



Lent is a six-week journey that takes us to Holy Week and Easter. It is a season for renewing our faith. This year, our Lent worship and devotional material focuses on the theme "Full to the Brim". The scriptures in Lent overflow with images and narratives that remind us of God's abundant love, grace, and forgiveness. The invitation is simply that we will receive this gift that is so great it cannot be contained. We are like vessels placed in a running stream. The cool, clear waters of God's love fill us to the brim and wash over us. Our Lent theme invites us to explore abundant, expansive grace. The Bible is brimming with the gospel of grace and so during Lent we are invited into a full life, a radically different life. We are invited to be who we are, to counter scarcity and injustice, and to spread love lavishly.

God is our refuge. There is nothing that can separate you from God, or could keep God from gathering you in, protecting you fiercely. Jesus' lament for Jerusalem is seemingly counter to how he is treated by Jerusalem. And yet, we receive grace upon grace, even if not deserved. Jesus as a mother hen is an image of fierce love and protection. You are a precious child of God. God longs for you. God will gather you in. No matter how much we try to separate ourselves from God, God will run to protect us. God's love for us is fuller than we can imagine.



Questions for Reflection:

- How do Jesus' words and actions in Luke 13 passage expand your notions of how God loves us?
- What surprises you about the image of God as a mother hen?
- When have you experienced God's love most surely, and most profoundly?
- Recall an experience or a story of a parent showing their child unconditional love, even when the child has chosen a destructive or difficult path. What do you learn about God's love through their example?

Adapted from SANCTIFIED ART FULL TO THE BRIM SERMON PLANNING GUIDE
Art by Under God's Wing by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity Inspired by Psalm 27

Spiritual Practice: The Breath Prayer

The breath prayer is a prayer that helps us focus on God by using our breathing as a guide. This very short prayer is a prayer of praise and petition consisting of from three to twelve syllables in two parts.

The first part of the breath prayer is a name of God such as Lord Jesus, Abba, Almighty, King of Kings, Creator, Shepherd, Redeemer, Bread of Life, etc. Spend some quiet time with God and consider God's great love for you. What name comes to your heart and mind?

The second part of the prayer is a petition such as *have mercy on me, hear my prayer, fill me with your peace, keep me safe, watch over me, forgive my sins, show me your way, lead and guide me*, and so on. What deep desire of your heart would you like to bring before God?

Putting the two parts together creates a simple but powerful prayer that you can keep in your heart and always have with you. It is a prayer that is as simple and as close to you as breathing! Slowly say the first part of the prayer as you breathe in. Then slowly say the last part of the prayer as you exhale. There is no hurry or rush; just relax and experience God's abiding presence. Experiment with the following examples and then write your own breath prayer:

Holy God, help me live for you. Abba, fill me with your peace. Show me your way, O Lord.

Holy Spirit, lead and guide me. Gracious God, give me strength. Creator, touch me with your joy.

Loving God, help me see the world as you do. God of Refuge, keep me safe.

A breath prayer can also be composed from your favorite scripture. Some suggestions to consider include Psalm 46:10, Psalm 23:1, Luke 23:46, Psalm 31:5, Matthew 6:9, Luke 1:38, 1 Samuel 3:10, Psalm 136:1, Psalm 118:24, etc. Wonder about the beauty and meaning of these words as you slowly inhale and exhale as you pray.

Check out this Spiritual Practice 101 video to learn more about The Breath Prayer - <https://youtu.be/1XJMOsM5jY8>