

## **2022 LENTEN DEVOTIONALS**

Diocesan Christian Education and Literature Board  
Diocese of Kuching

2022

## BISHOP'S MESSAGE

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we continue moving forward intentionally in advancing discipleship through building a personal relationship with our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, it is my sincere hope and prayer that this Lenten Devotionals will help us to meditate and reflect on the significance of Christ's loving act of suffering and death on the cross for our salvation.

This is a time of self-reflection and repentance, when we can ask our loving and gracious God for forgiveness and healing. Let this season be also a special time for us to humble ourselves before Him, for He said, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

It is also my sincere hope and prayer that this Season of Lent will make a difference in our spiritual walk with the Lord. Let this be a reminder that we are God's people who are called to be a people of prayer. May the Lord God, through His Holy Spirit, leads us closer to Christ so that He will take the center stage and be the Chief Cornerstone of our lives.

May the peace and joy of Christ be with us all. Amen.



The Rt. Rev. Datuk Danald Jute  
The Bishop of Kuching

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## **BIBLE VERSES**

All Bible verses are from New International Version, unless otherwise stated.

**2 MARCH 2022 (ASH WEDNESDAY)**  
**- WHAT KIND OF FAST DOES THE LORD DESIRE? -**

**READING: ISAIAH 58:1-12**

*“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?” (Isaiah 58:6-7)*

**REFLECTION**

Fasting is an inward self-discipline in order to gain spiritual insights. It is not necessarily always about abstaining from food. The Lord desires fasting that brings goodness and liberty to His people who are suffering from misfortune and injustice. Our righteous God desires His people to be generous and loving, merciful and forgiving just as He is. When we are aware that injustice is still prevalent in our community and if we choose to be silent about it, we are denying our identity as Christians who stand for justice and equality. As we are now living in an unprecedented and a very challenging time due to Covid-19, we are not only losing lives but we are also facing a dire situation where our economy and livelihood are severely affected. This has caused much adverse effects on people such as depression and sometime suicide. Even though this is the time for us to be prudent with our spending, as God’s people, we are at the same time called to share and provide for those in need. We should share because we are supposed to care and we should give because He lives. This is the type of fasting that our Lord desires.

**APPLICATION**

Am I doing the fasting that the Lord desires, that is denying myself not only of food but also denying myself of earthly materials in order to help others?

**PRAYER**

God of all creation, create in my heart the desire to seek not my own gain but the welfare of those in need. Lord, You have been good to me and so help me to be good to others. Bless me in this mission and ministry, through Christ my Lord and Saviour. Amen.

### 3 MARCH 2022 – THE WAY TO LIFE

#### **READING: DEUTERONOMY 30:15-END**

*“See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.”  
(Deuteronomy 30:15)*

#### **REFLECTION**

Under the terms of the Old Covenant, Israel had a choice: life or death, good or evil. It was up to them. God was going to glorify Himself through Israel one way or another. How it would happen was really their choice. Israel, if obedient, would see blessing. If disobedient, then Israel would surely perish. It was up to Israel and based on their conduct. It is essential for us to understand that we, in Jesus Christ, do not relate to God on the terms of the Old Covenant, but on the terms of a better covenant: The New Covenant. Under the New Covenant, our relationship with God is not based on what we do for God, but on what Jesus had done on our behalf. There is, of course, more to the New Covenant than this, but there is one crucial distinction between the two covenants. This is mentioned in Hebrews: “Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:28-29)

#### **APPLICATION**

Life has many choices. Which one of those choices do you consider as the most important? Jesus said He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. If you have not taken Jesus seriously or have backslid in your relationship with Him, it is time to repent and make Him as the Lord of your life.

#### **PRAYER**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, thank You for counting us worthy to be Your children through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Forgive me Father for not taking Your Son more seriously. Help me to grow in Him and make Him as the most important person in my life. In His name I pray. Amen.

## 4 MARCH 2022 - WHAT SACRIFICE CAN WE OFFER TO GOD?

### READING: PSALM 51:1-18

*“My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.” (Psalms 51:17)*

### REFLECTION

I get teary-eyed every time I sing the chorus to Chris Tomlin’s “How Great is Our God.” I used to sing it because it is catchy. But the words never meant much to me personally. That was until after my thyroid cancer surgery and the subsequent treatments. Part of the treatment was ingesting radioactive iodine. I had to ingest it twice and each time I had to isolate myself for 7 straight days. I stayed in my room in my father’s house and did not have any close contact with anyone, not even with my parents who were living in the same house. The isolation shook me so much that it got me to think about how insignificantly weak I was in comparison to His might and majesty. The doctors and nurses could prescribe me medicine and put me on treatment but there was no guarantee that I would be healed of the cancer. I quickly acknowledged that only our Heavenly Father could deliver me from it. Whatever I had achieved or done up to that time was of no use. They could not save me. It was at this time that I realised the only thing that really mattered was for me to offer my life to God’s service if He granted me a second chance.

### APPLICATION

We can all offer God many things as our “sacrifice” to Him – money, gadgets, building, land, etc. But He does not need these material sacrifices. What He really wants is us – our life in entirety for His service. How else to do this but to become His good and faithful disciples, sincere and humble in His service, without the desire for any rewards in return.

### PRAYER

Our Holy and Loving Father, I thank You for breaking my heart of stone and humbling me to my weakest. I realise that it is a blessing for me to experience Your power made perfect in my weakness. May You inspire me to offer You my life as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to You. I long to enter into Your presence as Your good and faithful servant and inherit all Your promises made through Your Son Jesus Christ, my Lord and God. Amen.

## 5 MARCH 2022 - HOW MAY THE LORD BLESS US?

### **READING: ISAIAH 58:9B - END**

*The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. (Isaiah 58:11)*

### **REFLECTION**

While the theme of fasting dominates verses 1-10, verse 11 talks about God's blessing upon His people. In this Lenten season, we are encouraged to fast because fasting is one of the spiritual disciplines which builds up and strengthens our relationship with God. Fasting does not just involve refraining from eating or drinking: true fasting that is acceptable to God is described in Isaiah 58:6-8. It means sharing with the poor and needy, enlightening those in darkness, lightening the burden of others as well as loving one another. In this way, the light of Christ will shine forth through us, the believers, into the world. Proverbs 11:25 says, "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed." The Lord will bless us as we bless others and share with them everything that we have in our lives.

### **APPLICATION**

Currently, the world is facing its greatest challenge caused by Covid-19 pandemic. Many people have lost their jobs and source of income. This has caused so much suffering and stress. During this season of Lent, let us not only be thankful for the Lord's blessing upon us, but offer our hands to help others using what we have in our lives.

### **PRAYER**

Almighty Father, we give You thanks for the blessings that You have given us in our lives, which have sustained us to this day. Our Lord Jesus tells us it is more blessed to give than to receive, so teach us Father, to bless others who are in need. Use us as instruments of Your blessing to others and let Your light shine brighter through us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



**6 MARCH 2022 (FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT)**  
**– HOW ARE WE TO GIVE THANKS UNTO GOD? -**

**READING: DEUTERONOMY 26:1-11.**

*“And now I bring the first fruits of the soil that you, Lord, have given me.” (Deut. 26:10)*

**REFLECTION**

During Moses’ times in Egypt, the Israelites suffer so much as they are forced into slavery. But God delivers them after He has heard their cry for help. God then give them the land of Canaan with its fertile soil. So, the Israelites really thank God for what He has done unto them. As their thanksgiving, they would go to the priests, bringing with them their first fruits unto the LORD. Christians are very much like the Israelites. Before we know and accept Christ, we are lost and far from God. We are slaved to sin and the power of darkness. But God by His grace, delivers us in the same manner He has delivered the Israelites from slavery. He sends His Son to the world in order to find the lost and save them (Luke 19:10). On the cross the Son lays down His life because of us and He redeems us from our sins, and because of that He has made us righteous, a people who are His own and who has the desire to serve Him and do His will.

**APPLICATION**

Think of all the good things that God has done in your life. Even though He might not have made you wealthy, but He has given you health, breath and other blessings. Therefore, we ought to praise and give Him thanks using our possession, talent and life.

**PRAYER**

Lord God, open my eyes in order to see Your blessings. Open my heart in order to give You thanks for Your goodness. Open also my ears in order to hear You speaking to my hearts. Open also my lips in order that I will not get tired of praying to You. Touch my feet and hands in order to do all the good and honorable things for You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## 7 MARCH 2022 – “BE HOLY BECAUSE I AM HOLY”

### READING: LEVITICUS 19:1-2, 11-18

*“Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.’” (Lev 19:2)*

### REFLECTION

The God of Israel is a Holy God. He wants His people, the Israelites, to be holy as He Himself is holy. Holiness is not just about following rules and regulations; neither is it just about abstaining from things which are prohibited by the word of God. Holiness is a quality of life that is free from the bondage of sin and evil desires. It is the freedom that allows someone to live joyfully in conformance to the life pattern of God. Holiness is defined by the perfect and sinless character of God. He is the standard of holiness that His people need to pursue and live. He demonstrated that holiness through the perfect and blameless life of His Son Jesus Christ. Thus, as His people, we are required to live holy lives. Our lives should be Jesus shaped through the imitation of His life. When the Israelites conformed to the law of God on moralities and society justice, they were basically keeping their life style in holiness, and by doing that they were living and sharing the character of God. Likewise, when we as Christians live holy lives, we too are living the character of God. This is the identity that God expects from us when He said, “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.”

### APPLICATION

Living a holy life is not just a duty but an identity that the beloved people of God need to pursue.

### PRAYER

Lord, help me to live a holy life following the example of Your Son Jesus Christ who has brought You much glory through His perfect and holy life. In His name I pray. Amen.

## 8 MARCH 2022 – THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD

### **READING: ISAIAH 55:10 – 11**

*So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)*

### **REFLECTION**

God’s word brings forth fruit. It always fulfils His purpose on earth. The word of the Lord has power, and it never fails in His intended purpose (Isaiah 55:11). When God’s people turn to Him and listen to Him, His word does His atoning work in them, bringing joy and peace as the climactic result. The joy is so great, that even the mountains and the hills, and the trees of the field join in. Where before there was barrenness that reminds us of the curse (the thorn), now there will be beautiful and useful trees. The picture is clear; in His glorious work of restoration, God takes away the barren and the cursed, and brings forth beauty and fruit. When the Lord restores, all the work is done for His name, and for His glory. When the Lord restores, the work is secure; it is an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. God promises this joyous state will never end.

### **APPLICATION**

Isaiah 55:11 should be a huge wake-up call for Christians to mend their ways and for sinners to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved. Remember - God has exalted His name and His word above all things (Psalm 138:2 NIV) and all that is written in the Scriptures will be fulfilled.

### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your word. Thank You that the Scriptures will not return to You void, but will accomplish all that You have determined. Thank You for Your plan of salvation and the simplicity of trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin and life everlasting. This I ask in Jesus' name and for His dear name's sake. Amen.

## 9 MARCH 2022 - GOD SAW WHAT THEY DID

### **READING: JONAH 3:1-END**

*When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, He relented and did not bring on them the destruction He had threatened. (Jonah 3:10)*

### **REFLECTION**

The people of the great city of Nineveh had sinned against God and He asked Jonah to go and preach to them the message of repentance. Initially Jonah refused to go for He knew that God would forgive them and bless them if they would turn from their sin and worship Him. Jonah also knew the power of God's message, that even though he himself was not a good preacher, the people of Nineveh would respond and be spared of God's judgement. When Jonah eventually went to Nineveh and preached to the people, they believed in the message and repented. "When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that He had said He would do to them, and He did not do it". Such is the message of Christ when He incarnated to take away our sin through His death on the cross. We are all like the people of Nineveh. We all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But God is merciful and through the death of Christ His Son, He is calling all of us to repentance such that He could bless us and accept us as His beloved children.

### **APPLICATION**

Examine your life and see what areas of your life that you have not surrendered to God in repentance.

### **PRAYER**

Thank you, Heavenly Father for sending your Son Jesus Christ to come to this world to take away my sins and grant me eternal life. Heavenly Father, I confess to You every sin that I have committed (name them in your heart), either consciously or unconsciously, and those that I remember and do not remember. Cleanse me Heavenly Father by the blood of the Lamb so that I would be pleasing to You and acceptable in Your sight. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## 10 MARCH 2022 - LET US TURN TO THE LORD

### READING: ISAIAH 55:6-9

*Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near. (Isaiah 55:6)*

### REFLECTION

The need for God's presence and intervention in our lives is urgent. We are now plagued with a deadly Covid-19 virus which has taken many lives throughout the world; no country is spared and how this deadly virus has disrupted our normal lives is unprecedented. In times like these, God is reminding us again to seek Him while He may be found, more so as we fight the battle against Covid-19 virus every day. The only way we can stand our ground in this battle is through the strength that can only be found in Christ. God Almighty, the Creator of the universe, who revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ is now calling us to seek Him because there will be a time when it will be too late. We ought to seek Him, He is the only one who can supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Not seeking and failing to call upon the Lord while He is near, means we miss the opportunity to get to know our awesome God and miss out on the blessings He promised.

### APPLICATION

Seek Jesus today and don't delay. He is calling us to a closer relationship with Him. The more we seek Him, the more we find Him, the more we find Him, the more we love Him.

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, give me the strength to seek Your Son Jesus Christ and set my mind and heart on matters that are important to You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

## 11 MARCH 2022 - IS THE LORD UNJUST?

### **READING: EZEKIEL 18:21-28**

*“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear, you Israelites: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust?” (Ezekiel 18:25)*

### **REFLECTION**

When something bad happens in our lives, we often try to find someone to put the blame on. We are fast in pointing our fingers toward others and sometimes we also point our fingers to God. We blame God when we do not get what we want. We blame God when the bad triumphs over the good. We blame God when our ambitions and wishes are not fulfilled. However, we often fail to see that we are sinners and are the ones who are always at fault. But God is just and wants us to repent. Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it” (Matthew 16:24-25). If we repent, carry our cross every day and deny our own sinful way then we are just in the eyes of the Lord.

### **APPLICATION**

Reflect on our misconception of God’s justice. Then pray for God’s forgiveness and ask Him to give you strength to carry your cross every day.

### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, we often put the blame on You when things are not going our way. Forgive us Lord for the unpleasant things that we have done to You. We pray that You would continue to give us the strength to carry our cross every day according to Your will. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## 12 MARCH 2022 – THE LORD’S OWN PEOPLE

### READING: DEUTERONOMY 26:16-END

*“You have declared this day that the Lord is your God and that you will walk in obedience to him, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws—that you will listen to him.” (Deuteronomy 26:17)*

### REFLECTION

Our identity matters. Who we are determines the way we act. A royal family members will not act like commoners; an Olympic sprinter will not have the same diet as a Sumo wrestler and an adult will not act like a child. As Christians, our identity is not tied to our job or achievement. First and foremost, we are the Lord’s own people before we are anything else. In the verse above, Moses reminds the Israelites that they belong to the Lord. They have been redeemed from slavery in Egypt and now are in a covenant relationship with Yahweh, their Redeemer. And the implication of that is that they are to walk in God’s ways, and keep all His commandments. Similarly, as Christians, we have been redeemed from the slavery of our sins, forgiven, and adopted into God’s family. That’s who we are: the Lord’s own people. And therefore, we walk in obedience and submission to God, not so that we can belong to Him, but as a response to His goodness and grace in saving us through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. We now belong to the Lord.

### APPLICATION

Identify which area in your life that is not in obedience and submission to the Lord, and repent. Ask the Holy Spirit’s help so that you can live in obedience to the Lord.

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help us, by Your Spirit, to live in obedience to You as Your people who have been redeemed. In Christ’s name. Amen.

**13 MARCH 2022 (SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT)  
- PUT YOUR TRUST IN GOD -**

**READING: GENESIS 15:1-12, 17-18**

*Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6).*

**REFLECTION**

An old man who was suffering from night blindness, without informing his family, quietly sneaked out of their longhouse in Spaoh to visit his rubber garden but lost his way when night fell. His family sent a search and rescue team to look for him. They beat gongs and called out his name hoping that he would hear and respond, but to no avail. As the search party almost gave up hope to find him alive, a good friend of the old man called out “O Engkaul”, the name they used to call each other. Immediately, the old man responded from the bush in the darkness of the night. They found him. Because of local superstition, the old man refused to respond to any call of the rescue team. He responded only to the one who called him by that unique name – the name that is known by his good friend alone. He trusted his good friend very much. In the same manner, Abraham knew his God and trusted Him. When God called Abraham, he believed and left his home country. The moment Abraham declared his belief in God’s promise, he was counted as righteous. Abraham’s life also demonstrates how we may grow in believing God’s word and encourages us to persist though we may grow slowly or not see our faith’s immediate fulfillment.

**APPLICATION**

How do you live your life that enables people to put their trust in Jesus Christ?

**PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, as Abraham was counted righteous for his belief in Your promise, we are also counted righteous by our faith in Your Son Jesus Christ. Help us to grow to be more like Jesus and hence to draw people to His saving grace. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.



## 14 MARCH 2022 – GOD IS FAITHFUL

### READING: DANIEL 9:4-10

*I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: “Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments.....” (Daniel 9:4)*

### REFLECTION

A few days ago, I visited a friend’s house and during our conversation, we suddenly heard the sound of broken glass and the crying of a child. We went to the kitchen and saw a sobbing four-year old child pointing to the maid, signalling that the maid had broken the glass. We all have difficulty admitting our guilt or wrong doing (regardless of age). We should learn from the life of Daniel. The Bible not only did not record any of his guilt but witnessed many instances of him not at fault with God or with man. He knew God is loving, faithful and keeps his promise; so he eagerly joined his people the Israelites, who had committed sin against God, in confession, fasting and prayer for their return to Jerusalem. Even though Daniel could see the sins of his people, he nonetheless made an effort to be with them. He showed his sense of community or oneness with them. As Christians, that is the manner of life that we need to inculcate within the one body of Christ, the Church. Christians should act as role models to other believers, for if someone within the Church has committed wrong doing, it is an indication that we have not been carrying out our responsibility as Christians to shine and be the light and salt for God.

### Application

How would you apply Daniel’s sense of community/oneness within your local church?

### Prayer

Our Heavenly Father who loves us, help me to live as a Christian who shines, and be Your light and salt to Your people. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen

## 15 MARCH 2022 – GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US

### READING: 2 SAMUEL 7:4-16

“I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.” (2 Samuel 7:9)

### REFLECTION

The above verse serves as a form of encouragement to us. We are reminded of God's faithfulness. If you are someone who is doubtful, lose heart, under oppression or troubled or maybe you feel as if you have been forgotten, if not forsaken, then this verse is for you. This is God's tender word, promises and assurances to His people. God's mercy on us remains unchanged, unwavering and unshaken, even when our life is embroiled in unpleasant challenges (Rom. 8:37-39). We should take heed of David's experiences. When he fought against Goliath and when he fled from Saul, God was with him, protecting and preserving him. God did not stop there! God moulded him, making him strong and great. Because God's divine character is unchanging, we must remain unshaken. Even when we are experiencing 'dark days' of our life, we need to keep believing that He is always with us (Matt. 28, 20). We need to let God's transforming power to lead and enable us as we walk in His plan for our life.

### APPLICATION

Reflect on Psalm 46, especially verse 7 which say, “The Lord of hosts is with us”. Will you take time to ponder upon God's passionate love for yourself? Will you live in faith and hope even though your life may be in tribulation?

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You that You love me. Thank You that You never leave me alone and are always ready to prepare and provide a way for me. Help me to look up to You in all circumstances so that I will always triumph over the power of darkness. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

## 16 MARCH 2022 – GOD’S PEOPLE HAVE REJECTED HIM

### READING: JEREMIAH 18:13-20

*“Yet my people have forgotten me; they burn incense to worthless idols, which made them stumble in their ways, in the ancient paths. They made them walk in byways, on roads not built up.” (Jeremiah 18:15)*

### REFLECTION

Prophet Jeremiah is a servant of God who has suffered so much in his ministry. This is because the Israelites were against the words of God that he brings to them. That means, the people are not only rejecting Jeremiah, they are also rejecting God. Jeremiah has been doing his ministry by following the call of God. This is the reason people do not like him. Jeremiah has been giving them warning that God would deal severely with them if they continue to disobey and reject Him. But the people do not care, they continue with their sins and refuse to repent. Instead, they make plans against Jeremiah, attack him and pay no attention to what he says. They are willing to seek counsel from others but not from God through Jeremiah. In spite of that, Jeremiah perseveres and continues to obey God even though the people are against him.

### APPLICATION

Think of the challenges and difficulties that God’s people are facing in serving Him. Bring up to Him your concerns and worries because God is faithful and that His people can rely on Him in the midst of such situation.

### PRAY

Our heavenly Father, You are very much aware of the many challenges and difficulties faced by Your people who serves You. Grant them strength O Lord so that their lives will be grounded on Your truth and that they will remain strong and faithful in their ministries even though people are rejecting them because of You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## **17 MARCH 2022 – “BUT I WILL BLESS THE PERSON WHO PUTS HIS TRUST IN ME”**

### **READING: JEREMIAH 17:5-10**

*“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream..” (Jeremiah 17:7-8a)*

### **REFLECTION**

In this short passage directed to the Israelites, Prophet Jeremiah outlines two distinctive ways of living—only two—there is no middle ground. Those who trust in mere mortals are accursed (vv. 5-6), but those who trust in the Lord are blessed (vv. 7-8). The prophet pointed out that blessed is the one whose confident hope is in the Lord, for he will be like a tree planted by the rivers of living water - that extends its roots into God’s life-giving streams; that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also does not wither. Those who built their trust in the Lord will not fear when problems and life's difficulties arise, but will hope in the Lord for strength and deliverance. They will not be anxious in a year of drought nor will they cease to yield fruit, but produces more fruit - much fruit, to the glory of God and to their own eternal benefit. For Yahweh Jireh is their Provider.

### **APPLICATION**

In the midst of this dreadful COVID 19 pandemic, would you continue to put your trust in the Lord for His promises and provision, and to continue to draw strength and sustenance from the Living water that ever flows and never fails?

### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, thank You Lord that in the midst of all life's difficulties and problems, You are my Rock and my Redeemer - my Source and my Supply. Thank You that in Christ I have all I need to stand firm in this evil day. I pray that I would live a life that honours You and that I would bear much fruit to Your praise and glory. This I ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## 18 MARCH 2022 - I AM READY

### READING: GENESIS 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28

*Israel said to Joseph, "Aren't your brothers tending the sheep near Shechem? Come, I'll send you to them." And he said, "I'm ready." (Genesis 37:13 CEB)*

### REFLECTION

Joseph, being Jacob's favourite son was probably never given much work to do. While his elder brothers were out in the wilderness tending the sheep, he was always confined to the safety of home. But his heart was longing for an adventure outside. So, when his father told him to go out to the field to check on his brothers, he answered, "I am ready". But little did he realise that his first venture outside the comfort of a home would lead to a journey into Egypt, that would eventually change the course of Israel's history. As I was writing on this text, I was in the midst of my preparation for a 3-month stint in Egypt. On May 24, 2021, two days before my retirement, Bishop Danald Jute and I were discussing my post-retirement plan. Then he asked me whether I would be prepared to go to Algeria and continue my ministry there. And I accepted. Expressing readiness or preparedness to do something does not actually mean we are ready for any eventuality. It is because there will be a lot of surprises waiting for us along the way to disrupt our preparation. Joseph's initial purpose was to check on his brothers and then to report to his father on how they were doing. But it did not turn out to be that way. He ended up being sold to the Midianite traders, taken to Egypt and sold as a slave to Potiphar. And as we continue reading the story until chapter 47 of Genesis, we discover that God had actually been working out His plan using Joseph's fortunes and hardships. And it ended with a happy note.

### APPLICATION

Think of your real-life situation where what you expected is not what God has granted you. How do you react to God in such a situation?

### PRAYER

Lord God, give me the mind to discern Your will, the heart to obey Your words and readiness to do Your work, that all things are done as You wish and for Your honour and glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## 19 MARCH 2022 - THE LORD'S COMPASSION

### READING: MICAH 7:14&15, 18-20

*Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance, which lives by itself in a forest, in fertile pasturelands. Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in days long ago. (Micah 7: 14)*

### REFLECTION

In this concluding chapter of the book of Micah, we see a plea by the prophet for the Lord's mercy on behalf of the people (of Israel) who has been indicted and judged by God. The people had become callous and arrogant of the seriousness and enormity of their sins and wanted to bargain with God instead of repenting before Him. Such was the state of the people and it is no wonder that the charge has been made and the punishment pronounced. Yet the prophet Micah pleads for the mercy of God, calling on His character and nature. In verses 14 & 15, the prophet reminds us of God's character. He described God as a shepherd who cares for the flock, bringing the sheep to green pastures and watching over them. In any and every flock, there will be the odd sheep who will wander off, yet the shepherd will always seek them out and bring them back into the fold. When the prophet Micah pleaded for mercy for the people of Israel, he knew that although the present and future seemed hopeless; he (and the people) can have hope in God because he knows that God loves the people and will have compassion on those who will trust Him and will turn to Him.

### APPLICATION

Knowing God means knowing His character and nature. As we know God more, we will know what He wants from us and what He has promised for us in His Word. So, I will make time to read, study and meditate on God's Word to know Him more and more.

### PRAYER

Almighty God, I thank You for reminding me that You are a God who is ever merciful and compassionate. Help me to understand what I need to do when I go the wrong way so that I can be more faithful to follow You all the days of my life. Please always assure me of Your un-failing love and un-ending mercy. In Yeshua's name I pray. Amen.

**20 MARCH 2022 (THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT)**  
**- WHY SPEND MONEY ON WHAT DOES NOT SATISFY? -**

**READING: ISAIAH 55:1-9**

*Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? (Isaiah 55:2a)*

**REFLECTION**

We have the freedom to choose how we spend our money to our satisfaction. But at times when we are faced with so many choices, we may not choose what is best for us or what we truly need. The invitation by the prophet is to "come to the waters", "come buy wine and milk", all of which are very much needed commodities in a desert community and are offered free. Here, God is really inviting us to come to him and to receive his blessings of salvation, which are made available without cost. Throughout the ages, people have been tempted to find satisfaction in many things other than God. But He constantly reminds us that He is the only one who brings genuine satisfaction in our lives. In Matt. 11:28, Jesus calls all who are heavy-laden to come to him to find rest for their souls. Many people may long for rest, whether physically or emotionally, especially in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic that has swept the entire world. It has also reminded us what is really important in our lives: what is lasting and what is temporal. When we are frequently faced with the reality of death and the fragility of life, we begin to treasure our relationships with one another more, and more so, our relationship with our Maker, who is eternal.

**APPLICATION**

During this season of Lent, let us be reminded that the true treasure that brings satisfaction is not found in the material things that we acquire or in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. The true path to abundant life is when we follow Jesus closely and obey his commands.

**PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, help me to discern Your wills and grant me the strength and perseverance to faithfully obey them throughout my life. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

## 21 MARCH 2022 – THE SIGN OF EMMANUEL

### READING: ISAIAH 7:10-14

*Well then, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him 'Immanuel.'* (Isaiah 7:14)

### REFLECTION

Isaiah 7:10-16 is the second movement in a larger “sermon” offered by Isaiah to king Ahaz of Judah. This was during the time when an alliance between Israel (the northern kingdom) and Aram (a non-Israelite kingdom) was formed to attack Judah, whose capital is Jerusalem. They did this, because Judah refused to participate in a coalition against the northern Mesopotamian power of Assyria, which wanted control over the region (2 Kings 16). Not surprisingly, this crisis incited terror in Ahaz and his subjects, who suddenly found themselves on the dangerous end of two enemy spears. Isaiah is called to enter into this high-stake mess. However, Ahaz responds with unbelief to God and his prophet (Isaiah 7:4). However, Isaiah addressed King Ahaz again (7:10). Ahaz refused to ask for a sign and instead, sought for protection from the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings 16:7-8). In frustration, Isaiah tells Ahaz that, despite his refusal to ask for a sign, God is going to give him one anyway, the coming of Emmanuel. On the one hand, Immanuel’s birth will mean the end of Ahaz’s enemies (Isaiah 8:1-4), however, God will bring against Ahaz and Judah the violent power of “the king of Assyria”. In gist, Emmanuel is both to save and condemn. Matthew 1:22-23 shows us that Jesus as Messiah is here to save, teach, exorcise, forgive, and judge. However, He will one day come in full apocalyptic glory, as both judge and Saviour.

### APPLICATION

Identify areas in your life where you rely on other human being as your help, and not relying on prayer and on God.

### PRAYER

Loving Father, help me to see that You are the eternal God, whom I can trust in all circumstances. Help me not to trust only in man. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.



## 22 MARCH 2022 – GOD REVEALS DEEP AND HIDDEN THINGS

### READING: DANIEL 2:20-23

*He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. (Daniel 2:22)*

### REFLECTION

Who can flee from God, keep their sins secret or hide their faults from God? No one can keep a secret from God. No one can lie to God. All things are known by God because God is the Creator and He knows everything. In the story of Jonah, God told him to go to the people of Nineveh and bring His message to them that He would punish them unless they repent. But Jonah fled from the call of the Lord and boarded a ship destined to Tarshish. God caused a storm and the ship almost sank. When the ship crew found out that Jonah was the cause of the storm, they threw him overboard. He was swallowed by a large fish but was miraculously alive. Regretting his action while still in the belly of the fish, Jonah prayed to God and then God commanded the fish to vomit him out on a seashore. From that story, we learn that we cannot hide from God. We cannot hide our sins or our wrongdoings from Him because He is all-knowing. Instead of running away and hiding from Him, let us come to Him in repentance for He knows all deep and hidden things in our lives. Hebrews 4:13 reminds us that, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

### APPLICATION

Let us remind ourselves that we cannot hide our sins from God. We need to change our lives by allowing the power of His Holy Spirit to transform and sanctify us so that we could be upright in His sight.

### PRAYER

Almighty God, I humbly come before You to seek your forgiveness for all my sins that I have tried to hide from You. Father, help me to get rid of all my evil desires and grant me the strength to overcome all my spiritual weakness. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

## 23 MARCH 2022 - OBEYING THE LAWS

### READING: DEUTERONOMY 4:1-9

*“Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you” (Deuteronomy 4:1).*

### REFLECTION

Moses had successfully led the exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt. They experienced extraordinary events during their journey of 40 years through the wilderness (for what could have been a journey of two weeks). Along the way, they obeyed and sometimes disobeyed God. As they prepared to enter the promised land, Moses gave them a final briefing, stressing to them the importance of obeying the Lord’s commands as part of their new lives. As the Israelites found out, obeying the Lord’s commands is of utmost importance. Throughout their history, they would experience God’s blessing when they obeyed the commands and going through adversities when they disobeyed. The attitudes of modern-day people in obeying commands are not much different from those of the Israelites during the time of Moses. We have seen this during the Covid-19 pandemic, where some people chose to ignore or deliberately go against directives concerning vaccination and standard operating procedures. Just as these directives were made with good intention, the laws and decrees of God are given to us for our own good. This is because our God is a God of order and has given His laws and decrees for us to follow and obey so that we would live a life which is upright, holy and pleasing to Him.

### APPLICATION

Let us reflect on our lives. What are the obstacles that hinder us from obeying God’s commands? Is it ignorance, rebelliousness, forgetfulness, sin or pride? Let us ask God to create a desire in us to obey and follow Him.

### PRAYER

Dear Lord, Grant me wisdom and the desire to follow Christ. Help me to overcome all hinderances so that I can strive to obey Your commands and allow me to be a channel of Your blessings to people around me. In Jesus’ precious name I pray. Amen.

## 24 MARCH 2022 – “BUT AM I REALLY THE ONE THEY ARE HURTING?”

### READING: JEREMIAH 7:16-23

*“But am I really the one they are hurting? No, they are hurting themselves and bringing shame on themselves.” (Jeremiah 7:19)*

### REFLECTION

Numerous surveys indicate that public speaking ranks as our greatest fear, even higher than death. If public speaking produces such anxiety, imagine being called to deliver a harsh message to a crowd of people. That was precisely the task God called Jeremiah to do. Jeremiah highlights the hypocrisy and self-delusion of Israel. Though engaged in all variety of sin, the people continued to return to the place of worship as if nothing was wrong. Indeed, they ran to the temple as a "den of robbers" (v. 11), deluding themselves into thinking that God would never destroy the very place of His presence. They chanted their mantra, "the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD" (v. 4). History lesson about Shiloh reminded Israel that the place of God's presence was no protection for those who remain in their sin. Jeremiah likewise identified the sin of God's people in failing to bring justice to the foreigner and innocent and violated the explicit commandments of God. Most central to their failings was their idolatry and lack of repentance. The sin of idolatry, does not just provoke God, but harms themselves as well. As God says, "They are harming themselves, to their own shame" (v. 19). God had given His commands, "that it may go well with you" (v. 23). God's commands are for our own good, and our obedience brings blessing and true satisfaction in our lives.

### APPLICATION

Consider Scripture's way of looking at sin. Our disobedience is a fundamental denial of God's blessing intended for us. Without a properly obedient relationship with Him, we miss the best that God has for us. Identify one thing in your life that is falling short of the best God intends for you; then do what Israel did not - repent and seek God's forgiveness.

### PRAYER

LORD, my sins not only sadden Your heart, but they bring harm to my life. I am sorry for my disobedience to Your commands. Help me to be obedient because it brings blessing to my life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## 25 MARCH 2022 – RETURN TO THE LORD

### **READING: HOSEA 14:1-9**

*“Return, Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall!”  
(Hosea 14:1)*

### **REFLECTION**

Hosea’s message is simple, strong, and promising. He calls the people of Israel to come back to God, that is to repent of their sins - return to the LORD their God. He begins his book by mentioning Israel’s sins, and how they have sinned against the LORD. The people of Israel have been backsliding or slipping away from the way of the LORD. Israel’s sins are their unfaithfulness - in times of trouble they turned to other nations for help instead of to God. They also worshipped other gods - the idols. Despite their great sins, God still has compassion on them, and loves them. He wants the people of Israel to come back to Him. They are called God’s people, and therefore belonging to God. Other nations cannot help them; the idols that they worshipped also cannot hear their cry. What the LORD God wants from them is to return to Him. The Lord wants the people of Israel to repent of their sins, because the LORD God still loves them and wants them to be His. In verse 4 He says, “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely!”

### **APPLICATION**

Let us come back to God with humble and repentant hearts, sincerely confessing our sins, and faithfully trusting and accepting Him. He is always waiting for us to come back like a prodigal son - returning to his father.

### **PRAYER**

Dear Lord, we do love shiny things. We love power, money and fame. We think that armies can protect our freedom; we think that our representatives in the government will save us; and we think we find security in our possessions. Help us to find our home in You. Help us to return to You, to trust only You, and to act on that trust for You. In the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

## 26 MARCH 2022 – “FOR I DESIRE MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE”

### **READING: HOSEA 5:15-6:6**

*“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.” (Hosea 6:6)*

### **REFLECTION**

To understand the requirement of God’s desire we must look back to the words of the Shema: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Love for God was the number one priority for the people of Israel. The whole Law, including the offerings and sacrifices, was to serve as an expression of this love for the Lord. However, over time the Israelites began to worship other gods while continuing the ritual of the sacrifices. They “obeyed the Law,” yet they did not display love toward God, and they did not truly know Him. Hosea’s message was a response to Israel’s hypocrisy. God desired their love over external practices of piety. He longed for His people to long for Him rather than simply continue a religious tradition. Scripture often notes that sacrifices to God are incomplete and even offensive without a changed heart that loves and knows the Lord. Jesus would later use Hosea’s teaching against the hypocritical Pharisees, saying, “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’”

### **APPLICATION**

Identify your religious duties and practices which take the place of God in your heart.

### **PRAYER**

Lord, may we not substitute You with our meaningless religious traditions. Let us desire to worship You alone. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**27 MARCH 2022 (FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT)**  
**- REMOVED FROM THE DISGRACE OF BEING SLAVES -**

**READING: JOSHUA 5:9-12**

*Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the place has been called Gilgal to this day. (Joshua 5:9)*

**REFLECTION**

Our focus today is on the mighty work that God has done for His people, the Israelites, after He rescues them from slavery in Egypt and as they enter the Promised Land. After Joshua has taken over the leadership of the people of Israel, God declares that they have finally earned their freedom from the reproach of Egypt. What God has done to them reminds us of our own freedom from sins and death through the gracious and mighty work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just as the Israelites were under slavery, we too were once slaves to sin. Ephesians 2:1 says, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins." But God deals with all sins through His Son's death on the cross. The cross of Jesus is central to our salvation. From the moment the first man and woman sin (see Genesis 3), God has planned that Jesus would die on the cross in order to pay for the penalty of our sins. Because of this, we look forward in faith to God's promise concerning what Jesus has done on the cross to deliver us from sin and death. So, we are no longer slaves to sin. Today, when we look back and believe what our Lord has done for us on the cross, we can be assured that we have received our forgiveness and new life. Even though the world rejects the cross, but Paul's word is very clear concerning the importance of the cross: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Cor.1:18).

**APPLICATION**

When everything seems lost, how shall we ensure that God comes to our rescue? How can we place our hope in God during this difficult time?

**PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, thank you for Your faithfulness even during challenging and trying time like today. Help us Father to rely on You in every step that we take. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## 28 MARCH 2022 - NEW CREATION

### READING: ISAIAH 65.17 – 25

*“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.” (Isaiah 65:17)*

### REFLECTION

Each person may have concern and worries in life that can place him in a situation of uncertainty. This is more so if the person has no source of relief from a situation that can destroy his future. In this passage, we see what God has planned for His people and how He restored their confidence and hope in their lives. Here, Prophet Isaiah is inviting us to think about what had happened to Jerusalem and her people. He witnessed how Jerusalem was in ruin and how much God's faithful people had suffered. However, subsequently the situation had improved, in which the city of Jerusalem had once again become a peaceful place for the returned Israelites. That relief to the people of Jerusalem mirrors what God has in store for His children. He said, "I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind." This is a message of hope for God's people - that under God, joy and happiness would be realised. It means that restoration would happen and events of the past would be forgotten. The healed Israel would continue to be cherished, there would be no more weeping and distress; homes would be built, vineyards would be seen again and their fruits enjoyed, and people would live in harmony under God's care.

### APPLICATION

God is making "a new version of something old". As believers, we need to discover how and in what way this has happened to us; compare our old life grounded by old belief with our present life driven by the Holy Spirit.

### PRAYER

Almighty God, You created me by Your will and redeemed me by Your power; help me to see Your acts in renewing my faith in You, and transform me to be like Your Son Jesus Christ. In His precious name I pray. Amen.

## 29 MARCH 2022 - THE LIVING STREAM

### READING: EZEKIEL 47:1-9, 12

*"... There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live."  
(Ezekiel 47:9)*

### REFLECTION

Imagine this, the water from the temple flows into the sea. Instead of becoming salty it transforms the sea water into fresh water. And it brings healing to the sea. Where the river flows, life abounds. Imagine the church, where the believers are, they are not contaminated by the world but brings life and healing to broken lives, broken marriages and families. Picture yourself ... where God places you, no matter how toxic people are, they don't poison you. Instead, the people experience Jesus through you. Can this be true? "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive.' (John 7:37-39). Jesus is talking about the church and you. He is talking about the One who dwells in you when you believe in Him, i.e., the Creator of everything you see and don't see; and He flows through you.

### APPLICATION

Is your life being led by the Holy Spirit? There are two ways to know; your life is transformed and you bring Christ's life and healing to others. If you want to be led by Him, you should believe and thirst for Him.

### PRAYER

Holy Spirit, I confess I have many thirsts but I don't thirst for You enough. Give me the one thirst I need, so that I will be Your living stream. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen



## 30 MARCH 2022 - HAS GOD ABANDONED US?

### READING: ISAIAH 49:8-15

*“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!” (Isaiah 49:15)*

### REFLECTION

It is unthought of for a mother to abandon her nursing child, or have no compassion for her child when he cries, especially so after she has carried him in her body for nine months. A bond between mother and child was forged through those months. However, it is not strange these days for babies to be abandoned by their mothers. Though there may have been bonds between mother and child but due to human frailty and brokenness brought by sin, a child can be forgotten, abandoned and unloved. Such was the image that was prophesied in Isaiah 49:15. Judah had long abandoned God and their covenant with Him to follow the ways of the idolatrous nations. They worshipped other gods and were immoral in their ways. Due to their persistent rebellion, God would punish them severely. Isaiah prophesied to Judah that they would be taken away to Babylon. Yet, God promised them that He will not forget or leave them in Babylon. He will bring them back to Jerusalem and restore the nation. Though they may think that God has abandoned them, He will not be like a forgetful mother. He will remember them.

### APPLICATION

Perhaps you have been feeling that God has abandoned you. Your prayers seem to go unanswered and His presence does not seem to be as near as it was when you first believed. Perhaps you were led to believe that your sins are too great for God to forgive. Friends, you are his beloved child in Jesus Christ. My advice for you is to call on Him with all your heart, like a child crying for his mother. God has not forgotten you. He is like a loving mother who is ready to carry you in His loving arms when you sincerely call upon Him.

### PRAYER

Father, help me to trust in Your promise that You will never leave or forsake me. I will call upon You for I believe You will answer me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## **31 MARCH 2022 - WHY DID GOD CHANGE HIS MIND?**

### **READING: EXODUS 32:7-14**

*Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened. (Exodus 32:14)*

### **REFLECTION**

A group of young and energetic executives were tasked with an important project to highlight their company's vision and mission statement. Numerous meetings between the management and the executives were held to remind them of the importance of the project and its impact on the company as many potential investors had been invited to witness the launching. Even though the executives had delivered a brilliant work, the management was not happy for the project failed to highlight its main purpose. The management made a decision to dismiss the young executives, but one senior executive pleaded for them to be given a second chance. The management relented on condition that they were not to be paid their incentives for that year. Such was the situation when the people of Israel sinned against God; He was very angry with them and threatened them with condemnation. However, upon Moses' plea, God changed His mind (Exo 32:14) and did not bring disaster upon them. But He still judged them by disallowing all adults born in Egypt, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, from entering the promised land.

### **APPLICATION**

We are condemned because of our sins but Jesus stands in the gap pleading before God for us. Let us remind ourselves that He took upon Himself our sins and by dying on the cross, we who are condemned have been made righteous before God.

### **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, by Your grace, we who are condemned have been made righteous through Your Son Jesus Christ. By Your Holy Spirit, continue to lead and guide us and let Your glorious light brighten our path, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## 1 APRIL 2022 – IMPORTANCE OF OBEYING GOD

### READING: JEREMIAH 26:1-15

*“Perhaps they will listen and each will turn from their evil ways. Then I will relent and not inflict on them the disaster I was planning because of the evil they have done.” (Jeremiah 26:3)*

### REFLECTION

Prophet Jeremiah went to the temple, where he preached to the people who came from all over Judah to worship. He stood in the open court and urged the worshippers to give up their sinful ways and return to God (v. 1-3). If they refused, the temple would be demolished, as what had happened to a tabernacle at Shiloh several centuries earlier (v. 4-6). Religious officials and ordinary citizens alike were so angered at Jeremiah’s words that a riot developed and put Jeremiah in serious physical danger (v.7-9). When the city officials rushed to the temple to intervene, the leaders among the crowd demanded that Jeremiah be executed (v.10-11). Jeremiah defended himself by pointing out that he had only been speaking the message God gave him. His real desire was that the people repent from their sins, for only by such action would they save themselves and their temple from destruction. The city officials accepted his defense (v. 12-16).

### APPLICATION

Have we listened to what God is saying to us? Are we ready to obey Him, no matter what?

### PRAYER

Lord God, by Your grace open our ears that we may hear You; and give us strength to readily obey You in all circumstances. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## 2 APRIL 2022 – “IMPORTANCE OF OBEYING GOD”

### READING: JEREMIAH 11:1-23

*“... ‘when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the iron-smelting furnace.’ I said, ‘Obey me and do everything I command you, and you will be my people, and I will be your God.”* (Jeremiah 11:4 – ASV)

### REFLECTION

I remember during my childhood; my father would not buy any present or gift for me when I disobeyed him and simply disregarded his valuable instructions. He also would not help me and ignored my needs for my rebelliousness against him. From the reading for today, we learn that God is behaving in the same manner when His people disobeyed Him by worshipping other gods. God cursed them for their heedlessness to the covenant that He had established with them. As a result, God punished them and did not listen to their prayers even when they were in deep trouble. God is holy and righteous and He punishes the wicked and the disobedient regardless of who they are. All of us will face judgment when our Saviour Jesus Christ returns. However, God is merciful and if we repent, God will hear our cry and will forgive those who sincerely seek Him. Even though we are not saved by good works, the Holy Scripture is very clear in saying that faith without good work is dead. When we obey God as our loving Father and follow His commands, we will be His people and will be greatly rewarded by Him.

### APPLICATION

How do you treat God’s words or His voice in your daily life? Do you obey and apply it in every area of your life?

### PRAYER

Gracious God, help me to listen and heed Your voice in every aspect of my life. Give me the strength to follow Your commands so that I will be pleasing to You and have an intimate relationship with You, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

**3 APRIL 2022 (FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT)**  
**- THE LORD WILL MAKE A WAY -**

**READING: ISAIAH 43: 16-21**

*"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." (Isaiah 43:19)*

**REFLECTION**

The Israelites, God's chosen people continued with their sin and disobedience. But God remained faithful and here, promised once again to care and to provide for them. God rescued them from Egypt; he parted the waters and threw the chariots, the horses and riders into the torrent (Isa 43:16-17). Now, God has a whole new chapter of the redemptive story in store for them... "behold, I am doing a new thing... I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Part of the "new thing" is that "The Lord will make a way" in the wilderness and provide water in the wasteland, turning it into a fruitful field. Lest we forget, Isaiah was a prophet of the coming Messiah, the Saviour. The rescue from slavery in Egypt is a sign of the rescue from slavery to sin and death. The passing through waters in the Red Sea is a foretaste of the passing through the waters of baptism. God always does new things; He says "I am making everything new" (Revelation 21:5). What a great promise this is for us from God! As we keep walking with God, in his light and truth, we will surely experience aspects of God and his salvation in brand new ways and depths.

**APPLICATION**

Is there any "wilderness and wasteland" in your life? Have you ever felt like you have met dead ends, without any way out? Jesus will make a way, where there seems to be no way.

**PRAYER**

Lord God, thank you for Your faithfulness and loving kindness. Help me to trust in You, even when life seems like a wilderness and all around seems like a wasteland. I believe You will make a way. So let Your river flow, even Your river of blessing for evermore. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## 4 APRIL 2022 – THE LORD ABOVE ALL

### READING: JOSHUA 2:1-14

*“When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.” (Joshua 2:11)*

### REFLECTION

Why did Joshua send the spies secretly? As far as he knew, he would be attacking a heavily fortified city using conventional warfare tactics. He needed strategic information about the city for the upcoming battle. The last time spies were sent, the report they brought back caused disastrous consequences (Num 13:1-14:4). While he did not want to move ahead without information, he also did not want to cause his people to stumble and question his wisdom and the ability to lead the nation. We would assume that Rahab - a pagan, a Canaanite, and a prostitute - would never be interested in God. Yet Rahab was willing to risk everything she had for a God she barely knew. We must not gauge a person’s interest in God by his or her background, lifestyle, or appearances. We should let nothing get in the way of our telling people about God. Rahab recognized something that many of the Israelites did not - the God of heaven is not an ordinary god! He is all powerful. The people of Jericho were afraid because they had heard the news of God’s extraordinary power in defeating the armies across the Jordan River. Today we can worship this same powerful, miracle working God. He is powerful enough to destroy mighty, wicked armies, as He did in Jericho. He is also powerful enough to save us from certain death, as He did with Rahab.

### APPLICATION

Consider that Rahab was a pagan sinner in the city where the culture was wholly given over to the worship of false gods and immorality, with no previous contact with the word of God or the things of God. What is your excuse of not fearing God?

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the many lessons we can learn from Joshua. Help me to carry out Your perfect will; and in times of dangers, I will look to You for direction and guidance and deliberately take my eyes off the logical, putting my trust in You - in active dependence. This I ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## 5 APRIL 2022 – THE LORD HEALS

### **READING: NUMBERS 21:4-9**

*So, Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived. (Numbers 21:9)*

### **REFLECTION**

A whole nation of people travelling on a long journey of survival through difficult terrain on foot led by their leader Moses forms the background of this passage. Israel would face much hardship during this journey to reach Canaan, the Promised Land. The people needed to follow Moses with complete obedience in order to overcome all dangers, uncertainties and enemies. Sadly, Israel frequently went against Moses during the journey. The event in Numbers 21 was the worst as they rebelled against both Moses and God. God's severe punishment of them through the painful and deadly bites of snakes woke the people up into realization of their sinful rebellion. They only found healing, forgiveness (and salvation) by looking at the bronze snake which God instructed Moses to make. As Christians we travel two journeys at the same time. The earthly journey preoccupies us most with a plethora of concerns for our daily needs. The other journey is a spiritual journey of the soul to find spiritual well-being and identity with Christ Jesus. This journey continues through following His word to a deeper walk with Christ as His disciple and to a fuller obedience to Him by bringing Christ-like transformation. Thus, as faithful disciples we follow Christ intentionally through difficult times, trials and failures. This difficult but rewarding journey is ours to have by cultivating a daily relationship with Him through prayer and applying His Word.

### **APPLICATION**

Are you assured of Jesus as your Saviour and Healer? Can you identify the two journeys in your life? As a Christian, you have been called to be a disciple by our Lord, so how can you renew yourself to become His disciple?

### **PRAYER**

Lord God, guide me to the Cross to receive Jesus as Lord and to know His healing in my life. Lord, guide me now as I desire to truly become a true disciple of Jesus, to obey His Word and have a prayer relationship with Him all my days. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## 6 APRIL 2022 – WORSHIP THE ONLY TRUE GOD

### **READING: DANIEL 3:14-20, 24-25, 28**

*“But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” (Daniel 3:18)*

### **REFLECTION**

I still remember as a young Christians, I was kind of holding to the belief that “all religions are the same.” My ancestors used to associate animals as gods that could give them blessings or spiritual guidance in life. As Christians, it is very important that we should no longer be holding onto this ancestral belief. The passage for today reminds us of the extent that we should be taking in opposing and rejecting false gods. We have the example of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were pressured into worshipping a golden image set up by King Nebuchadnezzar. Because of their strong and unshakable faith in the living God, they refused to bow down to worship the image. As a result, the King was enraged and ordered them to be thrown into the burning furnace. Miraculously the three were unharmed because the living and all-powerful God sent his angels to deliver them. As a result, the King acknowledged and praised the only true and living God of the universe!

### **APPLICATION**

Do you still believe or know Christians who still believe in superstitions or still holding onto ancestral beliefs? How might you ensure yourself or your Christian friends or relatives are solely trusting and worshipping the only true and living God?

### **PRAYER**

Living and gracious Father, help our people to recognise and acknowledge that You are the only true God whom we should worship. Help us to discern and know Your attributes so that we will faithfully follow and worship You in our daily lives. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.



## 7 APRIL 2022 – THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

### READING: GENESIS 17:3-9

*“I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.” (Gen 17:7)*

### REFLECTION

A family from up country was invited by a catechist to move to his village. It was a new experience, a new life for this family with no one that they know in this new village. To make them feel accepted the catechist took them in as his adopted family, gave them a piece of land on a hill, and building materials, and make this adoption known to the villagers. To them, this was something totally new – strange dialect, strange culture, strange neighbours, and from that point onwards they live as Christians and discard their pagan beliefs and customs. The land, the building materials, and the declaration that they are the adopted family of the catechist become a sign of the covenant that they are to live permanently in this village now that the villagers have accepted them as one of their own. Our earthly citizenship is temporary (Phil 3:20-21) because our eternal citizenship is in heaven. This is possible as now we live under a new Covenant with God. We now belong to Christ (2 Corinthians 1:21-22) and He has marked us as His own through His Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14).

### APPLICATION

We are just sojourners on this earth (Philippians 3:20). What shall we do to ensure that our citizenship in the kingdom of God is not lost? (Matthew 6:33)

### PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help us as we journey upon this earth, that our hearts and mind will be focused on Your promises in the heavenly dwelling that You have told us through Your Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In His name I pray.  
Amen

## 8 APRIL 2022 – THE LORD IS JUST

### **READING: JEREMIAH 20:10-13**

*But, Almighty Lord, you test people justly; you know what is in their hearts and minds. So let me see you take revenge on my enemies, for I have placed my cause in your hands. (Jeremiah 20:12 GNT)*

### **REFLECTION**

Most organisation of the world is built upon the opinion of the majority. Whilst diplomacy is a way forward for a progressive nation, it is easier to just go with the majority for the sake of peacekeeping in the community. I remember being trapped in a situation where the majority opinion rules, in which I was forced to admit a mistake that was not done by me. This is where what seemingly a just system can easily be manipulated for the sake of the wealthier, powerful, or charismatic person. In our reading today, the same thing happened to prophet Jeremiah when he prophesied against the will of the king and the entire nation. As a result, he got himself bound to chains by the priests (verse 2). Everyone slandered him (verse 10), wishing that the misfortune he prophesied against the nation would happen to him instead. In his frustration, Jeremiah lamented to the Lord with the hope that He will preserve His justice. What could be the source of Jeremiah's hope you may ask? Well, the mighty deeds of the Lord to His people have been the perpetual story from generation to generation (verses 12-13) and the Lord will stand with the people who listen and obey His will (verse 12).

### **APPLICATION**

Is there anything that God has put you through that goes against the view of the majority? If so, be faithful to it and trust that He will defend your cause.

### **PRAYER**

At times of uncertainty, unsure of the road that You are leading us to, help us to trust in Your words that the present injustice will eventually end upon Christ's return with His perfect justice. Amen.

## 9 APRIL 2022 – “THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD”

### READING: EZEKIEL 37:21-END

*“They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offences, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people and I will be their God.” (Ezekiel 37:23)*

### REFLECTION

I’ve never been a big fan of reunions. The idea of getting together with people we haven’t seen or even talked to in years, where some would take advantage of the gathering to impress each other, is not something that I look forward to. However, a family reunion is somewhat better because the people are related to each other and the matter of impressing each other is less of an issue. But even family reunions can sometimes be awkward when one is asked some very personal and uncomfortable question. Fortunately for us, Ezekiel describes another kind of reunion, one that all of God’s people can look forward to with great anticipation. Ezekiel 37:23-24 teaches us that we as God’s people have been redeemed from rebellion to obedience. Because of our sins, we were spiritually separated from God. But through the work of Christ on the Cross, God has redeemed all who have repented from their sins so that they could once again be His people and He would be their God. For the Israelites and for their own good, God gave them the Law. It was intended to be a guide on how they could live in a manner that would be the most beneficial for them. It would safeguard their dignity. Living in obedience to the Law, not only brings glory to God, but also serves to distinguish them as God’s people from the nations around them.

### APPLICATION

Find your ways to obey God. How would you maintain your distinctiveness in obeying Christ that could bring glory to God?

### PRAYER

Gracious Heavenly Father, thank you for the work of Your redemption. By Your Holy Spirit, help me and grant me strength to live in obedience to Your will so that I could wholeheartedly serve You, not only as my Saviour but also as my only God. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

The following devotionals are condensed from “Following Jesus to the Cross”  
by Revd. Dr. Lim Kar Yong.

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## **10 APRIL 2022 (PALM SUNDAY) – THE TRIUMPHANT ENTRY OF JESUS**

### **READING: MARK 11:1 – 11**

#### **REFLECTION**

I have led numerous study tours to the Holy Land. Without exception, there is always no lack of excitement among us when we gather at our local airport for departure. I imagine it would have been similar for the pilgrims in Jesus' time. Scattered all over the Mediterranean world, they had to make their pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover every year, as required by the Law of Moses. As they descended the Mount of Olives and approached Jerusalem, the panoramic view of the city and the majestic Temple Mount would have greeted them. The tiredness from a long, weary journey would have given way to a sense of joy and excitement upon seeing the temple, the symbol of God's presence for the Jews, and the pride of the nation. Some 2,000 years ago, traditionally known as Palm Sunday, the long-anticipated Messiah approached the city with the pilgrims. The crowd shouted with joy and welcomed Jesus as their king as He rode on a donkey. However, Jesus' emotional reaction was the opposite of that of the crowd and His disciples. He wept for the city, knowing that Jerusalem did not recognise her ruler and king. The temple was no longer fulfilling its function of drawing people close to God, leading Jesus to cleanse it the following day, and subsequently to predict its destruction (13:1–2). The temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. This was a very sad ending for a nation that rejected God and His Messiah. This reminds us that we cannot impress God with our magnificent church buildings. He is looking for people with contrite hearts that seek Him.

#### **APPLICATION**

Jesus wept for Jerusalem because Israel had forsaken God. If you were there, would you weep with Jesus? Do you weep for your nation, your city, or even your church?

#### **PRAYER**

Almighty and everlasting God, Your Son Jesus Christ wept for the city of Jerusalem for rejecting the Messiah. Look upon us with mercy according to Your steadfast love, and as we confess our sins to You, create in us a clean heart and restore us to the joy of Your salvation. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## 11 APRIL 2022 – JESUS PRAYS AT GETHSEMANE

**READING: MARK 14:32–42**

### REFLECTION

In His final moments on earth, Jesus struggled in deep anguish in the garden of Gethsemane. As He looked west from the garden, He would see the temple in all its beauty. There, thousands of animals were sacrificed every year, their blood staining the altar. But the blood had no real power to take away sins. This view would have reminded Jesus of all that lay ahead and how His blood would soon be shed on the cross as He sacrificed himself willingly to atone for the sins of all mankind. As Jesus wrestled with this difficult cup that He had to drink, He asked His three disciples, Peter, James, and John, to support Him in prayer. However, they failed to stand alongside Jesus in His hour of need. Despite Jesus pleading with them three times to keep awake, they fell asleep. At the most crucial hour, the disciples showed that they did not fully comprehend the cost of following Jesus. In their journey of discipleship, they had argued over who was the greatest and clamoured for status and positions of power. Up to this point, they still did not understand what it meant to share in Jesus' cup of suffering and to take up their crosses to follow Him, even to the point of dying for their faith. Likewise, Jesus has called us to follow Him, and each of us has a cup that we must drink. At times, the burden we carry may be heavy. We may even be tempted to remove the cup. But may we draw strength as we reflect on Jesus' prayer in the garden of Gethsemane: "Not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36).

### APPLICATION

Is there a difficult "cup" that God is asking you to drink? How are you responding to Him? What will enable you to pray: "Not what I will, but what you will"?

### PRAYER

Merciful Father, we remember Jesus our Lord who agonised and prayed earnestly in the garden to obey Your will. Strengthen our weak knees and deepen our desire to please You, so that we, Your church, may seek to do Your will. May we shine Your light in the darkness of this world until all people come to know Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

## 12 APRIL 2022 – THE TRIALS OF JESUS

**READING: MARK 14:53–65**

### REFLECTION

When others throw allegations at us, our natural human tendency is to be defensive. We want to prove our innocence. But Jesus refused to answer all the allegations during His trial. It was not until the high priest, Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57, 63–64), asked if He was the Messiah that He finally broke His silence and answered in the affirmative. Jesus paid a high price for His honesty. Caiaphas equated Jesus' answer with blasphemy, a charge that deserved the death penalty, which the Jewish court would pronounce the following day. For speaking the truth, Jesus was tortured before being delivered to the Roman authorities (Mark 14:65). Caiaphas resurfaced in Acts 4:1–22, after Peter and John healed a crippled man. Together with other elders and teachers of the law, he warned the disciples not to speak about Jesus. However, Peter and John boldly stood their ground and challenged the council of elders, saying: "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (vv. 19–20). They continued to proclaim the name of Jesus without fear. What about us? When a situation calls for us to stand on the side of the truth, what is our response? Are we quick to defend ourselves and our reputation, but tend to remain silent in defending the name and the glory of God in our pluralistic world today? May we learn to be like Peter and John, who boldly testified about Jesus even in the most hostile circumstances.

### APPLICATION

During the trial of Jesus, Peter denied Jesus three times. However, when he and John were tried before the same high priest who sentenced Jesus to death, he was bold and courageous. What could have contributed to this significant change? What stops you from being like Peter?

### PRAYER

Our Lord Jesus, You remained true to Your calling as the Messiah during Your trials. Help us to set aside everything that weighs us down and the sins that entangle us. May we fix our eyes on You as we run with perseverance and finish this race that You have marked out for us. In Your name I pray. Amen.

## 13 APRIL 2022 – JESUS BEFORE PILATE

### READING: MARK 15:1-15

#### REFLECTION

When the religious leaders brought Jesus to him, Pilate was not too convinced that their charges were political in nature. He suspected the matter stemmed from their envy of Jesus. Nonetheless, Pilate allowed himself to be swayed by them. When the religious leaders tried to corner him by saying that he was no friend of Caesar if he released Jesus (John 19:12), Pilate weighed his political options and realised it was too much of a risk to his reputation to release Jesus. As the crowd, stirred up by the chief priests, shouted, “Crucify him” (Mark 15:13–14), Pilate gave in to pressure and did what the religious authorities and the multitudes wanted: he had Jesus crucified and Barabbas freed (v. 15). Pilate is an example of a selfish person who preferred to hold on to his own position, status, and power, even though he knew he was doing the wrong thing by sentencing Jesus, who was innocent, to the cross. His conscience was seared when he made the biggest compromise of his life. How simple it is for us, too, to cave in to pressure from our peers, society, and workplace. How easy it is to do something that we know is ethically and morally wrong, or to remain silent when we see injustice around us. Do we compromise on what is right because it may jeopardise our reputation and status? Let us be people of courage and resolve to stand up and speak for the truth, and be a voice to the voiceless and marginalised.

#### APPLICATION

Why can it be difficult to stand up and speak the truth? Why is it easier to keep quiet? Why does God not want us to compromise our morals? Have there been times when you chose to protect your position and status instead of standing up for the truth? If so, perhaps this is a good time to ask the Lord for forgiveness.

#### PRAYER

Almighty God, give us courage so that we who have been set free by Your truth will constantly speak the truth. May we not be afraid to rebuke wrongdoings, and be courageous to suffer patiently for truth’s sake. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.



## 14 APRIL (MAUNDY THURSDAY) – THE PASSION OF JESUS

### READING: MARK 15:16–24

#### REFLECTION

The cross Jesus carried to Golgotha was too heavy, so Simon of Cyrene was asked to help Him (Mark 15:21). This encounter with Jesus changed his life. Simon was a Jew and a native of North Africa who probably had just arrived in Jerusalem for the Passover. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus. The fact that his sons are named in the Gospel suggests that they were well known to the audience of Mark's Gospel in Rome. Interestingly, Paul also mentions a Rufus and his mother, who was like a mother to Paul himself (Romans 16:13). If this is indeed the same Rufus, it suggests that Simon became a follower of Jesus after carrying the cross, and his family, too, became believers. Simon's small act of obedience to help Jesus appears to have transformed the lives of his whole family and led them to play greater roles in the kingdom of God later. Often, we may think that we must be fully equipped or be fully matured in Christ in order to serve God. But God is looking only for people who are faithful and obedient to serve Him. Our first "yes" to a small task may transform us to be more like Christ, and open doors to more significant opportunities to serve the Lord down the road. Are we willing to be obedient to serve the Lord, even though it may seem to be a "small" task of carrying another's burden?

#### REFLECTION

Is there a friend in need that the Lord might be asking you to help today? Pray for the strength and grace to accept this load, with the faith that your obedience will not be in vain.

#### PRAYER

Almighty God, we thank You for the inspiration of Simon of Cyrene, who carried the heavy weight of the cross for Jesus. Give us grace and strength to be sensitive to the needs of others, and to bear one another's burdens as we seek to be faithful and obedient to You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## 15 APRIL 2022 (GOOD FRIDAY) – THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

**READING: MARK 15:25–39**

### **REFLECTION**

Crucifixion was a very barbaric form of death invented by the Romans for slaves and those who rebelled against the Roman authorities. Thousands of criminals were crucified on the cross, and this sight would have been familiar to many in the first century. When Jesus invited His disciples to take up their crosses and follow Him, the imagery must have been shocking to them. Apart from the gruesome imagery, many Jews would have been offended by the cross. According to Deuteronomy 21:23, anyone put to death on a tree was under God’s curse. In addition, it would have been an abhorrent notion to die hanging naked on the cross, for many viewed public nakedness to be shameful. It was therefore unsurprising that many mocked Jesus when He was dying on the cross. Those who passed by, the religious leaders, and the thieves next to Jesus threw sarcastic comments at Him. The religious leaders even went to the extent of declaring that they had no other king but Caesar (JOHN 19:15). Who would have believed that this was God’s only Son, so helpless and powerless on the cross, dying for the sins of the world? Yet, there was an unlikely person who witnessed all the mocking and suffering of Jesus. Ironically, it was a Gentile centurion at the foot of the cross who grasped the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus and uttered, “Surely this man was the Son of God!” (MARK 15:39). This Gentile had found salvation in Jesus.

### **APPLICATION**

The religious leaders declared that they had no other king but Caesar. Likewise, we can at times be swayed by circumstances and tempted to shift our allegiance from our Lord to the Caesars in our life. Have we traded the King of Kings for other Caesars in our lives, like material possessions and wealth, career and honour, and status and position?

### **PRAYER**

Almighty God, we remember how Jesus our Lord surrendered into the hands of sinners and suffered death on the cross. Help us to follow His example of humility and obedience, that we may deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him daily. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## 16 APRIL 2022 – THE BURIAL OF JESUS

**READING: MARK 15:42–47**

### **REFLECTION**

Two disciples came to claim the body of Jesus for burial (John 19:38–42). Mark mentions one of them, Joseph of Arimathea. He was a secret disciple because he feared the Jews. This kept him from making an open stand for Jesus, at least until Jesus' trials. He was a minority objecting to the crucifixion of Jesus. Even though he could not persuade the religious leaders to release Jesus, he wanted to ensure that Jesus received a proper burial before the Sabbath instead of being left on the cross or disposed with other criminals to be scavenged by dogs. By stepping forward to claim the body of Jesus, Joseph was now exposing himself as a loyal follower of Jesus. This was a bold act indeed. Another disciple who came with Joseph was Nicodemus. He was also a secret disciple of Jesus. This explains why he had earlier visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought along approximately 35kg of expensive spices to prepare Jesus for burial. This unusually large amount of spices was typically used for members of royalty or highly respected individuals. In other words, Nicodemus believed that Jesus was King and deserved such extravagance in preparation for His burial! When the situation called for them to make a stand, both Joseph and Nicodemus obeyed and no longer hid in the shadows as secret disciples. They were willing to risk being ostracised by their religious leaders and community. Sadly, the disciples of Jesus who had followed Him all these years were nowhere to be seen. What a contrast! May we be like Joseph and Nicodemus, willing to be faithful witnesses for Jesus.

### **APPLICATION**

Are we behaving like secret disciples of Jesus because we fear the consequences of publicly declaring our faith? What hinders us from acknowledging our allegiance to Jesus to our family, relatives, friends, colleagues, and neighbours?

### **PRAYER**

Almighty Father, forgive us when we behave like secret disciples of Jesus our Lord. Give us courage to be faithful witnesses of the gospel through our words and our actions, so that we will always seek to glorify You, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **17 APRIL 2022 (EASTER DAY) – THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS**

**READING: MARK 16:1–8, 19**

### **REFLECTION**

Mark's narrative of the resurrection has long puzzled many interpreters. After witnessing the most glorious and significant event in the course of human history, the women who came to anoint Jesus' body "went out and fled from the tomb" because they were "trembling and bewildered" and they "said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid" (Mark 16:8). This was hardly a proper ending to the Gospel! Or, was it? One of the interesting literary patterns employed by Mark is the "command to silence" motif. Throughout the Gospel, we read frequently that Jesus did not permit people to tell others about himself or the miracles He did. Jesus knew that the crowd would make Him their political king. This was contrary to His mission on earth, which was to give His life as a ransom for many. Because of this, He commanded people not to tell others about Him, at least not until He had risen from the dead. But after the resurrection, Jesus' followers were commanded to spread the gospel. Yet, Mark never tells us whether the women eventually overcame their fear and went to tell the others about Jesus' resurrection. Many readers who have been following Mark's narrative would be left wondering, "Did they go?" This may well have been the point of Mark's omission of the women's response! As readers ask this question of the women, the gospel also invites us to ask this question of ourselves. Have we gone? Have we been faithfully proclaiming this glorious gospel of Jesus Christ who died, rose, and will come again? As the ascended Jesus is the same Jesus who will come again (Acts 1:10–11), may we have the courage to go and tell this good news to those who need to hear it.

### **APPLICATION**

Before His ascension, Jesus gave His followers the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). How are you obeying Jesus' commission to go and make disciples of all nations?

### **PRAYER**

Everlasting Father, grant us strength and boldness to go and make disciples of all nations. May we proclaim Him as the Saviour of the world so that people will come to know Him and worship at His feet. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## DEVOTIONAL AUTHORS

<b>DATE</b>	<b>OCCASIONS</b>	<b>AUTHORS</b>
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3-Mar-22		Revd. Wity Kendu
4-Mar-22		Revd. Kelvin Jawa
5-Mar-22		Revd. Timon Lugi
6-Mar-22	First Sunday of Lent	Revd. Canon Roannie W Cannidy
7-Mar-22		Revd. David Tan Kok Kui
8-Mar-22		Revd. Robin Sabai
9-Mar-22		Revd. Stephen Gendang
10-Mar-22		Revd. Augustine Saidi
11-Mar-22		Revd. Stanley Kiew
12-Mar-22		Revd. Wilston Trin
13-Mar-22	Second Sunday of Lent	Revd. Canon Dennis Gimang
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17-Mar-22		Very Revd. Kho Thong Meng
18-Mar-22		Revd. James Juhari
19-Mar-22		Revd. Canon Andrew Shie
20-Mar-22	Third Sunday of Lent	Revd. Canon Alfred Damu Bulang
21-Mar-22		Revd. Dato' Bong Ah Loi
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24-Mar-22		Revd. Trevor Tinda
25-Mar-22		Revd. Kebin Suur
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27-Mar-22	Fourth Sunday of Lent	Rt. Revd. Nelson Ugas Bulang
28-Mar-22		Ven. Andrew S. Pahah
29-Mar-22		Revd. Johnny Chin
30-Mar-22		Revd. Stephen Chin
31-Mar-22		Revd. Holden Osin

<b>DATE</b>	<b>OCCASIONS</b>	<b>AUTHORS</b>
1-Apr-22		Revd. Kamor Diah
2-Apr-22		Revd. Ralpheal Rueben Bonnie
3-Apr-22	Fifth Sunday of Lent	Rt. Revd. Datuk Danald Jute
4-Apr-22		Ven. Jose Jol Endru
5-Apr-22		Revd. Ivor Emmanuel Lim
6-Apr-22		Revd. Jeffry Renos Nawie
7-Apr-22		Revd. Lawrence Wah Onn
8-Apr-22		Revd. Walter MacDaniel Nakan
9-Apr-22		Revd. Widos Pauh
10-Apr-22	Palm Sunday	Revd. Dr. Lim Kar Yong
11-Apr-22		Revd. Dr. Lim Kar Yong
12-Apr-22		Revd. Dr. Lim Kar Yong
13-Apr-22		Revd. Dr. Lim Kar Yong
14-Apr-22	Maundy Thursday	Revd. Dr. Lim Kar Yong
15-Apr-22	Good Friday	Revd. Dr. Lim Kar Yong
16-Apr-22		Revd. Dr. Lim Kar Yong
17-Apr-22	Easter Day	Revd. Dr. Lim Kar Yong