

Devotional Readings for the Season of Lent, 2024

Day 33 – Sunday, March 17th

Centering

Welcome to Daily Devotional Readings for the Season of Lent.

Today is the fifth Sunday of Lent, March 17th, 2024.

Thank you so much for joining us for a moment of centering and prayer as we hear God's Word read from the Old Testament, the Psalms, and the New Testament and on Sundays, we have an additional reading from the Epistles.

Take just a few moments to gather and focus yourself.

Stop what ever else you have going on.

Close the door, turn off the TV, mute the cell phone...make these next few moments about you and the Lord.

Take 3 deep breaths, each time, holding the inhale for 5 seconds, then slowly exhaling.

When you are centered, begin to read.

Psalm 51:1-12 (Modern English Version)

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to Your lovingkindness;
according to the abundance of Your compassion,
blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned,
and done this evil in Your sight,
so that You are justified when You speak,
and You are blameless when You judge.
- 5 I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin my mother conceived me.
- 6 You desire truth in the inward parts,
and in the hidden part You make me to know wisdom.
- 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness,
that the bones that You have broken may rejoice.
- 9 Hide Your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence,
and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,

and uphold me with Your willing spirit.

Hebrews 5:5-10 (New Century Version)

5 So also Christ did not choose himself to have the honor of being a high priest, but God chose him. God said to him,

“You are my Son.

Today I have become your Father.”

6 And in another Scripture God says,

“You are a priest forever,

a priest like Melchizedek.”

7 While Jesus lived on earth, he prayed to God and asked God for help. He prayed with loud cries and tears to the One who could save him from death, and his prayer was heard because he trusted God.

8 Even though Jesus was the Son of God, he learned obedience by what he suffered.

9 And because his obedience was perfect, he was able to give eternal salvation to all who obey him.

10 In this way God made Jesus a high priest, a priest like Melchizedek.

John 12:20-33 (The Message)

20-21 There were some Greeks in town who had come up to worship at the Feast. They approached Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee: “Sir, we want to see Jesus. Can you help us?”

22-23 Philip went and told Andrew. Andrew and Philip together told Jesus. Jesus answered, “Time’s up. The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

24-25 “Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you’ll have it forever, real and eternal.

26 “If any of you wants to serve me, then follow me. Then you’ll be where I am, ready to serve at a moment’s notice. The Father will honor and reward anyone who serves me.

27-28 “Right now I am shaken. And what am I going to say? ‘Father, get me out of this’? No, this is why I came in the first place. I’ll say, ‘Father, put your glory on display.’”

A voice came out of the sky: “I have glorified it, and I’ll glorify it again.”

29 The listening crowd said, “Thunder!”

Others said, “An angel spoke to him!”

30-33 Jesus said, “The voice didn’t come for me but for you. At this moment the world is in crisis. Now Satan, the ruler of this world, will be thrown out. And I, as I am lifted up from the earth, will attract everyone to me and gather them around me.” He put it this way to show how he was going to be put to death.

Romans 12:1-21 (New Century Version)

12 So brothers and sisters, since God has shown us great mercy, I beg you to offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him. Your offering must be only for God and pleasing to him,

which is the spiritual way for you to worship. 2 Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect. 3 Because God has given me a special gift, I have something to say to everyone among you. Do not think you are better than you are. You must decide what you really are by the amount of faith God has given you. 4 Each one of us has a body with many parts, and these parts all have different uses. 5 In the same way, we are many, but in Christ we are all one body. Each one is a part of that body, and each part belongs to all the other parts. 6 We all have different gifts, each of which came because of the grace God gave us. The person who has the gift of prophecy should use that gift in agreement with the faith. 7 Anyone who has the gift of serving should serve. Anyone who has the gift of teaching should teach. 8 Whoever has the gift of encouraging others should encourage. Whoever has the gift of giving to others should give freely. Anyone who has the gift of being a leader should try hard when he leads. Whoever has the gift of showing mercy to others should do so with joy.

9 Your love must be real. Hate what is evil, and hold on to what is good. 10 Love each other like brothers and sisters. Give each other more honor than you want for yourselves. 11 Do not be lazy but work hard, serving the Lord with all your heart. 12 Be joyful because you have hope. Be patient when trouble comes, and pray at all times. 13 Share with God's people who need help. Bring strangers in need into your homes.

14 Wish good for those who harm you; wish them well and do not curse them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and be sad with those who are sad. 16 Live in peace with each other. Do not be proud, but make friends with those who seem unimportant. Do not think how smart you are.

17 If someone does wrong to you, do not pay him back by doing wrong to him. Try to do what everyone thinks is right. 18 Do your best to live in peace with everyone. 19 My friends, do not try to punish others when they wrong you, but wait for God to punish them with his anger. It is written: "I will punish those who do wrong; I will repay them," says the Lord. 20 But you should do this:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him a drink.

Doing this will be like pouring burning coals on his head."

Prayer

(Pray this prayer or use your own words.)

God I have held on so long to the wrong things.

I have sweaty-palmed, white-knuckled held on my desires, my will, even living itself.

All the while, you're reminding me to let go

To **loose** the very thing I want to keep.

To **lose** the thing I want to find.

Right now I am shaken.

Right now, I am in crisis.

And what am I going to say?

Just this.

Unless I fall to the ground and allow "the me" around me to die

so that “the You” within me can grow,
I can never truly live.
And above all things, I want to live with You.
Amen.