

Mar. 6 – Saturday

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

from Rev. Magdalen Sebastian, First Christian Church, Wheeling
“*[God] will not let you be tested beyond your strength.*” My heart aches as I sit with congregants who are in horrific physical, mental, or spiritual pain especially when embarrassed, they try to nullify their pain by saying, “others have it worse than me” or “God’s not going to give me more than I can handle, right?”

I find it a fuzzy line between drawing true strength from scripture and murmuring “correct” words that we do not feel. The problem, I believe, is that we forget to read the second half of the above verse: “*but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.*” Somewhere along the way, we have internalized that this “way” is something we must find and do all on our own. The gift is that the “way” God provides us out of our suffering and pain is through the combination scripture and the company of others believers. Our strength is not limited to what we personally can muster, but what we can gather through God and God’s people. That strength is indomitable.

*Our Strength and our Redeemer,
help us to follow your way, and when we struggle,
help us to feel your strength and love through the Word and your people.*

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Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
in West Virginia presents:

Prayerscapes for Lent

Reflections and Prayers from The Order of Ministry

Feb. 28: Second Sunday in Lent

Read Luke 13:31-35

from Rev. Jamie Gump,

Madison Avenue Christian Church, Huntington

What do you know about a mother’s love? What will a mother do to protect and look after her children? Anything and everything! Jesus – God with us – wants us to know that that kind of love and refuge is ours to have. Jerusalem was not willing to live in this closeness. Just as children at times refuse, rebel, and run from a mother’s care, we, too, sometimes refuse the security God offers. When you step away from God’s care, “your house is left to you,” meaning we are left with the life we’ve chosen. Love allows us that freedom.

Neither God nor Mom can as effectively care for and nurture a runaway child. But one thing is certain – the love never ends! Both will wait – today, tomorrow, the third day, forever if need be - for the wandering one to return. That is the good news!

*Lord, may we remain close to you, and should we stray,
may we know that you will always welcome us back into your arms.*

Mar. 1 – Monday

Read 1 John 1:5-9

*from Pastor Rae Browning, First Christian Church,
Cumberland, MD*

As a child, I lived in a three story house with the bedrooms on the third floor. A dark, closed-in stairway led to the rooms. With my heart pounding, I’d climb the scary stairs and make my way into one of the rooms. Standing in the middle of the room, I would swing my arm above my head in circles searching for the only light which hung from the ceiling. Darkness loomed all around until, at last, I found the switch to turn on the light. Safe at last with the light on, my heart returned to its normal beat.

Finding the light of Jesus is much the same way. In acknowledging sin, turning to Jesus, we are forgiven. Darkness is lifted.

Accepting Jesus turns on an everlasting light that diminishes the darkness even of death. 1 John 2:12 says, “I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.”

*Within our darkest night, you kindle a never-dying fire, O God.
Shine in my life, and into our world, through me.*

Mar. 2 – Tuesday **Read 1 John 3:1-3**
from Rev. Sarah Webb, Wheeling, WV

With bright eyes they scramble to the front of the sanctuary to take their places around the pastor, jockeying for their favorite positions. They are eager to tell their stories, perhaps to get a laugh from the congregation. Even the shy ones come with hope and pay close attention. Each child wants to be seen and appreciated.

We look at them and see ourselves – how we all want to be known, to be loved, to be seen for who we really are. When we stand before our Lord Jesus, we are fully known – not just for who we are now, but for who we are becoming.

Lent is a journey through the layers of ourselves, that we might become ever more honest with ourselves and transparent before God. It is the hard work of coming clean.

Thank you, Lord, that you know us completely, and love us still.

Mar. 3 – Wednesday **Read Isaiah 55:1-5**
from Rev. Joshua Patty, Central Christian Church, Fairmont

My mother and brother once ate at a newly opened restaurant. When they asked for the check, they were told that there was no charge; the restaurant was training its staff before the official opening a few days later. Imagine if the restaurant had advertised this: “Come and eat, whatever you want, *for free!*” They would have been overrun. People would have waited for hours.

Isaiah writes that God offers this very thing, an everlasting banquet, to all who will come. It’s not a secret offer either. But there are no crowds, no lines. It’s almost like no one knows or cares.

In our busy, stressful lives, we often overlook God’s offer, not knowing exactly how hungry we are. We keep looking for drinks to ease our parched throats, not realizing our thirst is spiritual. Despite our foolishness, we stumble across God’s banquet, and partake. During this Lent, let us confess our tardiness and thank God for this waiting, gracious feast.

*Cultivate the hunger that you have planted within us, O God –
a hunger for you, for your gracious nourishment,
for healing and peace.*

Mar. 4 – Thursday **Read Romans 10:8b-13**
Rev. David Chafin, Deputy Regional Minister

The heart of the faith lies in the resurrection of Jesus, and the propelling passion of our mission lies in the assurance that the gift of resurrection living is available to all.

Dare we ask ourselves, as we examine our own lives, who it is that we might prefer not receive this new and living faith? How will we incorporate those who seem foreign to us into the life of the church? Are there limits to our version of this proclamation of the gospel that Paul’s letter would not allow?

*If I have failed to see your good news as good news for my neighbor,
O God, help me to know it, and by your grace to deal with it faithfully.*

Mar. 5 – Friday **Read Psalm 63:1-8**
*from Rev. Scott Thayer, Bethany Memorial Church and
Chaplain of Bethany College*

Today’s scripture speaks of two realities that we all can understand: appetite and satisfaction. For the Psalmist, bodily yearnings for food and drink were reminders of a hunger and a thirst for Something else. In his book, *Confessions*, Augustine wrote, “*Our hearts are restless until they rest in God.*”

We were created complete, but not whole. Our circuits are all in place, but they are not integrated. There is a missing factor, a secret ingredient, an undiscovered treasure that we spend our lives looking for. It is a faintly gleaming star, a still, small voice, a subtle aroma. It does not blare out of the radio or scream from the headlines. But in the silent watches of the night God invites us to the banquet. We come, we eat, we drink. And we find that the essence we were looking for is already ours in God’s steadfast love.

*O God, when we think of you in the watches of the night,
may our souls be satisfied with the abundance of your grace.*