

Actions of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke: Costly Love

Part Two: January 2023

Love is willing the good of the other. Love is costly when the lover takes great risks for the beloved. Jesus models this “costly love” over and over in the gospels. He invites us as married couples to risk all for him and for each other. This month we offer meditations on four examples of costly love: the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, the blind man, Zacchaeus in Jericho,¹ and Jesus on the cross. We will conclude these meditations with the surprise encounter of the disciples with the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

First, just as in traditional cultures a bride on her wedding night lets her hair down and allows it to be seen by her husband for the first time, the sinful woman touches Jesus with her hair and tears, causing great scandal at the dinner at Simon’s house. How does Jesus respond to such an outpouring of love and affection? How does he turn the anger of the host onto himself? We can imagine her thoughts: “He is going to get hurt—for me—and he doesn’t even know my name!”

Next we will encounter a series of actions culminating in the costliest act of love of all: Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus is traveling from Galilee on his way to Jerusalem. It was normal to travel thorough the town of Jericho; it would also not be unusual to stop there for the night before passing on to Jerusalem. On either side of Jericho, Jesus encounters two individuals in very different states of life. One is a blind man who lives not only on the outskirts of town, but on the outskirts of society. He is the nameless oppressed who is personally loved and healed by Jesus. The other is the oppressor, the hated chief tax collector. Of all the people in that town, Zacchaeus is the only one whose name we know. He too is encountered by Jesus. He is loved and healed as well. Both oppressed and oppressor experience a love that costs Jesus dearly. In both cases he takes the anger of the crowd upon himself and transforms the lives of these two individuals. Next, we see Jesus on the cross: the ultimate gift of love. There are two thieves crucified with him, and we see his compassion and love for them even now, at the moment of his greatest suffering.

Finally, we see two dispirited disciples on the road to Emmaus. It has been suggested that they are a married couple, returning home after the tumultuous events of that Passover weekend. Their hopes for a messiah seem to have been dashed, but they recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread as they eat the first meal on the first day of the New Creation. They will later recount as well how their hearts were burning when Jesus opened the Scripture for them.

¹ I am indebted to Kenneth E. Bailey for his insights. Fuller treatment of the woman at Simon’s house, the blind man, and Zacchaeus can be found in *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2008.



Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Luke 7:36–48, 50

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment.³⁸ She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner."⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "Speak."⁴¹ "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.⁴² When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?"⁴³ Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet.⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, [it is evident that] her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."⁴⁸ Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Meditation

Jesus was asked to come to Simon's house, but there was no welcome, no "Glad you are here; let me take your coat." It was as if he came to one of our houses, and we didn't even turn off the TV. There was no respect and there were none of the common courtesies that were required by the rules of hospitality in the ancient world. It was quite scandalous to treat a visiting teacher that way. And the sinful woman from the city (code for a prostitute) saw this and was appalled that such a good man would be treated that way. Who was she? She was someone who had heard Jesus preaching and believed that he would even forgive her sins, which must have been many. Then she responded in a way that must have cost her dearly, both financially, in the expensive ointment she used, and personally, by running the truly great risk that her act of genuine love would be seen as inappropriate and rejected, and she would be thrown out of the house.

Quiet reflection: Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

Prayers and Intentions: As if talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

Lord's Prayer: Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

Blessing: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Unity Prayer: God, make our hearts one. Amen.



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Reading: Luke 7:37–38

And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸ She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.

Meditation

The woman broke all kinds of barriers in expressing her deep gratitude for Jesus' forgiveness. She recognized that here, in the person of Jesus, was the divine power to forgive sins. Here in the person of Jesus was the presence of God himself. She noticed the slight on the part of Simon the host and washed Jesus' feet with her tears. She then anointed them with costly ointment, when simple olive oil would do. And if that weren't intimate enough, she let her hair down, as if she were a bride for her husband on their wedding night. She wiped his tear-stained feet with her unbound hair. No one in the room would have missed the significance of this action. She has pledged herself to Jesus. Will he accept?

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Reading: Luke 7:39–43

Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "Speak." ⁴¹ "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly."

Meditation

Simon wanted to see if Jesus was really a prophet before he would extend the common courtesies that hospitality required. He was alarmed that Jesus would not only tolerate, but welcome such an intimate display. Jesus read his mind, and in what must have seemed like a mild rebuke, said, "Simon, I have something to say to you." He proceeded to tell him the parable of the two debtors whose debts were both forgiven by a certain creditor. One of the debtors owed a great sum and the other a much smaller one. Jesus congratulated Simon for having answered correctly that the one who owed the greatest debt loved the creditor more. Simon must have seen that the woman was the one who had the greatest sins forgiven, since she expressed her love so extravagantly. He must also have seen, by implication, that he too was a sinner. But he had not yet expressed either his gratitude or his love.

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Reading: Luke 7:44–49

Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet.⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, [it is evident that] her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."⁴⁸ Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."⁴⁹ But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Meditation

In what must have been seen as quite a breach of manners, Jesus pointed out how his host had treated him with such dishonor. And indeed, for those of us who know who Jesus really is, Simon's behavior was inexcusable. But- then Jesus did something even more unexpected. Where Simon, or any other man, would have had the woman expelled from the house, Jesus allowed her to continue her ministrations. He drew all the unwanted attention onto himself. He let all the potential shame from her inappropriate conduct fall on himself. More than that, he accepted her very intimate expressions of gratitude and assured her that she was forgiven and now could live in peace.

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Reading: Luke 18:31–35

Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.³² For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon.³³ After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again."³⁴ But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.³⁵ As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.³⁶ When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening.³⁷ They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."³⁸ Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Meditation

The disciples did not grasp that the Son of Man, whom they knew to be Jesus, was going to Jerusalem to die. They were aware of the messianic overtones of Jesus' ministry, but they were spiritually blind to the reality of his mission. Now as they approached the outskirts of Jericho, they encountered a blind man who saw Jesus for who he really was: the "Son of David." The blind can see and the sighted are blind. Oh, the irony.

God's love, his willing our good, his willing our salvation, is a profoundly costly love. It is a love that takes upon itself all the sorrow, suffering, and pain not only of all mankind, but of each individual person as well. God's love is personal. He loves us not simply as a race, but as individuals. He loved the woman at Simon's house; he loved the blind man on the outskirts of Jericho; we will see that he loved Zacchaeus the chief tax collector, and the two thieves who hung on their crosses beside him, and the married couple he encountered on the road to Emmaus. Jesus encountered each of them, and his costly love changed their lives and saved them.

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As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." ³⁸ Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ³⁹ **Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet;** but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁰ Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, ⁴¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me see again." ⁴² Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." ⁴³ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; **and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.**

Meditation

When a great person comes to our town, we all want to catch a glimpse, to be near, to bask in the limelight for just a moment. We have our cell phones ready to take selfies that record our near brush with that greatness. Woe to the person who photobombs our priceless picture or spoils our moment. human beings really haven't changed much over the last two thousand years; we just have more technology. Today the Internet would allow us to shame the blind man for embarrassing us and disrupting our moment. Outside of Jericho, this crowd also told him to shut up. But Jesus ignored the anger of the crowd. He stood still and brought the blind man to be near him. He risked the crowd's scorn and brought healing to the blind man. His demonstration of costly love changed the crowd's reaction from anger to praise of God. But what about the blind man? His response is next.

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Meditation

"What do you want me to do for you?" When I was a young man, the Lord asked me the same question. I was standing under a streetlamp in a small midwestern college town. A friend had just invited me to give my life to Jesus, but I was not sure that I believed that Jesus was really there. What did I want Jesus to do for me? I wanted to know if he was there, if he was real. And if he was, did he love me? I didn't really know what that meant, but I knew that if he was there and if he did love me, I had to change the way I had been living my life up to that point. So, I did the best I could. I said, "I can't promise to be good for the rest of my life, but I give myself to you now. Please just let me know if you are there." Fifty-plus years later, I look back at that moment and realize that when he answered that prayer, it did in fact change the trajectory of my life in ways I could not have imagined. I knew then and still know today that he is real and that he loves me. But his love cost me. My friends changed, my habits changed, my life goals changed—and very little was easy. What did it cost the blind man to ask for sight? He could no longer beg, because he no longer had an infirmity. He would have to work, but he had no training, no skills. His life would change dramatically if he accepted the gift of sight. Grace may be free, but it is not cheap. It will change us. Are we prepared? What do you want him to do for you?

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Reading: Luke 19:1-10

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ² A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³ He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴ **So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.** ⁵ When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷ All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." ⁸ Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." ⁹ Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Meditation

Scholars suggest that the large crowd that had greeted Jesus when he entered Jericho signaled that a great banquet was being prepared in town for the famous rabbi, who would be expected to spend the night before he resumed his journey to Jerusalem. But Jesus surprised them by passing right through, with no intention of spending the night or attending the banquet in his honor. Sycamores, with their large leaves, were planted on the outskirts of a town. So, Jesus had made it all the way through town when he stopped to see the diminutive Zacchaeus hiding in the tree. There are so many odd things to notice before we go on. Why is an adult man running through town? Why is he climbing a tree? Dignified men don't do those things. How did Jesus know his name? Did the angry crowd curse Zacchaeus and shout at him? He was, after all, the hated chief tax collector. He had probably cheated all of them at one time or another. Was he in a tree because he was afraid that if he were caught in the crowd he would be harmed or killed? Like the blind man on the other side of Jericho, Zacchaeus wanted to see the great man who was passing through his town. Jesus surprised them even further. He told Zacchaeus to come down from the tree and to hurry home so that Jesus might eat with him. Jesus turned down the banquet that the town leaders must have prepared to honor him, and went instead to eat at the house of a sinner.

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Meditation

All who saw this *grumbled* that he was going to spend the night in the home of a sinner! The reaction of the crowd reminds us of the reaction of Israel upon the return of the spies Moses had sent into the promised land to bring back a report about how they should enter that land. The spies reported a good land, full of milk and honey, but also filled with giants. The people were afraid and rebelled against the Lord. They also *grumbled*, saying, "the LORD hates us that he has brought us out of the land of Egypt, to hand us over to the Amorites to destroy us" (Deuteronomy 1:27). Because of their rebellion, only Caleb and Joshua were allowed to enter the promised land—and that was after many more years of wandering in the wilderness. Much later, the crowd in Jericho were no better. They saw Jesus offering salvation to one of their most hated oppressors, the chief tax collector. How easy it is to grumble when we see the Lord do something we don't understand, or when he asks us to do something that causes us to be afraid.

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Meditation

Zacchaeus was caught by himself, without a bodyguard to protect him. Jesus' action may have spared Zacchaeus' life or kept him from bodily harm. Jesus redirected the anger of the crowd onto himself. What was it like to receive such costly love? Like the blind man, whose life was dramatically changed, Zacchaeus' life would never be the same. Jesus invites himself into Zacchaeus' house, but Zacchaeus must make the choice to receive him. He accepts Jesus' offer and goes on to pledge that he will return what he has stolen and, at great personal cost, will make reparation for all the evil he has committed. He will have to live each day differently, because he has received Jesus into his heart and his home. Salvation begins in one moment of decision; but it must be lived out daily. In our marriages we make promises on the day of our wedding. We must renew them with our actions every single day.

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Reading: Luke 23:33–34, 36–43

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." ...³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine,³⁷ and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!"³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?⁴¹ And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong."⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."⁴³ He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Meditation

Hanging on the cross next to Jesus, the criminal mocked and derided him: "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" What if Jesus had listened to him? What if he had come down from the cross? What if he had brought those two criminals down from their crosses with him? He could have. He could have cheated death in that moment. But then Easter morning would not have happened. Death, the great enemy of humankind, would not have been defeated, only cheated. "Salvation" would have been illusory—a momentary respite from suffering, not the healing and restoration of our relationship with God, not the undoing of the rebellion in the garden so long ago. The irony is that by selflessly embracing his own death on the cross, Jesus was saving that poor man and us. The other criminal, often called the good thief, caught a glimpse of the cost that love must pay and offered the prayer we all need to make: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He does remember us, not only at the hour of our death, but when we receive that costly love and allow it to transform our lives and our marriages.

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Reading: Luke 24:13–24

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them,¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.¹⁷ And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"¹⁹ He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.²¹ **But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.** Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

Meditation

Two disciples were walking slowly from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus about seven miles away. It has been suggested that the two disciples were a husband and wife. If this is the case, they could be Cleopas and Mary, the sister of Jesus' mother (see John 19:25, where his name is spelled Clopas). If this is true, this Mary who was walking along had been at the foot of the cross when Jesus died. They were downtrodden; their personal hopes and the hopes of Israel had been crushed by Roman cruelty. Their personal loss had been compounded by the shattering of their deepest hope for Israel. Israel was longing to be freed from oppression. They were longing for God to act and finally end Israel's exile. Their prayer had been that of Psalm 42:1–2: "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?" They had hoped that Jesus was the one through whom God would finally act. They longed to see God in the Temple once again. God seemed to have forgotten their plight, and their enemies had pressed the point home. It seemed that another failed messiah had come to a bitter end because of Roman justice.

Quiet reflection: Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

Prayers and Intentions: As if talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

Lord's Prayer: Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

Blessing: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Unity Prayer: God, make our hearts one. Amen.



Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Luke 24:25–33

Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

Meditation

A stranger had joined them along the way and asked them why they were so sad. They explained what had happened and their hearts burned as he explained the scriptures to them. As they approached the village, the stranger made as if to go on. Cleopas and Mary urged him to stay because it was getting late in the day. He consented. They sat down at a table to eat the evening meal. The stranger picked up a piece of bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave them each a piece. At that moment their eyes were opened. The phrase in Luke's gospel reminds one of Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen. 3:7). Their eyes too had been opened, but in contrast, opened upon their own nakedness and shame. This new couple saw the hope of Israel. This time the story would end ultimately not with death, but with the promise of life. It was the first meal on the first day of the New Creation!!! It was also the eighth meal that Luke recounts in his gospel; the seventh and final meal of the old creation was Jesus' last supper.

Quiet reflection: Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

Prayers and Intentions: As if talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

Lord's Prayer: Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

Blessing: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Unity Prayer: God, make our hearts one. Amen.



Pray

God, come to our assistance.

-Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Reading: Luke 24:28–33

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.

²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² **They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"** ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

Meditation

When we read and study it, scripture actually makes God present. The scriptures are part of a remarkable dialogue. God speaks, addressing us as friends, for scripture is God's word. As he does this, he is alive, inviting us to share in the love that is the Trinity, for scripture makes God present. Jesus, the Word of God incarnate, is present in the scripture, and we encounter him each time we read and study it. Think about what happened on the road to Emmaus between Jesus and the two disciples. And remember that some scholars have suggested these two were a married couple.

He patiently broke open the scripture for them as they walked despondently away from Jerusalem. After he revealed himself in the breaking of the bread, their eyes were opened and they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" As a couple, let the Lord break open the scriptures for you each day.

Quiet reflection: Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.

Prayers and Intentions: As if talking to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.

Lord's Prayer: Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

Blessing: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Unity Prayer: God, make our hearts one. Amen.