

# *Words for the Season*

*Daily Devotions for Lent*

*Week of March 1, 2021*



*Photo Credit: Yannick Pulver  
Morning After a Cold Night in the Mountains, Bern, Switzerland*

*Prayers by Rev. Sarah Are*

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Monday, March 1, 2021

See ...

**Read:** Jeremiah 1:11-19

<sup>11</sup> The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see a branch of an almond tree.” <sup>12</sup> Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.” <sup>13</sup> The word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, tilted away from the north.”

<sup>14</sup> Then the Lord said to me: Out of the north disaster shall break out on all the inhabitants of the land. <sup>15</sup> For now I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, says the Lord; and they shall come and all of them shall set their thrones at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its surrounding walls and against all the cities of Judah. <sup>16</sup> And I will utter my judgments against them, for all their wickedness in forsaking me; they have made offerings to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands. <sup>17</sup> But you, gird up your loins; stand up and tell them everything that I command you. Do not break down before them, or I will break you before them. <sup>18</sup> And I for my part have made you today a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall, against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. <sup>19</sup> They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you.

**Reflect:** If God were to ask you, “What do you see?” What would you say? How would your answer impact your actions?

**Pray:** God of visions,  
you ask me, “What do you see?” And in this moment, I’m not sure how close I’ve been looking. There is so much suffering in the world. It’s easy to turn away. It’s tempting to curate our lives to see what we want to see. Open my eyes to truthfully and honestly see what you see. Amen.

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

*Live ...*

**Read:** John 4:43-54

<sup>43</sup> When the two days were over, he went from that place to Galilee <sup>44</sup> (for Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in the prophet's own country). <sup>45</sup> When he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the festival; for they too had gone to the festival.

<sup>46</sup> Then he came again to Cana in Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. Now there was a royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. <sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." <sup>49</sup> The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my little boy dies." <sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way. <sup>51</sup> As he was going down, his slaves met him and told him that his child was alive. <sup>52</sup> So he asked them the hour when he began to recover, and they said to him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." <sup>53</sup> The father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he himself believed, along with his whole household. <sup>54</sup> Now this was the second sign that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

**Reflect:** When do you feel most alive? What does it feel like? When are you the furthest from feeling alive? What can you change?

**Pray:** Jesus of Nazareth,  
over and over and over again, you choose life. You heal us with your hands and your words, saying, "Go, you shall live." So now that I have this wild and wonderful life, help me to use it to the best of my ability. I see now—this is a gift. Amen.

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Well...

**Read:** John 5:1-18

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. <sup>3</sup> In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. <sup>5</sup> One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” <sup>7</sup> The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” <sup>8</sup> Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” <sup>9</sup> At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath. <sup>10</sup> So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, “It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.” <sup>11</sup> But he answered them, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your mat and walk.’” <sup>12</sup> They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take it up and walk’?” <sup>13</sup> Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. <sup>14</sup> Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you.” <sup>15</sup> The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. <sup>16</sup> Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath. <sup>17</sup> But Jesus answered them, “My Father is still working, and I also am working.” <sup>18</sup> For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

**Reflect:** What would life look like for you to be well? What visible or invisible things in your life need healing?

**Pray:** Patient healer,  
I need your healing words, but the things that ail me are not obvious to the eye. They are internal—hurtful narratives, doubt in myself, doubt in you. I long for you to see all of me and to make me well. Show me how to get off my mat. Gratefully I pray. Amen.

Thursday, March 4, 2021

# Shelter...

**Read:** Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh—  
my adversaries and foes—  
they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident.

One thing I asked of the Lord,  
that will I seek after:  
to live in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the Lord,  
and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock.

Now my head is lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer in his tent

sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!  
“Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!”  
Your face, Lord, do I seek.  
Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.  
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,  
O God of my salvation!  
If my father and mother forsake me,  
the Lord will take me up.

Teach me your way, O Lord,  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my enemies.  
Do not give me up to the will of my  
adversaries,  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they are breathing out violence.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of  
the Lord  
in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the Lord!

**Reflect:** Psalm 27 is a morning song, designed to start your day. What is your favorite part of your morning ritual? Where could you include more gratitude and praise?

**Pray:** God of the dawn,  
if you were a home, I would pray: Put me inside those four walls. Open the door and pull me in. Let me walk your hallways and sit on your couch. Teach me the flow of the floors as I memorize the flow of your voice. I want to be close to you. Help me get there. Amen.

Friday, March 5, 2021

*Answer...*

**Read:** Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of  
my groaning?  
O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;  
and by night, but find no rest.

Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.  
In you our ancestors trusted;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.  
To you they cried, and were saved;  
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, and not human;  
scorned by others, and despised by the people.  
All who see me mock at me;  
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;  
“Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—  
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”

Yet it was you who took me from the womb;  
you kept me safe on my mother’s breast.  
On you I was cast from my birth,  
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.  
Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.

Many bulls encircle me,  
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;  
they open wide their mouths at me,  
like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart is like wax;  
it is melted within my breast;  
my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me;  
a company of evildoers encircles me.

My hands and feet have shriveled;  
I can count all my bones.  
They stare and gloat over me;  
they divide my clothes among themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O Lord, do not be far away!  
O my help, come quickly to my aid!  
Deliver my soul from the sword,  
my life from the power of the dog!  
Save me from the mouth of the lion!

From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.  
I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:  
You who fear the Lord, praise him!  
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;  
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!  
For he did not despise or abhor  
the affliction of the afflicted;  
he did not hide his face from me,  
but heard when I cried to him.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.  
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek him shall praise the Lord.  
May your hearts live forever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the Lord;  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before him.  
For dominion belongs to the Lord,  
and he rules over the nations.

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
and I shall live for him.  
Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord,  
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that he has done it.

**Reflect:** What hurt do you take to God? Knowing that Jesus quoted this passage on the cross, how does that change your perspective of this psalm?

**Pray:** Creator God,  
I cry out to you, but I often hear nothing. I want easy answers but I am coming to see, you are not a vending machine. I cannot always force what I want. Are you silent? Are you speaking and I'm missing it? Are you trying to teach me how to rest in you without frantically finding solutions? Whatever the answer, I trust that you're here. Grant me peace. Amen.

Saturday, March 6, 2021

# Speak Openly ...

**Read:** John 7:1-13

After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him. <sup>2</sup> Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near. <sup>3</sup> So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; <sup>4</sup> for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." <sup>5</sup> (For not even his brothers believed in him.) <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. <sup>7</sup> The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil. <sup>8</sup> Go to the festival yourselves. I am not going to this festival, for my time has not yet fully come." <sup>9</sup> After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

<sup>10</sup> But after his brothers had gone to the festival, then he also went, not publicly but as it were in secret. <sup>11</sup> The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying, "Where is he?" <sup>12</sup> And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, "He is a good man," others were saying, "No, he is deceiving the crowd." <sup>13</sup> Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.

**Reflect:** What prevents you from speaking openly? What would it look like to be empathetic to your neighbor, affirming of all, and still authentic to yourself when you speak?

**Pray:** Holy God,  
there are all sorts of narratives about what it means to be a Christian. I am quick to defend myself, but am I quick to defend you? Do not let me be silent, allowing false truth to hang in the air. Let me be one who speaks openly of your love for all, and how your love has changed my life. Amen.

Sunday, March 7, 2021

# Name ...

**Read:** Mark 5:1-10

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup> And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. <sup>3</sup> He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; <sup>4</sup> for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. <sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; <sup>7</sup> and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." <sup>8</sup> For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." <sup>10</sup> He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

**Reflect:** Take inventory of your soul. What do you carry that weighs you down? What do you carry that brings you to life? Know that God sees it all, and calls you by name.

**Pray:** Gracious God,  
you see me when I am down, and you invite me to tell you about it. You ask me, "What is your name?" And in that moment, I can respond with the lies that cover me, or I can respond, "I am a child of God." No matter what I say, I know that you love me. What a gift to be seen and called by name. Amen.