



*This is Your Life:*

*A Lenten Journey*

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## *This is Your Life: A Lenten Journey*

This Lenten journey, which I have titled, “This is your Life”, is an opportunity for us to be intentionally and prayerfully thoughtful about who we are and how we became the person we are today. The title is taken from the TV show that aired its last episode before I was ten years old. I remember the show and how enjoyable it was to watch a celebrity revisit their past. It always made a star seem more human to know more about their past and the people and experiences that shaped them. This version will not include visits from people in your past, however. Instead, we will do the work of visiting ourselves, so to speak, over the next six weeks.

I was also put in mind of the movie *Forrest Gump*, which starts and ends with a floating white feather, carried here and there on the breeze. While fictional, that movie captures a lifetime through a series of events, many of them which seem insignificant or random at the time. The irony of the film, and perhaps our lives, is that when viewed in the rear-view mirror, we can see amazing things that we missed in the moment. We can also see how things connect through our lives. It may feel like our own life is a series of small unrelated events as we’ve been blown about through life, and yet I suspect this Lenten experience will prove otherwise.

As we take this journey we start by remembering our childhood and several aspects of those years. After that first week we will look at other features of our lives, but not necessarily in chronological order. We’ll jump around our memories a bit to look at areas of our life such as our relationships, our vocation and work, our role as servant and steward, what we’ve learned through the School of Hard Knocks, and the legacy we hope to leave behind when we die. We’ll also be on the lookout for how and where God fits into our story. Each day will have a scripture passage, a question or questions for reflection, and a prayer prompt based on that week’s theme. Keeping notes in this booklet might prove helpful, it’s not required.

We will also gather weekly to explore each of the themes a bit, through guided conversation and sharing stories. No one will be asked to share something they are uncomfortable sharing. Each week the session will cover the chapter of the journey we just spent the week reflecting on.

I hope that most of the things we recall from our past are positive, or at least neutral, as in the case of things that might have been difficult but are no longer challenging. I am aware, however, that when we reach back in time, we can also uncover things that are still painful and possibly unresolved. If at any time you find yourself feeling intense emotion that you aren’t able to manage readily, please reach out to someone on our clergy team or to a trusted counselor that you may already have a relationship with. This is not intended to be a painful process; I pray it will be helpful and joyful by the time we are through.

Remembering where we’ve been helps us know where we’re going. It also helps us find meaning and purpose for who we are today and what God calls us to do. No matter how



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many years of formal education we've had we are all students, learning and growing as we go through life, sometimes despite our best attempts not to do so! It's also true that we have not traveled this road alone. Our life has been filled with people from our first hours until now. Perhaps most importantly, God has been along on the journey from the start, too. The start is the natural place for any journey to begin, so it's to our own beginning that we turn now.

Thank you for taking this journey with me.

Tom+

Lent, 2020





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Prayer Prompt: Ask God to give you courage for the things you are afraid of now.

Friday:

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. *John 12:3*

Are there any smells that take you back to your childhood? What are they, and where do they take you in your mind?

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Thank God for a moment you remember.



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Prayer Prompt: Pray for teachers today who are doing the work of teaching today's children.

Monday:

For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. *1 Corinthians 13: 9-11*

As a child, did you have a sense of what you wanted to be when you grew up, or what you wanted your life to be like? What was it you envisioned?

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Prayer Prompt: Thank God for the ability to dream and pursue those dreams.

Tuesday:

But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come



















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Prayer Prompt: Give thanks for chores that taught you responsibility, and ask forgiveness for times you gave your parents a hard time or grieved your first boss.

Friday:

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. *Exodus 20:8-11*

Sabbath-keeping is largely gone from our culture. Over the course of your life, what do you remember about Sundays and days off? Did you always balance work and time off the way you learned from earlier generations? How do you balance it now?

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Prayer Prompt: Give thanks for rest and ask God's help for keeping sabbath.













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What have been the hardest moments in your life to live through? Why were they hard? How did they shape you? As you remember them, is there anything you can give thanks for?

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Prayer Prompt: Ask God to help you lay down burdens you may have been carrying for a long time.

### Lent 4 - Sunday:

Jesus said to Martha, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" *John 11:23-26*

Losing loved ones is probably the hardest thing we have to deal with in life. What deaths have been the hardest for you?

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# SERVICE AND STEWARDSHIP

**Wednesday:**

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. *1 Peter 4:10-11*

When did you first learn about serving others and giving back without expectation of reward?

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Prayer Prompt: Give thanks for those who taught you generosity and selflessness.

**Thursday:**

“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. *Matthew 6:2-4*

When did you first learn about financial stewardship as a spiritual practice? Giving back to church and/or giving to efforts that help others? Who taught you?



























