



CROSSWALK

LENT 2022

**WITH UNIVERSITY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

“O, THE WONDERFUL CROSS,”

O, the wonderful cross. Bids me come and die and find that I may truly live. O, the wonderful cross, O, the wonderful cross. All who gather here by grace draw near and bless your name.”

The lyrics to this song express the upside-down nature of the Kingdom of God – that the road to life passes first through death. This is true not only about our final passing from life into death and then into life with God but also in our daily experience of life here on earth. Our daily practice of dying to ourselves opens us to the experience of living for and with Christ. And while this daily practice also passes first through a death—a death to self—it opens for us a joy and flourishing made possible only by life with God. The mystery we increasingly discover is that the crosswalk is actually the road of life, the road rich with all the beauty and joys and benefits of life lived with God.

Jesus puts it this way: “If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.” He asks us to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and follow Him. This is the path Jesus took on our behalf, and his journey beckons us and equips us for our own.

But how do we do this? How do we lay aside what entangles us? How do we walk the road of the cross? How do we deepen our relationship with Jesus? We begin, of course, with grace, which is the underserved favor of God in and for our life. Grace opens the door to relationship with Jesus and accompanies us on the road of discipleship to Jesus. Coming alongside grace, spiritual practices or disciplines are tools that help us on this path. They are rhythms and habits that help us sow not to the flesh but to the spirit (Gal 6:8). They are practices that help us to not be conformed to the patterns of this world but to be transformed (Rom 12:2). The practices themselves do not transform us, but they do help us walk the path with Jesus, the One who transforms our lives.

Throughout this season of Lent, we invite you to use the resources in this guide to help you on your own crosswalk. In this guide, we’ve paired a spiritual practice with each weekly sermon reflection. We’ll dig into the spiritual practice more deeply during our Equipping Time on Sunday mornings as well. This guide can be used individually or with others. We hope it is a tool that helps your life be formed more and more by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and guides you on the road of life with Him, our Lord and Savior.

WITH YOU ON THE JOURNEY,
SUSANNA HOKE, DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP

WEEK 1: THE CROSS AND YOUR MIND

The death of God bends our minds to heal them

PRAYER

In the shade of your cross, Jesus, we hold our minds in open hands to you. Shape them, bend them, change them as you in your wisdom see fit, that we might experience your healing, be drawn into your wisdom and have within us the mind of Christ. Amen

READ 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

SERMON REFLECTION

1. What was a key takeaway from the sermon?
2. What do people object to in the message that Jesus had to die on the cross?
3. What are some of the current schemes for saving the world?
 - a. What is the world to be saved from?
 - b. What would the saved world look like?
4. How do current world saving schemes compare with God's plan?
5. Verse 22 says the Jews looked for a sign. What sign were they offered in Matt 12:38-40? What sign would you like to have?
6. How has God used weak, foolish or lowly things to correct you?

APPLICATION

At the end of this passage, Paul quotes Jer 9:23, which commands us to boast in the Lord. In light of the passage in 1 Corinthians, what might it look like to boast in the Lord? What do you boast in? See Eph 2:8-9 and Jer 9:23-24. What are you tempted to boast about other than Christ? Spend some time in prayer, asking God for help in that area.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: SCRIPTURE MEDITATION/MEMORIZATION

Part of the battle we face is a battle in our minds. We are often like the father seeking healing for his child when he cried out “Lord, I believe—help my unbelief”. Jesus himself told us in Joh 6:28 that “the work of God is to believe in Him who He has sent”. Paul speaks of this battle in 2 Cor 10—that we “take every thought captive to obey Christ”. Adam and Eve faced this temptation through a seed of doubt, “did God really say...?” Scripture is a tool God gives us to fight this battle. It is described in Heb 4 as being living and active, and sharper than a two-edged sword. As we meditate on and memorize Scripture, it becomes deeply engrained in us. It becomes a resource and a tool we can use as we face lies in our own life.

Over time, as we memorize and meditate on scripture, two things happen. First, we take Paul’s advice in Phil 4:8 and turn up the volume on truth. We think about that which is good and lovely and pure. Second, we develop an “arsenal” to fight the lies that fill our mind. This is how Jesus responded to the lies of the enemy, and the same is possible for us. For example, a lie might whisper that we do not matter to God. The truth responds with Matt 10:29–31: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

REFLECT & ACT

- + What has been your experience with memorizing scripture?
- + In what ways do you experience a “battle in your mind”?
- + What role do you see scripture playing in this battle?
- + What is a scripture that you are drawn to and would like to memorize?
- + What is a lie that you are battling? What scripture might speak truth to that lie that you could memorize?

TRY IT OUT THIS WEEK

In his book *Live No Lies*, John Mark Comer maps out a “battle plan” for combating lies and taking our thoughts captive to obey and trust Christ.

- Step 1:** Identify a thought or feeling that is nagging you.
- Step 2:** Look for the lie beneath that thought or feeling.
- Step 3:** Consider the scriptural truth that “fights” that lie.
- Step 4:** Commit this scripture to memory that it might come to mind as the lie arises.

WEEK 2: THE CROSS AND YOUR WORK

History will never leave behind what we build on the foundation of Jesus Christ

PRAYER

At the foot of the cross, the place of your work on our behalf, we hold out to you the work of our hands. We want to surrender this to you. Help us to see where we labor in vain and chase other loves. Give us wisdom to discern how and what we are building and give us your grace to build our life on you. Amen

READ 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

SERMON REFLECTION

1. What was a key takeaway from the sermon?
2. What does it mean to build your life on something? Upon what or whom do people base their life choices?
3. Who are the people in your life that had a considerable influence in building the foundation of your faith?
4. What are you building with? What spiritual practices (such as prayer, Bible reading, worship, and service) have you found useful to build your faith?
5. How does being secure in Jesus affect what you choose to do? Who you talk with? What you say or don't say? See Joh 10:27-29 and Phil 1:6

APPLICATION

Take some time to prayerfully examine what you are choosing to build your life on. Ask God if there is anything that should be added or taken away.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: CREATING A RULE OF LIFE

As we consider the intersection of the cross and our work, a Rule of Life is a tool to help us keep God at the center of everything we do and create balance and order as we steward our life. Think of a rule not so much as a list of dos and don'ts but as a support structure or trellis that allows a vine to grow. Our days, thankfully, are hemmed in by sunrise and sunset. We are finite and cannot do it all, and yet our moments make up our days, which make up our lives. All of us already have a way of life that we are living. Creating a Rule of Life helps us consider how we want to intentionally spend our time and helps us build the trellis on which our life and faith can flourish.

Remember, your rule is meant to serve and support you and help connect you to Jesus. Begin with a simple plan. Allow it to match your personality. Review what is working and what is not and edit accordingly. Share with others and celebrate what is bringing you joy, as well as how you are flourishing.

REFLECT & ACT

- + In what ways or areas are you flourishing?
- + In what ways or areas are you struggling?
- + How might a Rule of Life provide a trellis of support?
- + What are your fears or concerns about a Rule of Life?
- + What is one step you would like to take?
- + Who can be on this journey with you?

Begin by creating categories like: Spirit, Mind, Body, Relationships, Rest, Work, Money, Technology or Entertainment, Mission. Consider different periods of time: daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually.

Note your "have-tos", what brings you joy and what pulls you away from Jesus? Use this information to begin to craft a rule or rhythm of life that helps nurture your life of faith in these categories, using different periods of time. You might want to practice 30 minutes of prayer and Scripture daily, spend one day a week in Sabbath and spend 24 hours annually in silence and solitude.

RESOURCES

- "Developing a Personal Rule of Life Workbook" from Bridgetown Church (ptw_ruleoflife_workbook_.pdf (squarespace.com))
- "Living Faith Day by Day" by Debra Farrington
- "The Common Rule" by Justin Earley

WEEK 3: THE CROSS AND YOUR BODY

He offers his body to restore ours

PRAYER

Jesus, thank you for offering your body for us for our salvation and restoration. Thank you for the gift of our life and our bodies. Forgive us for our assumption that they are ours to own instead of ours to steward. Give us wisdom on how we can honor you and follow you with our body. Amen

READ 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

SERMON REFLECTION

1. What is a key takeaway from the sermon?
2. Some philosophies think that what happens with the body doesn't matter. What does this passage say about the significance of our bodies?
3. Have you experienced temptation to do something you shouldn't? How have you justified it? What impact does thinking we have the right to control our bodies play in justifying misusing our bodies? How were you able to resist that temptation?
4. What is the purpose of a temple? How does considering your body as God's temple affect your decisions about what is appropriate to do?
5. Read 2 Cor 5:17-21. You have been bought with a price. How have you been restored and reconciled to God in spite of past errors?

APPLICATION

Spend some time in prayer. How can you honor God with your body? See Rom 12:1-2. What might God be calling you towards? What adjustments might he be asking you to make with regards to how you treat your body?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: FASTING

Our bodies are not our enemies. Our bodies are a gift from God and part of the Imago Dei of each of us. Our bodies are also not intended to be our masters, and yet it is very easy to be ruled by their appetites (I am reminded of this most days at about 4pm when my stomach growls!). And we know the appetites of the body are more than just physical hunger but can be a hunger that leads us down all sorts of paths other than the way of Jesus. As Peter says in 2 Pet 2:19, "You are a slave to whatever controls you."

Fasting is an age-old practice that helps break this control and focus us more singularly on God. It refreshes our awareness that we are sustained by him. This is particularly fitting during Lent, which is often a season where we embrace self-denial. In other words, we give something up to experience solidarity with Christ who gave his all for us.

For the Christian, fasting is not a physical practice but a spiritual one. Its primary purpose is to connect us with God. Fasting also reminds us of our utter dependence upon God as we find in him a source of sustenance beyond food. It puts us in a place of need and want, where our flesh can encounter the spirit. David writes in Ps 69:10 "I humbled my soul with fasting" and in this place of humility, we can experience the presence, grace, and transformation of God in profound ways.

REFLECT & ACT

- + What has been your experience with fasting?
- + What are your thoughts about the appetites of the body?
- + What are your concerns about fasting?
- + What would be your hopes in fasting?
- + What invitations do you hear from God about fasting?

Typically, in fasting, you determine what you will fast from and for what period of time. This should be done with wisdom and medical and physical considerations. Because this is a spiritual practice, also determine how you will lean into God during your fast. Remember, that is the primary purpose. You might begin by fasting for one meal and spending this time in prayer, worship, or scripture. Perhaps this catalyzes a regular practice of fasting or fasting for a longer period of time. Again, use wisdom, medical consultation and engage your community as you practice fasting.

RESOURCES

Get you started can be found online, including [Fasting: Practicing The Way \(practicingtheway.org/practices/fasting\)](https://practicingtheway.org/practices/fasting)

WEEK 4: THE CROSS AND YOUR SINGLENES OR MARRIAGE

Nobody is single or married at the cross of Jesus...only a new family

PRAYER

Jesus, thank you for weaving us into your family. We think of you on the cross and your words to John about your mother, Mary. As we seek the way of the cross, help us to be open to your vision of family and to surrender to you our whole life, including our relationships. Teach us to live in reconciled relationship and to embody the humility and surrender that you modeled for us in your life with others. Amen

READ 1 Corinthians 7:7-16

SERMON REFLECTION

1. What is a key takeaway from the sermon?
2. How does Paul's description of one's marital state as a gift challenge the contemporary cultural view of marriage? How does it challenge the contemporary church's view as you have experienced it?
3. What advice does Paul give to the unmarried or widowed? What justification does he provide? How convincing is Paul's argument to you?
4. What advice does Paul give to the married? What justification does he provide? How convincing is Paul's argument to you?
5. What do you make of the fact that Paul clearly identifies his advice in verse 12 as his personal opinion, and not a directive from the Lord? Why do you think he makes this stipulation in verse 12, but not to the advice in verses 8 & 9? Do you think this makes a difference in how much weight should be given to the advice given in this passage?

APPLICATION

How does this text challenge your understanding of relationship and family? Spend some time reflecting on this and asking God to help you hear His invitations to you.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: RECONCILIATION

This week's sermon is about our relationships and the new family of God that we are drawn into in Jesus. This is a wonderful gift of life with Jesus. However, as we all know, life with family is not always easy. Relationships are messy. Yet the way of the cross is not a solitary experience but one that intersects and connects us with others. The good news is that the work of the cross opens up the way for reconciled relationships—first with God and also with one another. In Eph 2:13-1, Paul shows us the connection between the cross and our reconciliation to both God and one another. "But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." Jesus makes it possible for us to live reconciled, and the way of the cross asks us to live into this possibility.

Reconciliation is not easy work. It is the work and the way of the cross. Like Jesus, it will take surrender, it will take humility, and it will take faith in a power that is greater than our own. But the way of the cross was never intended just for our life but also for our life together. So, we are called to clothe ourselves with humility and to make every effort to live in peace with everyone. (Heb 12:14)

REFLECT & ACT

- + How do you feel about the word "reconciliation"? What emotions, experiences, concerns, or hopes come to mind?
- + How is your relationship with Jesus? In what ways do you believe and experience the forgiveness and reconciliation of Christ? How do you need to receive that more fully?
- + How is your relationship with others? Who do you need to extend forgiveness to? Who do you need to reconcile with?
- + What is your posture toward others? How can you cultivate curiosity, humility and incarnational listening?

Jesus teaches us to pray for our enemies and bless those who curse us. Spend some time regularly praying for your enemies or those you are at odds with.

What are some ways you can seek reconciliation and peace this week? As you engage in the work of reconciliation, you may need to engage your community, church community or leaders, or professional support. Peacemaker's Ministries is a great resource for engaging in reconciliation and peacemaking. They even have an app for navigating conflict. (peacemakerministries.org)

WEEK 5: THE CROSS AND YOUR LOVE

There's no love like love at the cross

PRAYER

Jesus, thank you that you have lived out your love towards us on the cross. We confess that we have often loved on our own terms and in our own ways. Help us grow in understanding your love, defined by and expressed on the cross. Give us courage to live this out as your disciples. Amen

READ 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

SERMON REFLECTION

1. What is a key takeaway from the sermon?
2. How does the absence of love limit human attempts of learning, teaching and sacrifice?
3. Using these verses from 1 Corinthians, list what love is and what love is not. (Look at several different translations to get a fuller understanding of what Paul is saying.) Which of these are easy for you to show, and which are more difficult?
4. How has knowing Jesus enabled you to love others more fully?
5. What does it mean to you that God already knows you completely? How does that help you understand what it means to be loved and to love?

APPLICATION

Paul closes by naming faith and hope along with love. Think about how your life reflects these three spiritual gifts. Which do you have in abundance? Which are in short supply? This week, ask God for help in using your abundance and filling your need.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: SERVICE

In Mar 10:45, Jesus tells us that he, the son of man, came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. He demonstrated this in many ways through his ministry on earth and through his death on the cross. A profound witness to his posture of service happened in the upper room on the eve of his crucifixion when Jesus knelt down and used a towel and basin to wash his disciples' feet. As followers of Jesus, we are also called to serve and lay our lives down for others. As Richard Foster puts it "the risen Christ beckons us to the ministry of the towel" (Celebration of Discipline p. 140). Walking in the way of Jesus means living on a path, and with a posture, of service. Paul writes in Phil 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or empty pride, but in humility consider others more important than yourselves." Peter reminds us in 1 Pet 4:8-10 that "Most important of all, we should continue to show deep love for one another... Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. God has given each of you a gift from this great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another." We learn in 1 Corinthians that love is not just a warm and fuzzy feeling, but that it is lived out in how we serve and treat one another. The way of the cross is the way of love lived out, and this is something we do through the spiritual practice of service.

REFLECT AND ACT

- + How do you relate to the reminder that Jesus has served you?
- + How would you describe your attitude towards serving others?
- + How are you currently serving others?
- + What emotions surface for you about service? Joy, guilt, anxiety, hope? Spend some time in prayer about these feelings.
- + How can you engage in the spiritual practice of service this week?
- + How can you live out love?

Begin with prayer—"Lord, show me who and how I can serve today." Practice cultivating an attitude of service. This could be as simple as asking someone in your life - how can I help you or serve you today? A friend of mine phrases it this way "Is there anything I can do to be helpful to you?"

PRACTICE ACTS OF SERVICE

This could be as simple as picking up trash around the neighborhood. You can go to University Presbyterian Church, Seattle: Opportunities (upc.org/serve) to view opportunities to serve.

WEEK 6: THE SURPRISE OF THE CROSS

God transforms our lives through the message of a crucified king

PRAYER

Jesus, awaken our spirit to the surprises you have for us. Help us to know you, to walk with you, to trust you, and to open ourselves to your transforming work and power in our lives. Amen

READ 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

SERMON REFLECTION

1. What is a key takeaway from the sermon?
2. What is surprising about the Gospel message? When you first heard the Gospel what was your reaction?
3. What does our culture add to this message of salvation? You may have an easier time seeing what is added to the gospel by other people or faith traditions. What do you see?
4. What is the difference between believing a message and being impressed by a messenger? By which are you most easily persuaded?
5. What previous experience with the spirit's power can you recall? Is this a fond or challenging recollection for you?
6. How do you desire to experience the power of the spirit in the gospel?

APPLICATION

Think about what it means to have one's faith based on the power of God instead of human wisdom. Which is most durable? Ask God to grow your faith in his power.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: SABBATH

As we consider the surprise of the cross, we are drawn into the spiritual practice of sabbath—of pausing, resting, and ceasing our labors, to embrace the profoundness of God’s work on our behalf. This work is dynamically embodied in the crucifixion of Jesus. His descent into death and the work he did there on behalf of humankind took place on our Sabbath. On our day of rest, Jesus was doing the work necessary for our salvation. Sabbath—keeping reminds us of this reality. Esau McCaulley puts it this way “Rest is an affirmation of the sovereignty of God. He doesn’t slumber or sleep so that we can. Sabbath keeping is a physical manifestation of salvation by grace. It is an act of resistance against the lie that we are only what we create or accomplish.”

The fourth commandment tells us “Remember the Sabbath by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work. Sabbath creates a space to live—not into the demands of the earth and clock, but into the love of God and love of neighbors. Sabbath is a ceasing of labor and laboring, and connecting with the holiness and presence of the Lord our God. In the Bible, Sabbath was also highly communal, drawing people into meals and worship and celebration.

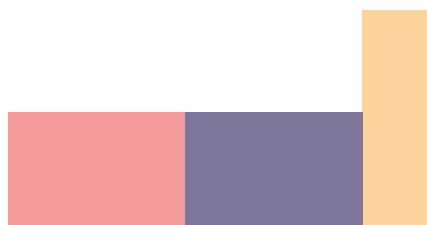
Like all spiritual practices, we must remember its purpose. As Jesus said in Mar 2:27, “The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath”. How might you practice Sabbath to meet the needs of your life as a disciple of Jesus Christ? How can you make space for rest? How can you resist the lie that you are only as good as what you accomplish? How can you make space for worship, for keeping Sabbath holy and unto the Lord? And what might this look like as a communal and not only solitary experience?

REFLECT & ACT

- + How do you react to the idea of Sabbath? What emotions or thoughts surface for you?
- + What are your current habits of Sabbath?
- + What would you like to change about your Sabbath practices?
- + Begin to write out ideas on how you would like to practice Sabbath. Include plans for rest, worship and connection with God. Pete Scazzero suggests the categories of: Stop, Rest, Delight & Contemplation
- + Consider plans for connection and community, too.
- + Give it a try and remember that a regular rhythm takes practice! Give yourself permission to edit and adjust.

RESOURCES

Sabbath — Practicing The Way
(practicetheway.org/practices/sabbath)



WEEK 7: IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED ~ EASTER SUNDAY

What is done is done... but for all that he's undone

PRAYER

We want to walk with you, Jesus, from the cross, through the grave and to the empty tomb. As you did not abandon the cross, we do not want to abandon the way of the cross, the way of following you. Give us strength, Jesus to keep watch with you, to keep walking with you and thank you for your grace that welcomes us back when we take a detour. Thank you for all that you have done for us. Amen

READ 1 Corinthians 15:17-20

SERMON REFLECTION

1. What is a key takeaway from the sermon?
2. What is the problem that requires Jesus' death and resurrection to solve?
3. What are some of the ways you've tried and failed in your efforts to repair your state of separation from God?
4. Why would a faith that was limited to this world be futile?
5. What difference does it make to have faith in Christ's resurrection in one's earthly life, and in the promise of eternal life?

APPLICATION

What would you say to someone who asked you about the cross? Write out God's rescue plan in common language and in just a few sentences. Who can you tell this to? Ask God to direct you. It may be yourself!

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: CELEBRATION

Jesus' arrival into the world was marked by the angel's words "I bring you good news of great joy!" Jesus' first miracle was at a wedding feast. On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus ate and drank and enjoyed the company of his friends. Apparently, Jesus knew how to celebrate.

It is easy sometimes to forget to celebrate in our life with Jesus. But that is how it began, with Father, Son and Spirit declaring how very good life was. That is how it will end, with a great banquet feast. And that is part of our life with Jesus now. Life with Jesus is just that—it is life—a full life. Life that involves work and rest, discipline and play, solitude and community, sorrow and celebration. And Easter is a time to celebrate, remembering that the gospel, the good news of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, gives us much to celebrate.

Jesus' resurrection draws us into a life of freedom, of hope, of possibility, of love. It is as if Jesus sees us sitting alone as the music begins to play, walks over, extends his hand, and draws us into the dance. Today, this Easter Sunday, we dance. We feast, and play, and laugh. We give thanks because Jesus tells us this truth "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (Joh 16:33).

Find ways this week to take heart. Find ways to celebrate and share the good news of Jesus with great joy. Perhaps this means a feast of your own or a walk in nature. Perhaps a game with friends or a kindness to a stranger. Whatever the way, our celebration this week is an expression of gratitude and a declaration of the sure victories secured by Jesus Christ — that nothing good and right and true will be lost forever. That through Jesus, all good things will be restored. This is too part of the crosswalk.

THANK YOU FOR ENGAGING IN THIS CROSSWALK DURING THE SEASON OF LENT.

At UPC, we talk about joining Jesus as he transforms our lives and the lives of those around us. The crosswalk is the place where this transformation occurs. But transformation occurs not when we seek it but when we seek him. When our heart, like Paul's, desires this: "I want to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified" 1 Cor 2:2. C.S. Lewis says it this way:

"Your real, new self (which is Christ's and also yours, and yours just because it is his) will not come as long as you are looking for it. It will come when you are looking for Him. Does that sound strange? The same principle holds, you know, for more everyday matters. The principle runs through all life from top to bottom. Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it."

(C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, 190)

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CS LEWIS



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