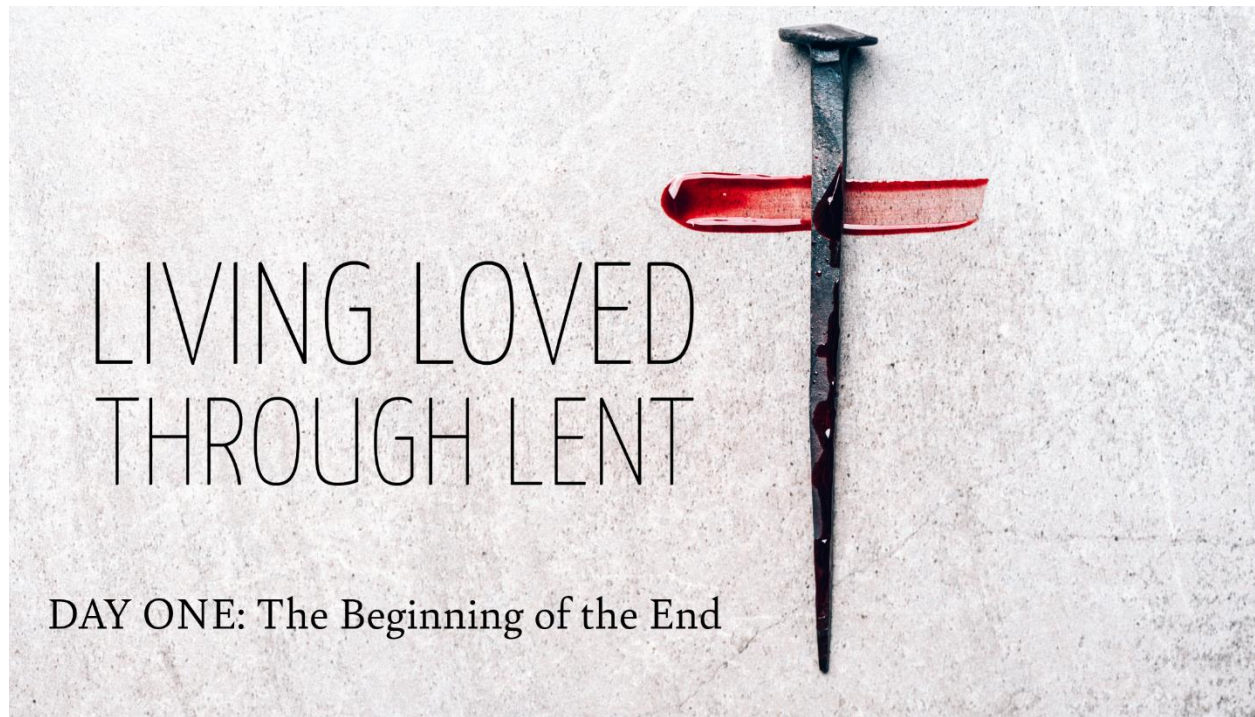


LIVING LOVED THROUGH LENT

*a lectio divina
journey*





Read: This is the beginning of the end. Jesus has just left the upper room where he shared Passover with his disciples, washed their feet, and spoke of a betrayer. Read [Luke 22:39 and John 18:1](#) quietly, pausing to envision this moment in Jesus' life. Consider what might be going on in his mind and in that of his disciples.

On this walk with his followers, Jesus opened his heart, focusing often on his love for them. Read his first words in [John 14:1-3](#) slowly aloud. Then, read it a second time, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

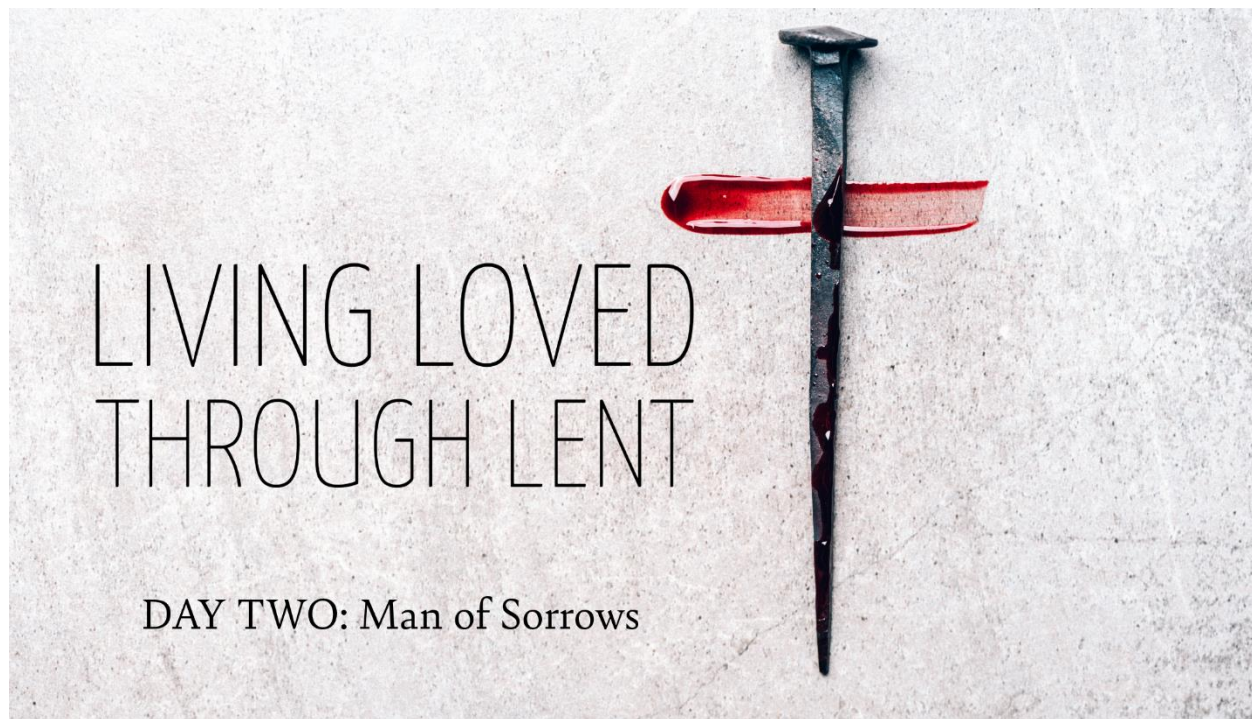
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Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to impart Jesus' message for you from this passage. What is he inviting you to consider? To do? To know? Open your heart and ask him to write his love deeply within you.

Rest: Sit quietly with what you have heard or sensed or experienced. Let all other thoughts go, except the reality of God's presence here and now, with you. Let him love you. If it helps, play worship music in the background. If your mind gets distracted, gently whisper "I receive your love" or "I love you, Lord."

He who knows not the Christ of Calvary knows not God, and He who does not thus know, knows not anything that is worth knowing.

R. E. March



Read: Hundreds of years before he came, the prophet Isaiah described Jesus as a *man of sorrows and acquainted with grief* (Isaiah 53:3). Read [Matthew 26:36-38](#) quietly, pausing to envision what it means for God to feel his soul crushed with grief.

Return to the moments just before this when Jesus shared poignantly with his disciples of his love. Read his words in [John 14:15-18](#) slowly aloud. Then, read it a second time, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

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In the cross God is revealed not as One reigning in calm disdain above all the squalors of earth, but as One who suffers more keenly than the keenest sufferer—"a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Oswald Chambers



Read: Jesus is in torment of soul, yet his closest friends are oblivious. Read [Mark 14:34-37](#) quietly, pausing to envision what it means to be in such pain, yet have no one on earth to share it.

Consider again the final words Jesus had shared of his love for his followers. Read [John 14:21-23](#) slowly aloud. Then, read it a second time, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

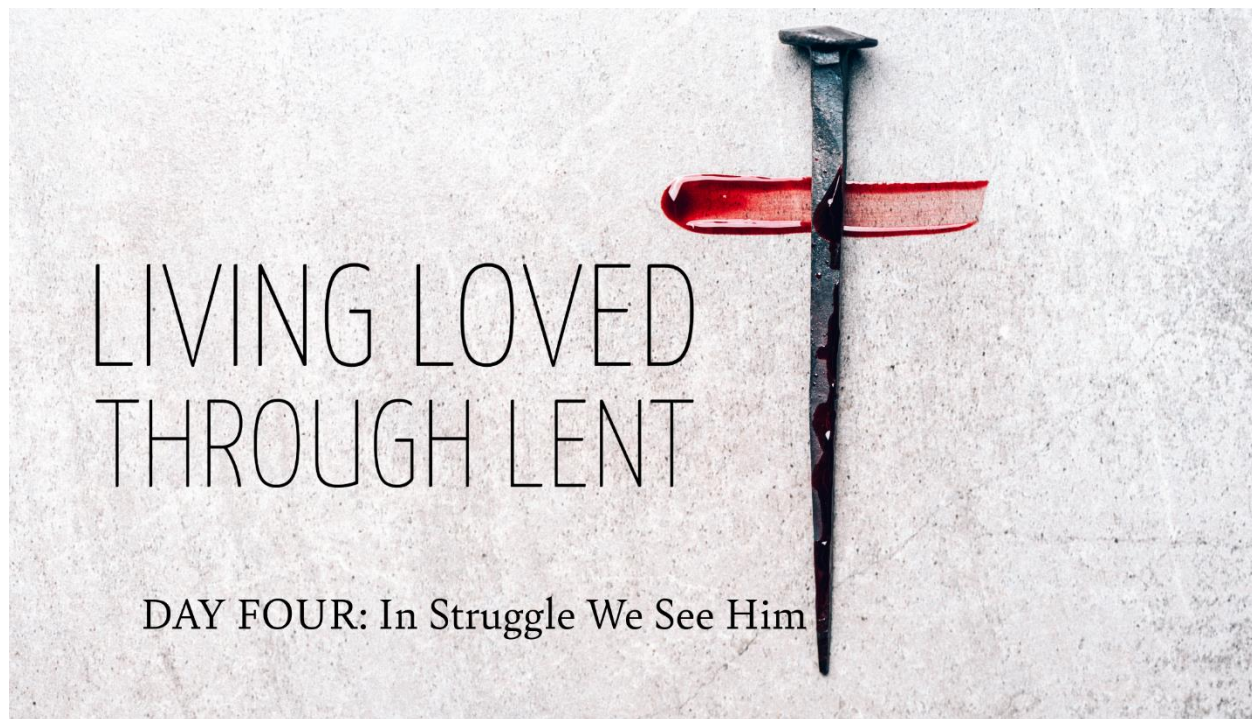
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The passion will inevitably remain extraneous to us until we go into it through the very narrow door of the "for our sake," because only he who acknowledges that the passion is his fault truly knows the passion. Everything else is a digression.

Raneiro Cantalamessa



Read: This is a pivotal moment in the garden—Jesus holds the cup of suffering he is about to drink. Read [Luke 22:41-45](#) quietly, pausing to consider what this cup holds...and how it feels for Jesus to hold it, wishing he didn't have to.

Consider again the final words Jesus shared, promising peace to his followers. Read [John 14:25-27](#) slowly aloud. Then, read it a second time, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of Jesus' heart in it? What truth is captured here? What has made him say this? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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Organized religion has domesticated the crucified Lord of glory, turned Him into a tame theological symbol. Theological symbols do not sweat blood in the night.

Brennan Manning



Read: Through the miry pain of his own struggle, Jesus longs to warn his disciples of what is to come. Read [Mark 14:38-41](#) quietly, pausing to imagine Jesus' compassion and concern for these ones he has shared life with for three years.

As Jesus continued to share with his disciples before the garden, he made audacious claims about the reach of his love and of his Father's love. Read [John 15:9-11](#) slowly aloud. Then, read it a second time, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

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Only one act of pure love, unsullied by any taint of ulterior motive has ever been performed in the history of the world, namely the self-giving of God in Christ on the cross of undeserving sinners. That is why, if we are looking for a definition of love, we should look not in a dictionary, but at Calvary.

John R. Stott



Read: Something has happened in Jesus' resolve. Read [Mark 14:42](#) and ponder his words—how do they differ? What might be going on inside of him?

Jesus' lengthy monologue on the way to the garden is replete with incredible promises and words he hopes will help his followers grasp how different things will be because of his love. Read [John 15:13-16](#) slowly aloud. Then, read it a second time, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

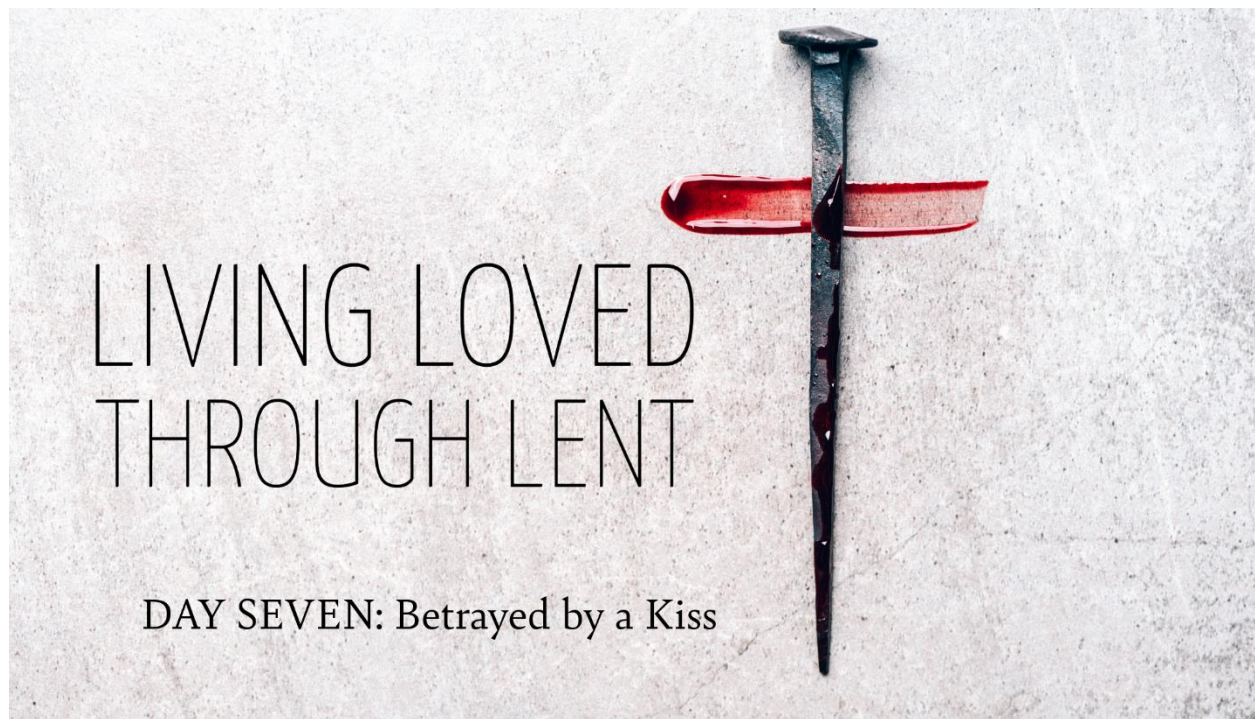
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Without Gethsemane, there would have been no Golgotha. The blood and water that flowed from his wounds on the cross were preceded by bloody sweat that poured from his pores as he suffered the agony of a death more painful than the physical death on the cross, the death of the will.

Michael Card



Read: Of all the ways Judas might have betrayed Jesus, he chose a kiss. Even in the Middle Eastern culture, such a greeting is rife with meaning. Read [Matthew 26:47-49](#) and [Luke 22:48](#). What must Jesus have felt? How did he respond? Imagine that moment and hold it as you continue.

Even until the end, Jesus' followers struggled to understand his divine identity. He finally spelled it out in the simplest terms possible. Read [John 16:25-28](#) slowly aloud. Then, read it a second time, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

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And even so, with the meekest of gestures, has the war for the world been engaged. With a kiss. And the kiss has a tooth. And the snake that struck the Lord has a back of fire and a body of human opinion.

Walt Wangerin



Read: Have you ever been completely alone? Abandoned by your closest friends? Read [Matthew 26:50-56](#). Imagine the moment when Jesus knew he was completely alone. What filled his soul?

Again and again, Jesus upholds the supremacy of love, even in his cries to his Father. Read [John 17:20-23](#). Count the number of times Jesus uses the word “love.” Read the passage again, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

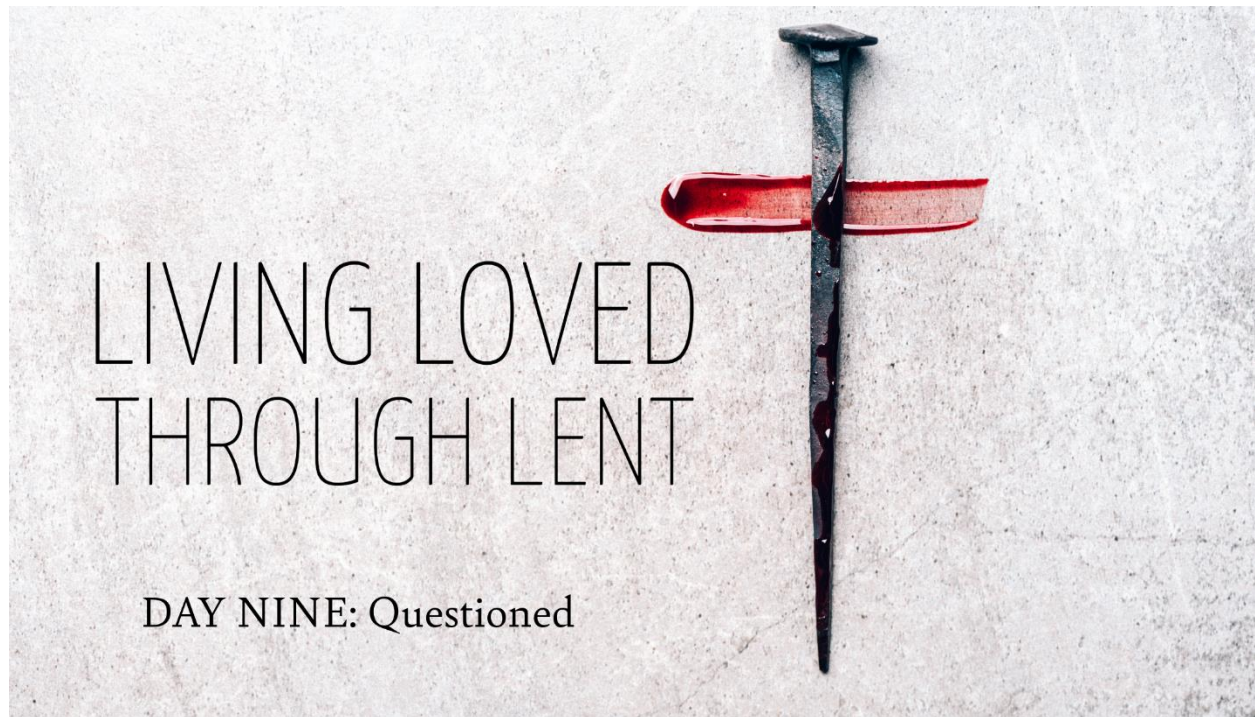
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My Jesus! Loaded with contempt, nail my heart to your feet, that it may ever remain there, to love you and never leave you again.

Saint Alphonseus Liguori



Read: We often think of Jesus' suffering as his death on the cross, but his wounds began so much earlier. Read [John 18:12-14 and 19-23](#). Place yourself there. Watch Jesus' face, his eyes. What do you see?

Some of the most profound words in Scripture are in what has been called Jesus' *high priestly prayer*. Read [John 17:24-26](#) slowly aloud. Take your time with this. Then, read it a second time, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of Jesus' heart in it? What truth is captured here? What has made him say this? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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In all our lingering at Calvary, perhaps we are at no time more helpless than when we attempt to survey the fullness of the Savior's love. Calvary must speak for itself. Nor is it a mute testimony. It is vibrant and vital in its expression. It speaks volumes.

S. Franklin Lodgson



Read: While all of his disciples left him in the garden, two came back, trying to check on him. Read [John 18:15-18, 25-27](#). Who came back? What would it have been like to have been either one of them? Envision the weight of these moments, the emotions and fears that may have filled their hearts.

David, the man after God's own heart, often wrote of God's tender care and love. Read [Psalm 5:3-7](#) quietly aloud. Then, read it a second time, choosing one word or one phrase to focus on.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What truth about you is captured here? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to impart God's message for you from this passage. What is he inviting you to consider? To do? To know? Open your heart and ask him to write his love deeply within you.

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You and I may give one another the impression of being earnest, godly Christians, but before the Cross we have to admit that we are not this sort of person at all. At Calvary the naked truth is staring down at us all the time from the Cross, challenging us to drop the pose and own the truth.

Roy Hession



Read: The wounds of Jesus now intensify—physical and emotional. Read [Mark 14: 53, 55-65](#), [Matthew 27:3-10](#). Imagine the heart of Jesus in these moments as he receives such shaming assaults. Consider the pain of being the betrayer, overwhelmed with hopeless regret.

Sometimes passages are so familiar to us that we lose the incredible scope and breadth of what they say. Read [John 3:13-17](#) as if you've never heard this before. What would it have been like to have been a religious leader, sneaking in to see Jesus and then hearing these words? Choose a word, phrase or verse to sit with today.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart? Turn this word, phrase or verse over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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You will understand that spitting scene that night when God lets you see your own heart.

Alexander Whyte



Read: How often Jesus chose to be silent or to give cryptic answers rather than defend himself. Read [John 18:28-38](#). How did Jesus respond? What could he have said? What was Pilate's response?

The love of God often shines most brightly when things around us seem darkest. Read [Jeremiah 31:1-4](#). Read it again, listening for God's heart as he knows the pain his people are about to suffer. Choose a word or phrase to focus on.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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Christ is to us just what His cross is. All that Christ was in heaven or on earth was put into what He did there...Christ, I repeat, is to us just what His cross is. You do not understand Christ till you understand His cross.

P. T. Forsythe



Read: It seems now that Jesus has become a spectacle, someone to toy with. Read [Luke 23:6-12](#). What was it like in that atmosphere? Envision the sights and sounds, and how Jesus might have felt.

The manifold riches that were purchased for you and me through the suffering of Christ are mind-boggling. Read [Ephesians 1:3-8](#) slowly, phrase by phrase and consider just a few of these. Read it again and choose the word or phrase that most grabs you.

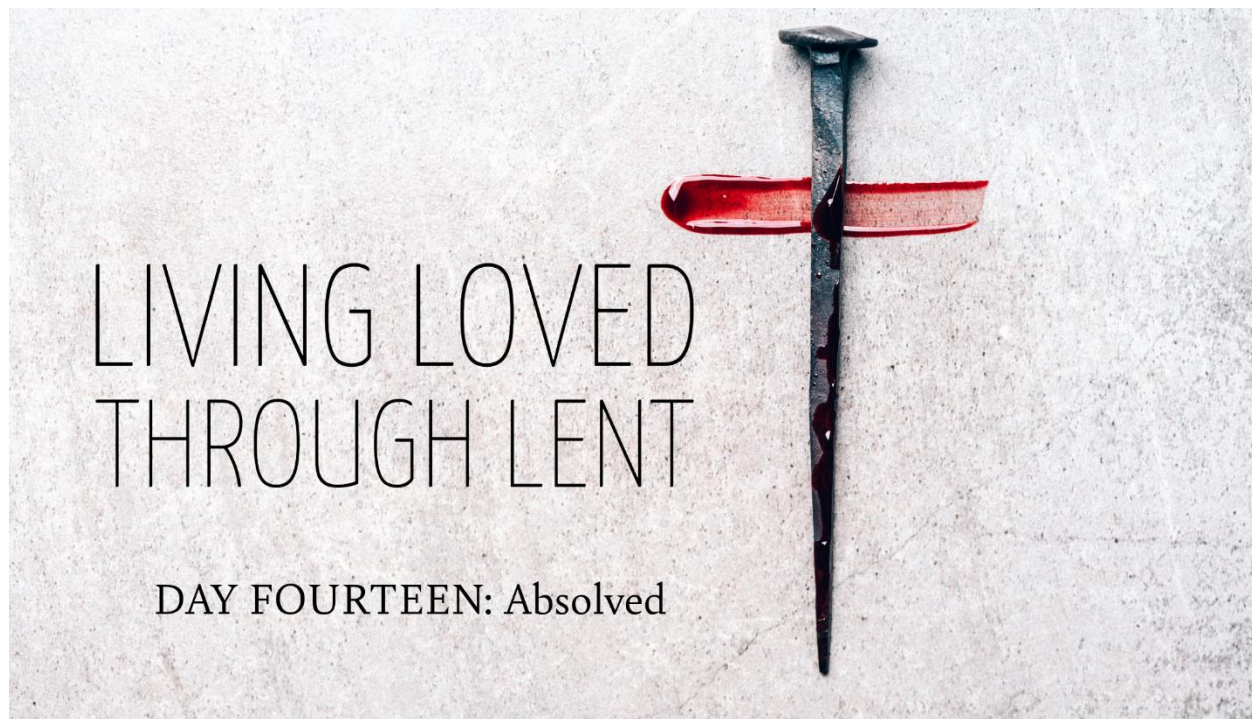
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Come now my soul, and worship this man, this God. Come believer, and behold thy Savior. Come to the innermost circle of all sanctity, the circle that contains the cross of Christ, and here sit down.

Charles Spurgeon



Read: The intensity is building with angry crowds, confused leaders and Jesus, battered and bruised, yet so much more to come. Read [Matthew 27:15-21](#). Envision the crowds and the cries they make. Consider the quiet suffering of Christ.

The love of God is inherent in his nature, as his people have seen throughout their history. Read [Deuteronomy 7:6-9](#) and hear the words spoken of you. Read it again slowly and quietly aloud, looking for one word or phrase to breathe in today.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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The very existence of the cross, and of the crucified Christ, forces us to make a crucial decision: Will we look for God somewhere else, or will we make the cross, and the crucified Christ, the basis of our thought about God.

Alistair E. McGrath

LIVING LOVED THROUGH LENT

DAY FIFTEEN: Scourged



Read: In one short verse we see a universe of pain. Read [Mark 15:15](#) and consider this description of scourging: *The Roman scourge was a short whip made of two or three cords, each one knotted at intervals with pieces of metal or stones. Sometimes there was a hook at the end. The prisoner was made to bend over a post so that the cuts could cover their entire upper body. Afterwards, their backs would be lacerated in ribbons, with muscles exposed through profuse bleeding. At times the scourging itself killed the person.* This chapter in Jesus' suffering is painful, but a powerful testament to his love for broken sinners.

Considering this kind of suffering can only cause us to bow in humble awe. Read [Romans 8:31-34](#) quietly aloud, seeing the scourging of Christ in the background. Read it again, choosing a single word or phrase that captures your heart.

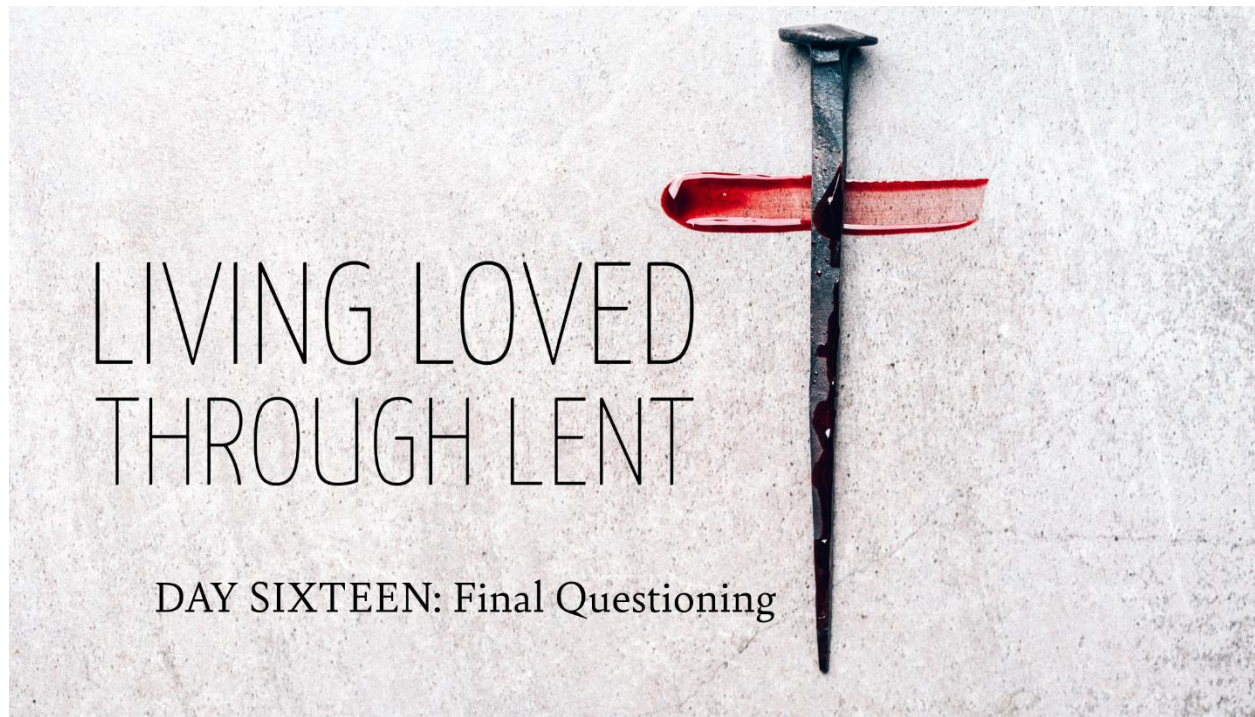
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How might any pain be more to me than to see Him that is all my life,
all my bliss, and all my joy suffer?

Julian of Norwich



Read: So many opportunities for things to turn out differently, and yet Jesus goes along. Read [John 19:6-11](#) and seek to grasp his mindset. See Jesus there, listening to the crowds cry for crucifixion. Envision his awareness of all that he has heard from his Father.

There is a peace in knowing our lives are governed by God's sovereign plan. In light of this reality, read [Matthew 6:25-30](#) aloud. Then slowly read it again, choosing a single word or phrase that captures your heart.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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Where have your love, your mercy, your compassion shone out more luminously than in your wounds, sweet gentle Lord of mercy? More mercy than this no one has than that he lay down his life for those who are doomed to death.

Bernard of Clairvaux



Read: The roar of the raucous crowd cannot be ignored. They want him gone, out of their sight. Read [John 19:12-15](#) quietly aloud. Read it again, listening to the sounds, seeing the characters in this drama that will change all of history.

The Psalmist would perhaps have been stunned at the hardness of hearts, given his grasp of God's love. Read [Psalm 36:5-10](#) slowly. As you read it a second time, look for a word or phrase to ponder more deeply.

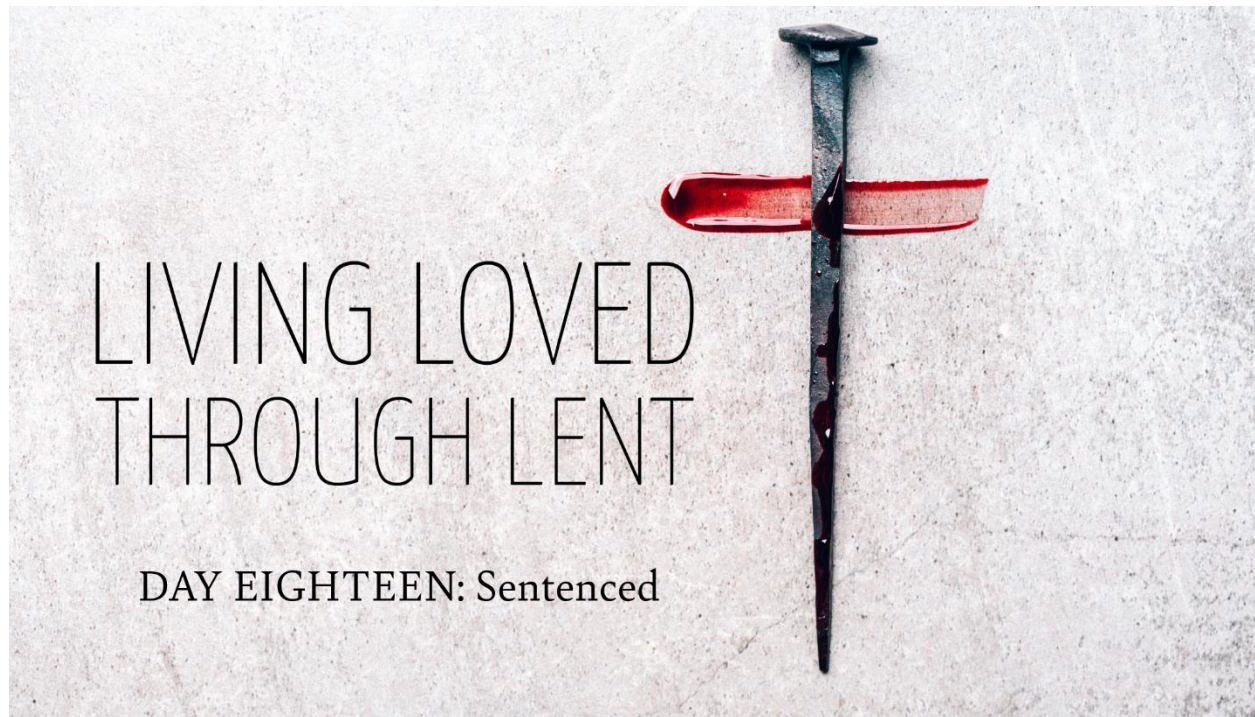
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And unfortunately, it is certain that I am also one of that crowd that doesn't give much thought to what happened. I, who am even able to write these things about the Passion while remaining impassive, whereas it should only be written about in tears.

Raneiro Cantallamesa



Read: More abuse for the Lord of glory, this time from the military elite. Read [John 19:16](#) and [Matthew 27:27-30](#) as you take in this next chapter in the terrible trauma Jesus endures.

Who is a God like ours? This is the question the prophet Micah poses. Read [Micah 7:18-20](#) aloud, listening to the heartbeat of God behind it. Read it a second time slowly and reflectively as you choose a word or phrase to go deeper.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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Thorns, it seems, always accompany visits to glory. No one who has walked in Christ's presence will ever be allowed to strut.

Jamie Buckingham



Read: Today the walk up Calvary's Mountain begins. This journey can be not only spiritually, but emotionally and physically taxing. Consider how long it has been and all that has happened since Jesus led his disciples to the garden of Gethsemane. Read [Matthew 27:31](#)—one simple verse and only steps left to go.

In our journey with Jesus we see our need and his abundant provision. Read [1 Timothy 1:15-17](#) quietly as you ponder Jesus' steps down the Via Dolorosa...the way of pain. Read it again and open your heart to the word or phrase Jesus has for you today.

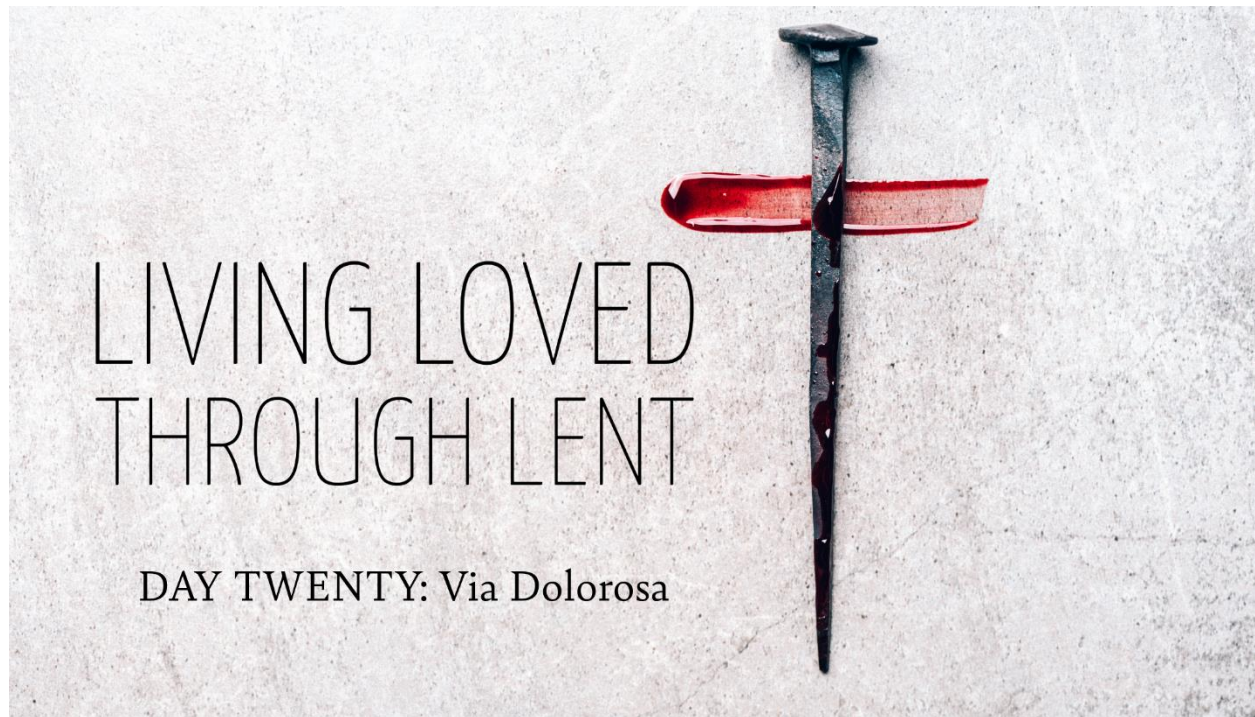
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At the head of the procession of life, then, is a thorn-crowned Man, his pains healing our pains, his wounds answering our wounds, his love taking our sin.

Earl Stanley Jones



Read: Through a city swarming with thousands of Jews celebrating Passover from all over the world, Jesus goes to his death. Read [John 19:17 and Luke 23:26-32](#) and envision him being jostled through the streets, pushed until he cannot stand.

Jesus endured this and so much more for the joy set before him. Read [Romans 5:1-8](#) aloud quietly as you see him telling women not to weep. Read it again, looking for one word or phrase that will be yours to hold close today.

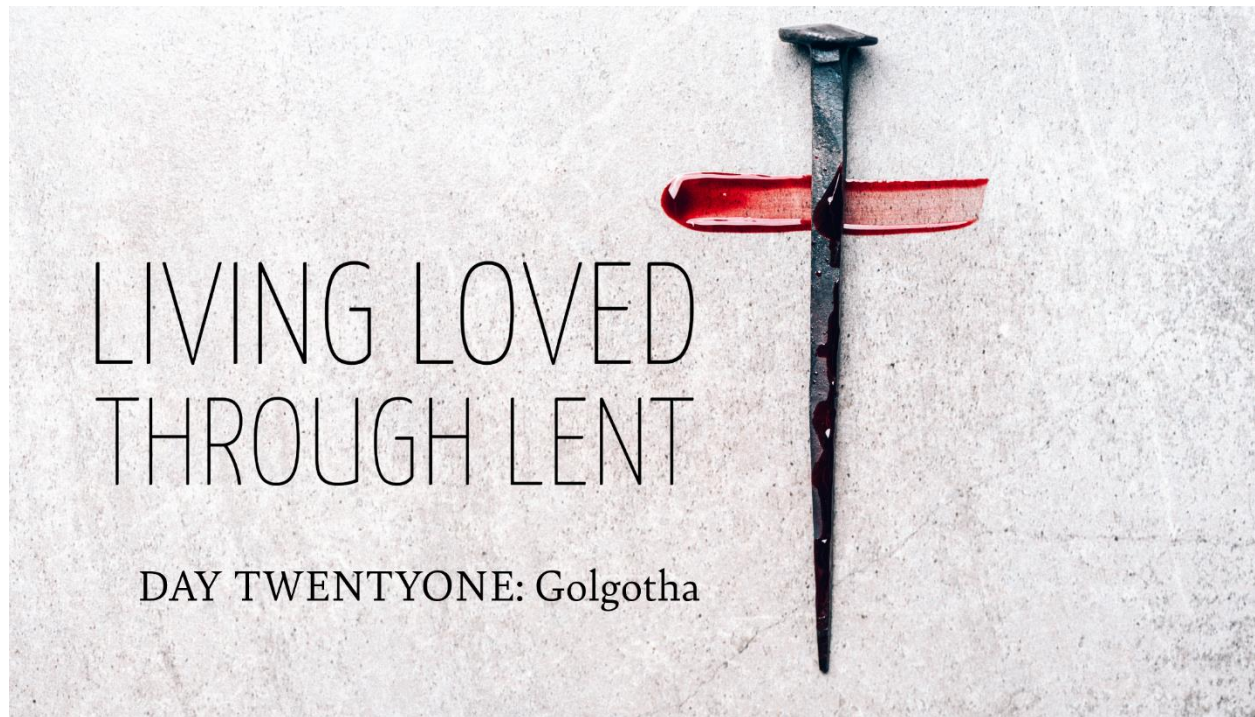
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When we look at his cross, we understand his love. His head is bent down to kiss us. His hands are extended to embrace us. His heart is wide open to receive us.

Mother Teresa



Read: The moment is almost here. The place called Golgotha reeks of death, shame, and destruction. Read [Matthew 27:33-34](#) and lift your eyes to look down from this hill of death. See the lost, the broken, the world...yourself.

Read [Colossians 1:18-22](#) with the background of Golgotha in your mind. See what is being purchased here. Read it again and choose a word or phrase to sit with for this time.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to impart God's message for you from this passage. What is he inviting you to consider? To do? To know? Open your heart and ask him to write his love deeply within you.

Rest: Sit quietly with what you have heard or sensed or experienced. Let all other thoughts go, except the reality of God's presence here and now, with you. Let him love you. If it helps, play worship music in the background. If your mind gets distracted, gently whisper "I receive your love" or "I love you, Lord."

I want to recover the truth that Jesus was not crucified on an altar between two candlesticks, but on a garbage heap at a crossroads of the world...where soldiers gambled and cynics talked smut.

George McCloud



Read: Little description is given to this very gruesome event, a violent, cruel process every criminal sentenced to death must endure. Read [John 19:18](#) and sit quietly for a few minutes taking this in.

Have you come to taste even a drop of the love God has for you? Has the cross arrested your heart? Read [Zephaniah 3:14-17](#). Hear the crucified Lord speaking these words to you. Choose a word or phrase that captures your heart.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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And if we men and women of this latter day wish to gaze into the awfulness of sin, we shall have to take our stand at the mystic confluence of midnight and noonday and abide in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Warren Wiersbe



Read: An eternity of forgiveness lies in the heart of Christ, and here we see its fruit. Read [John 19:23-24](#) and [Luke 23:34](#). Imagine this scene and hear the gentle voice of Jesus praying.

God's love is so vast and yet so practically personal. Read [2 Thessalonians 3:1-5](#) slowly aloud. Then read it again, absorbing each word. Choose a word or phrase to focus on today.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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What do you weep at, if you do not weep at this?

Dante Alighieri



Read: The King of kings is being put to death and even in this, his antagonists seek to rob him of glory. Read [John 19:19-22](#) and consider the depth of meaning behind this epitaph.

A world-renowned passage on love was written by Paul to the church at Corinth. But if God is love, then surely there is no better description of God than 1 Corinthians 13. Read [verses 4-7](#) word by word, slowly. Read it again as you envision the redeeming love of Calvary. Choose a word or phrase to go deeper.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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Behold what great contempt hath the Lord of Majesty endured, that his confusion may be our glory; his punishment our heavenly bliss! Without ceasing impress this spectacle, O Christian, on thy soul!

Dionysius



Read: To mock someone is to be contemptuous of them, often using sarcastic language. Read [Mark 15:29-30](#). Consider the mockery being thrown at Jesus and the taunting challenge they give. What would your life hold had he chosen to prove his divinity in that moment?

The anguish Jesus experienced reminds us that he has felt every pain we have ever felt. Read [Psalm 31:3-7](#) quietly. Read it a second time, remembering the anguish of soul Jesus must have felt when mocked as he hung to die. Choose a word, phrase or verse to soak in today.

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And age by age the Lord Christ is crucified. And we too have crowded eagerly to Calvary and nailed Him to His cross, and laughed up into His face, and watched Him die, and gone our way well pleased and much relieved that we have hustled Him out of the way -- yes, even we.

John Arthur Gossip



Read: Not only passersby but the religious elite mock Jesus, throwing his own claims back in his face. Read [Matthew 27:41-43](#) and listen to the shouts and taunts thrown in Jesus' face, even as he hangs helpless.

What does it mean to be precious and honored in someone's sight? [Read Isaiah 43:1-4](#) as you envision the wounds Jesus must feel in the face of such torment. See his face and hear his voice as you read it again, choosing a word, phrase or verse to sit with.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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Around the Silent Sufferer surged the brutal slaughter and flung its showers of barbed sarcasm in His holy face. The Prisoner has become the sport of the executioners.

William Henry Bierderwolf



Read: Jesus offers redemption in the most tender words: “today you shall be with me...” Read [Luke 23:39-43](#) and consider the two men on either side of Jesus as he hangs there. Such different responses, such different destinies.

With the background of these two men and their responses, read [Romans 5:6-8](#) quietly aloud. Consider your own response to Jesus as you read it again, looking for a word, phrase or verse that speaks specifically to you.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God’s nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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When the true meaning of the crucifixion dawns upon us, then the whole sordid, bloody, painful death shall make us tremble before its glory.

Ben M. Herbster



Read: Very few of Jesus' friends remained with him as he died, and most of them were women. Read [John 19:25-27](#) where they are each named. How does John describe himself? What do you see of Jesus' nature in his humanness here?

In reflecting on the suffering of Christ at Calvary, we may only glimpse the wonder that prophets and priests have seen and spoken of. Read [1 Peter 1:8-12](#) quietly and slowly. Read it a second time and choose a word, phrase or verse that speaks to you today.

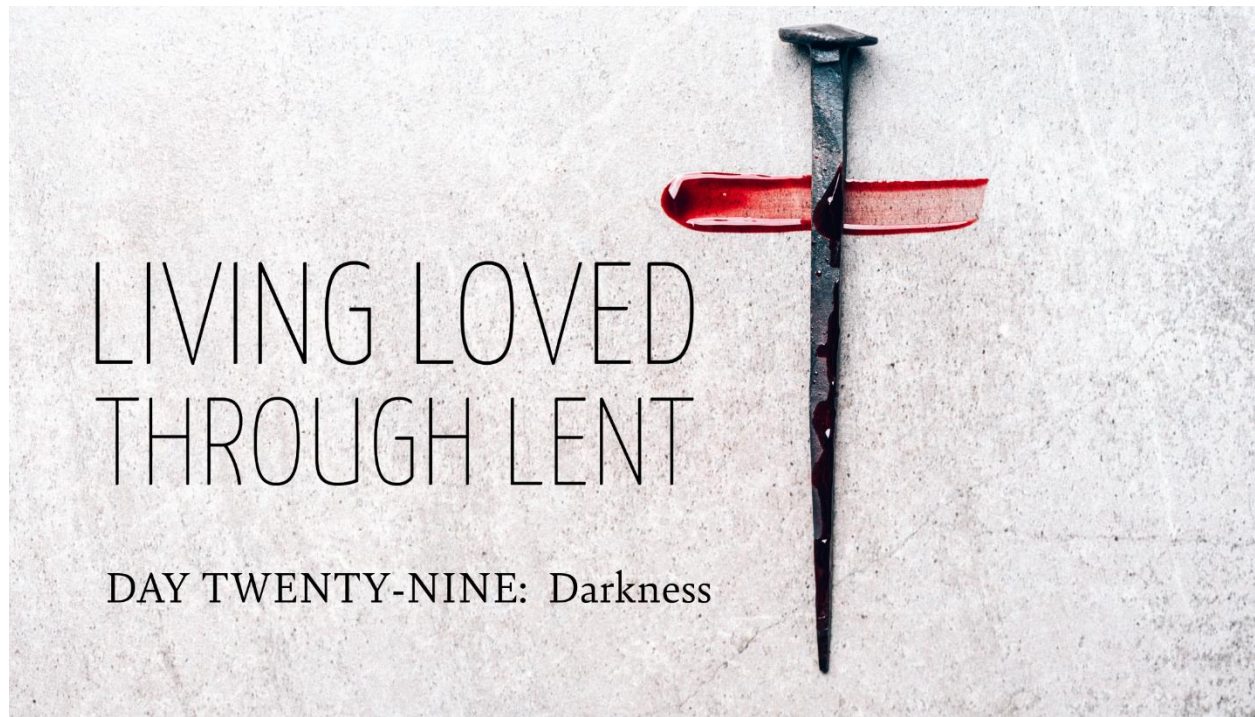
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Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you
remember Christ crucified and be silent.

John of the Cross



Read: It would be hard for us to imagine the kind of darkness that descended on Calvary as Jesus drank the cup of our sinfulness. Read [Luke 23:44-45](#) and sit with the reality of these three hours—see Jesus drinking drop by drop in the darkness of human depravity.

Are you beginning to grasp the breadth and scope of Christ's love for you. Can you sit in the wonder of it? Can you let him love you as he longs to do? Read [Romans 8:35-39](#) as a light in the darkness Jesus is experiencing. Read it again aloud and choose a word, phrase or verse to focus on.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

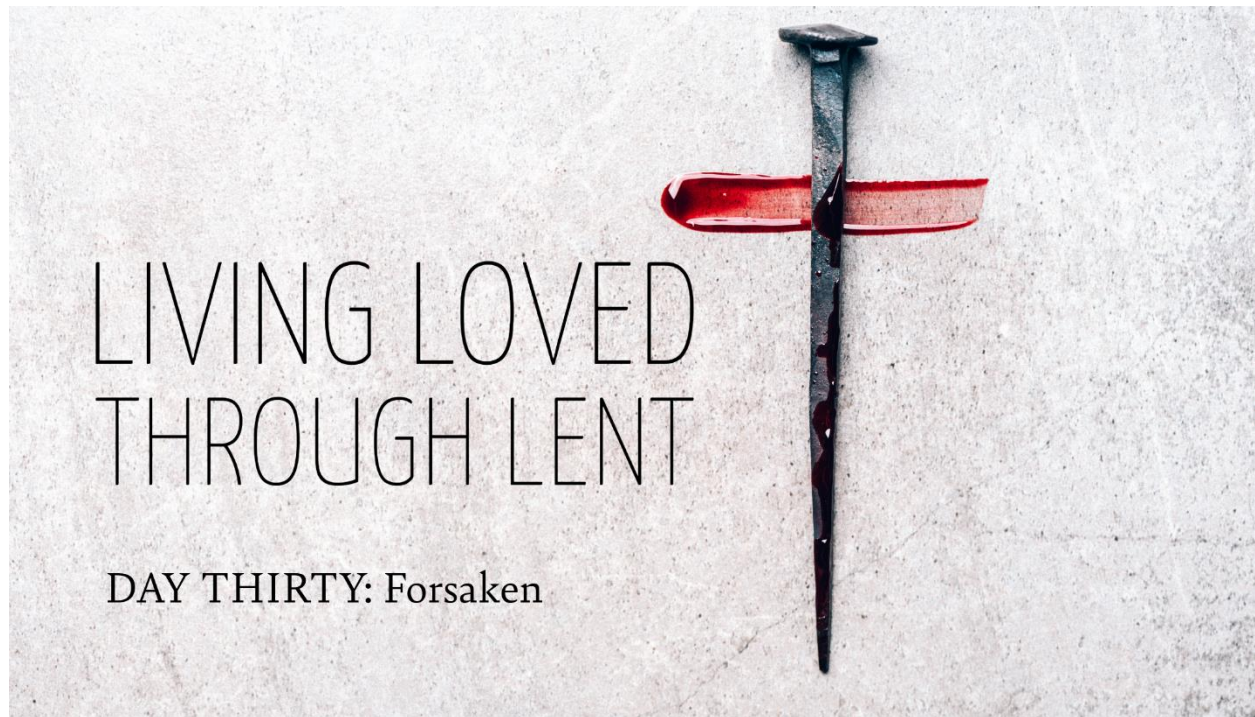
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Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Sometimes it causes me to tremble . . . tremble . . . tremble.

Old negro spiritual



Read: Today we ponder the most painful words Jesus spoke in his final hours. Theologians still differ on what it means. Read [Mark 15:34](#) at least two times., setting aside all preconceptions and envisioning all that Jesus experienced as he cried out.

In David's lonely sojourns running from Saul, he expressed a depth of yearning that springs from knowing God's love. Read [Psalm 63:1-3](#) as you imagine such longing. Read it a second time and choose a word, phrase or verse that moves you.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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There is something infinitely profounder than pathos in the death of Jesus; there is a mystery we cannot begin to touch.

Oswald Chambers



Read: We can never forget that Jesus was fully human and yet his cries from the cross plumb greater depths of meaning than the words themselves. Read [John 19:28-29](#) and [Matthew 27:47-49](#) quietly aloud, feeling the emotions Jesus must have felt and pondering what his deeper needs were.

There is a lofty theological term called *prevenient grace*, which simply means that God is at work in and around us long before we realize it. This is blazoned in no uncertain terms in [1 John 4:8-10](#). The reality of this rings from the sufferings of Jesus on Calvary. Read the passage slowly, phrase by phrase, taking in its profound meaning. Read it again, choosing a word, phrase, or verse to fix your heart on.

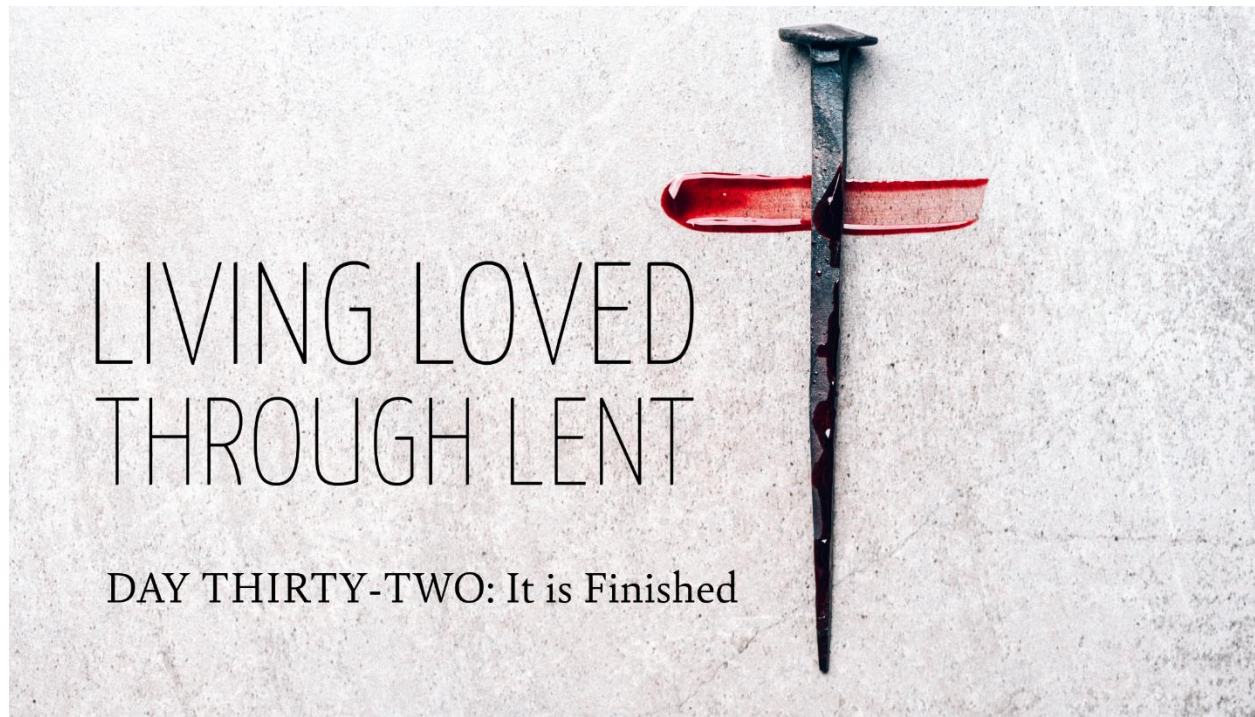
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How do you approach the thirst of Jesus? Only one secret -- the closer you come to Jesus, the better you will know His thirst. Jesus thirsts even now, in your heart and in the poor -- He knows your weakness, He wants only your love, wants only the chance to love you.

Mother Teresa



Read: A universe of truth and meaning are wrapped up in Jesus' final words from the Cross. Read [John 19:30](#) and imagine the sights and sounds all around him. Was it silent or noisy? Reverent or raucous? Did anyone even hear him or realize what was happening?

If someone were to ask you why Jesus brought you to life spiritually, what might you say? Read [Ephesians 2:4-10](#) out loud, savoring the reality of love that has enabled you to live. Read it again, choosing a word, phrase, or verse to fix your heart on.

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Blessed Redeemer, precious Redeemer, seems now I see Him on
Calvary's tree.

Avis B. Christiansen



Read: What did it mean for Jesus to taste of death, to experience the end of his existence as a human being? What made him shout these last words and what do they mean for us? Read [Luke 23:46](#) and [Matthew 27:50](#), taking the time to see Jesus there, to hear him shout, to imagine the weight of relief in giving himself into his Father's hands.

Crucifixion for a Jew in a Roman culture carried unbearable shame. Jesus took this on for you, so that you might experience his covenant of love. Read [Isaiah 54:4-10](#) all the way through. Then read it again, slowly, pausing after each verse to consider the enormity of the words. Choose a word, phrase or verse that has affected you and spend time with it.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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As you gaze upon the cross, and long for conformity to him, be not weary or fearful because you cannot express in words what you seek. Ask him to plant the cross in your heart. Believe in him, the crucified and now living one, to dwell within you, and breathe his own mind there.

Andrew Murray



Read: The enormity of what took place when Christ breathed his last breath can only be suggested in an earthquake of a magnitude we cannot imagine. Read [Matthew 27:51-53](#) and imagine the crazy chaos that must have taken place, and the miracle of life some got to experience.

Have you ever taken the time to consider what your life might have held had Jesus not been willing to suffer such agony of body and soul? To give his life in exchange for yours? Read [Lamentations 3:22-26](#) as you process these thoughts. Read it again aloud, letting your heart feel the wonder of redeeming love. Choose a word, phrase or verse that captures your attention in this moment.

Think: Review the passage again and ponder the word or phrase that stands out to you. What do you see of God's nature in this? What do you see about his heart for people? For you? Turn this word or phrase over and over in your mind—gently, like a fragile treasure.

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But as we gaze, it is not pity that we feel, but a profound reverence, for there on Calvary is the great turning point in the course of human affairs.

Hughell Fosbroke



Read: How different this death must have been from all the others the soldiers ever witnessed. Surely they ponder the paradox that one brutally nailed to a cross could determine his own destiny, even to his last breath. Read [Matthew 27:54-56](#) and try to imagine being one of those who stood guarding the dying criminals. What would it be like to have the revelation given to the centurion?

Perhaps by now you are beginning to see that God doesn't just love you, but that he *abounds* in love for you. Read [Psalm 86:1-5](#) quietly aloud and consider this. Read it again slowly, choosing a word, phrase or verse to focus on.

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And, as you sit and gaze, it will be born in you that only a crucified Savior could meet your need.

William Sangster



LIVING LOVED THROUGH LENT

DAY THIRTY-SIX: Water and Blood

Read: One day, the scene you read of today will flash in front of every person who has ever walked this earth. Read [John 19:31-37](#) and consider this reality: Every eye will gaze at Jesus' pierced side, and they will mourn as if they have lost their only son, for all of mankind has played a part in his gruesome death.

It has often been said that Jesus died of a broken heart, and perhaps he did. How precious the blood shed for you and me. Read [1 Peter 1:18-21](#) as you remember his pierced side, water and blood pouring out. Read it again, choosing a word, phrase or verse to sit with today.

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Stand at the foot of the cross, and count the purple drops by which you have been cleansed; see the thorn-crown; mark His scourged shoulders, still gushing with crimsoned rills... And if you do not lie prostrate on the ground before that cross, you have never seen it.

Charles Spurgeon



Read: We have walked the entire journey with Christ to the cross and soon his body will be taken down. Quiet your heart before God as you read [Mark 15:42-47](#) and [John 19:38](#). Who was there? Who watched? Who took action? Why? Take a few minutes to envision all the characters in this incredible moment of drama.

As you think of these events, think of the love that has been so graphically portrayed through your Savior at Calvary. Read [1 John 3:1-5](#) quietly aloud as you soak in the wonder of this. Read it again slowly, taking in each reality it addresses. Choose a word or phrase to focus on.

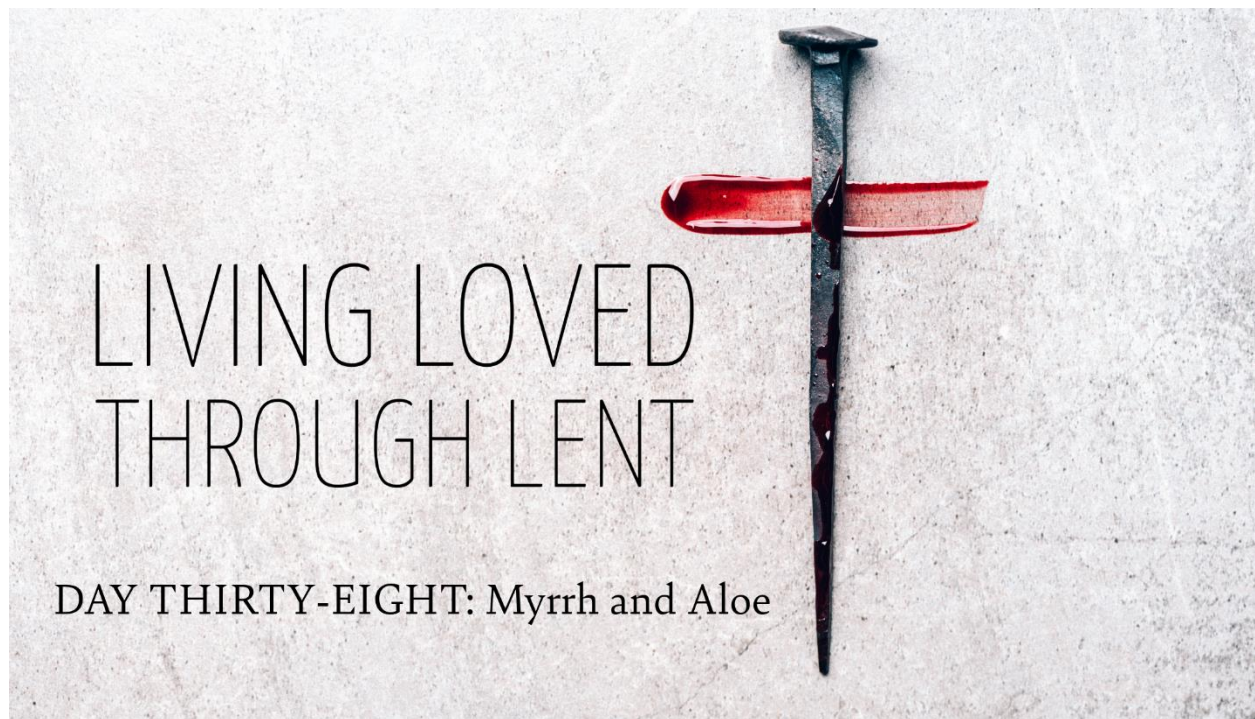
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For in the cross of Christ, as in a splendid theater, the incomparable goodness of God is set before the whole world. The glory of God shines, indeed, in all creatures on high and below, but never more brightly than in the cross.

Calvin's Saint John



Read: It seems the final act of mankind's greatest tragedy has come to an end. The Son of man who never had a place to lay his head is now put to rest in a rich man's grave. Read [John 19:39-42](#) and [Luke 23:55-56](#) and see those who remain. What emotions must be playing across this spectrum of souls who remain? What would you feel had you been there?

What will it take for you to stay in this place of living loved by God? And as you are, what do you want to bring in return? Read [Jude 1:20-25](#) and inhale deeply of redemption. Then exhale with gratitude and praise. Read it again aloud and choose a word, phrase or verse to sit with today.

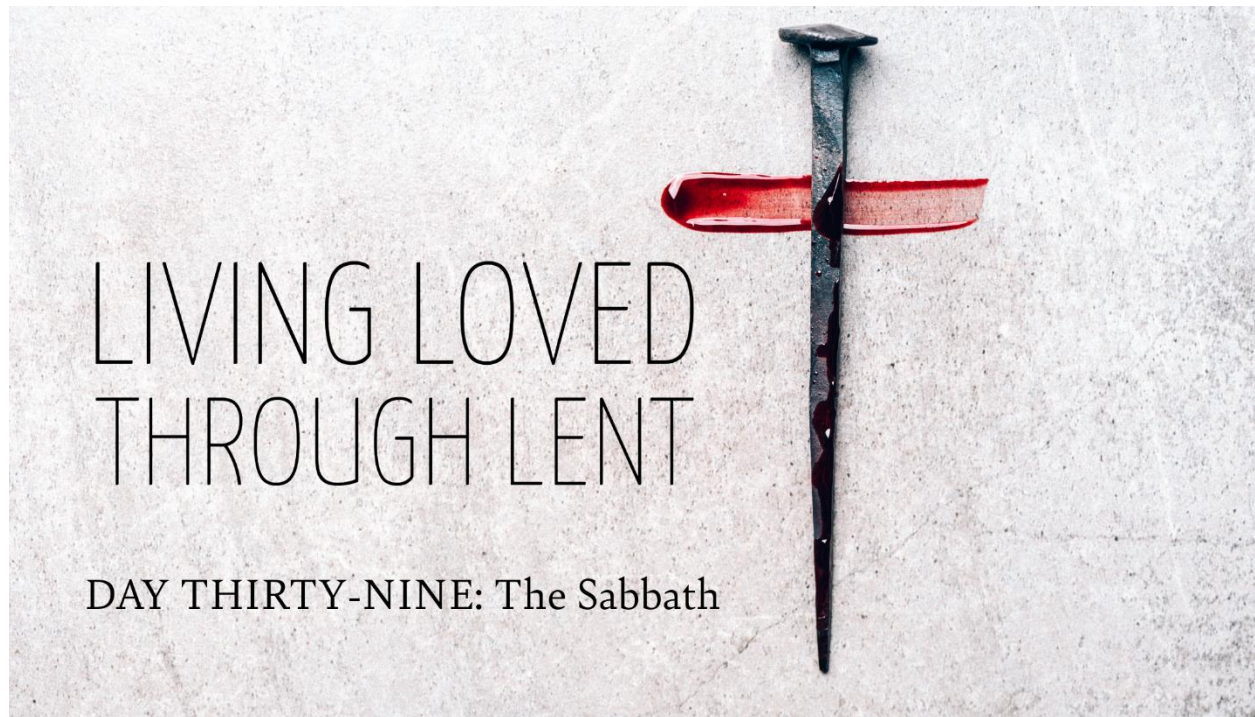
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In the cross is an ocean of love yet unrevealed, a mountain of power still unreleased, and a sea of truth not yet fathomed . . . There is something utterly exhaustless about the provisions of Calvary.

S. Franklin Logsdon



Read: Make this time with God a time of rest as the Jews did on the Sabbath. Mentally cease from all activity except focusing on Him. Breathe deeply and slowly. Feel the coolness of the earth in the dark tomb where Christ has been laid. Smell the aromatic spices. Anticipate the miraculous as you offer yourself to the Savior. Ask Him to reveal His truth to your own heart today as you read [Luke 23:55-56](#) and [Matthew 27:62-66](#).

Jesus hung from a cross with your name engraved on his hands, a reality prophesied by Isaiah hundreds of years before. Read [Isaiah 49:13-16](#) with quiet wonder. Read it again and take it in, choosing a word, a phrase or a verse to focus on today.

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Nowhere do I more find such fruitful stillness as when I am near the cross.
Nowhere do I feel so inclined to take the shoes from off my feet. And how do you account for it?

John Henry Jowett



Read: *I have seen the Lord.* With these words Mary Magdalene startles the grieving disciples. Resurrection hope is spawned and will soon spread like a soothing ointment to all who will believe -- some having seen, and others simply by faith -- that what Jesus of Nazareth said he would do, he did. Read [Luke 24:1-11](#) and [John 20:2-18](#) through slowly, taking in the wonder and joy of these moments.

This is the turning point in human history, for in it we see the power of love, the likes of which the world has never known. Read [Ephesians 4:14-21](#) with a strong voice. There is no other love like this. Read it again. Soak the words in, savor them, and live in Christ's love as you choose a word, a phrase or a verse to focus on today.

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I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched and all the navies that ever were built, and all of the parliaments that ever have sat, and all the kings that ever reigned put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life, Jesus of Nazareth.

Anonymous