



# LENT 2020

**LINC**<sup>TM</sup>

Adapted with thanks and acknowledgment to Pastor Matt Behrens,  
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In Lent we give ourselves encouragement and space to feel discontent. This is a season of longing where we don't immediately fill our cravings with whatever is close at hand. We allow ourselves to yearn for something better, and we remind ourselves what Jesus has done to offer something better....His love.

Traditionally, the season of Lent is a 40 day observance preceding Easter. The 40 days match the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness, fasting and being tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13).

This is the true God who became a man. He hungered as he went without food. He felt isolation as he spent time away from others. And he was tempted to take shortcuts - to cut corners, or make his work a little less taxing. He was tempted to abdicate his role as Savior. Yet, He willingly shared His love and gave His life for you... for me...for all.

During Lent we recognize our own "wilderness." We hunger for the Bread of Life. We feel isolated because of the separation sin has imposed between Creator and creation. And we are tempted to take shortcuts, to make things "easier" on ourselves. We are tempted to abdicate our identity as heirs of the King of heaven and earth. Each day, we look to the cross and see that we are indeed loved....and empowered to share His love.

You are invited to read and reflect on the events of Holy Week as recorded in all four gospels. For each day this guide includes a **Bible reading, a question for reflection, and a prayer focus.** You could use this for individual prayer time, family devotions, or small group conversations.

This booklet will guide us through the next several weeks. Sundays are not part of the 40 days of Lent. Every Sunday is a celebration of Easter and even in this overcast season the bright light of resurrection breaks through the clouds every Sunday. Celebrate that as you gather with friends in worship.

## WEEK ONE

### February 26 // Day 1

READ: Matthew 21:1-11

REFLECT: Verses 6-11 mention several groups of people who respond in different ways to Jesus. Which group do you relate with?

PRAY: Pray that Jesus would reveal himself in your life today in a way that parallels verse 5.

### February 27 // Day 2

READ: John 12:1-11

REFLECT: Mary honored Jesus and everyone in the house benefitted from it. Her gift to Jesus made the entire house smell wonderful. Who models this kind of faith for you?

PRAY: Pray that we have opportunity to be around people like Mary, and if possible, our faith would bless others as Mary's faith did.

### February 28 // Day 3

READ: John 12:12-19

REFLECT: The crowd in verse 17 is telling the story of what they experienced in their own lives - they saw Lazarus raised from the dead. You may not have seen a resurrection, but what personal story of God's grace are you able to share?

Share your story with a friend or family member.

PRAY: Pray that God opens our eyes to see the works of his grace in and around your life.

## February 29 // Day 4

READ: Mark 11:12-26

REFLECT: How do you pray? Where did you learn to pray like that? Who do you continue to learn from?

PRAY: Pray that God would continue teaching us to pray.

## March 1 // REST DAY

Sunday!

Take time to relax on this Sabbath. The readings will continue tomorrow.

## WEEK TWO

### March 2 // Day 5

READ: Matthew 21:23-32

REFLECT: Jesus spoke with an authority that called people to change. Some people resisted his authority and would not change. Others were changed by him. How is the authority of Jesus changing you?

PRAY: Pray that we would respond to the authority of Jesus and allow our lives to be changed.

### March 3 // Day 6

READ: Mark 12:1-12

REFLECT: The buzzword to describe the attitude of these tenants is "entitlement." Where do you need to keep entitlement in check personally? Work? Family? Your neighborhood? Church?

PRAY: Pray that we grow in humility and service before God and others.

### March 4 // Day 7

READ: Matthew 22:1-14

REFLECT: In verse 8 we're told the original group invited was not worthy. Verses 9-10 let us know who gets to come to the wedding. Given who attends the wedding, what does it mean to be worthy in this story?

PRAY: Pray that we never get too busy to miss God's party.

## March 5 // Day 8

READ: Luke 20:9-26

REFLECT: With his words in verse 25 Jesus takes an either/or proposition and turns it inside out. What do we learn about living as followers of Jesus in a world that wants us to leave Jesus behind?

PRAY: Pray that God grants us wisdom to live our faith boldly even when enemies would create conflict for us.

## March 6 // Day 9

READ: Luke 20:27-40

REFLECT: What is the good news in verse 38?

PRAY: Thank God for the life we have in him. Pray that more people would know him as God and join this life.

## March 7 // Day 10

READ: Matthew 22:34-46

REFLECT: When you think of loving with your heart, soul and mind, does any one of those seem more natural for you?

What could it mean to apply love to your neighbor with your heart, soul and mind?

PRAY: Pray that God teaches us to love better.

## March 8 // REST DAY

Sunday!

Take a break! After all, Jesus has done all that's necessary. Rest in that truth as you look forward to the rest we find in Easter.

## WEEK THREE

### March 9 // Day 11

READ: Matthew 23:1-39

REFLECT: Woe is not a warning or a curse. It's a lament. Jesus is not reprimanding as much as he is longing for people to change. Replace "Jerusalem" with your own name in verse 37 and read it again. How do you respond?

PRAY: Pray to Jesus in response to his longing for you.

### March 10 // Day 12

READ: Mark 12:41-44

REFLECT: This woman gave from her poverty. She could have held back telling herself her gift was good enough anyway, but she gave from her poverty. When have you held back because you thought what you had to offer wasn't good enough? What does it look like for you to give from your poverty?

PRAY: Pray that God shapes a heart of generosity within you.

### March 11 // Day 13

READ: Mark 13:1-13

REFLECT: Verse 13 provides a mixture of caution and confidence. What happens when we lose either of these and go overboard with the other?

PRAY: Pray that God sends his Spirit to guide us in the tension of caution and confidence.

## **March 12 // Day 14**

READ: Matthew 24:15-35

REFLECT: One of the great sola statements of the Reformation was sola Christus or Christ alone. How does today's reading encourage us toward a faith grounded in Christ alone?

PRAY: Pray that God strengthens our sola Christus faith.

## **March 13 // Day 15**

READ: Matthew 24:36-51

REFLECT: The question in verse 45 is not meant to go unanswered. Who are the faithful servants God has provided to care for your faith? Have you had opportunity to care for others?

PRAY: Pray for those servants who care for us in faith. Pray that God provides all we need to care for others.

## **March 14 // Day 16**

READ: Matthew 25:1-13

REFLECT: One possibility is that the oil is faith. In that context, how are we made ready like the wise virgins?

PRAY: Thank God for the faith he's given you, and pray that more of our friends, neighbors and family would have a faith that makes them ready to enter the marriage feast with Jesus.

## **March 15 // REST DAY**

Sunday!

How will you celebrate the life you have in Jesus today? Who will you share the love with?

## WEEK FOUR

### March 16 // Day 17

READ: Matthew 25:14-30

REFLECT: If the previous parable was about being prepared, this one is definitely about being involved. How is God calling you to be involved in his work of caring for people and sharing his love? (hint: If the question is hard to answer substitute “For whom” in place of “How.”)

PRAY: Pray that God makes clear how he’s calling us to be involved in his work.

### March 17 // Day 18

READ: Matthew 25:31-46

REFLECT: By faith in Jesus you’ve already done the good things of the people on the King’s right. His work is credited as your own. There’s no chance you haven’t done “enough.” How does that make you feel? How does that free you to serve?

PRAY: Pray thanks for what Jesus has done, and guidance for all that we do in care for others.

### March 18 // Day 19

READ: John 12:20-50

REFLECT: Verses 46-47 reveal the motive Jesus has for all he does. Where do our churches need more of his motives and less of our own? What might your role be in making that happen?

PRAY: Pray that Jesus’s motive of salvation for all would be our own.

## March 19 // Day 20

READ: Mark 14:12-26

REFLECT: On several occasions in the Old Testament God made covenants with his people. A covenant is like a contract or agreement, but God's covenants were often one-sided and functioned more like promises. Jesus here says "This is my blood of the covenant..." What does that mean to you?

PRAY: Which promises of God are you most thankful for today. Pray and thank God for these.

## March 20 // Day 21

READ: John 13:1-17

REFLECT: Look at the words of Jesus in verse 10. What is the connection to baptism? What is the connection to a life of ongoing confession?

PRAY: Pray that Jesus would once again make us clean.

## March 21 // Day 22

READ: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

REFLECT: The apostle Paul was not present when Jesus spoke these words, yet he says he received them from Jesus. Why was it important for Paul to receive this insight from Jesus?

PRAY: Pray that we receive well the teachings about Jesus that have been passed on to us.

## March 22 // REST DAY

Sunday!

God has done all for you. Rest today knowing there's nothing required of you.

## WEEK FIVE

### March 23 // Day 23

READ: John 13:18-38

REFLECT: Jesus commands us to love one another as he has loved us. How does that look?

PRAY: Ask Jesus to teach us to love, and thank him for his love.

### March 24 // Day 24

READ: Luke 22:24-38

REFLECT: What did service look like in the life of Jesus? How can you grow in service today?

PRAY: Pray that our hearts are shaped by the servant heart of Jesus.

### March 25 // Day 25

READ: Matthew 26:31-35

REFLECT: When have you been overconfident, and what were the results?

PRAY: Pray that we navigate the tensions of confidence and caution in following Jesus.

### March 26 // Day 26

READ: John 14:1-31

REFLECT: What does Jesus promise concerning the Holy Spirit? What hope does this give to you?

PRAY: Pray for the Holy Spirit's activity in and around our lives to be evident.

## March 27 // Day 27

READ: John 15:1 - 16:4

REFLECT: As you consider the vine dressing metaphor, do you see yourself in a season of pruning or fruit-bearing currently? How are both of these signs of God's love?

PRAY: Pray that our lives would bear fruit by the cultivation of Jesus.

## March 28 // Day 28

READ: John 16:5-33

REFLECT: Jesus makes a strong statement to close this section. How are the truth of his words hard to see? What tells you Jesus has overcome the world?

PRAY: Pray that we hold to what is true even when it's hard to see.

## March 29 // REST DAY

Sunday!

Rest in knowing God's love for you is not based on anything you do today.

## WEEK SIX

### **March 30 // Day 29**

READ: John 17:1-26

REFLECT: In verse 20 Jesus begins a prayer for you. What words of his prayer describe your identity and your mission?

PRAY: Pray along with Jesus for the things he's prayed for you.

### **March 31 // Day 30**

READ: Matthew 26:36-56

REFLECT: With what words does Jesus address Judas? Where do you sense Jesus may be responding in similar manner to people or the culture around you?

PRAY: Pray that we learn to accept answers to our prayers even when we don't like them.

### **April 1 // Day 31**

READ: John 18:1-18

REFLECT: Which of the people mentioned can you most relate to? (Peter? The soldiers? Caiaphas? The servant girl? The disciples?)

PRAY: Pray that Jesus helps us see ourselves in him.

### **April 2 // Day 32**

READ: Mark 14:32-72

REFLECT: What emotions, if any, are stirred as you read this section? What part do emotions play in healthy relationships?

PRAY: Pray that the emotions we have as created beings would serve the relationship we've been given with our Creator.

## April 3 // Day 33

READ: Luke 22:39-62

REFLECT: Peter was struck by guilt. When have you been struck by feelings of guilt? How do we respond to these feelings as followers of Jesus? (Look at 1 John 1:9 if you're uncertain.)

PRAY: Confess in prayer your need for forgiveness.

## April 4 // Day 34

READ: John 18:19-40

REFLECT How many questions does Pilate ask? What does he assume about Jesus, and how does that limit what he asks and learns?

PRAY: Pray that our assumptions and those of our neighbors would be removed so that we can see Jesus clearly.

## April 5 // REST DAY

Palm Sunday!

There is nothing you need to do. Jesus has done it all.

## April 6 // Day 35

READ: John 19:1-16

REFLECT: Pilate thought he knew what Jesus wanted and assumed Jesus needed his help. What does it look like when we assume Jesus needs our help?

PRAY: Pray that we allow Jesus to lead even when we don't understand what's happening.

## April 7 // Day 36

READ: Matthew 27:27-44

REFLECT: There were many skeptics taunting Jesus while he was on the cross. Which skeptical taunts are difficult to hear from our culture?

PRAY: Pray for confidence and kindness for those who face taunts and questions in response to their faith.

## April 8 // Day 37

READ: Luke 23:26-49

REFLECT: As you read about the two criminals crucified with Jesus, what do you learn?

PRAY: Pray the words of the second criminal in verse 42.

## **April 9 // Day 38 // MAUNDY THURSDAY**

READ: John 19:16-27

REFLECT: How do you live as family with those who share your faith?

PRAY: Pray that we grow in understanding what it means to be family in Christ, and grow in living this out.

## **April 10 // Day 39 // GOOD FRIDAY**

READ: John 19:28-42

REFLECT: Joseph and Nicodemus made time to care for the body of Jesus as a part of their grieving. How have you made time for grieving when a loved one has died?

PRAY: Pray that we allow ourselves time for sorrow even as we anticipate the joy of resurrection.

## **April 11 // Day 40 // HOLY SATURDAY**

READ: John 20:1-31

REFLECT: Mary at first assumes there has been no resurrection. Thomas refuses to believe in a resurrection. Who do you know that might be in a similar place? What would it be like for Jesus to reveal himself to them?

PRAY: Pray for our friends and neighbors to believe in Jesus.

## **April 12 // EASTER**

Easter Sunday!

He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

LINC empowers local leaders to impact their communities through the Gospel. Working together isn't just about giving a leader the practical resources they need to plant a church, start a coffee ministry, finish their theological training. It means being there for each other in prayer, in coaching, in spiritual formation.

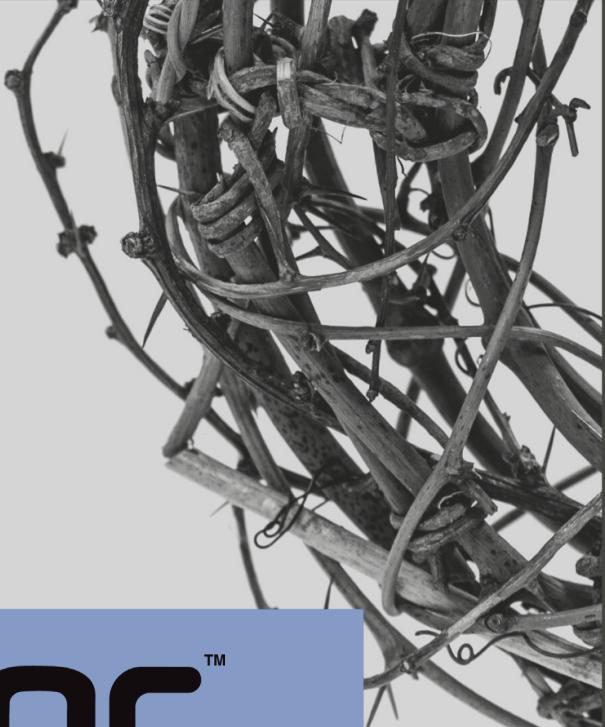
From City Director down the pipeline to a potential ministry leader, we invest in each other, we share the love of Christ and each other's burdens, so that we might all be stronger in ministry - together.

The work we do across all LINC cities is driven by the love shown to each of us from the Father through the Son. It's from that abundance we pour out and into our city. Through intentional discipleship, we are seeing God do amazing things here. The Kingdom of God is advancing!



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