

An Invitation to a Holy Lent 2026

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Dear Friends,

May the Peace of Christ guide you and keep you through this season of Lent.

Lent is a beautiful season of preparation for Holy Week and Easter. It is a time to notice and intentionally resist the pervasive cultural draw to self-focus, self-reliance, and self-satisfaction and return to a focus on God's glory, God's provision, and God's calling to love and good works.

On Ash Wednesday we hear the call to a Holy Lent "by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and alms-giving; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word." Our prayer is that this devotional guide may help lead you in prayerful self-examination and growth in the transforming power of God's Love.

In keeping with our theme this year of "**Cultivating Peace in a Culture of Violence**," this Lenten devotional invitation will take much of its content from the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount contains some of the most counter-cultural teachings of Jesus. We should expect to experience resistance to these teachings simply because they challenge our cultural assumptions. *Resistance* is neither good nor bad, it is simply an invitation to pray and discern. Noticing our resistance is often the first step in accepting the Lord's invitation to repentance (knowing differently) and transformation.

There are several ways that you may choose to use this devotional to guide you through Lent.

First, we will be hosting a weekly discussion on Sundays during Lent focusing on the way of righteousness described by Isaiah. You are invited to join us or use these pages to host your own discussion in your family or with a community of friends. (pages 3-10)

Second, there is an invitation to pray through the Beatitudes during Lent as a way of cultivating peace in your own life. (pages 11-13)

Finally, there is an invitation to pray through the weekdays of Lent using the Sermon on the Mount as a guide. (pages 14-22)

A prayer for Lent -

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

An Invitation to Walk in the Way of Righteousness

The invitation:

In the Beatitudes, Jesus proclaims, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” This begs the question, “How do we recognize righteousness?”

Isaiah warns the people of Jerusalem about the coming judgement of God and offers this hope to the righteous.

“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?

Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,

who despises the gain of oppressions,

who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,

who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed

and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,

he will dwell on the heights;

his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;

his bread will be given him; his water will be sure. (Isaiah 33:14b-16)

We will allow this description of righteousness to guide our journey through the weeks of Lent. May we indeed hunger and thirst for righteousness and may the Lord satisfy us.

Ash Wednesday - 18 FEB - An Invitation To Lent

“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?

Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”

*He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,
he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.*

Too often the wrath of God coming in judgement as a consuming fire has been used to foster a fear based faith. However, the Biblical image is truly an image of the fierceness of God’s Love and the purity of His Holiness.

God describes himself as “a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Deuteronomy 4:24). God’s Love for us is so fierce that our idolatries are swept away and consumed in His presence. Lent is a time to allow this cleansing fire to purify our hearts from idolatry and fill our hearts with God’s Love. Lent asks us if we are willing to stand in this consuming fire and be purified.

Are there idolatries, temptations, or habits that God is inviting you to submit to His consuming fire during this season?

Steadfast faith in God, resisting the temptation to the idolatry that abounds around us, also sustains and protects us in the face of the fiery taunts and persecutions of the world in the same way that the three young men were saved in the furnace (Daniel 3). Let us use this canticle from Morning Prayer (BCP 2019) close our time of self-examination with praise.

BENEDICTUS ES, DOMINE

Glory to you, Lord God of our fathers; *
you are worthy of praise; glory to you.
Glory to you for the radiance of your holy Name; *
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.
Glory to you in the splendor of your temple; *
on the throne of your majesty, glory to you.
Glory to you, seated between the Cherubim; *
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.
Glory to you, beholding the depths; *
in the high vault of heaven, glory to you.
Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; *
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.

- SONG OF THE THREE YOUNG MEN, 29-34

1st Sunday - 22 FEB - Examining Our Walk

*“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?
Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”*

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
*who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,
he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.*

In the Sermon on the Mount and other teachings, Jesus calls us to walk with a conspicuous witness to God’s glory rather than with a conspicuous piety for our own glory. Jesus often calls out the religious leaders of His day for their outward piety and inward idolatry. Walking righteously is not a set of behaviors to be followed but rather a humble obedience to the leading of God.

The Lord speaks through the prophet Jeremiah condemning the leaders of the people saying,
“They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially,
Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’
But there is no peace.” Jeremiah 6:16

The Lord then invites the people to return to Him saying,

Thus says the LORD:
“Stand by the roads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way is; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls.”
But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ Jeremiah 6:16

This week, we will be examining the way of our walking. I invite you to ask the Holy Spirit to review with you the past week or so. The following questions may help in this review.

In what ways have my actions served as a witness to God’s work and the glory of His Kingdom?

In what ways have my actions sought my own glory and the attention of others?

In what ways have I sought a superficial healing and an illusion of peace?

In what ways have I asked God to show me His way? How did I respond when He answered?

As I look forward into the next week, how might God be inviting me to walk righteously? In what situations do I need wisdom, discernment, or strength? How willing am I to submit to God’s will in these situations? How might I ask others to pray for me?

2nd Sunday - 1 MAR - Examining Our Speech

*“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?
Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”
He who walks righteously and **speaks uprightly**,
who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,
he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.*

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus The manner in which we talk is much more than an external behavior. Our speech provides a window into the condition of our heart.

Jesus teaches us that it is “not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.” Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” He answered, “Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” And he said, “Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and so passes on? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.” (Matthew 15:10-20)

This week, we will be examining the way of our speaking. I invite you to ask the Holy Spirit to review with you the past week or so. The following questions may help in this review.

As I consider what I have said to others in the past week, what is springing forth from my heart?

What have I left unsaid that I should have spoken?

As I look at the words I say to myself, what effect do these have on my heart?

As I look at the week ahead, how might I ask the Holy Spirit to guard my heart and my tongue that I may indeed speak uprightly?

3rd Sunday - 8 MAR - Examining Our Economic Practices

*“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?
Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”
He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
**who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,**
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,
he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.*

The industrialization and globalization of our economy has brought mixed results and many questions about the trade offs which have accompanied these changes such as “Are cheaper goods worth fewer manufacturing jobs?” These are not questions with simple right and wrong answers but rather invitations to awareness and discernment. One of the biggest certainties of effect from globalization and industrialization is that it has placed a greater distance between producer and consumer. As consumers, we no longer personally know the person who is producing most of the goods we purchase.

This week, we will be examining our ways of doing business. I invite you to ask the Holy Spirit to review with you the past week or so. The following questions may help in this review.

What are the “gains of oppressions” around us? Is it in the things produced through oppressive labor practices? Or things produced by oppressing and destroying the creation around us? Or things which oppress us in their use and consumption?

How might we be “holding bribes”? Do low prices and convenience “bribe” us to look the other way and ignore the impact of our purchase? Or have we become so comfortable that we are unwilling to consider change?

Consider the purchases that you have made in the past week. Select one or two to consider through the entire supply chain. Where might there be oppressions? Where might there be love and good works? Are there alternatives to consider? Take notice of your resistance and prayerfully consider how the Holy Spirit may be leading you.

Consider the purchases you may make in the coming week. Is there an opportunity to “shake the hand” of the one who is making or growing what you are buying? Is there an opportunity to purchase something that is free from the “gains of oppression”?

4th Sunday - 15 MAR - Examining What We Are Listening To

*“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?
Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”
He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,
he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.*

We live in a day and age in which we can choose what we are hearing and tailor it to our desire. We can choose what bias of news we hear. We can choose what music we play, what podcasts or audiobooks fill our ear buds, what teaching or commentary we listen to from “Christian” sources.

This week, we will be examining what we are choosing to listen to. I invite you to ask the Holy Spirit to review with you the past week or so. The following questions may help in this review.

As I look back at the past week or so, what have I chosen to listen to?

Am I listening to murderous speech? Does what I choose to listen to cultivate violence or peace in my heart?

Our culture of near infinite choice also allows us to choose what we do not listen to. Paul warns Timothy that, “the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

As I look back in the past week, are there truths that I have chosen to mute or drown out by choosing to listen to comfortable lies and half-truths?

Let us here take a moment to pause and remember that the purpose of our self-examination during this season of lent is not to induce guilt or shame but to lead us to repentance and amendment of life, living fully in our identity as Beloved children of the Father. Let us pray again the prayer with which we opened Lent:

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Now, I invite you to look ahead into the coming week and consider what you desire to listen to. How might the Holy Spirit be inviting you to listen to those things which lead us to love and good works and stop our ears from hearing of bloodshed?

5th Sunday - 22 MAR - Examining Where Our Eyes Are Drawn

*“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?
Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”
He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,
he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.*

We live in a culture that bombards us with images, seeking to draw our eye and catch our attention.

This week, we will be examining those things upon which our eyes linger. I invite you to ask the Holy Spirit to review with you the past week or so. The following questions may help in this review.

As I look back at the past week or so, where has my eye lingered?

Your phone likely knows more about where your eye lingers than any of us would like to admit. Take a moment to consider the advertisements and other content that are pushed on your phone. What insight might this give into what is catching your attention?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus links the focus of our eyes to the health of our hearts.

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! (Matthew 6:19-23)*

Unhealthy eyes draw our hearts to covetousness and lust. As we look toward the coming week, how might we shut our eyes from looking upon evil? What might we turn our eyes toward instead to be full of light?

Palm Sunday - 29 MAR - Receiving Grace

*“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?
Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”*

*He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,*

***he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.***

The roller coaster ride from the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem to the Cross and the tomb and then to the glory of the Resurrection is a journey that leads us to question what provides us security, protection, and provision. The people welcome Jesus in Messianic triumph expecting an earthly king and an earthly kingdom, a very human way of providing their own security and provision with God as a safety net. The way of Jesus calls us to a heavenly King and a heavenly Kingdom that at times is inexplicable from our human perspective. Our passage from Isaiah concludes with the promise that those who dwell in the presence of the Lord and walk in the way of righteousness receive both protection and provision.

As we conclude our Lenten journey by traveling with Jesus and the disciples through Holy Week, we will examine the ways in which we are receiving provision and protection. I invite you to ask the Holy Spirit to review with you the past week or so. The following questions may help in this review.

What makes me feel safe?

Is the protection of God my primary refuge or my last resort?

How might God be inviting me to receive His protection, even if it seems inexplicable or even reckless from a purely human perspective? Am I willing to receive this invitation?

As I look at my possessions, how much is enough?

Could I be content with a fortress of rocks, daily bread, and clean water given from the hand of God?

How might God be inviting me to receive His provision, even if it seems inexplicable or even reckless from a purely human perspective? Am I willing to receive this invitation?

As I take a moment to reflect on this Lenten journey, how have I noticed God at work in me and around me? In what ways has God invited me to draw closer to Him?

As I look forward, how might I carry these lessons and invitations into the season of Easter and beyond.

An Invitation to Pray the Beatitudes

The invitation:

Set aside a time and a place to quiet yourself before the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you read and meditate upon the ways that Jesus describes the blessings of the Kingdom.

You may choose to simply pray for the promised blessing in this manner, “Lord, bless me with a poverty of spirit that I may know the kingdom of heaven.”

The blessings may also remind you of other places within Scripture, spiritual practices, or portions of the liturgy that describe or elaborate on the blessing.

I offer below the ways in which I have been praying through the Beatitudes.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

*O Lord, my heart is not lifted up;
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.
O Israel, hope in the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore. (Psalm 131)*

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Mourning takes many forms in our lives. I invite you to notice the ways in which you are sad or grieving. Allow God to comfort you.

I invite you to notice your mourning over the things that are distressing in your circumstances and the world around us. Present these things to God in lament expressing your distress, acknowledging your own powerlessness to change these circumstances, crying out for God to act and waiting for His response. Allow God’s presence to comfort you and respond in praise.

I invite you to notice your mourning over the ways in which you have turned away from God’s presence and His will. Use these to guide your confession and be comforted in God’s forgiveness.

“Blessed are the meek (gentle), for they shall inherit the earth.”

The word translated as meek is also translated as gentle. Notice how Jesus describes Himself as gentle and invites us to learn gentleness as we follow Him.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

You may wish to consider also the Christ Hymn (Ephesians 2:5-11)

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

*“Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?
Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”
He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
who despises the gain of oppressions,
who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe,
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed
and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,
he will dwell on the heights;
his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks;
his bread will be given him; his water will be sure. (Isaiah 33:14b-16)*

Examen - How am I walking and speaking? What are my hands busy with? What do my eyes seek? What do I listen to? Where do I seek provision and security?

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

THE KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

And see if there be any grievous way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting! (Psalm 139:23-24)

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

THE AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

grant us your peace.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

We can speak hard Truth and endure the rejections and temptations of the world only when we are firmly grounded in our identity as beloved children of God.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. (1 John 3:1)

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Rejection, criticism, and even perceived persecution is not an automatic banner of authentic ministry.

Examen - When I feel rejected, reviled, or persecuted, what is false in the accusations and what may be true? Am I confident that I am speaking God's Truth or have I in some way twisted Scripture to fit my purposes? If others do as I say will it lead them closer to God and inspire them to love and good works? Does the Lord indeed doth say? Where this is so, how am I rejoicing in God's love and comfort and looking to God's promise?

An Invitation to Use the Sermon on the Mount for Daily Prayer

The invitation:

During the season of Lent, consider prayerfully reading through the Sermon on the Mount each week. Each weekday, a portion of the Sermon on the Mount is presented with an introduction from the Beatitudes. On Saturday, Psalm 85 is offered as a way of reflecting upon the week.

As you read, notice the portions of Jesus' teaching that draw your attention. Pray and ask what the Lord seeks to show you.

Notice any resistance or desire to "tame" the teaching that you experience. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to bring you a deeper understanding and obedience.

Notice the ways in which you are comforted or encouraged. Pray and rest in these.

MONDAY - Matthew 5:2-20

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek (gentle), for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Christ Came to Fulfill the Law

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Anger

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Lust

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Divorce

“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

Retaliation

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And

if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Love Your Enemies

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Giving to the Needy

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The Lord's Prayer

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Fasting

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Do Not Be Anxious

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Judging Others

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Ask, and It Will Be Given

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

The Golden Rule

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

A Tree and Its Fruit

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

I Never Knew You

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Build Your House on the Rock

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

The Authority of Jesus

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

SATURDAY - Psalm 85

1 LORD, you have been gracious to your land; *
you have turned away the captivity of Jacob.
2 You have forgiven the offence of your people *
and covered all their sins.
3 You have taken away all your displeasure *
and turned yourself from your wrathful indignation.
4 Restore us then, O God our Savior, *
and let your anger cease from us.
5 Will you be displeased at us for ever, *
and will you stretch out your wrath from one generation to another?
6 Will you not turn again and quicken us, *
that your people may rejoice in you?
7 Show us your mercy, O LORD, *
and grant us your salvation.
8 I will hearken to what the LORD God will say, *
for he shall speak peace unto his people, and to his saints, that they turn not again.
9 For his salvation is near to those who fear him, *
that glory may dwell in our land.
10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
11 Truth shall flourish out of the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
12 Indeed, the LORD shall show goodness, *
and our land shall give its increase.
13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and he shall direct his going in the way.