

2026 Grace Church Easter Fast Devotional

A Letter from Pastor Bill:

Grace Church Family,

Each year as we approach Easter, we set aside time to fast and seek the Lord together. This is not a new practice for the church, nor is it a way to earn God's favor. It is simply a way to prepare our hearts.

Fasting slows us down. It exposes distractions. It reminds us that we are dependent on the Lord and sustained by His Word. In the days leading to the cross and the empty tomb, we want to be attentive. We want to approach Easter thoughtfully, not casually.

This devotional has been prepared to guide us through these twelve days. Each entry is rooted in Scripture and designed to help us reflect on Christ's work — from His teaching and ministry to the Upper Room, the garden, and finally the cross on Good Friday. As our fast concludes, we will stand beneath the words, "It is finished," and look forward with hope to resurrection morning.

Throughout these days, I encourage you to pray for one person. Ask the Lord to place someone on your heart who may need to encounter Christ this Easter. Pray that God would prepare them, and that He would prepare you to speak with clarity and humility when the opportunity comes.

Whether your fast involves food, media, or another form of restraint, remember that the purpose is not performance but proximity. We fast because we belong to Christ and desire to draw near to Him.

May the Lord use this time to deepen your understanding of the cross, strengthen your hope in the resurrection, and prepare our church for what He desires to do this Easter.

In Christ,

Pastor Bill

Day 1: March 23, 2026

An Invitation, Not an Obligation

Read: Matthew 6

"When you fast..." – Matthew 6

When Jesus teaches about fasting in Matthew 6, He begins with a simple assumption: "When you fast." He doesn't say "if," and He certainly doesn't frame it as a threat. There is no pressure in His voice, no spiritual intimidation, no demand to prove ourselves. Instead, it feels more like an invitation into something deeper.

For many of us, fasting carries baggage. Some have experienced it as pressure. Others have seen it used as a badge of spiritual maturity. Some of us may even feel anxiety about whether we are doing it “right.” Yet Jesus never presents fasting as a way to impress God. He doesn’t suggest that it earns favor or secures blessings. The cross has already accomplished everything necessary for our acceptance. We fast not to belong to Him, but because we already do.

That is an important shift.

Fasting is not about spiritual performance. It is about proximity. It is about creating intentional space to draw near to the One who has already drawn near to us. Whether someone in our church fasts meals, certain foods, social media, entertainment, or simply chooses to be more intentional in prayer this week, the point is not the scale of the sacrifice. The point is the posture of the heart.

In fact, Jesus’ strongest warning about fasting wasn’t about weakness—it was about pretending. The Pharisees made their fasting visible. They wanted to be seen. They wore their sacrifice on their faces. But Jesus reminded His listeners that the Father sees what is done in secret. That is where the real exchange happens—not in public recognition, but in private communion.

This week before Easter is not about being seen. It is about being with Him.

Perhaps your fast feels small. Perhaps you are unsure what to give up or how consistent you will be. That’s okay. God is not measuring your resolve; He is responding to your hunger. And not just physical hunger, but spiritual hunger—the quiet moment when you choose prayer instead of scrolling, when you open Scripture instead of reaching for a snack, when you whisper, “Lord, I want more of You.”

That desire matters.

As this fast begins, we are not only drawing near to God personally—we are walking toward Easter. The cross and the empty tomb stand ahead of us, and with them will come people who may not yet know the joy of forgiveness. The Lord is preparing more than a service; He is preparing hearts.

As you step into this week, ask God to place one specific person on your heart. A friend, a family member, a coworker, a neighbor. Someone who may sit beside you this Easter. Pray that as He deepens your hunger for Him, He would awaken hunger in them as well. Let your fasting quietly become intercession.

This week is not about earning God’s attention. It is about aligning with His heart—for you, and for those He longs to draw near.

Reflection

- What has fasting felt like for me in the past—pressure, pride, fear, indifference?
- What would it look like for me to receive this week simply as an invitation rather than an obligation?

Pray for One

Ask the Lord to place one specific name before you as this fast begins. Pray that as He draws you nearer to Himself this week, He would begin preparing their heart for Easter. Ask that they would sense a growing openness to the message of Christ.

A Simple Prayer

Father, as I begin this fast, align my heart with Yours. Draw me closer to You, and begin even now to prepare the one I am praying for. Let this Easter be marked by clarity, conviction, and grace.

Day2: March 24, 2026

The Heart God Desires

Read: Psalm 51

*“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God,
You will not despise.” — Psalm 51:17*

Psalm 51 is not a polished prayer. It is not composed from a place of strength or stability. It was written after David’s failure had been exposed, after sin had come fully into the light. There is no image management in this psalm. David does not attempt to balance his wrongdoing with religious effort. He does not promise improvement or offer outward sacrifice to compensate. Instead, he comes honestly, acknowledging what is true about his heart.

What he discovers is something freeing: God is not looking for impressive devotion. He is not moved by visible sacrifice detached from inward surrender. “You will not delight in sacrifice,” David writes earlier in the psalm, “or I would give it.” What God desires is a heart that is tender and truthful before Him. A heart that does not defend itself. A heart that does not pretend.

As we continue this fast, Psalm 51 gives language to what may begin surfacing within us. Fasting has a way of revealing what is usually hidden. Irritation may rise more quickly. Restlessness may feel sharper. Distractions may seem louder. That exposure is not a sign of

failure; it is an opportunity for clarity. When appetite is restrained, the heart becomes easier to examine.

David does not shrink from that examination. “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” That prayer is not about minor adjustment; it is about renewal. Only God can create what is clean. Only He can restore what has grown dulled. And He does not despise the one who comes honestly.

As we walk toward Easter, this matters deeply. The cross reveals the seriousness of sin, but it also reveals the mercy of God. Resurrection proclaims that renewal is possible. The preparation of this week is not about external discipline alone; it is about inward readiness. A soft heart receives the message of the cross more fully.

Consider today not only your own heart, but one person you are praying for this Easter. Ask the Lord to do in them what David asked Him to do in himself—to create what only He can create. Pray that as He softens you, He would soften them. That honesty before God would take root in their life as well.

Reflection

- Is there anything surfacing in me that I need to bring honestly before God?
- Am I allowing the Lord to examine me as we approach Easter?

Pray for One

Ask God to place one specific name before you today. Pray that the Lord would prepare their heart for the message of the cross and the hope of the resurrection.

A Simple Prayer

Father, You see my heart fully and clearly. Where it is guarded, soften it. Where it is distracted, refocus it. Create in me a clean heart, and prepare those I am praying for to receive You. Amen.

Day 3: March 25, 2026

The Fast God Chooses

Read: Isaiah 58

*“Is this not the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,*

*to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?” — Isaiah 58:6*

Isaiah 58 addresses people who were fasting faithfully but missing the heart of it. They were abstaining from food. They were humbling themselves outwardly. They were seeking God with visible devotion. Yet the Lord confronts them with a searching question: “Is this the fast that I choose?”

The issue was not that they were fasting. The issue was that their fasting had not reshaped their obedience. They continued in conflict. They ignored injustice. They fasted while maintaining hardness toward others. Their restraint had not yet led to realignment.

Through Isaiah, God describes the kind of fasting that reflects His heart. It loosens what binds. It lifts burdens. It feeds the hungry. It shelters the vulnerable. It refuses to turn away from need. The fast He chooses moves beyond personal discomfort into outward mercy.

This does not diminish private devotion; it gives it purpose. When we remove something from our routine this week, we are not simply practicing discipline. We are creating space. The question Isaiah presses gently into us is this: will that space lead to obedience? Will it shape our relationships? Will it move us toward compassion?

Later in the chapter, God promises guidance and light. “Then your light shall break forth like the dawn... and the Lord will guide you continually.” There is clarity when fasting aligns with righteousness. There is renewal when restraint is joined with mercy.

As Easter approaches, this alignment becomes especially significant. The cross is the ultimate act of mercy. The resurrection is the ultimate declaration of freedom. If we are preparing our hearts for that day, then our fasting should gradually conform us to the character of Christ—gracious, patient, attentive.

As you pray for the one person on your heart this week, ask the Lord to prepare not only their ears to hear, but your life to reflect Him. Pray that when they encounter the message of Easter, they would also encounter compassion in you.

Reflection

- Has my fasting created space for greater obedience?
- Is the Lord inviting me to extend mercy or reconciliation to someone?

Pray for One

Lift the name the Lord has placed on your heart. Ask Him to loosen whatever binds them and to draw them toward the freedom found in Christ this Easter.

A Simple Prayer

Lord, align my fasting with Your heart. Let it produce mercy, not pride; obedience, not appearance. Prepare me, and prepare the one I am praying for, to see clearly the hope of the resurrection. Amen.

Day 4, March 26, 2026

At the Table with Sinners

Read: Luke 5:27-32

“After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.” — Luke 5:27–28

The calling of Levi is quiet in its wording but profound in its implications. Jesus approaches a man whose reputation would have placed him on the margins of respectable society. Tax collectors were not simply disliked; they were considered corrupt, disloyal, and spiritually compromised. Levi’s profession signaled separation—from community, from synagogue life, and from trust. Yet it is precisely to this man that Jesus speaks a simple command: “Follow me.”

There is no recorded sermon preceding the invitation. No visible repentance is described beforehand. Jesus sees him, and He calls him. What follows is equally simple: Levi leaves everything and follows. The text does not dramatize the moment, but it does emphasize the surrender. Something about the presence and authority of Jesus made the leaving possible.

What unfolds next is not retreat but celebration. Levi hosts a great feast in his home, and many tax collectors and others recline at the table with Jesus. The scene is not solemn. It is communal. It is relational. It is filled with those who would not have been welcomed in religious circles. The Pharisees notice and question the disciples: “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Their concern reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the heart of Christ.

Jesus answers them with clarity: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” His presence at

the table is not compromise; it is mission. It is not approval of sin; it is pursuit of the sinner. The physician goes where the sickness is.

As we move closer to Easter, this passage gently shapes our focus. Levi's story reminds us that no one is beyond the reach of an invitation, and no one is too far removed for the call of Christ. The same Jesus who sat at that table still gathers people to Himself.

As you fast this week, ask the Lord to place one specific name on your heart. Someone who may walk through the doors this Easter. Pray not only that they would attend, but that they would hear clearly the invitation of Christ. And as you pray for them, allow the Lord to prepare you as well—so that when they arrive, they encounter not performance or pressure, but a church shaped by grace and truth.

Reflection

- Do I see people the way Jesus sees them, or through the lens of reputation?
- Is there someone in my life who may need a simple invitation toward Him?

Pray for One

Bring the name on your heart before the Lord today. Pray that this Easter, they would encounter Jesus not merely as a teacher, but as the Savior who calls them personally. Ask that they would respond to His invitation with openness and humility.

A Simple Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that You still call people to follow You. Give me eyes to see others as You do, and prepare the one I am praying for to hear Your invitation clearly this Easter.

Day 5: March 27, 2026

The Joy of the Bridegroom

Read: Luke 5:33-35

“Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? — Luke 5:34

When the Pharisees questioned Jesus about fasting, their concern was not merely procedural; it revealed a deeper misunderstanding. They observed that John's disciples fasted regularly and that they themselves fasted often. But Jesus' disciples were eating and celebrating. Something felt inconsistent to them.

Jesus answered with an image drawn from a wedding. When the bridegroom is present, guests do not mourn. They rejoice. The presence of the bridegroom changes the tone of the gathering. Joy becomes appropriate. Celebration becomes fitting.

In that moment, Jesus was revealing something profound about Himself. He was not simply a teacher refining religious practice; He was the Bridegroom inaugurating something new. His arrival signaled fulfillment. His presence transformed the atmosphere.

Yet He also spoke of a coming absence. "The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast." His words quietly pointed toward the cross. The removal of the bridegroom would not be metaphorical; it would be literal. Suffering would come. Loss would come. And in those days, fasting would take on a different character—not as performance, but as longing.

We now live in that tension. The Bridegroom has come. He has died. He has risen. He is present by His Spirit, and yet we await His visible return. Our fasting is not rooted in despair; it is rooted in desire. We fast not because Christ is absent in power, but because we hunger for His fullness.

As Easter approaches, this image deepens. We are preparing to remember the days when the Bridegroom was taken away, and to celebrate the morning when death could not hold Him. Fasting sharpens anticipation. It reminds us that resurrection joy is not casual—it is costly, and it is glorious.

Consider the one you are praying for this week. Perhaps they do not yet see Christ as Bridegroom. Perhaps the language of joy feels foreign to them. As you fast, ask the Lord to awaken in them a desire for the One who brings true celebration. Pray that this Easter would not be merely another date on the calendar, but a revelation of the One who invites them into lasting joy.

Reflection

- Is my fasting rooted in longing for Christ, or in routine?
- Do I see Easter as remembrance only, or as renewed celebration?

Pray for One

Bring the name on your heart before the Lord. Ask Him to reveal Himself to them—not as distant religion, but as the Bridegroom who brings joy. Pray that their heart would be stirred as Easter draws near.

A Simple Prayer

Lord Jesus, deepen my longing for You. As we approach the cross and the empty tomb, prepare my heart to celebrate with clarity and gratitude. Stir the heart of the one I am praying for, that they would see Your joy and Your mercy. Amen.

Day 6: March 28, 2026

New Wine

Read: Luke 5:36-39

But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.” — Luke 5:38a

After speaking of the bridegroom and fasting, Jesus continues with another image. He speaks of new wine and wineskins. His words are simple, but they carry weight. New wine, when it ferments, expands. If it is poured into an old, hardened wineskin, the pressure will tear it apart. Both the wine and the skin are lost. New wine requires something supple, something able to stretch.

In the immediate context, Jesus is speaking about the new covenant He is inaugurating. He is not patching old religion. He is not adjusting the Pharisees' framework. He is bringing something entirely new. His life, death, and resurrection will not fit inside rigid systems that refuse to yield.

But the principle reaches into our own hearts as well.

God's work is living. The Spirit is not static. The Word continues to speak. If our hearts become fixed and hardened, we may find ourselves resisting what He is doing rather than receiving it. The issue is not whether the wine is powerful. The issue is whether the wineskin is pliable.

Fasting, rightly understood, keeps the heart from growing rigid. It creates room. It softens what routine can harden. It reminds us that we are not sustained by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. When we remove distractions, even small ones, we become more attentive to what the Lord may be pressing into us.

As Easter approaches, the image of new wine becomes especially fitting. The resurrection was not a minor adjustment to history; it was new life breaking through death. The message of the

empty tomb still carries power. The question is whether our hearts remain receptive to it, or whether familiarity has dulled its force.

Consider the one you are praying for. Perhaps they have grown resistant to spiritual things. Perhaps the message of Christ feels old to them. Pray that the Lord would prepare their heart to receive what is truly new. Pray that the Spirit would soften what has hardened, so that the truth of Easter does not glance off the surface, but takes root.

And as you pray for them, allow the Lord to examine you as well. New wine still requires fresh receptivity.

Reflection

- Has familiarity with the gospel made me less attentive to its power?
- Where might my heart need to become more pliable before the Lord?

Pray for One

Lift the name on your heart before God today. Ask Him to soften their heart so that the message of Christ's death and resurrection would be received as new life, not old information.

A Simple Prayer

Father, keep my heart from growing rigid. Make me receptive to Your Word and responsive to Your Spirit. As we draw near to Easter, renew my wonder at the resurrection, and prepare the heart of the one I am praying for. Amen.

Day 7: March 29, 2026

A Fresh Wineskin

Read: Luke 5:36-39 again...

"And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'" — Luke 5:39

Jesus closes His teaching on new wine with a sobering observation. People who have grown accustomed to old wine often resist the new. Not because the new lacks value, but because familiarity feels safer. The old is known. The old is predictable. The old requires less adjustment.

This is not merely a comment about preference. It is a revelation about the human heart.

We grow accustomed to patterns. We grow comfortable with routines. Even spiritually, familiarity can dull attentiveness. We know the language of the gospel. We know the rhythm of church life. We know the story of the cross and the empty tomb. And sometimes, without realizing it, what is holy becomes ordinary in our perception.

The danger is not rejection of Christ. The danger is quiet indifference.

Fasting interrupts that drift. When something familiar is removed—food, entertainment, comfort—the soul becomes more alert. We begin to notice what we normally overlook. Hunger sharpens awareness. And in that awareness, the Lord gently exposes where our hearts may have settled for routine instead of renewal.

Jesus did not come to patch old garments or preserve hardened systems. He came to bring life. That life cannot be contained in a heart unwilling to yield. A fresh wineskin is not flawless; it is pliable. It stretches. It receives. It adjusts to what God is doing.

As we move closer to Good Friday, this becomes personal. The cross is not merely a historical event. It is the decisive act of redemption. The resurrection is not seasonal symbolism; it is living power. If we approach Easter with hearts dulled by repetition, we may miss the depth of what is before us.

Ask the Lord to renew your capacity for wonder. Ask Him to make your heart receptive again. And as you pray for the one person on your heart, consider that they may be accustomed to “old wine” as well—ideas about Jesus that feel stale or incomplete. Pray that the Lord would awaken fresh understanding in them. Pray that what they hear this Easter would not feel familiar and distant, but living and true.

The gospel does not grow old. But our perception of it can.

Fasting gives space for renewal.

Reflection

- Has familiarity with the gospel reduced my sense of awe?
- Where might I be resisting fresh obedience because the old feels easier?

Pray for One

Bring the name before the Lord again today. Ask Him to awaken fresh understanding in their heart. Pray that this Easter, the message of Christ would feel alive and new to them.

A Simple Prayer

Father, guard me from spiritual indifference. Renew my sense of awe at the cross and the empty tomb. Keep my heart pliable and ready to receive Your work. Prepare the one I am praying for to see You clearly. Amen.

Day 8: March 30, 2026

The Hour Has Come

Read: John 12

“Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks... So these came to Philip and asked him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’” — John 12:20–21

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” — John 12:23

As Jesus approached Jerusalem for the final time, something began to change in the tone of His words. In John 12, we are told that some Greeks came seeking Him. Their request was simple and profound: “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” It is a sentence that echoes across centuries. It is the longing of every searching heart, whether clearly expressed or quietly felt.

When Jesus hears of their request, He responds in a way that may seem unexpected: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” Throughout the Gospel of John, the “hour” had not yet come. But now it had arrived. The moment toward which everything had been moving was no longer distant. The cross stood ahead.

Jesus then speaks of a grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying in order to bear much fruit. He does not avoid what is coming. He does not soften it. He names it. Death will precede life. Sacrifice will precede fruitfulness. Glory will come through surrender.

As we continue this fast, the language of hunger begins to mirror the language of John 12. Something must fall into the ground. Something must be released. The discipline of this week has not been about loss for its own sake, but about alignment with the pattern of Christ—laying down in order that life might come.

Easter approaches, but it does so by way of the cross.

Consider again the one you are praying for. Their desire may not yet be articulated as clearly as “we wish to see Jesus,” but beneath the surface of every life is longing. Pray that as they come

near this Easter, whether through invitation or curiosity, they would truly see Him—not merely hear about Him, but perceive who He is and what He has done.

And as you pray for them, ask the Lord to deepen your own sight. The hour has come. The cross is not accidental. It is purposeful. It is glory through surrender.

We are walking toward it now.

Reflection

- What in my life needs to fall into the ground so that fruit might come?
- Do I truly desire to see Jesus more clearly as we approach the cross?

Pray for One

Ask the Lord to draw the one on your heart closer to Christ. Pray that they would not merely attend Easter, but that they would truly see Jesus and understand His sacrifice.

A Simple Prayer

Lord Jesus, open my eyes to see You clearly as we approach the cross. Teach me to follow Your pattern of surrender. Prepare the heart of the one I am praying for to see Your glory revealed in Your sacrifice. Amen.

Day 9: March 31, 2026

The King Who Comes in Peace

Read: John 12:12-9 again

*“Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey’s colt.” — John 12:15*

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds gathered quickly. They spread palm branches before Him. They shouted, “Hosanna!” They proclaimed Him King. There was excitement in the air, anticipation in the streets. Something momentous felt close.

Yet the kind of King they celebrated was not the King He came to be.

They longed for political deliverance. They hoped for visible power. They expected overthrow and restoration on their terms. But Jesus came riding not on a warhorse, but on a donkey's colt. The image was not conquest but humility. He did not come to seize authority; He came to lay down His life.

The same crowd that shouted "Hosanna" would soon fall silent, and some would join the voices that cried, "Crucify Him." Their expectations did not align with His mission. They wanted victory without surrender, glory without suffering.

As we move closer to Good Friday, this passage invites reflection. It is possible to welcome Jesus enthusiastically while still misunderstanding Him. It is possible to celebrate Him publicly while resisting the path He walks.

Fasting has been preparing us to see Him clearly. It has been stripping away distractions so that we might recognize the kind of King He truly is. The One who enters Jerusalem in humility will soon carry a cross. The One who is praised will soon be rejected. The path to resurrection passes through sacrifice.

Consider again the one you are praying for. Perhaps their understanding of Jesus is incomplete. Perhaps they see Him as helpful, inspiring, or moral—but not crucified and risen Lord. Pray that this Easter, they would encounter Him as He truly is. Not the King they imagine, but the Savior who gives Himself fully.

And ask the Lord to search your own expectations. Do we welcome Him on our terms, or are we willing to follow Him on His?

The King has entered the city. The cross stands ahead.

Reflection

- Do my expectations of Jesus align with who He reveals Himself to be?
- Am I willing to follow Him even when the path includes surrender?

Pray for One

Pray that the person on your heart would come to see Jesus rightly this Easter—not merely as a figure of history, but as the crucified and risen King.

A Simple Prayer

Lord Jesus, keep my heart from shallow celebration. Teach me to follow You in humility and obedience. Prepare the one I am praying for to recognize You as Savior and King. Amen

Day 10: April 1, 2026

In the Upper Room

Read: John 12:20-26 again

“When the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him.” — Luke 22:14

“And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you.’” — Luke 22:19

Jerusalem was crowded for the feast, but in the upper room there was stillness. The meal had been prepared according to custom. The disciples took their places at the table. On the surface, it appeared to be another Passover, another retelling of deliverance from Egypt. Yet beneath the familiar rhythm of the evening, something far greater was unfolding. Jesus knew the hour had come. He knew betrayal was already in motion. He knew the cross stood only hours away. And still, He reclined at the table with them.

During the meal, He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it. The actions were simple, but His words were not. “This is my body, which is given for you.” The bread was no longer merely symbolic of past rescue; it now pointed forward to His own sacrifice. He then took the cup and spoke of a new covenant in His blood. Redemption would not come through lambs remembered from generations past, but through the Lamb seated at the table with them. The upper room was quiet, but it was heavy with meaning. The cross had not yet been raised, but its shadow had already fallen across the table.

As we gather tonight as a church body, whatever the specific form our service takes, the posture remains the same. We come not to rush ahead to celebration, but to sit in remembrance. Fasting has been preparing us for this moment. The hunger of the week has reminded us that we are sustained by Christ alone. The slowing of our routines has created space to consider the weight of what He was about to endure. In the upper room, Jesus did not resist what was coming; He embraced it willingly. The bread was broken before His body was. The covenant was declared before His blood was poured out.

This evening invites us to the same attentiveness. Before the noise of Easter morning, before the brightness of resurrection joy, there is a room where the cost is acknowledged. We do not gather to recreate emotion, but to remember truth. Our salvation was not abstract. It was given. It was poured out. It was costly.

And even as we sit in solemn reflection, we do so with quiet expectancy. The table anticipates the cross, and the cross will give way to resurrection. The story is not yet finished.

As you prepare to gather, bring before the Lord the one you have been praying for throughout this fast. Ask Him to ready their heart for Easter Sunday. Ask Him to give you humility and clarity when the time comes to speak of Christ. Let the stillness of the upper room shape you first, so that when resurrection morning arrives, your joy will be grounded in understanding.

Tonight we remember. Soon we will behold the cross. And beyond the cross, there is life.

Reflection

- Have I slowed my heart enough to consider the cost of redemption?
- Am I entering this evening with reverence and gratitude?

Pray for One

Lift the name on your heart before the Lord. Pray that this Easter, they would understand that Christ's sacrifice was personal and purposeful—for them.

A Simple Prayer

Lord Jesus, steady my heart as I remember Your sacrifice. Let the weight of the cross shape my gratitude and deepen my love for You. Prepare the one I am praying for to encounter You clearly this Easter. Amen.

Day 11: April 2, 2026

In the Garden

Read: Luke 22:39-46

"And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed." — Luke 22:41

"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." — Luke 22:42

After the upper room, after the bread and the cup, Jesus went out to the Mount of Olives. The streets that had once echoed with praise were now quiet. The disciples followed Him into the garden called Gethsemane. There, away from the crowds and removed from the noise of the city, the weight of what was coming pressed fully upon Him.

Luke tells us that He withdrew a short distance and knelt to pray. The One who had calmed storms and raised the dead now bowed low in anguish. He spoke plainly to the Father: "If you are willing, remove this cup from me." The cup He referred to was not abstract suffering; it was the full measure of divine judgment against sin. It was the cost of redemption. He felt it approaching.

Yet His prayer did not end with escape. "Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." These words are not spoken lightly. They are the language of obedience under pressure. The Gospel writers tell us His anguish was intense. He was not detached from what lay ahead. He faced it fully. And still, He yielded.

In the garden, we see both the humanity and the holiness of Christ. He does not minimize the cost, and He does not avoid it. He submits Himself entirely to the Father's will, not because the path is easy, but because it is necessary. The surrender of Gethsemane precedes the suffering of the cross. Before nails were driven, obedience was declared.

As we approach Good Friday, this moment steadies us. The cross was not an accident of history. It was not the result of forces beyond His control. It was embraced. The Son entrusted Himself to the Father's will for the sake of those He came to save.

Consider again the one you have been praying for. The obedience of Christ in the garden was not distant or impersonal. It was for sinners. It was for wanderers. It was for those who do not yet see. As you pray for them, remember that the path to their redemption passed through this garden. The Savior who knelt there did so willingly.

And as you reflect, allow His obedience to quiet your own heart. The garden reminds us that trust in the Father is not proven when circumstances are easy, but when surrender is costly. Christ has gone before us.

Tonight, we stand on the edge of the cross.

Reflection

- Do I see the cross as something Christ endured reluctantly, or as obedience embraced willingly?
- How does His surrender reshape my understanding of love?

Pray for One

Lift the name on your heart before the Lord. Thank Him that the path to their salvation passed through Gethsemane. Pray that this Easter, they would come to see the depth of Christ's willing obedience for them.

A Simple Prayer

Father, thank You for the obedience of Your Son. Thank You that He did not turn away from the cup, but entrusted Himself to Your will. As we approach the cross, deepen my gratitude and prepare the heart of the one I am praying for. Amen.

Day 12: April 3, 2026

It Is Finished

Read John 19

“After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst.’” — John 19:28

“When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished,’ and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” — John 19:30

John’s account of the crucifixion is deliberate and restrained. He does not linger on every detail of suffering, though the suffering was real. Instead, he draws our attention to purpose. Again and again he notes that events unfolded “to fulfill the Scripture.” Nothing at the cross was accidental. Nothing was uncontrolled. Jesus was not overtaken; He was completing what He had come to do.

Hanging between heaven and earth, enduring rejection, bearing sin, He spoke a final declaration: “It is finished.” These were not words of defeat. They were words of completion. The work given to Him by the Father had reached its appointed end. The cup spoken of in Gethsemane had been drained. The Lamb prepared before the foundation of the world had been offered.

When John writes that Jesus “gave up his spirit,” he reminds us again that even His death was not taken from Him unwillingly. The obedience begun in the garden is fulfilled at the cross. The surrender whispered in prayer becomes the sacrifice accomplished in public view. Redemption is not left unfinished. Atonement is not partial. The debt of sin is not deferred. It is finished.

As this fast comes to its close on **Good Friday**, we stand beneath the cross with quiet gratitude. The hunger of these days has been a small reminder of our need. The cross reveals how fully that need has been met. We do not complete what Christ has started. We do not add to what He has done. We receive what has been accomplished.

Yet even here, hope begins to rise. John's Gospel does not end at the tomb. The One who declares "It is finished" will soon step out of the grave. The work of atonement is complete, and because it is complete, resurrection life will follow. The cross is not the end of the story, but it is the decisive turning point of it.

Bring before the Lord the one you have prayed for throughout this fast. The words "It is finished" were spoken for sinners. They were spoken for those far off and those near. They were spoken for wanderers, skeptics, and doubters. Pray that this Easter, they would come to understand that the work necessary for their forgiveness has already been accomplished. Nothing remains for them to earn. Everything has been provided.

As the fast ends, let gratitude remain. Let reverence linger. And let quiet expectation grow. The cross has spoken. The work is complete. Morning is coming.

Heart Check

- Do I live as though Christ's work is complete, or as though something still depends on me?
- Has this week deepened my gratitude for what was finished at the cross?

Pray for One

Thank the Lord that the work of salvation is finished. Pray that the one on your heart would receive what Christ has accomplished and enter into the hope of resurrection life this Easter.

A Simple Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that the work is finished. Thank You that nothing remains to be added to Your sacrifice. As we look toward Easter morning, steady my hope and draw the one I am praying for into the life You have secured. Amen.