

# *Week 1: Brokenness*

## *Ash Wednesday, February 14*

*Joel 2:1-2, 12-17*

*Ken Jackson*

The soundtrack is unmistakable, and to this day for those who watched Amity Island police chief Martin Brody in 1975 battle the great white shark as it terrorized beachgoers, we still wonder, “Just when is it safe to go back into the water?” One word strikes terror... Jaws. Perhaps this is how the people of Judah felt in 800 B.C. when the prophet Joel reminded them of the plague of locust and drought in chapter one. But God was not finished, He instructed Joel to warn about another calamity, an invading army and complete,

utter devastation. How can anyone withstand this?

In 1981 I found myself in the midst of a very real personal drought. It was as if locust had descended upon my relationships, finances, dreams, and even what little joy I had for life. But like a ball rolling downhill, I continued to make poor choices and the ensuing army was threatening what the locust didn't devour in my life. I had strayed pretty far from God. Through the prayers of people and the love of God I heard again the great message of Joel 2:12, "*Yet even now, return to me with all your heart.*" It was through God's grace and my repentance that my life was restored even more abundantly than ever.

**Prayer:** *O God, in the midst of my  
brokenness may I return to you, my provider  
and defender so I may praise your name.  
Amen*

## *February 15*

*Genesis 3*

*Jeremy Till*

So often we find ourselves rationalizing actions that are damaging to our relationship with GOD. Adam and Eve rationalized eating fruit from the tree of good and evil in Genesis 3. They knew it was wrong, but because of their immediate situation they chose to do what was self-fulfilling. How often do we rationalize our sin? We convince ourselves that it's "not really hurting anyone", "everyone else is doing it," it's easy, popular, or a plethora of other passive excuses instead of holding ourselves accountable to HIS WORD. Each and every time we sin the relationship with our Heavenly Father is tarnished and separation is created between us and GOD. Not because HE loves us less but because our love for HIM wanes with sin against HIS

WILL. Pray today that the decisions you make glorify GOD and illustrate HIS love for us through our actions and words. Never forget that the way we live our lives may be the first page a non-believer ever reads about GOD's LOVE!

## *February 16*

*Psalm 1*

*Greg Reid*

Key verse: Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Psalm 1:4

Chaff is the outer shell that must be removed to get to the valuable kernels of grain inside, by a process called threshing and winnowing. After the plants were cut, they were crushed and the pieces thrown into the air. Chaff is very light and carried away by the slightest wind, while the good grain falls back to the earth. Too often in my life, my sin and worldly concerns have turned me into chaff, drifting along without any discernible direction, useful for nothing. But thankfully, by God's infinite mercy, He gives me more chances than I deserve to be good grain that He can actually use.

## *February 17*

*Romans 3:9-26*

*Brian Stewart*

As human beings, we all fail, have shortcomings, and sin. We know the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1; 31:18) are considered major sins. However, it's the little sins, the sins we do on a daily basis such as arguing, gossiping, being disrespectful, and lying that work to destroy us, our relationship with our Lord, and the people we have sinned against.

There are times when we say or do something in the heat of a moment that is hurtful to our spouse, relatives, friends, church members or co-workers. When we sin against someone, we should do the right thing by apologizing for our transgression and ask for forgiveness. We should work diligently to reduce our sins. Like in hymn

number 526 **“What a Friend We Have in Jesus,”** we should take our transgressions to the Lord and ask for his forgiveness. With his guidance and our dedication, we can become a better person and less sinful.

As Christians, we should lead by example. If by chance I have sinned against a fellow church member by way of a statement or action, I want to apologize and ask for your forgiveness.

Life can be tough at times. However, with a friend like Jesus and the support of fellow Christians, life can be easier.



## *Week 2: Repentant*

*Sunday February 18*

*Psalm 32*

“Repentance is not something God demands of you before He will take you back and which He could let you off if He chose; it is simply a description of what going back is like.” --C.S. Lewis

## *February 19*

*Acts 2:38-39*

*Merelo Watt*

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all whom the Lord our God will call." God promises eternity with Him in heaven. He desperately wants a relationship with you and all you have to do is say "YES!" Yes Lord I want to be with you. Yes Lord I want a relationship with you. Yes Lord I want your forgiveness, your love, your mercy, your peace and joy. Yes Lord I want to be a better person and live for you and do what you have for me to accomplish. Yes Lord I love you and want to change my sinful ways. Yes Lord I want to repent, live for you and be with you forever!

Dear Almighty Father, help me to repent of my sins, to turn around and begin my life with You, fully with you and for you Lord. I say YES to you Lord! Amen

Other scripture: Acts 3:1

## *February 20*

*2 Chronicles 7:11-16*      *Pastor Fred Bailey*

2 Chronicles 7:11-16 v. 14 “if my people, who are called by name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”(NIV)

“Repentance” is the action of repenting, a sincere regret or remorse, of turning from evil and turning to the good. “Each person who turns to God in genuine repentance and faith will be saved.” Repentance is a basic and an all important beginning to our life of faith. We read in 2 Corinthians 7:10 that “Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation....” “Conviction of sin is one of the most uncommon things that ever happens to a person. It is the beginning of

an understanding of God” (Oswald Chambers). His love for us in Jesus Christ that brings us to the point of saying, “I have sinned.”

The result of repentance is forgiveness and cleansing expressed in healing, hope, happiness, wholeness and oneness with God. The Word says “then I (God) will ...forgive their sin and will heal their land”. Repentance opens the “door” to God’s love, mercy and grace experienced in that new life in Jesus Christ.

## *February 21*

*Psalm 116:1-5*

*David Strickland*

When the author of this psalm wrote this, it was without the experience of God's grace in the death and resurrection of Jesus. To repent is "to feel sorry for and turn from sin". I have certainly experienced this on too many occasions in my life. This is a fairly universal experience with even Paul lamenting that he continued to not do the things that he should do and continued to do the things he knew that he should not do. It would seem to demonstrate the fact that our efforts are insufficient to even come close to the standard that God has set for us. This is the reason that God's plan for our salvation was in place before we were even created. God's grace is a gift not a reward. Even though the gift of God's grace is available to all, seeking it through

repentance is a necessary element toward having us in a right relationship with God. May we continue to feel the sorrow of our sinful ways and turn away from them and toward God.

## *February 22*

*Psalm 51:1-17*

*Jeff Wilcox*

There are several things that we are guaranteed in life: We will pay taxes, we will die and due to our brokenness, we will Sin. Thank God, He offers us Grace. I often feel ashamed and guilty after I realize my shortcomings and disobedience. Have you ever felt this way? As bad as the guilt and shame feels, it also offers us the opportunity to experience God's love in a very tangible way. The sleepless nights, the stress, the shame, the terrible feelings of uselessness and low self confidence all start to melt away when we repent, turn away from our sin and ask for God's forgiveness. In Psalm 51:7b we see David's plea to God, "wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." I pray that we all repent and seek God's cleansing from sin.



## *February 23*

*Hosea 6:1-6*

*Will Griffin*

Repentance starts with the first pang of guilt followed by feeling convicted. Knowing that v6 “[God desires] steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings” plunges me in conviction only lower—how often my love of God is not steadfast! I hear again that “to obey God is better than sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22), but still my wavering love produces uncertain devotion. It is right that you and I are brought back to a Godly perspective by the consequences and weight of our sin, but, Praise Be to God, Jesus came to give mercy and steadfast love to us sinners! In view of His great love, v1a “Come, let us return to the Lord; for He has torn us, that he may heal us.”

## *February 24*

*1 John 1:5-9*

*Camille Griffin*

1 John 1:8-9 has been imprinted in my mind since childhood. I attended a church where the liturgy included the words, “If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us but if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:8-9) What was once rote memorization, repeating those same words weekly, later became very powerful repetition. Repentance is essential to our relationship with God. It is identifying our own shortcomings and then, in turn, recognizing the power of the cross. The vastness of God’s love for us is that He would send His Son to die for our sins and be resurrected so we can live eternally with him. 1 John 1 not only has eternal hope for

us in that our sins are forgiven, it also has earthly hope: when we walk in the light of repentance and forgiveness we have fellowship with each other.

*Take time today to confess your sins, either through writing them on a piece of paper or simply silent reflection, knowing that because of Christ's death and resurrection you are forgiven in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

## *Week 3: Redeemed*

*Sunday February 25*

*Psalm 130*

“God's capacity to forgive is greater than our capacity to sin; while our sin reaches far, God's grace reaches farther. It's a message revealing the radical contrast between the sinful heart of mankind and the gracious heart of mankind's Creator.” --  
Tullian Tchividjian

## *February 26*

*Galatians 4:4-7*

*Kevin Cash*

My Dad, Michael, often explained to me that I could not understand his love for me. He said that I would begin to understand when I became a Dad. I informed Dad that I understood after my oldest son, Kell, was born. Dad lovingly disagreed.

Dad passed away in 2006. I have come to realize that not only was Dad explaining that I could not understand his love for me. He was, more importantly, explaining that I could not understand His (capital H) love for me.

Of course, Dad was correct. And I still do not understand ... just as Kell, Ian, and Logan cannot understand Christine's and my love for them.

How much more must my Creator "Abba Father" (heavenly Dad) love me? He allowed His one and only Son to be sacrificed for my sins, failures, hang ups, second guessing of what He knows to be right and wrong, and (drum roll) my lack of understanding.

That is the beauty of it though. We are not asked to understand. We are asked to believe. And I do believe. We are the sons and daughters of our heavenly Dad. And He has been waiting for us.

## *February 27*

*Ephesians 1:3-8*

*Theresa Keith*

Why wasn't Jesus allowed in the jewelry store?

Because he breaks every chain!

This is just some funny humor to demonstrate a very real truth! Most of us are guilty of wrapping ourselves in binding chains of self-doubt, self-pity, or unworthiness. We allow these chains to hold us hostage, in a sense, not allowing us the necessary room we need to bloom and grow. Whatever chains you have put on yourself Jesus came to break. He wants to set you free so that you may not only walk with Him, that you may dance and sing His praises to those around you! We cannot live out the great commission, Matthew 28:18-

20, creating disciples, while being bound in our own guilt. God sent Jesus so that we may be redeemed for HIS glory. We have been set free, because God's grace is so rich. Allow yourself the joy of redemption Jesus brought for you.



## *February 28*

*Romans 8:1-11*

*Jordan Arkle*

We often make resolutions at the beginning of the year to eat better, work out, or read more books. If you're like me, you probably made it a week, maybe two weeks, before your good idea became a thing of the past. Chapter 8 begins with the ultimate resolution, God's Promise of Redemption.

Paul reveals to us in Romans 8:1-11 God's path forward for us to live a life free from condemnation. Don't let your stresses and worries define you, for these are things of the flesh. Find strength in these verses, <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For

to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

When it seems the world is against you, have faith because God is for you! He is as much for you now as he was when he knit you in the womb or set the Cosmos in motion! Live in the Spirit and become what God has always intended you to be....Redeemed!

## *March 1*

*Psalm 103:1-12*

*Ashley Wilcox*

Have you ever met someone who is famous? Often, people say they have a hard time talking to a famous person. They get nervous, and the only thing they can think to say is to tell the famous person how good they are at what they do.

Naturally, we want to tell these people how talented they are. Chances are, if they are famous for doing it they probably already know how well they do it, that's why they are famous.

When we talk to God sometimes, we are so amazed that the God of the universe listens to us and that we want to simply tell him how great we think he is. Psalm 103 does just that. As you read Psalm 103, praise the

Lord in all he does, has done, and will do for  
you.

## *March 2*

*Colossians 1:3-14*

*Pat Shipp*

Everyone is in need of redemption; our natural condition is characterized by guilt: all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3-23:24).

To be redeemed is to be forgiven. God has paid the price for our freedom and we are no longer in bondage to sin. His death was in exchange for our life. Redemption is only possible “through His blood” that is by His death (Colossians 1:14).

Grace is God’s unmerited favor. It is kindness, love, from God that we don’t deserve. There is nothing we have done nor can ever do to earn this favor. It is a gift from God.

God's grace is amazing, not only does it provide for our salvation and redemption, it enables us to live an abundant life in Christ Jesus. Jesus didn't come so we could have a perfect life but rather a perfect Savior to follow for the rest of our lives.

**GRACE:**

**God's**

**Riches**

**At**

**Christ's**

**Expense**

**Job 19:25 FOR I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER  
LIVES**

## *March 3*

### *Psalm 107:1-3*

We all have a story of redemption. For today's meditation, read Psalm 107:1-3 and consider your own story of God's redemption. As you feel led, write out your own meditation on being redeemed by Jesus. This can be in the form of your own story, a poem or a prayer.

## *Week 4: Beloved*

### *Sunday March 4*

*John 3:1-21*

“Christ is the humility of God embodied in human nature; the Eternal Love humbling itself, clothing itself in the garb of meekness and gentleness, to win and serve and save us.” --Andrew Murray



## *March 5*

*1 John 3:1-2*

*Laykin Cheshire*

“To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates ya from pretense, humbled us out of our self-righteousness, and fortified us for any difficulty life can throw at us.” -- Tim Keller

I can relate to this quote in so many ways. Over the past year I have felt Gods love in so many different ways: through my doctors, friends, family, complete strangers, and of course my wonderful church. He has shown me that if you truly put all your faith in him he will take care of you and your needs. He has humbled me in ways I didn't

know I needed to be humbled in. I truly believe that God let me have my experience with cancer so that I could be there for the people I would come to know going through similar situations. God showed me his love so I could in return show his love to others. I am a child of God and so are you! I am so glad God chose me to give his love too!

## *March 6*

*Psalm 139*

*Heather Krell*

Have you ever wished that you were different from the way that you were made ... prettier, more confident, smarter, taller, thinner, etc? In today's day and age of internet searching, idolizing Hollywood, and social media, we fall into a false trap that society has set a certain standard for how we must act or look in order to be loved and accepted. No matter how much we change ourselves trying to reach that standard, we will never achieve our goal of feeling fully loved or accepted.

Thankfully, Psalm 139 tells us that we are fully loved just the way we are because God created each one of us with a unique, specific plan. Think about that for a minute

... you are not just here by accident. God loves you so much that he took the time to create every detail about you to be part of his amazing plan.

This Lent, choose to remind yourself that you are a beloved child of God who was fearfully and wonderfully made. You are perfect just as you are and you are worthy of God's love!!

“I praise you because I am fearfully and  
wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful, I know that full  
well.” Psalm 139:14

## *March 1*

*Romans 8:28-39*

*Merrill Carter*

Beloved.

By definition: dearly loved, dearest, precious, treasured.

However, these words fall short still in defining the infinite love God has for us as found in Romans 8:28-39. Sadly, our love for each other is often so “conditional” that we simply cannot fathom a love with no limits or limiting conditions. But thankfully it exists, beyond our comprehension, in our Lord. These scripture verses are some of the most comforting to be found in that they encompass the true meaning of God’s love, with the ultimate sacrifice in Christ for us as proof. With this assurance, we have nothing to fear or doubt, no matter life’s

circumstances or hardships. Truly, “if God is for us, who can be against us” in any way? In this world of increasing fear and loneliness, isolation and subtle disconnecting, what peace to the soul to rest assured that nothing, no matter, what it may be, can separate us from the love of God.

Beloved.

## *March 8*

*Deuteronomy 7:9*

*Cheryl Snellgrove*

While reading this scripture, I'm reminded of God's faithfulness and love for us. He didn't choose to love us because of who we are, God chose us because we accept Him into our hearts and lives. He is there for all who want Him and seek Him. He made the promise to always love us. God loves all his people that are accepting of His Love and obeys His Commandments. God's love is unconditional. Even when we fail, all He expects of us is to ask for His forgiveness and mercy, therefore allowing Him back into our hearts again. We all make mistakes and sometimes detour off the path that He would have us take, but God is always there to receive us because he promised that He would be faithful to all of us, always. His

love and faithfulness can be counted on  
forever.



## *March 9*

*1 Peter 2:4-10*

*Devon Lochner*

Recall yourself being a child in primary school, the dreaded gym class. At least for me, I dreaded it. Always picked last for kickball, or even sat out for other activities. It makes you feel sad, or even unworthy of the task at hand. Maybe even a little unloved. However, growing older and discovering the many things that God calls you do for him it all of the sudden makes you feel like the gym class all-star. Makes you feel strong, cared for, and loved by God. That's why I think that it's important as we do his work, we surround others with that same amount of love that he gives to us every day. We are beloved by God because we are children of God; he has a specific task for all of us and picks you first. That to me is the greatest love you can feel,

and even if you aren't on the best team for  
dodge ball your still on the best team above  
all.

## *March 10*

*John 3:16-17*

*Brother Ken Jackson*

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

In 1968, Rev. Fred Shelnuttt was my pastor at Smyrna UMC in Smyrna, Georgia. It was through his preaching and influence in my life that I recall hearing for the first time that God was a loving father. During that same time, I heard the witness of a missionary wife, Virginia Law, who shared about her husband Burleigh having given his life in the Congo for the cause of Christ. These two people lived out the example of those who not only told me about God, Christ, and eternal life, but they also demonstrated it through their actions of

sharing the gospel message to a 10-year old boy whose heart had been prepared for this “good news”. Not only in my preparation for preaching, but in all my relationships, this verse serves as the catalyst for why I do what I do and how I do it. It is the gospel message in twenty-six words. It is the reason for the hope within me.

*Prayer: Thank you God, for people who have been a part of my journey of faith. May my words and life serve as an encouragement to others and glorify you. Amen.*

# *Week 5: Called to Love*

## *Sunday March 11*

*Matthew 5:43-45a*

“Love pursues blindly, unflinchingly, and without end. “ –Bob Goff

## *March 12*

*1 John 4:7-21*

*Valerie Everist*

Each February it seems that LOVE is the common theme all around us. The stores begin to sell Valentine gifts and cards so that couples, parents, and friends can show their “love” to one another by exchanging cards, gifts, flowers, and chocolates. During this time, some people feel lonely and depressed because the Valentine holiday makes them feel even lonelier, more single, and more lost than they ever did before. Thankfully as Christians we can face each day with a different attitude since we are able to experience the unselfish, perfect love of Jesus Christ in our lives. We can concentrate on the One who loves us more than anyone and who was sent to die on a cross so that we may have eternal life. We can also experience a deeper love than any

Valentine card or gift could ever express. It is also during this time that we should focus on how to love others the way that Jesus loves us since it is our personal responsibility as Christians. Loving others in this way is a witness that you are born of God and that you know God. It is the best gift we can give.

## *March 13*

*Colossians 3:12-14*

*Maleah Watt*

Love. Such a powerful word yet sometimes its' true meaning gets drowned by everyday life and today's society. What does it truly mean to love? Like all unanswered questions, we look to the bible for answers. Love, as shown through the scripture, means to show **genuine** compassion, **true** kindness, **complete** humility, and **endearing** gentleness. And yes our favorite, patience. To love someone in a godly way is to look at their mistakes and failures and then look at your own and realize you are not called to judge or call out the world for its inevitable flaws. No. You are called to love and cherish the people and bring them closer and closer to **Christ**.



*Dear All Loving Father,*

*Teach me to genuinely love, help me forgive those who have wronged me, and help me have patience for those I cannot understand. You have called me to love, and through you, I know how. Amen.*

## *March 14*

*Matthew 22:34-40*

*Jan Gagner*

We are called to love. When we love it's an amazing feeling. God love for us is so huge and all he asks is that we love him back with all our heart, soul and mind. With all our blessing, the least we can do is love him back. Love God like this and see what happens. I know when I take time to do as he asks and pray to him I have such peace.

## *March 15*

*Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*

*Dave Everist*

Last year, my wife and I felt like we were being called by God to serve in a way that we had not served before. We weren't sure what the tugging in our hearts was about, so we prayed and asked God to show us specifically what he wanted us to do. At the same time, we were invited to participate in the Global Impact Celebration as a representative of the local ministry that I was working with. During the Global Impact week, we felt that God was calling us to be involved in foreign missions, which sounded very exciting to us. We felt the timing was right since my wife would be retiring in the spring. We kept praying that God would guide us where He wanted us to serve. Ironically, a few months later, God answered our prayers by calling in a

completely different direction – full-time caretakers of my wife’s parents. During this season we have seen that not only have we been called to serve in our own home, we have been called to love....to love unselfishly, patiently, and fully. Through this experience we are learning to rely on God for wisdom, patience, and strength.

## *March 16*

*John 15:1-17*

*Kimmi Lochner*

Two years ago my brother and his wife traveled all the way to China to adopt my sweet nephew, Oak. For the first year and a half of his life Oak had laid in a crib with minimal interaction day in and day out. No one was there to pick him up when he cried or to play with and nurture him. I have been looking back at all of the picture and videos of when they first met him how reserved and closed off he was. He wouldn't let you really touch him, he would not reach out for you, he basically did not react to you. Then my mind flashes forward to who Oak is now. Because he is surrounded by such a loving family he now reflects that love. He is constantly full of laughter and joy, and wants to love on anyone he is around.

This is true of us as Christians as well.  
When we truly abide in God's love we  
reflect it. When we feel loved by the father  
we are able to freely share that love with  
others as we are called to.

## *March 17*

### *Ephesians 4:1-16*

For today's meditation, you are encouraged to read these verses and consider specific people that God is calling you to love. Take time to pray, asking God specific ways that you can love other, then write those things down.

## *Week 6: Called to Serve*

*Sunday, March 18*

“We become neighbors when we are willing to cross the road for one another. (...) There is a lot of road crossing to do. We are all very busy in our own circles. We have our own people to go to and our own affairs to take care of. But if we could cross the road once in a while and pay attention to what is happening on the other side, we might indeed become neighbors.”

--Henri Nouwen



## *March 19*

*Micah 6:6-8*

*Barbara Hatch*

This verse provokes the thought, what else can I do, or need to do in service to God. Do I need to read my bible more? Do I need to pray more? Do I need to serve my church more? While, all these things are what God wants me to do, I can get caught up in the act of each one and miss what he desires of me. I believe that we all can experience this from time to time.

We can get so caught up in the act of being a good Christian and miss out on the simplicity of serving as one of God's children. It's so easy to become haughty in our actions and miss out on the very opportunities before us. In this verse God is simply saying that if we act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with him we will be

striving to give him what he requires of us. People want to be treated justly and not to be mistreated. Does not God treat us justly and not mistreat us?

People want to be loved and shown mercy, especially when they don't feel very loveable. Does not our God love us and accept us? Does he not show us mercy all the time?

People want to be treated humbly. Does not God treat us humbly?

So, what does God require of me? He requires me to do what is just, love mercy and kindness and to walk humbly with him. When I demonstrate these actions, I am sharing the exact love that he shows me each and every day and perhaps in a small

way, thank him each time for sending his precious son, Jesus Christ.

## *March 20*

*Isaiah 61:1-3*

*Lindsey Nimmons*

God calls us to be his hands and feet to serve him. He asks all who proclaim to be followers of him to spread the good news of spiritual healing, comfort those who grieve, be in constant help of those in need, offer hope to those who have lost it, and set free those who are in bondage of sin. If we do all of these things in his name, He will be glorified through us.

## *March 21*

*2 Timothy 1:6-10*

*Gracie Keith*

Ring Ring Ring –hello?

If Jesus called you serve would you answer?

The overwhelming excitement from a child whom you just helped conquer a math problem, the smile the elderly woman gives you when you offer to help her carry her groceries, or even the genuine hug you give to someone who is grieving. These are why we are called to serve. God sent his ONLY son to come down to earth to help us –it's only fair in return we serve others. God calls you to a service far beyond anything you could ever imagine. You were put on Earth to make a contribution, not for yourself satisfaction, but for others that may see Christ through you, and seek to know more. Be bold, and answer the call.

## *March 22*

*Philippians 2:1-11*

*Toni Wilkerson*

*Verse 3: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit."*

Reading Philippians 2:1-11 reminds me of the iconic slogan from the '90's, "W.W.J.D". Do you remember the bracelets, coffee cups, signs, etc. that had this famous abbreviation on them? What would Jesus do? Ironically, the people who came up with the slogan never saw a penny of the millions of dollars companies across the globe have made from it.

Charles Sheldon, a minister from Topeka, Kansas started a sermon series in 1886. He told entertaining stories of people finding themselves in moral dilemmas. To make it

more interesting, he would end each story as a cliffhanger to encourage the audience to come back the next Sunday. These sermons became very popular and were soon published in a book. The book became one of the top 50 best-selling books of all time. He earned very little from this because of a copyright error. He didn't seem to care as long as the message was being spread and he hoped more people would spend time contemplating Jesus because of it.

How did it become a huge market of WWJD bracelets and other products in the 1990's? A youth director, Janie Tinklenberg of Holland, Michigan read Sheldon's book. She wanted her students to keep the slogan in their minds. She abbreviated it so that it would fit on bracelets and it prompted

others to ask what it meant. She had stumbled on a goldmine. She felt it was getting out of hand after seeing a \$400 necklace with W.W.J.D on it and a board game was created. To try and take control of it and use the money to start a non-profit youth ministry, she applied for the trademark. She was told she waited too late similar to the problem that Sheldon had with the copyright of his book. The irony here is that the companies made millions on a slogan that they never followed.

*Prayer: Dear Father, Help us be more like Jesus. Help us to be humble and do everything to Your glory. Help us to demonstrate Jesus's incredible love to each other. Amen.*



## *March 23*

*Romans 12:9-13*

*Pam Frederick*

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them.

To me this scripture could be called the "Mary Talley" passage. We recently celebrated the life of Mary. She was everything in the passage, and more. She loved everyone, really loved them. We should all strive to follow her example. Lazy? Not a chance. Be zealous, really. Mary was always doing something for somebody. *Serve the Lord enthusiastically?* Yep, that was her too. *When God's people are in need, be ready to help them.* She had that covered as well. Mary was a dedicated volunteer at the AICC, giving a smile and whatever assistance she could to everyone that walked in the door. *Be patient and*

*keep on praying.* Mary was our "prayer chain" coordinator for many years. Not only did she notify every one of prayer needs, she followed up on them personally. Many times she would ask me weeks later about a prayer concern I had placed on the prayer chain. This is a model for us -- *Truly love others, work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically, be patient and keep on praying.* Thank you, Mary, for your servant's heart and an example for us to follow.

## *March 24*

### *Titus 2*

For today's meditation, the last before Holy Week, choose a verse from Titus 2 and write it out, considering what it means to "do good for the sake of the Gospel." Take time to consider specific ways God is calling you to serve.

## *Holy Week*

### *March 25: Palm Sunday*

Mark 11:1–11; Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29

### *March 26*

Lamentations 1:1-12; John 12:1-11

### *March 27*

Lamentations 1:17-22; John 12:20-36

### *March 28*

Lamentations 2:1-9; John 13:21-32

### *March 29: Holy Thursday*

Lamentations 2:10-18; John 13:1–17, 31b-35

### *March 30: Good Friday*

Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-33; John 18:1-19:42

### *March 31: Holy Saturday*

Lamentations 3:37-58; Romans 8:1-11

### *Easter Sunday: Resurrection*

I Corinthians 15:1-11; John 20:1-18