

March 31, 2021

Family Lent Devotion: Week 7*

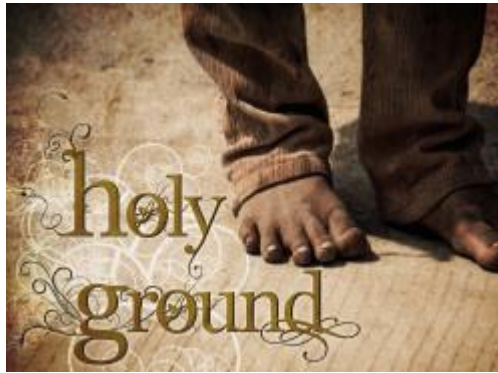
WEEKLY SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:1-18 (CEB)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

LUKE 24:1-2 (CEB)

Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women went to the tomb, bringing the fragrant spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they didn’t find the body of the Lord Jesus. They didn’t know what to make of this. Suddenly, two men were standing beside them in gleaming bright clothing. The women were frightened and bowed their faces toward the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He isn’t here, but has been raised. Remember what he told you while he was still in Galilee, that the Human One must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” Then they remembered his words. When they returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven and all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. Their words struck the apostles as nonsense, and they didn’t believe the women. But Peter ran to the tomb. When he bent over to look inside, he saw only the linen cloth. Then he returned home, wondering what had happened.

WEEKLY LENTEN DISCIPLINE: WORSHIP



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 arrive at Easter. This week, we will move through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday to arrive on Sunday morning at an empty tomb. We will celebrate with Mary Magdalene as we declare: "Christ is Risen!" We celebrate and we are full of joy and gratitude. Jesus' resurrection is a call for celebration and praise. We gather in our faith communities to praise God, give thanks, and to shout with joy together. It is in these moments that we ask:

"God, how can we even begin to say thank you for all you have given us?"

And we remember the words of Christ and the call to love God and love neighbor. We commit our lives again to Christ, and we seek to move forward in the hope of the Resurrection. We are not alone. Christ is Risen! We have nothing to fear. God is with us!

Weekly worship is the time when the entire body of Christ comes together to experience and respond to God's presence in our lives. During worship, we remember and celebrate what God has done through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Worship is one of the many ways we express our joy and gratitude. We offer our praise and thanksgiving for God's presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit, as we anticipate and celebrate what God promises to do in our lives and in our world. Sometimes our culture does not invite us to share our gratitude or to express our joy. It is important to encourage these emotions, as they keep us balanced and grounded when life's chaotic waters pull us in multiple directions. Other times, we come to worship to share our grief, our prayers, and our pain. Again, our culture does not always invite us to share our deepest emotions. Worship is a wonderful time to model the act of expressing our feelings and sharing our emotions as we lift up our prayers and concerns to God.

Remember: We pass on our appreciation and love for worship to our children through practice. Children learn to worship by worshiping.

This week, take time as a family to talk about worship. Give family members an opportunity to:

- share their favorite part of worship.
- share how worshiping God makes them feel.
- discuss how they can worship as a family throughout the week. This might be done by:
- attending a worship service together.
- singing a specific song each night as a family

- lighting a candle and saying a prayer of praise and thanksgiving
- reading a favorite Scripture. (Reading the Psalms together works really well for daily family worship)
- creating family rituals to do together. This an important way to grow together in the faith as you affirm that God is not just present and active in your lives on Sunday mornings (or whenever you go to church), but God is with you at all times and in all places.)
- share and express their joy, whether it be through jumping, clapping, singing, dancing, drawing, or simply saying “YAY God!” or “Thank you.”
- share and express their concerns and prayers by saying: “Lord, I am.... (insert emotion here). Thank you for listening.” Example: “Lord, I am sad because my dog died. Thank you for listening.” Or “Lord, I am happy because I made a new friend today. Thank you for listening.”

WEEKLY WONDERING QUESTIONS:



- I wonder how you prepared for the mystery of Easter today?
- I wonder where you saw the color purple this week?
- I wonder when you felt close to God this week?
- I wonder what brought you joy this week?
- I wonder how you like to express your joy?
- I wonder what your favorite part of worship is?
- I wonder what the hardest part of worship is?
- I wonder why we worship?

WEEKLY FAMILY PRAYER:

God,

You are always with us, guiding us and loving us. Thank you. Sometimes when we feel this love, we want to shout, “Thank you!” or whisper, “You’re the best, I love you!” Help us find ways to express our joy and to share our feelings with you and others. 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