

February 24, 2021

Family Lent Devotion: Week 2*

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE: LUKE 13:31-35 (CEB)

At that time, some Pharisees approached Jesus and said, “Go! Get away from here, because Herod wants to kill you.” Jesus said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Look, I’m throwing out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will complete my work. However, it’s necessary for me to travel today, tomorrow, and the next day because it’s impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather your people just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you didn’t want that. Look, your house is abandoned. I tell you, you won’t see me until the time comes when you say, “Blessings on the one who comes in the Lord’s name.”

WEEKLY LENTEN DISCIPLINE: RITUAL OF PROMISE



When you find yourself in a space such as Lent, where life seems thinner than usual and the journey more focused than normal, what do people of faith do to keep journeying on? In ancient times, rituals helped to remind the people of the promise, as yet unfulfilled, and gave reason to trust what seemed to be impossible.

In this week’s Scripture, we hear Jesus lamenting (crying) over Jerusalem and the people who did not choose to follow Christ. Yet, we also hear Jesus affirm his commitment to them and to us, promising us that he will return. During this holy season, we remember that Christ is with us. We believe the good news and live into this promise: God is with us. In response, we pay attention, and we ask this question:

“How do I experience God’s presence and love in my life?”

When we pay attention, when we take time to stop and to look, we can see, feel, hear, and know God’s presence. Sometimes it might mean paying attention to the moments when we experience God’s love through the eyes or actions of another — when we feel joy, when we feel peace, when we are comforted by a caring friend, even in those times when we are surrounded by chaos. Sometimes it might mean remembering when we have experienced and known God’s presence. It might mean leaning on another person who reminds us in the darkest moments that “God is here.” Sometimes it’s sitting in the silence and the darkness of Good Friday, surrounded by death and sadness, and finding the strength to say, “I believe...” or “help me believe.” Christ does not say that faith is easy. In fact, in this week’s Scripture, he reminds us that it can be hard.

During the difficult times, our knowledge of God's presence and love becomes especially important.

By taking note and sharing the moments when we experience God with others, we document our memory and our learnings, acknowledging and identifying our experiences of the holy. These "stampers," as children I work with have called them, mark our hearts and minds, helping us see, feel, and remember God's promise to be with us. They remind us of God's gift of peace. These stampers, memories, experiences, give us hope that can carry us through the dark places

Practice the Spiritual Discipline of Promise:

- Take time at the end of each day to share the moment(s) you felt close to God, saying "Today I felt close to God when..."
- Options: You might choose to share "close to God" moments:
 - at the dinner table or another meal
 - in the car after school
 - at bedtime
 - in a dedicated space in your home (prayer corner, family table, family gathering spot outside)
- Individuals might choose to share their God moments quietly in a special place. Examples:
 - writing in a journal
 - typing on a computer
 - drawing images in an art pad
 - writing on a slip of paper and putting it into a "God Box"
- Take time to document these moments – the times when you feel God's presence and know that God is with you. This helps us remember that God IS with us, even in times when we cannot see, hear, or feel the divine's presence and/or love.

Options

- Create a family journal (where everyone can write/draw/etc.)
- Create a family wall for the season of Lent where everyone can add "close-to-God" moments each day
- Provide each person an individual space to share his or her "close-to-God" moments



WEEKLY WONDERING QUESTIONS:

- I wonder how you experienced God's love today?
- I wonder how you prepared for the mystery of Easter today?
- I wonder where you saw the color purple today?
- I wonder what the color purple reminds you of?
- I wonder when you felt close to God this week?

WEEKLY FAMILY PRAYER:

Covenant God, Sometimes, when we can't see, touch, or hear you, we wonder, "Are you really there?" Then we remember the many ways you have shown us your love and we see the many things that reveal your creative presence in our lives. We feel the love in a hug from our mom, dad, or friend; and we know that this is what your love must feel like. We see the stars shining in the sky above or watch the sunrise, and we are amazed by your beautiful work that makes these things possible.

Lord, during this week of our Lenten journey, help us find ways to remember that you are with us. We know that this is big work. Help us practice remembering as we get ready for the mystery of Easter. During this season, help us learn how to trust you, love you, and share your love with others. Lord, thank you for being with our family as we travel together, preparing our hearts and minds to enter into the mystery of Easter. Bless us in our work. It's in your holy name, we pray. Amen.