

FEBRUARY 25, 2018
SECOND SUNDAY
IN LENT



Jesus teaches the way of the cross.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 8:31-38	Jesus predicts his death
Monday	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16	Sign of the covenant
Tuesday	Romans 4:13-25	God's promise realized thru faith
Wednesday	Mark 9:30-37	The Son of Man betrayed
Thursday	Matthew 16:1-26	Taking up the cross
Friday	Mark 10:32-45	Jesus again predicts his death
Saturday	Psalms 22:23-31	Suffering and praise
Sunday	John 2:13-22	Jesus cleanses the temple

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

[Jesus] called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any wants to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." **Mark 8:34 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, give us faith to trust the way of the cross that we may experience hope in the midst of our hurts and disappointments through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Thank you, God, for all you give; without your gifts we would not live. May we do more than sip and swallow. May we trust your Son and follow. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God who gives life to the dead, give you faith and courage to follow Jesus.
(Romans 4:17b)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Lord Jesus, You Shall
Be My Song*



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- If you had all the power to do what you want, what would you want to do?
- Peter rejects Jesus' teaching that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, and die at the hands of those who hate him. How is this difficult for us to accept, even today?
- What does it mean to pick up your cross? How is it difficult to pick up your cross and follow Jesus?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 8:31-39.

Peter represents the world that prefers power and control. Jesus says that is the way humans think, not God. Our human tendency is to find answers and leaders that make things sound simple and easy. The cross of Christ shows the way of God that accepts suffering, rejection, and death as the way to life and hope. God's victory is hidden in defeat. God's glory is hidden in the cross. The good news of Jesus Christ is that God enters into our hurts and our sense of rejection and says we are healed, accepted, and saved through the cross of Christ. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection gives us the faith and strength to pick up our cross, that is, to lose our sense of control in our own lives for the sake of the gospel (vv. 34-35). Even then, our faith involves a lifelong journey to reject the message of Peter in favor of following Jesus. Pray for God to be with you and others in your hurts and disappointments to bring healing and new life, to make "all things new" (Romans 4:17b). Pray for the gift of faith to pick up your cross and follow Jesus.

Pray: The Lord's Prayer.

SERVICE

Research shows that often we do not tell our own stories of faith in God to those around us. Telling our faith stories is important to nurturing the faith in the church. Psalm 22:30-31 states that "future generations will be told about the Lord and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn." We are the people to tell the story to others that future generations may know of God's saving work. This is not simply the work of preachers on Sunday morning. Take time this week to tell your story of faith to family and friends around you.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Fasting is a longstanding Christian tradition especially suited to the season of Lent. Fasting is not intended as a form of self-sacrifice and torture to one's body. It is a form of prayer by taking time away from eating to be attentive to God's speech, God's voice present to the one fasting. Abram could've been fasting when he heard God speak to him (Genesis 17:1, 3, 15). Select a time this week to skip a meal or eat a more simple meal in order to devote time to prayer, being open to God's word spoken to you.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org