

LENTEN DEVOTION – WEEK 4

MARCH 31 – APRIL 6, 2019

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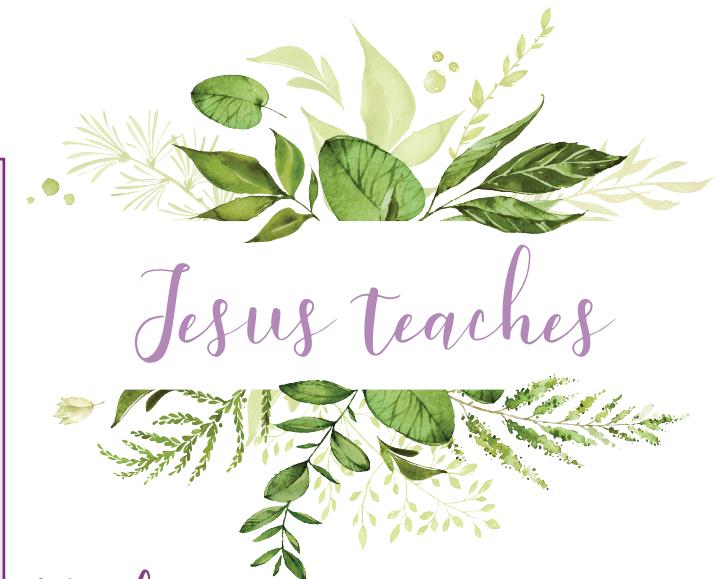
Sunday | LUKE 4:14-15

Jesus teaches throughout Luke's Gospel. He teaches in formal settings like synagogues. He teaches outdoors to crowds gathered eager to hear his words. He teaches with stories, telling parables that invite listeners to reach their own – often surprising, yet inevitable – conclusion. He teaches by asking questions. He most certainly teaches by example, modeling for his followers how they are to be in the world. He reminds his followers that even after he no longer walks the earth, the Spirit will remind them of all that he taught them. Friends and foe alike refer to him as teacher, rabbi.

This week we focus on Jesus, the teacher, our teacher. We remember, like those first disciples, that Jesus continues to teach and that the Spirit tutors us. We are not self-taught, but mentored, guided, instructed and given tools to help us hone our discipleship. While a YouTube video might teach us how to change a tire or Khan Academy might help us master calculus, learning the will and ways of God, growing in Christian maturity and deepening our discipleship requires face-to-face time with Jesus, his Word and members of his Body.

Who were (or are) your favorite teachers? What made them so? I suspect their passion for their subject engaged you. I imagine their patience allowed you to persist when the material got challenging. I trust that they valued you, thought you had something worth sharing or invited you to risk trying a new thing. Good teachers push us just enough, praise us honestly, critique us with care and call forth the best of us. They never let us stop learning. Jesus, the master teacher, never stops teaching and calls us to never stop learning how to follow him a little more closely each day.

Master teacher, your patience astounds us. We are humbled and shocked by your willingness to meet us where we are, challenge us with care, honor our slightest progress and believe in our ability to serve you in ways that make a difference. Make of us eager students, unafraid to ask questions, try new things, make mistakes and always, always keep learning. Amen.



Jesus teaches

Monday | LUKE 4:31-32

Jesus teaches in synagogues wherever he goes, meeting with those gathered for worship on the sabbath. The folks of Capernaum are astounded at this teaching, as he teaches with authority. What, do you imagine, did he teach? What is Jesus teaching you when you gather week to week? Are you astounded at what he has to say and the way he says it?

Teacher, you meet us when we gather, coming to us with the authority of God, ready to teach us all we need to know in order to have life abundant. Quiet in us any voice but yours. Grant us the ears to hear and the hearts to heed your life-giving teachings. Channel our astonishment into attitudes and actions that reflect our knowledge of you. Amen.

Tuesday | LUKE 6:46-49

Jesus uses every method to teach those he encounters, giving us every opportunity to understand. He makes sure we know that his lessons require a real-life response, not only intellectual assent. What teachings of Jesus do you find the most difficult to put into practice? Today, make a tangible effort to enact one of Jesus' instructions.

You teach us, Lord, to dig deep and make your teachings the unshakable foundation of our lives. Often, we fail to do the work needed to make for a strong structure of faith. We sincerely desire to not just listen, but to put into practice your commandments. Each day, we seek to make you the cornerstone of all we do and say and, indeed, who we are. Amen.



Jesus teaches

Wednesday | LUKE 9:1-6

Jesus teaches us in order that we might go out and share with others the Good News of God. He tells us to do as he does, sending us out with explicit instructions: Pack light and rely on the hospitality of others. Today, take stock of all that you carry around, literally and metaphorically. What baggage do you need to leave behind in order to better share the Good News with others?

Lord Jesus, our culture tells us relentlessly that we need more. Our closets overflow with unneeded things even as our spirits bend under the weight of grudges, guilt and worry. We are too heavy laden to travel far or well. Today we let go of some of what holds us back from proclaiming your Good News to the world. Amen.

Thursday | LUKE 9:21-26

Jesus does not tell us only that which we want to hear. He plainly teaches the most difficult lesson of all: that he will suffer and die. He also says clearly that he will rise again on the third day. The joy of resurrection comes only after the pain of crucifixion. Pray today for all of those in the midst of pain and suffering. Be willing to hear and speak hard truth that leads to new life.

Jesus, you do not spare us the painful truth that suffering and death inevitably come to all, even the Son of Man. You also clearly teach that God works through horrendous events, even your crucifixion. May our knowledge of this gospel truth grant us hope and the courage to lose our lives for your sake in the confidence that in so doing we will be saved. Amen.

Friday | LUKE 10:25-37

Luke's Gospel is awash in questions. Jesus knows that asking the right question elicits the right answer, surprising as that answer may be to us. Notice the questions in this parable. Write down questions you have for Jesus. Imagine what questions Jesus has for you. How do you respond?

Lord Jesus, you do not force us to do your will. You invite us to come to the right answers through the right questions, through patience, by meeting us where we are and believing we are teachable, transformable, worth your time and care. Thank you for taking the time to hear our questions, tell us stories, call forth holy answers that will change the course of our lives for good. Amen.

Saturday | LUKE 12:1-11

Good teachers call us out and keep us accountable, not to shame or embarrass, but to coax and encourage us to be better than we imagine we are capable of being. Jesus speaks a hard word in these verses, one that we, too, must hear. Where are we practicing hypocrisy, saying one thing and doing another?

Jesus, we do not want to admit the many ways we say one thing on Sunday and do another on Monday through Friday. We praise your name in worship, confess your lordship in our lives publicly, but fail to practice love for one another or care for the least of those among us. We recognize our hypocrisy and seek to live with integrity, with your help. Amen.