

WALKING *with* JESUS

Devotions for
Lent & Easter 2025

**SNEAK
PEEK!**

Take a look
inside



Editors of *Mornings with Jesus*

A GUIDEPOSTS DEVOTIONAL

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A GUIDEPOSTS DEVOTIONAL

“Lent is about becoming, doing, and changing whatever it is that is blocking the fullness of life in us right now. Lent is a summons to live anew.”

SISTER JOAN CHITTISTER

O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High

O love, how deep, how broad, how high,
how passing thought and fantasy,
that God, the Son of God, should take
our mortal form for mortals' sake!

He sent no angel to our race,
of higher or of lower place,
but wore the robe of human frame,
and He Himself to this world came.

For us baptized, for us He bore
His holy fast, and hungered sore;
for us temptations sharp He knew,
for us the tempter overthrew.

For us to wicked men betrayed,
scourged, mocked, in crown of thorns arrayed,
He bore the shameful cross and death
for us at length gave up His breath.

For us He rose from death again,
for us He went on high to reign,
for us He sent His Spirit here
to guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.

All glory to our Lord and God
for love so deep, so high, so broad—
the Trinity whom we adore
forever and forevermore.

—Attributed to Thomas à Kempis

INTRODUCTION

Why does Lent exist? It exists because faith cannot flourish in a bubble, like a flower under glass. Our faith needs to be lived, stretched, and tested. Lent gives us the opportunity to pick up the faith we've been taught and carry it on our hearts, to emulate in our own small way the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, on the way to Easter's spiritual rebirth.

Bringing together some of Guideposts' most beloved writers and adding a few newer ones, *Walking with Jesus: Devotions for Lent & Easter 2025* offers observations and reflections on the season. Each heartfelt devotion is based on everyday life and experiences, reminding us that the season of Lent brings an unparalleled chance to walk alongside our Redeemer to Easter's glory. Paired with scripture and faith steps, these devotions invite us to stretch, strengthen, and, perhaps, test our own faith.

Lent isn't mentioned in the Bible, but its practice derives from Jesus's long withdrawal from society after being "led by the Spirit" (Matthew 4:1, NIV). God didn't cut off His Son from food and company for 40 days for no purpose. Jesus's stay in the wilderness was meant to test and strengthen Him. While in the wilderness, Jesus refuses every temptation Satan suggests, remaining stalwart in His devotion to God and His Word. Only after Jesus withstands these tests does He rejoin society, ready to begin His Gospel mission.

Jesus would never be far removed from suffering, as the tempests of Holy Week show. But, again, there was purpose for this. The book of Hebrews tells us, "[Jesus] had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:17–18, NIV).

Suffering, of course, wasn't exclusive to Jesus. Among the earliest Christians, even those who hadn't met Jesus before His crucifixion,

were firm in their belief that great rewards would come after their worldly tribulations. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

“We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

—ROMANS 5:3–4 (NIV)

Suffering in this sense is both a character builder and a faith builder. “However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name” (1 Peter 4:16, NIV). Our difficulties today will make us better Christians tomorrow. And we are hopeful that better days—in heaven, if not here—await us. Indeed, what is Easter’s jubilation but a glimpse of the paradise to come.

Pastor Timothy Keller wrote: “While other worldviews lead us to sit in the midst of life’s joys, foreseeing the coming sorrows, Christianity empowers its people to sit in the midst of this world’s sorrows, tasting the coming joy.”

In keeping with the bright blooms of spring (Lent is an Old English word for “spring”), the Lenten season wears the vivid colors of a world bursting into flower after winter’s dormancy. Like the natural beauty around us, we are invited to grow into better followers of the Lord over the 40 days. (Remember that our Lenten intentions and restrictions are relaxed on Sundays, which are dedicated for celebrating the Resurrection.) Paramount is our commitment to those practices that our God has taught from the beginning:

Pray. For Jesus, praying is an embodiment of His unity with His Father. Christ instructs us how to pray and even uses prayer to drive out evil spirits. His prayers are active appeals that extend even beyond the death He foresees for Himself. Regarding His disciples, he says, “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me”

(John 17:20–21, NIV). By praying to the Father, we follow in the virtuous steps of Christ.

Fast. For Jesus, fasting has great purification power, as demonstrated by His time in the wilderness. He even advises us on its practice, making it a private affair, saying, “Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matthew 6:18, NIV).

Give. Among His Beatitudes, Jesus says, “Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (Matthew 5:42, NIV). How better to model ourselves after the Savior who sacrificed His earthly life for our eternal one?

Lent is much more than a mandate against the little pleasures that give temporary happiness. More important are the opportunities it gives us to shoulder our small share of the Lord’s burdens and sacrifices. Through our embrace of His examples of praying, fasting, and giving—by choosing the hard path over the easy road—we demonstrate our love of God and stretch our faith into His Grace.

Lisa Guernsey

ASH WEDNESDAY

MARCH 5

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.

1 TIMOTHY 4:4 (NIV)

LATELY, I'VE BEEN DOWNHEARTED, PLAGUED by negative thinking. My work wasn't going well, and I was discouraged. I couldn't even muster the enthusiasm to spend my regular devotional time with Jesus. But today I had a reason to cheer up. Whatacatch was back! My favorite item at Whataburger is the fish sandwich. But several years ago, the fast-food restaurant took Whatacatch off the menu except during Lent. But today was Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. My daughter Brooke and I headed to lunch.

"If I play my cards right, I can have forty fish sandwiches," I said.

"Aren't you supposed to *give up* something for Lent?" Brooke asked. I would have answered but my mouth was full. Life was good again!

After I finished my sandwich, a nudge from Jesus got me wondering. Why wasn't I this happy every day of my life—grateful for waking up each morning with the gift of another day? Why did it take a sandwich to make me appreciate the life Jesus had given me? Then and there, I decided what I would give up for Lent—negativity and ungratefulness! And I would *give* thanks to the One who made this great gift of life possible.

I asked Jesus to forgive me for skimping on our time together and promised I'd do better. And I'd make it a habit to express my gratitude the moment I opened my eyes. Who knew a fish sandwich could be such a good teacher?

PAT BUTLER DYSON

FAITH STEP

As soon as you awaken each morning, thank Jesus for your life. Then pursue a day worthy of His gift.

THURSDAY MARCH 6

*Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
just as we hope in You.*

PSALM 33:22 (NKJV)

AFTER MY DIVORCE, MY BIGGEST worry was my children—how they would be affected. They had been, and still are, the most important aspect of my life. Loving, protecting, and guiding them—and teaching them about Jesus—were and still are my focus. Mothering is my greatest calling. The coming apart of our family was something I never wanted, and I felt deep shame about it. I had so much guilt for allowing this difficulty into their lives.

The divorce was final in winter. As springtime came and Easter approached, I desperately looked for signs of life. I wanted to believe Jesus was going to do a new thing. I hoped it would spring up any moment (Isaiah 43:19), but what I mostly felt was tired. Empty. Sad and lonely. It was strange doing all the usual activities and planning for the holiday on my own, without my husband. Easter morning, I was

overjoyed to have my kids with me, but there was palpable weirdness to our celebration.

Jesus's resurrection from the dead took on new meaning for me that year. In many ways, my old self had died and was buried. I was forced to let go of the illusion that I had control over my life, my kids, and even the rate at which we all would heal. I threw myself on His mercy and waited, like a seed in the ground, hoping and trusting Jesus would raise me up and cause me to bloom in His time.

GWEN FORD FAULKENBERRY

FAITH STEP

Start some indoor seeds or buy bulbs to force.
Watch, wait, and trust sprouts to shoot up as you
pray for Jesus to raise up hope inside of you.

FRIDAY MARCH 7

God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 (NLT)

I COULDN'T WAIT TO TRY THE same-day home delivery benefit of my discount store membership. But I felt disappointed when my first order was dropped off. The store had made a few substitutions. The eggs were not extra-large, the pizza sauce was not our favorite brand, and the canned tomatoes were a different size from what I needed for a recipe. This feature did not turn out to be so convenient and timesaving after all.

Substitution isn't always a bad thing; it can be necessary, which is a major theme throughout the Bible. God designed the system of sacrifices and offerings laid out in the first seven chapters of Leviticus to atone for the Israelites' sins. This foreshadowed the day He would send the perfect Lamb, who would carry the sins of the world to the cross.

Jesus lived a sinless life, but He willingly offered Himself as a substitution for our punishment. Only the sacrifice of the sinless Christ was enough to bring forgiveness for our sins. Every bit of the horrific sorrow, abuse, pain, and suffering that Jesus endured paid for my sin. And for yours. I'm not sure I can ever comprehend such love.

Some days I'm tempted to substitute other activities for time I should spend with Jesus. But I find contentment and purpose only when I give Jesus first place in my heart. Nothing, and no one, can ever replace Him.

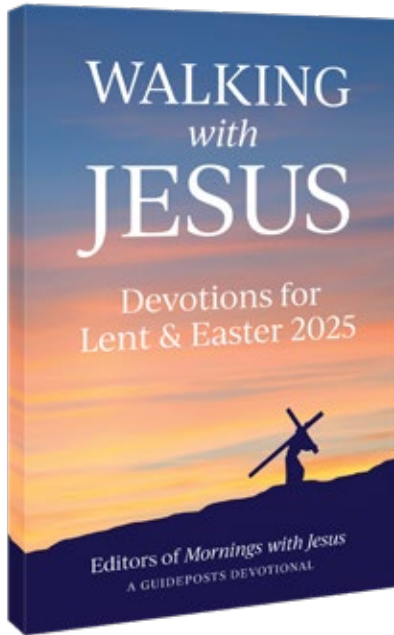
DIANNE NEAL MATTHEWS

FAITH STEP

Have you been trying to substitute something in the place Jesus should have in your life? Talk to Him about that.

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