

Holy Week....

Mark your calendars for three special services of worship during Holy Week at Epiclesis

Palm Sunday: April 13: 10:30 AM

Maundy Thursday: April 17: 7 PM

Holy Saturday: April 19: 11 PM (Tentative)

Resurrection Sunday: April 20: 10:30 AM



Would you like to learn more about Lent and the Christian year? Look for these resources (some of which are available for check-out in our library):

Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church. Laurence Hull Stookey (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

Ancient-Future Time. Robert E. Webber (Grand Rapids: Baker Books), 2004.

The Seasons of the Christian Year (an online resource): Dennis Bratcher. Available from: http://www.crivoice.org/chyear_resources.html

Worship in Our Community (an online resource): Chris Alford. Available at www.Epiclesis.org under "Resources".

Epiclesis

An Ancient-Future Faith Community...

Worshiping Sundays at 10:30 AM, at the Carmichael Chapel
4600 Winding Way; Sacramento, CA; 95841

Find us on the web: www.Epiclesis.org
Need more information? Info@Epiclesis.org

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Epiclesis

An Ancient-Future Faith Community...

A Journey of Spiritual Determination



2025

(Year C)

A Journey of Spiritual Determination

Lent, 2025

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How to Use This Booklet

This booklet has two parts:

The first portion (through page 6) is a kind of overview of the Season of Lent. You'll find basic information, some handy FAQs, and suggestions for ways you might want to observe Lent this year.

The second part of the booklet (starting on page 7) is a more in-depth, self-guided devotional series, written by Pastor Chris, that we're hoping you'll use on your Lenten Journey.

Our theme this year is "A Journey of Spiritual Determination," and our special focus is on the psalm texts for each week. Each devotion features several components: 1) A few thoughts to consider before reading the psalm; 2) The actual psalm text itself; 3) Some commentary on the text; 4) A listing of the other Scripture appointed for the week along with a thought or two regarding them; 5) And a closing prayer.

And what about Palm Sunday?

Liturgy of the Palms: April 13, 2025

Palm Sunday is technically part of Lent— and it also isn't. Here's what I mean: Sundays are always considered feast days and are not counted in the "40 days." And yet, it does fall within the season and is thought of as the final Sunday of Lent. When does Lent end? It depends upon whom you ask. Some mark the end with Palm Sunday, for Roman Catholics it's Holy Thursday, and for others Lent comes to a close at the Easter Vigil service on Holy Saturday night.



On Palm Sunday, there are generally two ways that worship is organized, either by the "Liturgy of the Palms," or with the "Liturgy of the Passion." So, one is more oriented toward the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into the city, and the other focuses more on the suffering and crucifixion.

Our practice at Epiclesis has usually been to follow the Palms liturgy, and so here are the Scriptures appointed for the day with a thought or two for you.

Scriptures for Palm Sunday: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Luke 19:28-40.

What a contrast of journeys we have in Holy Week, especially as you compare the week's beginning, Christ's triumphal entry, with the week's end, and Christ's crucifixion: The shouts of "Hosanna!" and "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" and "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!" will be replaced at week's end with weeping and cursing.

Some thoughts on the text:

One study Bible I use has the title “A Harvest of Joy” at the top of this psalm. That’s a lovely idea. The psalmist is praying for the full restoration of Israel (bringing to mind the joyful return of the exiles from Babylon). But the restoration is ours through Christ.

We have persevered and the journey has been tough— hard, even. We have engaged in a journey of spiritual determination. We’ve chosen to dwell and abide, we’ve been single-minded in what we were seeking, we’ve made pursuit a priority, and we’ve confessed sin.

Maybe we’ve failed some along the way. We’ve continued, perhaps, in spite of tears and difficulty. But there’s a promised harvest coming.

Other Scripture texts appointed for this week in Lent: Isaiah 43:16-21; Phil. 3:4b-14; and John 12:1-8.

Spotting our theme of “journey” in these other texts: As the pace quickens in these final days of Lent, we see a pause in Christ’s journey to Jerusalem. John’s Gospel shows Jesus at a dinner with His friends. And what happens there prepares Him for the final leg of the journey.

A Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, we marvel that in Christ, we can and do abide in You. Father, Your Son, our Savior, was obedient to the difficult path that was set before Him. Help us to walk this Lenten journey in faithfulness as well. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, speak to us, teach us, and lead us. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Basic Lent Overview:

What is Lent?



When people think of Lent, they often think “Roman Catholic.” But Lent isn’t a Catholic thing or an Episcopal thing— it’s a Christian thing! Lent has been observed in one form or another since the very early church, long before there were Catholics or Episcopalians as we know them today. What’s more, growing numbers of historically non-liturgical churches are finding new meaning in Lent. They are discovering that the journey of Lent helps prepare them for the great celebration of Easter and is a welcome spiritual enrichment to the late winter and early spring months.

The Bible has many things to say about cleansing and repentance. Consider these four verses— *and notice what kind of picture they paint of our relationship with God:*

*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. —Psalm 51:7*

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting. —Psalm 139:23-24*

*Therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes. —Job 42:4*

*So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition,
in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. —Daniel 9:3*

Lent is the time when we especially focus on our need for repentance and cleansing. Doing so links us with countless believers across the ages— a long line of Christian brothers and sisters— who saw it as a time for both personal discipleship and paying attention to the needs of others.

The season of **Lent**, a period of forty weekdays, follows Epiphany (Sundays, always considered “Feast Days,” are not included). Beginning on Ash Wednesday and culminating in Holy week, this season of both joy and sorrow is a time for the church to proclaim, remember, and respond to the atoning death of Christ. The colors violet/purple (and sometimes grey/black) usually associated with Lent conveys the reflective, penitential tones of Lent.

Some questions and answers about Lent...

What is the Lenten season, and why is it set apart?

It is a period of six weeks preceding the anniversary of the Savior’s death, and is set apart as a special season of fasting, penitence, and prayer.

Why is it called “Lent”?

Some suggest that it comes from an old Saxon word, *lent*, which means “spring.” Lent always comes in the spring of the year. But the practice of Lent is older than the word.

With what event in Jesus’ life does the Lenten season correspond?

The forty days which He spent fasting in the wilderness.

Why is the first day of Lent called “Ash Wednesday”?

It comes from a custom that prevailed in the early church of sprinkling ashes on the heads of worshipers the first day of Lent as a visible expression of humiliation and sorrow for sin.

Are there any examples of this custom mentioned in the Bible?

Yes, many. Some examples are Daniel and David and the people of Nineveh, to which Jesus Himself refers in Matthew 11:21.



Week Five: Ascent to Deliverance (Psalm 126)

Some things to think about before reading the psalm text:

It’s appropriate, I think, that a Psalm of Ascent is our final one of Lent. This is one of several psalms that the Jewish people would sing as they were going up to Jerusalem and to the Temple. As our journey through Lent comes to a close, we’re also going to Jerusalem in a way. Jesus was going up for His passion. We’re going up for our deliverance.



Psalm 126 (NIV)

- 1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed.
- 2 Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”
- 3 The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.
- 4 Restore our fortunes, Lord, like streams in the Negev.
- 5 Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.
- 6 Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.

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You know the story in the Gospel passage— the parable of the Prodigal Son. But did you ever consider his two-part journey? The journey to the “distant region” and the one back home again were starkly different. Take some time to compare and contrast those two journeys and meditate on what they might teach.

A Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, we marvel that in Christ, we can and do abide in You. Father, Your Son, our Savior, was obedient to the difficult path that was set before Him. Help us to walk this Lenten journey in faithfulness as well. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, speak to us, teach us, and lead us. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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If Lent only lasts 40 days, why does it begin 46 days before Easter?

There are six Sundays in Lent, and as all Sundays are considered “feast days” in honor of the Resurrection, they are taken out. To make up for them, six days are added to the beginning of the season.

What is the point of “keeping” Lent?

To deepen the religious life, to purify the heart from sin, and to unite us more closely with the Savior.

Why do some churches ask that fasting be observed during Lent?

Because repentance and humility are essential to growth in grace. Fasting is often coupled in the Bible with repentance and seeking after God. Jesus Himself fasted, as did the disciples.

What are some ways to observe Lent?

Perhaps the most well-known cliché associated with the season is the question, “What are you giving up for Lent?” Many people “give things up” for Lent— perhaps things of little consequence— and don’t really know why. Sometimes rituals grow meaningless when we forget their original purpose.

But one of the best ways to approach Lent is not by thinking about what to “give up” but rather what to “take on.” *At the very heart of the Christian faith is our common participation in the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.* To be a Christian is to follow Christ.



Through the ages, the church has been called to remember and live out this kind of new life, an incarnational life, with Jesus Christ right at the very center of who we are and how we live.

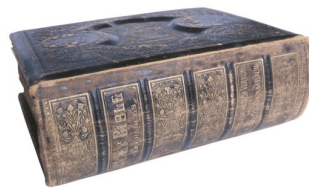
The Christian life has been referred to as a journey of faith. Lent, too, is often thought of in terms of a journey. So, in some ways, the season of Lent is the perfect time of the Christian year to walk in the footsteps of Christ as He draws closer to the cross.

You may be interested to learn that in the very early church, the season of Lent was used to immerse new believers in matters of the faith so that they could grow in discipleship during the weeks leading up to Easter. On Easter Sunday morning, they would be baptized and then partake in their first Communion. *What a wonderful, glorious moment that would have been for new Christians!* This was also a time when anyone who had lapsed in their faith, or was out of fellowship with the church, could be reconciled and restored.

In our own time, many Christian denominations and traditions have begun to recover Lent as a time of common preparation and community. The practical suggestions that follow are all rooted in the hope of this recovery: how best to “take on” forms of devotion and common life which flow from and prepare for the realities made present at Easter.

Idea 1: Searching the Scriptures

Lent is the perfect time for Bible study, as well as the renewal of personal reading. One good place to start is to read in preparation for our Sunday worship services during Lent. This very booklet with its weekly focus is a great place to begin.



You might like to look into getting a special Lenten daily Bible study for personal devotion. Many people also use a book of prayer or other daily devotionals to help them meaningfully organize and focus their readings.

Idea 2: Prayer and Fasting

Over the years, prayer and fasting have been the most visible aspects of Lent. More frequent and intense personal prayer time is something that most Christians could use. Perhaps Lent could be a time for you to make good on some well-meaning resolutions to spend more time in prayer.

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

9 Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

10 Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.

11 Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!

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Some thoughts on the text:

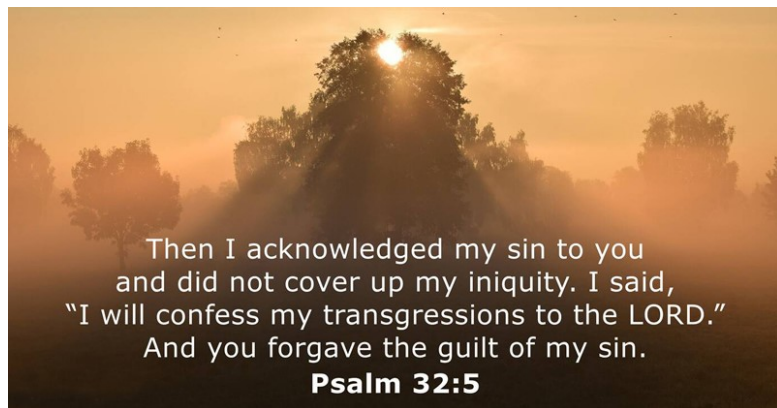
Here’s another “wisdom psalm” for us, and it’s also one that Christian tradition counts as one of seven “penitential psalms” (along with 6, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). David, the psalmist here, was afflicted by his own conscience and was literally wasting away because of unconfessed sin. You get the feeling that he was rotting away from inside out.

The phrase “When I kept silent” can also be translated “When I didn’t declare my sin.” That means that David knew about the sin, but he didn’t confess it. And notice what happened when he did: He was forgiven, he was protected, he was delivered, and he also instructed others on how to break through to joy. Verse 11 is also translated, “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.”

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any unconfessed sins in your life. Some may be hidden from you; some may not. And receive the forgiveness of the Lord and shout for joy.

Take some time to read the other Scripture texts appointed for this week in Lent, and as you do, be on the lookout for our theme of “journey”: Joshua 5:9-12; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; and Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32.

Week Four: Break Through to Joy (Psalm 32)



Some things to think about before reading the psalm text:

One burden you surely don't need to carry with you on this Lenten journey is unconfessed sin. And you don't have to, either. Unconfessed sin is a heavy weight, and it's an obstacle to joy. Let's break through any unconfessed sin together.

Psalm 32 (NIV)

- 1 Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
- 2 Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.
- 3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
- 4 For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.
- 6 Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them.
- 7 You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Many people, especially during the busy times we live in, find it helpful to use the season in an intentional way to "simplify" their lives. For example, Lent can be a meaningful time for learning how to eat in less costly and indulgent ways. But merely "giving up" food for physical self improvement is not the ultimate point. Rather, we want to learn about the potential connections between living more simply and being able to see God is showing and teaching us. The idea is to put off things that might keep us from putting on more of the disciplines of the Christ-life.



In some ways the disciplines of Lent are similar to two of the goals of worship during Lent: simplicity and sobriety. At Epiclesis, we have an intentional desire to help worshipers find a place where they can encounter God and say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts...."

Idea 3: Acts of Love and Devotion

Historically, the season of Lent has been a time to focus on the needs of others, especially the poor and needy. Acts of love and devotion, also called acts of piety, have been overlooked by many in their Lenten observances.

Consider incorporating personal offerings of time, talents, or treasure into this season of Lent. It's the perfect opportunity for this kind of outward demonstration of love and devotion.

A Journey of Spiritual Determination ...In Five Self-Guided Sessions by Pastor Chris

Introduction to the Series

Do you sometimes think of Lent as a mountain to climb or a hard journey to push through? I do. I suppose that any successful Lenten Season will have those elements to it.



But, as odd as it might seem to say, I think I'm looking forward to those aspects of Lent this year. I kind of want it to be hard, in a way. Here's what I mean:

Years ago when my classmates and I were approaching the end of our doctoral coursework and heading into the thesis part of the journey, my mind (just being honest here) wondered from time to time about how I could get through it with the least amount of effort. (We even thought about printing up sweatshirts with the Latin phrase "Hail to the Bare Minimum"). And yet I'll never forget the words of one of my favorite professors. "Gentlemen, I know what you might be thinking: 'How can I get this thing done as fast and easy as possible?' But you don't want that. Trust me, you don't. Because if you make it to the end— if the thesis is accepted and you get the degree— and if it cost you little, you will be deeply sorry later. It won't mean as much. Truth is: You want this thing to be hard so that the victory on the other side is sweet."

This Lent, I'm taking on two or three very difficult personal disciplines. I expect it to be hard. I want it to be a journey of spiritual determination. So, in some ways, I'm writing these little devotionals for me. And yet it occurred to me that others might want something similar this Lenten Season, and so you're invited to come along.

It might be a mountain to climb or a hard journey to push through, but then again, that also might be a good thing.

Some thoughts on the text:

Another lament psalm, the author here is quite vividly equating his desire for God with thirst. And not just any thirst: It's one that burns and leaves him bone dry and exhausted. He yearns to worship the Lord, He longs to be in God's presence.

One translation of the first verse says this: O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you. The Hebrew word for "soul" can also mean "throat"? The psalmist's metaphor may be intentional.

This Lenten Season, I'm praying for me and for you, that our spiritual disciplines are priority pursuits. I'm praying that even on our beds at night, we are remembering and seeking and thirsting for and clinging to God.

Take some time to read the other Scripture texts appointed for this week in Lent, and as you do, be on the lookout for our theme of "journey": Isaiah 55:1-9; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9.

Paul's letter to the Corinthians lays out some important things about that journey on the first Sunday of Lent: The journey of the Children of Israel out of Egypt. Look for ways that Paul says our pathway, our journey, can benefit from learning about it.

A Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, we marvel that in Christ, we can and do abide in You. Father, Your Son, our Savior, was obedient to the difficult path that was set before Him. Help us to walk this Lenten journey in faithfulness as well. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, speak to us, teach us, and lead us. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Week Three: Priority Pursuit (Psalm 63:1-8)

Some things to think about before reading the psalm text:

Do you remember the “clings to me” phrase in the psalm for week one? It happens here, but this time from the mouth of the psalmist rather than God. Verse 8 says, “I cling to you....” Similar phrases are found in verse 1: “I earnestly seek you,” and “I thirst for you....” As you read the

psalm, take stock in two things: the direction, or motion, that it calls to mind, and the priority pursuits that the author engages in.

Psalm 63 (NIV)

1 You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

5 I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

6 On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.

7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.

8 I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.

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One more thing: Recall that we talk a lot about Lent being a time to take things on, as much as a time to give things up. If you want some ideas about taking on and giving up, especially as it applies to spiritual disciplines, let me know. I can direct you to some good resources.

Bless your journey... let's do it together. Pastor Chris

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Prayer

Here is a prayer and declaration of faith for you to use during your Lenten journey (taken from *Celtic Daily Prayer: Farther Up and Farther In*).

Lord, I will trust You.

***Help me to journey beyond the familiar
and into the unknown.***

Give me the faith to leave old ways

and break fresh ground with You.

Christ of the mysteries,

can I trust You to be stronger than each storm in me?

I determine amidst all uncertainty,

always to trust.

I choose to live beyond regret

and let You recreate my life.

***I believe You will make a way for me and provide for me,
if only I trust You.***

I will trust, even in the darkness,

and know that my times are still in Your hand.

***I will believe You for my future, chapter by chapter,
until all the story is written.***

Week One: Choosing to Dwell (Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16)

Some things to think about before reading the psalm text:

Can someone make a deliberate choice to dwell in God? Or putting it a different way, can someone make God their habitation and not just a visitation? If it is possible, would it require spiritual determination of some kind?

I realize that our location is already IN Christ and, in that way, we are always in Him as He is in us (John 14). But I think most of us long for an ever deeper and more abiding kind of dwelling in God.

So, read Psalm 91 and see what comes to mind about “choosing to dwell.” According to the Psalmist, what are rewards of a decisive commitment to abiding in Him?

Psalm 91 (NIV)

1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

9 If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,” and you make the Most High your dwelling,

10 no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.

11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;

12 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.



Take some time to read the other Scripture texts appointed for this week in Lent, and as you do, be on the lookout for our theme of “journey”:

Gen. 15:1-12, 17-18; Phil. 3:17-4:1; and Luke 13:31-35.

There’s quite a journey depicted in today’s Old Testament passage, though it might not be evident at first. God is making a covenant with Abram, who has already been on a long journey. But the covenant promises and blessings point to a further journey— and it will be one that Abram will ultimately not live (in this lifetime) to see.

A Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, we marvel that in Christ, we can and do abide in You. Father, Your Son, our Savior, was obedient to the difficult path that was set before Him. Help us to walk this Lenten journey in faithfulness as well. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, speak to us, teach us, and lead us. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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7 Hear my voice when I call, Lord; be merciful to me and answer me.
 8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek.
 9 Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.
 10 Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.
 11 Teach me your way, Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.
 12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.
 13 I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.
 14 Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

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Some thoughts on the text:

Psalm 27 is a "lament psalm," and yet it also speaks quite a bit about trust. The speaker has complete confidence in the Lord and delights in God's presence in the Temple. That's the good news.

However, he has also suffered many unpleasant circumstances: His family has disowned him, and his enemies seem bent on the total destruction of his character. That's the bad news.

And yet, even in the depth of all his troubles, the psalmist is sure of and is even anticipating his deliverance. Did you see verses 5 and 6: "He will keep me," "He will hide me," "My head will be exalted," "I will sacrifice..."? He knows that with persistence and single-mindedness, and because of the goodness of God, he will be brought through his trials—and it will happen "in the land of the living" (while he is still alive).

How's your Lenten journey coming along? Are you holding to your spiritual disciplines? Is the journey tough? The Lord is the stronghold of your life. He will keep you. (And you're going to see it in the land of the living). And that's more good news.

14 "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name."
 15 He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.
 16 With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Some thoughts on the text:

Psalm 91 is a "wisdom psalm" that celebrates a relationship with God based on trust and devotion, and its blessings include deliverance from evil, protection by angels, answers to prayers, and the gifts of a long life and salvation. Most of the psalm is thought of as the author's personal testimony, with its final verses being words of assurance spoken by God (14-16).

I especially love one translation of verse 14, where God Himself is talking, that reads like this: "Because he clings to me in love...." Another translation has it this way: "Because he hoped in me...."

Isn't that a wonderful picture to ponder, especially as we start out on this Lenten journey? That we would cling to God in love, and because we do, God will be with us. Because we know His name, because we call upon His name in prayer, He will answer us and deliver us and show us His salvation.

One other thought: When I read the word "dwell" in Psalm 91, I also think of "reside" and "remain." And those words in turn remind me of the vine and branches pericope of John (15:4). Jesus says this (and "abide" is rendered "reside" or "remain" in other translations): "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me."

To deepen my dwelling in God, I am indeed choosing to dwell—I'm clinging to God in love. I'm determined to abide in Christ.

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Take some time to read the other Scripture texts appointed for this week in Lent, and as you do, be on the lookout for our theme of “journey”: Deut 26:1-11; Rom 10:8b-13; and Luke 4:1-13.

In the Deuteronomy passage we see the Children of Israel on their journey out of slavery— and God is preparing His people for what happens after that journey comes to an end. And take note that the Gospel passage features one the most important “journeys” of Jesus.

A Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, we marvel that in Christ, we can and do abide in You. Father, Your Son, our Savior, was obedient to the difficult path that was set before Him. Help us to walk this Lenten journey in faithfulness as well. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, speak to us, teach us, and lead us. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Week Two: Single-Mindedness (Psalm 27)

Some things to think about before reading the psalm text:

Verse four of our psalm for this week says, “One thing I ask...this only do I seek....” What is it that is being sought? There’s single-mindedness in that phrase, don’t you think? Is there some action there as well?

The psalmist seems to be very persistent here, even (perhaps especially) in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Psalm 27 (NIV)

- 1 The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?
- 2 When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.
- 3 Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.
- 4 One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.
- 5 For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.
- 6 Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord.

