

2021
Lenten
Journal

40 Days of Blessing

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR.
CHANGE THE WORLD.

 **Park Cities**
BAPTIST CHURCH



40 Days of Blessing

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR.
CHANGE THE WORLD.

“Blessed.” It’s on t-shirts, home décor, and it’s even got its own hashtag. We often say, “we are blessed to be a blessing.” But what does it mean to be blessed? What’s more, what does it mean to be a blessing?

In Genesis 12, God promises to bless Abraham, and through Abraham and his descendants, all the peoples of the world will be blessed. There is no greater blessing than relationship – particularly, a relationship with God. To know God and be known by God is the ultimate blessing. If, by God’s grace alone, you have come to know God through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of God’s only Son, Jesus Christ, you are blessed.

Notice when we say we are “blessed to be a blessing,” we don’t say we are blessed to create or manufacture a blessing. No, in Christ Jesus, we are blessed to be a blessing. Because we have received an unending relationship with God by grace through faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit – the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead – lives and breathes in us.

So, as we live and breathe in our ongoing relationship with God, and our relationships with others, we are continually blessed to be a blessing. God created each of us for relationship with God and with one another. God designed each of us with unique personalities and gifts that, when activated by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, have the capacity to set the world on fire with hope and joy.

The family of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, united in love, and committed to loving her neighbor, is not meant to be merely a glorious ideal, but a visible reality.

Over the 40 days of this Lenten season, we will prepare to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday, but not without remembering the Good Friday when our Savior carried the weight of humanity's sin and shame – including our own – to the cross. When we consider how Jesus gave everything for us, we realize how Jesus continues to give everything to us. In response, we seek to give everything back to Jesus.

As you journey through these pages, we pray you journey with Jesus. We ask the Holy Spirit to awaken you to the authentic, personal lifestyle of Jesus. Jesus came not only to show us who God is, but to show us who we were created by God to be. We invite you to take time to read these real-life stories of Jesus. Notice what Jesus noticed. Consider the connections between activities, relationships, and events. Then, go and be who you see Jesus being.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven,” (Matthew 5:16 ESV).

Jesus prayed, Jesus listened, Jesus shared his table, Jesus served, and Jesus told the best stories about God. We pray over these 40 days of Lent, we as a faith family will not only remember Jesus, but we will reflect Jesus.

As we choose 4 people to bless over 40 days from 4 spheres of life where God has already planted us, and 1 person to bless with us, we pray we don't accomplish a task, but rather, we encounter our Teacher. We pray we are transformed more and more into the image of Christ Jesus over the next 40 days, and that our transformation catches fire in the form of loving where we live.

Be blessed, PCBC, and be a blessing.



Note to Families

As we come together as a faith family and love where we live, we invite you to come together with your own family and do the same! Parents, your kids are watching how you live and listening to you (whether it seems like they are or not!). This is a great opportunity to show your kids what it looks like to live and to love like Jesus right where you are.

Each week, as we learn a new practice, talk about it with your kids each day! Whether it's at the breakfast table, on the drive to and from school, around the dinner table, or before bedtime prayers, seek to spend a few minutes each day talking about each new practice.

Invite your kids to bless with you and encourage them to pick 1 friend they can bless as we prepare for Easter.

As you go through these 40 days of loving where you live together,

- Regularly pray for your child's friend as a family
- Set up COVID-friendly play dates with your child's friend

- Brainstorm together as a family about ways you can serve your child's friend (and their family)
- Share your story and Jesus' story with your child
- Help your child learn to write and share their own life story with their friend
- Teach your child to know and share Jesus' story with their friend
- Dream together as a family about how you can celebrate Easter with your child's friend (and their family)

It is never too early or too late to teach your kids about Jesus and show them what a life surrendered to Jesus Christ looks like! When we look at the life of Jesus, we see how Jesus began to teach (or "disciple") his friends (or "disciples") before they fully understood and believed who Jesus really was. Discipleship doesn't begin after kids (or adults) place their faith in Jesus, but before!

We pray these 40 days of loving where we live are a special opportunity for you to come together as a family and walk with Jesus as never before!

Ash
Wednesday,
February

17

Blessing

 **READ GENESIS 12:1-4**

● What does this passage teach us about being blessed?

● What does this passage teach us about being a blessing?

● What does this passage teach us about God?

● What does this passage teach us about people?

● How will you practice what God has shown you today?

Thursday,
February

18

Blessing

 **READ JOHN 15:12-17**

● What does this passage teach us about being blessed?

● What does this passage teach us about being a blessing?

● What does this passage teach us about God?

● What does this passage teach us about people?

● How will you practice what God has shown you today?

Blessing

 **READ MATTHEW 28:16-20**

- What does this passage teach us about being blessed?

- What does this passage teach us about being a blessing?

- What does this passage teach us about God?

- What does this passage teach us about people?

- How will you practice what God has shown you today?

Pick 4 People

TO BLESS FOR 40 DAYS

As we enter this Lenten season, we invite you to choose 4 people who you will bless for 40 days from 4 different spheres of your life and the relationships you are already planted in.

The 4 different spheres of life and relationships are:

- 1) HOME OR FAMILY**
(including roommates and extended family)
- 2) FRIENDS**
(those you regularly choose to spend time with for fun)
- 3) CO-WORKERS OR CLASSMATES**
(current or former)
- 4) NEIGHBORS**
(not only your geographical neighbors across the hall or street, but also those you encounter as you're out and about – such as your local barista, the neighborhood grocer, or the server at your favorite restaurant)

As you reflect on these 4 different spheres of life and relationships, we encourage you to prioritize people you know who do not yet have a personal, transformative relationship with Jesus. With that in mind, ask God to show you which 4 people in your life you should commit to blessing over the 40 days of Lent.

WRITE THEIR NAMES HERE:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

Pick 1 Person

**TO BLESS WITH YOU
AND KEEP YOU ACCOUNTABLE**

Is there someone within our PCBC faith family who you can ask to join you in this journey of blessing? We encourage you to pick someone who you trust enough to be totally honest with, and someone who trusts you enough to do the same. If you do not yet have a relationship like that within PCBC, feel free to ask a friend of yours who is part of a different local church (either in town or out of town) to join you.

AS WE GO THROUGH THIS LENTEN SEASON,

- Sundays are dedicated to personal preparation
- Mondays are dedicated to someone from your home or family
- Tuesdays are dedicated to one of your friends
- Wednesdays are dedicated to a current or former classmate or co-worker of yours
- Thursdays are dedicated to one of your neighbors
- Fridays are dedicated to reflection and reaching out to the 1 person you have asked to bless with you and keep you accountable
- Saturdays are dedicated to Sabbath rest

Saturday,
February

20

Sabbath

- Historically, the church does not include the Sabbath in the 40 days of Lent. “Sabbath” comes from the Hebrew word, *shabbat*, which means “rest” or “cessation.” While Christians generally associate Sunday with the Sabbath, in keeping with our theme of living like Jesus, we have chosen to treat Saturday as our Sabbath.
- Each Saturday, we will provide a Bible passage related to Sabbath for you to read and learn from. Though the Sabbath is a reflection of how God rested on the seventh day after creation, it is important to note that while God rested from working in a traditional sense, God never ceased from being God. Likewise, in Jesus’ day, his view of the Sabbath was controversial in different religious circles. In keeping with his identity as the visible image of the invisible God, Jesus did not cease being Jesus on the Sabbath. Therefore, while we encourage you to spend a day ceasing from your labors and resting in the presence of God each week, that does not mean you take a 24-hour break from being a child of God.
- When Jesus says humanity was not created for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was created for humanity, Jesus is emphasizing that God’s command to rest is a gift from God. Even on Saturdays, we challenge you to take time to be blessed by God. If God opens your eyes

to see an opportunity to bless someone on a Saturday, don’t hold back simply because it’s supposed to be your Sabbath. Always be open to the ways and the work of God. That said, we urge you to guard your Sabbath as best you can as a special, restful, joyful, set apart day that is holy unto the Lord.

- Many Christians traditionally fast or give something up for the Lenten season. Here at PCBC, we are collectively giving up our own agendas, personal preferences, comforts, and go-to free time activities over these 40 days. Our time will likely be the greatest sacrifice we make throughout this journey, but every real and rich relationship needs time to grow. We believe the time we put into this journey will be directly correlated to the fruit we see developed throughout this journey.

READ EXODUS 20:8-11

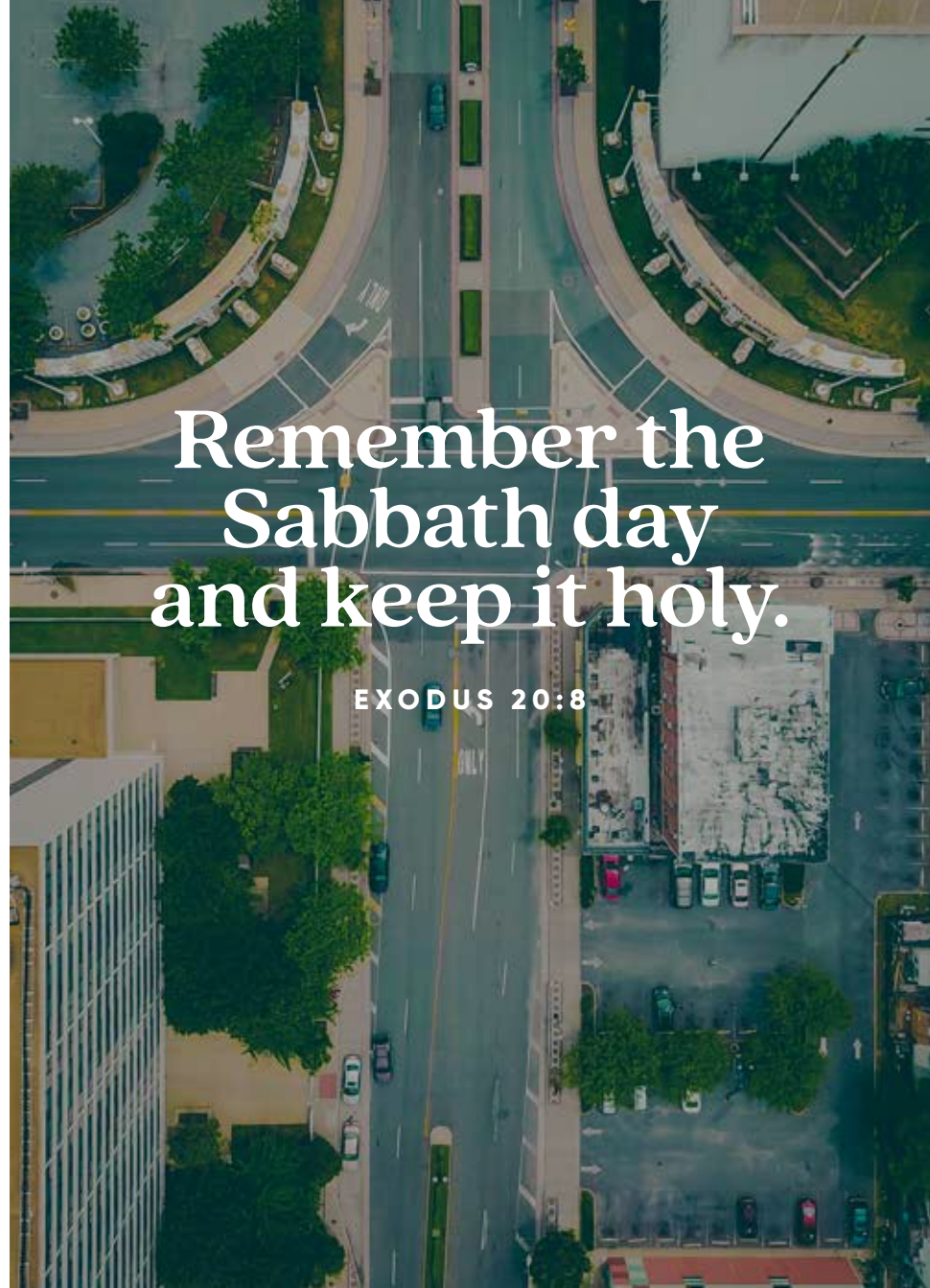
- What does this passage teach us about Sabbath?

- What does this passage teach us about rest?

- What does this passage teach us about God?

- What does this passage teach us about people?

- How will you practice what God has shown you today?





B

Begin with Prayer



Each week, we will focus on a new letter of B.L.E.S.S. Another way to remember this first letter is, “before anything else, PRAY.” There is an urgency and a vitality associated with this phrase. However you choose to remember this first and primary practice of blessing, we pray (no pun intended) you never lose sight of the priority of prayer.

As you spend time in prayer and the Scriptures this week, we invite you to pay close attention to not only how Jesus prayed, but when Jesus prayed. Reflect on the events surrounding Jesus’ prayers, and consider why Jesus prayed when he did.

Remember Jesus came to earth to show us who God is, as well as who God created us to be. The fact that Jesus, who is God, regularly took the time to pray, should tell us something about the importance of prayer.

You may have heard it said, “prayer doesn’t just change things, it changes us.” While many of us believe that to be true, we tend to forget. We lose sight of the necessity of prayer, as well as the gift of prayer. Furthermore, we forget the promise that the prayers of God’s children yield great results.

There is power in our prayers. God invites us to pray not only on our own behalf, but also on behalf of others. It is in this intercessory prayer that we begin to see the miraculous unfold. As we continue to seek God in prayer on behalf of others, we experience God answer in ways that can only be explained by three letters: GOD.

When we pray, God has a way of aligning our desires with God’s desires. The Bible says when we don’t know what to pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. Even now, Jesus Christ himself is

seated at the right hand of the throne of God our Father, forever interceding for each one of us.

If Jesus is actively praying for us, shouldn't we join him? Before we do anything else, let us run to God in prayer. May God renew our minds and transform our hearts in prayer, as we begin to see others and ourselves as God sees us. May prayer become the air we need to breathe in this new life with Christ. As we pray, let us breathe in the blessing of God, and breathe out the blessing of God into the lives of those around us each day.

Finally, let us keep in mind who we are praying to (and with): "the one who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen," (Ephesians 3:20).

**So, let us begin with prayer, and pray
BIG as we love where we live.**

Sunday,
February
21

Practice Praying with Jesus

**READ LUKE 22:31-34
(HIGHLIGHT VERSE 32)**

● What does this passage teach us about being blessed?

● What does this passage teach us about being a blessing?

● What does this passage teach us about God?

Monday,
February

22

Pray for Person #1

Home/Family: _____

 **READ MATTHEW 26:30-46**
(HIGHLIGHT VERSES 39, 42, 44)

● What does this passage teach us about praying?

● Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #1?


● Take time to pray for Person #1 now. Write down their name and one word or sentence you are praying for them today.

Tuesday,
February

23

Pray for Person #2

Friend: _____

 **READ LUKE 6:6-20 (HIGHLIGHT VERSE 12)**

● What does this passage teach us about praying?

● Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #2?


● Take time to pray for Person #2 now. Write down their name and one word or sentence you are praying for them today.

Wednesday,
February

24

Pray for Person #3

Co-worker/Classmate: _____

 **MARK 6:38-52 (HIGHLIGHT VERSES 41, 46)**

● What does this passage teach us about praying?

● Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #3?


● Take time to pray for Person #3 now. Write down their name and one word or sentence you are praying for them today.

Thursday,
February

25

Pray for Person #4

Neighbor: _____

 **MARK 1:32-39 (HIGHLIGHT VERSE 35)**

● What does this passage teach us about praying?

● Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #4?

● Take time to pray for Person #4 now. Write down their name and one word or sentence you are praying for them today.

Friday,
February

26

Reflect on Your Week



READ LUKE 11:1-13 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 1-4)

- What does this passage teach us about praying for others?

- What has God taught you through this week of blessing?

- Text or call your 1 friend you picked to be a blessing with you. Ask them, “How is blessing going this week? What is God teaching you? How can I pray for you?”
- Then, share with your friend what God is teaching you and how they can pray for you, too.
- Pause and pray for each other.

Saturday,
February

27

Sabbath – Rest



READ GENESIS 2:1-3

- What does this passage teach us about Sabbath?

- What does this passage teach us about rest?

- What does this passage teach us about God?

- What does this passage teach us about people?

- How will you practice what God has shown you today?



Listen



Listening may be the greatest demonstration of love – especially these days. In our world of posting, commenting, retweeting, liking, and sharing, we don't do a lot of asking or listening. Jesus was the best listener, and as Christ-followers, we can learn a lot from how Jesus listened.

Jesus is known for asking questions. Jesus is also known for answering questions with questions. As you look at the life of Jesus this week, pay attention to the questions Jesus asked that accompany his example of listening.

Whenever we ask someone a question, it shows we are not only interested in knowing the person's answers, but we are interested in knowing the person. Asking someone a question and actively listening to their response automatically elevates and communicates value to the person being listened to. In our asking and listening, we are positioning ourselves not only to listen to the person, but to learn from the person – and even learn with the person.

Consider this in light of the identity of Jesus Christ. Jesus, who was God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped. So, Jesus stopped, Jesus looked, Jesus listened, Jesus asked questions, and Jesus listened some more. Jesus, who had the very mind of God, took the time to ask questions to learn about those with whom he was speaking.

The answer is never the driving motivation behind Jesus' questions. Jesus already knows the answer. When Jesus asks us questions, he invites us on a quest. Whenever someone asks us a question, we are sent searching for our response, seeking to find our understanding.

The beauty of this quest in light of Christ is, whenever we seek, we are ultimately designed by God to find the one who seeks and finds us. Jesus said in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man [Jesus] came to seek and to save the lost.”

Do you live each day with your eyes open to seek and find those who are lost, that they might be saved by grace through faith in Jesus? Before Jesus ever stopped to listen, he stopped to look. Jesus stopped, looked, listened, asked, and listened some more.

This week, we want to stop and look so we might listen, and as we listen, so we might learn, and as we listen and learn, so we might love as Christ first loved us.

We love where we live whenever we look, listen, and learn.

Sunday,
February
28

Practice Listening to Jesus

MATTHEW 16:13-19 (HIGHLIGHT VERSES 15-17)

● What does this passage teach us about listening?

● Based on this passage, how can you pray for yourself as you prepare for this week of blessing?


● How will you practice what God showed you today?

Monday,
March

1

Listen to Person #1

Home/Family: _____

 **LUKE 8:40-56 (HIGHLIGHT VERSES 47-50)**

- What does this passage teach us about listening?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #1?

- How will you listen to Person #1 today?


- Text or email Person #1 right now and ask them how they're doing and how you can pray for them. For instance, "Hey, you were on my mind today and I just wanted to reach out and see how you're doing and if there is any way I can pray be praying for you right now?"
- When they respond, stop and read their response closely. Pause and pray for whatever they share with you. Then, come back and write down their prayer needs here.

Tuesday,
March

2

Listen to Person #2

Friend: _____

 **MARK 9:14-29 (HIGHLIGHT VERSES 21-24)**

- What does this passage teach us about listening?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #2?

- How will you listen to Person #2 today?


- Text or email Person #2 right now and ask them how they're doing and how you can pray for them. For instance, "Hey, you were on my mind today and I just wanted to reach out and see how you're doing and if there is any way I can pray be praying for you right now?"
- When they respond, stop and read their response closely. Pause and pray for whatever they share with you. Then, come back and write down their prayer needs here.

Wednesday,
March

3

Listen to Person #3

Co-worker/Classmate: _____

 **JOHN 5:1-17 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 6-9, 14)**

- What does this passage teach us about listening?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #3?

- How will you listen to Person #3 today?


- Text or email Person #3 right now and ask them how they're doing and how you can pray for them. For instance, "Hey, you were on my mind today and I just wanted to reach out and see how you're doing and if there is any way I can pray be praying for you right now?"
- When they respond, stop and read their response closely. Pause and pray for whatever they share with you. Then, come back and write down their prayer needs here.

Thursday,
March

4

Listen to Person #4

Neighbor: _____

 **JOHN 8:1-11 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 10-11)**

- What does this passage teach us about listening?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #4?

- How will you listen to Person #4 today?

- Text or email Person #4 right now and ask them how they're doing and how you can pray for them. For instance, "Hey, you were on my mind today and I just wanted to reach out and see how you're doing and if there is any way I can pray be praying for you right now?"
- When they respond, stop and read their response closely. Pause and pray for whatever they share with you. Then, come back and write down their prayer needs here.

Friday,
March

5

Reflect on Your Week



READ JOHN 18:28-40
(HIGHLIGHT VERSES 33-38)

- What does this passage teach us about listening to others?

- What has God taught you through this week of blessing?

- Text or call your 1 friend you picked to be a blessing with you. Ask them, “How is blessing going this week? What is God teaching you? How can I pray for you?”
- Then, share with your friend what God is teaching you and how they can pray for you, too.
- Pause and pray for each other.

Saturday,
March

6

Sabbath – Rest



READ ISAIAH 58:1-14

- What does this passage teach us about Sabbath?

- What does this passage teach us about rest?

- What does this passage teach us about God?

- What does this passage teach us about people?

- How will you practice what God has shown you today?



E

Eat

(Share your table
and your time)



Whenever Jesus ate with people, it wasn't about the food as much as it was about him sharing his table. There's something special that happens when we sit at the table with others. Sitting at the same level, looking into each other's eyes, and taking the time to linger – these realities that come with eating together contribute to the bonds that are often formed at the table.

HGTV's "Fixer Upper" star, Joanna Gaines, is familiar with the power of the table. From her cookbook, *Magnolia Table*, to her Waco, Texas restaurant with the same name, and her new television show with (you guessed it!) the same name, Joanna continues to invite the world to join her at her table. What is most endearing about Joanna is her ability to be totally true to herself and to others in every context. Her authenticity and humility are infectious. Though her fame continues to rise, everyone continues to be valuable and welcome in her eyes.

Jesus was the same way. Jesus was not about keeping up appearances. Jesus was totally true to himself and to others in every context – even unto death. Everyone was valuable and welcome in the eyes of Jesus. Those who society hated were loved by Jesus and drawn to Jesus. Jesus had a reputation of sharing his table with the scandalous second-class citizens of his day.

As we study the life and practices of Jesus this week, look out for how Jesus shared his table and, more importantly, who Jesus chose to eat with. If it's not about the food, what do you think it is about? Why was Jesus known as a "friend of sinners?" Why would Jesus share his last supper with a man who would turn around and betray him?

We know current COVID realities make it difficult for us to be able to eat with people like we used to prior to 2020. Please be

cautious and considerate when it comes to practicing eating with others this week. For this reason, we have suggested the idea of “sharing your table” rather than eating a meal in-person together.

It’s not about the food as much as it is about sharing our table and our time. So, having already prayed for each of the 4 people you are blessing over 40 days, and texting or emailing them last week, it is not strange to ask if each person is free to chat this week (over the phone, via FaceTime, on Zoom, in-person and socially distanced, or however you both prefer to communicate during COVID). Simply sit down and have a conversation with each person like you would if you took them out for a meal.

Even during a pandemic, we all still need to eat. Whether in-person or virtually, we love where we live when we share our table and our time with others.



Practice Eating (Sharing Your Table) with Jesus

 **READ MATTHEW 26:17-30 (HIGHLIGHT VERSES 20-21, 26-29)**

- What does this passage teach us about eating (sharing our table)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for yourself as you prepare for this week of blessing?

- How will you practice what God showed you today?

Monday,
March

8

Eat (Share Your Table) with Person #1

Home/Family: _____

 **READ LUKE 10:25-42**
(HIGHLIGHT VERSES 38-42)

- What does this passage teach us about eating (sharing our table)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #1?

- How will you eat (share your table) with Person #1 this week?

- Text or email Person #1 now to set up a time that works for both of you to share a safe meal (or simply have a conversation).

Tuesday,
March

9

Eat (Share Your Table) with Person #2

Friend: _____

 **READ JOHN 21:1-19**
(HIGHLIGHT VERSES 9-15)

- What does this passage teach us about eating (sharing our table)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #2?

- How will you eat (share your table) with Person #2 this week?


- Text or email Person #2 now to set up a time that works for both of you to share a safe meal (or simply have a conversation).

Wednesday,
March

10

Eat (Share Your Table) with Person #3

Co-worker/Classmate: _____

 **LUKE 24:26-49 (HIGHLIGHT VERSES 30-32, 35, 38-43)**

- What does this passage teach us about eating (sharing our table)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #3?

- How will you eat (share your table) with Person #3 this week?


- Text or email Person #3 now to set up a time that works for both of you to share a safe meal (or simply have a conversation).

Thursday,
March

11

Eat (Share Your Table) with Person #4

Neighbor: _____

 **LUKE 14:1-24 (HIGHLIGHT VERSES 11-14)**

- What does this passage teach us about eating (sharing our table)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #4?

- How will you eat (share your table) with Person #4 this week?

- Text or email Person #4 now to set up a time that works for both of you to share a safe meal (or simply have a conversation).

Friday,
March
12

Reflect on Your Week



**READ MARK 2:13-17 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 15-17)**

- What does this passage teach us about eating (sharing our table) with others?

- What has God taught you through this week of blessing?

- Text or call your 1 friend you picked to be a blessing with you. Ask them, “How is blessing going this week? What is God teaching you? How can I pray for you?”
- Then, share with your friend what God is teaching you and how they can pray for you, too.
- Pause and pray for each other.

Saturday,
March
13

Sabbath – Rest



READ EZEKIEL 20:19-20

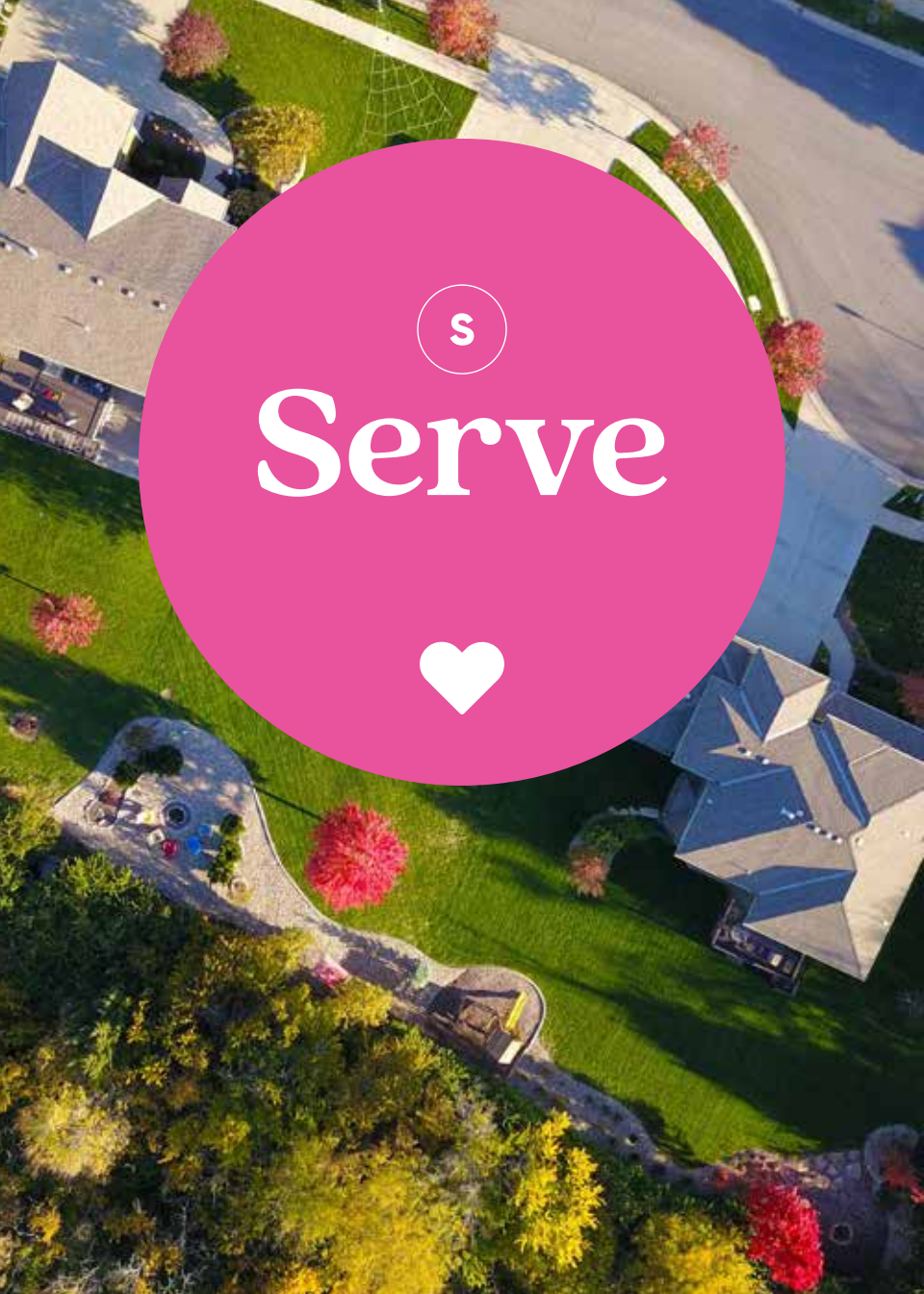
- What does this passage teach us about Sabbath?

- What does this passage teach us about rest?

- What does this passage teach us about God?

- What does this passage teach us about people?

- How will you practice what God has shown you today?



On more than one occasion, Jesus self-identified as a servant. The Greek word *diakonos* means “deacon or minister,” but it also means “servant.” The Greek word used to describe ministry is the same word used to describe table service.

Jesus didn’t come to feast at the table of a fine dining restaurant. Rather, Jesus came to be the server. Jesus, the only one worthy of a grand banquet, came to serve those who lived as enemies of God. Now, we can be certain that one day we will attend the wedding supper of the Lamb, but until that day, we are meant to follow the example of the Lamb of God. In other words, we serve others because he first served us.

Each week of this Lenten journey, there have been a few consistent threads woven between each new practice we learn. Have you noticed any?

One of those threads is honor. Whenever we lift up someone’s name to God in prayer, we are honoring that person. Whenever we take the time to listen closely to another person, we are honoring that person. Whenever we invite someone to join us at the table, we are honoring that person. Likewise, whenever we serve someone else by placing their needs before our own, we are honoring that person.

As we continue to observe the life of Jesus this week, ask yourself, “why did the only one who was truly worthy of honor spend so much time honoring others?”

As we seek to serve others in love this week, we invite you to get creative and actively seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Based on the present and pressing needs you have gathered by listening

to and praying for the 4 people you are blessing over 40 days, how can you tangibly and practically serve each person this week?

Each day, think of one thing you can do for one person. With God's help, that one small thing can become a huge thing to the person you're serving.

Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians, "For you were called to freedom, brothers [and sisters]. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another," (Galatians 5:13).

The most tangible way we love where we live is by serving one another.

Sunday,
March
14

Practice Serving Jesus

MARK 12:28-34 (HIGHLIGHT VERSES 32-33)

● What does this passage teach us about serving?

● Based on this passage, how can you pray for yourself as you prepare for this week of blessing?

● How will you practice what God showed you today?

Monday,
March

15

Serve Person #1

Home/Family: _____



**PHILIPPIANS 2:1-16 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 3-8)**

- What does this passage teach us about serving?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #1?

- How will you serve Person #1 today or this week?

- What is one practical need Person #1 has expressed that you can meet (or begin to meet) with one tangible act of service?

Tuesday,
March

16

Serve Person #2

Friend: _____



**JOHN 13:1-20 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 3-5, 12-17)**

- What does this passage teach us about serving?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #2?

- How will you serve Person #2 today or this week?


- What is one practical need Person #2 has expressed that you can meet (or begin to meet) with one tangible act of service?

Wednesday,
March

17

Serve Person #3

Co-worker/Classmate: _____

 **LUKE 22:24-27 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 26-27)**

- What does this passage teach us about serving?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #3?

- How will you serve Person #3 today or this week?


- What is one practical need Person #3 has expressed that you can meet (or begin to meet) with one tangible act of service?

Thursday,
March

18

Serve Person #4

Neighbor: _____

 **MATTHEW 25:31-46 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 34-40)**

- What does this passage teach us about serving?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #4?

- How will you serve Person #4 today or this week?

- What is one practical need Person #4 has expressed that you can meet (or begin to meet) with one tangible act of service?

Friday,
March
19

Reflect on Your Week

 **READ MARK 10:31-45**
(HIGHLIGHT VERSES 43-44)

- What does this passage teach us about serving others?

- What has God taught you through this week of blessing?

- Text or call your 1 friend you picked to be a blessing with you. Ask them, “How is blessing going this week? What is God teaching you? How can I pray for you?”
- Then, share with your friend what God is teaching you and how they can pray for you, too.
- Pause and pray for each other.

Saturday,
March
20

Sabbath – Rest

 **READ MATTHEW 12:1-15**

- What does this passage teach us about Sabbath?

- What does this passage teach us about rest?

- What does this passage teach us about God?

- What does this passage teach us about people?

- How will you practice what God has shown you today?



S

Story

(Share
YOUR story)



Arguably, the most popular feature of Instagram these days is “stories.” Several times a day we share our own stories, and we share other people’s stories within the framework of our own stories. All these years after the story of Noah’s ark began floating around the Ancient Near East, and the story of the farmer who scattered seed on 4 different soils spread around the Sea of Galilee, and even after all of our technological development, we are still a people who love stories.

The primary way God reveals truth to us is through story. We see it in the Old Testament, we see it in the life of Christ, and we see it in New Testament believers who reflect on the story of Christ’s life. The very message we have been entrusted to guard and proclaim – the gospel of Jesus Christ we have been called to preach to the ends of the earth – is a story.

Along with the abundance of Bible stories God has given us (including the story of Jesus Christ), God has also given each one of us a unique story, and it’s a story that changes with each new day we live it.

Have you ever noticed how no two people have the exact same story? Sure, there are similarities in stories – and that’s often something that helps establish connections between us. Many of our relationships are formed from a shared aspect of our stories. Even so, there is no one else who ever has or ever will walk this earth who shares the same story as you. In the midst of God writing the great and glorious story of eternity, God is also actively involved in writing the story of your life.

Every person on the planet has a story, and every person’s story involves God. However, not everyone recognizes the hand of God in their story. When we who have placed our faith in Jesus Christ

reflect on our lives and look for God's handiwork through the years, we cannot help but praise the Lord. Even in the hard parts – in fact, especially in the hard parts – we can testify God is with us and God is faithful. The common thread uniting all of our stories in Christ Jesus is hope. No matter what, there is always hope in Jesus.

One of the ways we honor others is by trusting them with our real-life stories. If God has transferred you from the dominion of darkness to the Kingdom of God's dear Son, you have been blessed with a story designed to bless others. Don't keep that hope to yourself! We are transformed by God so others might be transformed, too.

By now, you have earned the right to not only share your story with the 4 people you've chosen to bless over 40 days, but you've earned the right for your story to be heard. Too often we are quick to speak and slow to listen. Jesus did the opposite. Jesus was quick to listen and slow to speak, but whenever Jesus spoke, people listened. Because of the way Jesus lived his life, many who heard of Jesus ultimately heard from Jesus, though not everyone had ears to hear.

This week, as you reflect on your God-given story, consider how you can join your story and Jesus' story together (think of how you share someone else's story within your own story on Instagram). Then, set up a conversation with each of the 4 people you've chosen to bless over 40 days to share your story plus Jesus' story at once next week.


Lord-willing, the weather is beginning to warm up for those who are comfortable meeting safely in-person and socially distanced outdoors. Since this is a more personal conversation, being able

to have it in-person is ideal, but not required. Remember to stay safe and honor the wishes of those you're serving. How we live toward others directly affects how we're heard by others.

We love where we live by sharing our real-life stories with others in the context of real-life relationships.

Sunday,
March
21

Practice Sharing Your Story with Jesus

 **JOHN 9:1-41 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSE 25)**

● What does this passage teach us about sharing our story?

● Based on this passage, how can you pray for yourself as you prepare for this week of blessing?

● How will you practice what God showed you today?

● Take time to reflect with Jesus and write the 3 parts of your story:

○ Part 1: What was your life like before you knew Jesus?

○ Part 2: How did you personally come to know Jesus?


○ Part 3: What is your life like now that you know Jesus?

Part 3 should change with each new day as you walk with Jesus. Keep your story fresh, relatable, and honest!

Monday,
March
22

Share Your Story with Person #1

Home/Family: _____

 **ACTS 9:1-31 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 17-22, 26-28, 31)**

- What does this passage teach us about sharing our story?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #1?


- How will you share your story with Person #1?

- Text or email Person #1 to set up a time to chat next week.
- Then, next week, take time to share your story and share Jesus' story (the gospel) with Person #1.

Tuesday,
March
23

Share Your Story with Person #2

Friend: _____

 **JOHN 4:25-42 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 28-30, 39-42)**

- What does this passage teach us about sharing our story?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #2?

- How will you share your story with Person #2?


- Text or email Person #2 to set up a time to chat next week.
- Then, next week, take time to share your story and share Jesus' story (the gospel) with Person #2.

Wednesday,
March

24

Share Your Story with Person #3

Co-worker/Classmate: _____

 **MARK 5:1-20 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 15, 18-20)**

- What does this passage teach us about sharing our story?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #3?

- How will you share your story with Person #3?


- Text or email Person #3 to set up a time to chat next week.
- Then, next week, take time to share your story and share Jesus' story (the gospel) with Person #3.

Thursday,
March

25

Share Your Story with Person #4

Neighbor: _____

 **LUKE 21:1-19 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 12-15)**

- What does this passage teach us about sharing our story?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #4?

- How will you share your story with Person #4?

- Text or email Person #4 to set up a time to chat next week.
- Then, next week, take time to share your story and share Jesus' story (the gospel) with Person #4.

Friday,
March
26

Reflect on Your Week



READ REVELATION 12:7-12
(HIGHLIGHT VERSES 10-11)

- What does this passage teach us about sharing our story with others?

- What has God taught you through this week of blessing?

- Text or call your 1 friend you picked to be a blessing with you. Ask them, “How is blessing going this week? What is God teaching you? How can I pray for you?”
- Then, share with your friend what God is teaching you and how they can pray for you, too.
- Pause and pray for each other.

Saturday,
March
27

Sabbath – Rest



READ LUKE 13:10-21

- What does this passage teach us about Sabbath?

- What does this passage teach us about rest?

- What does this passage teach us about God?

- What does this passage teach us about people?

- How will you practice what God has shown you today?



S

Story

(Share
HIS story)



Is there someone in your life who has a story you love to tell? Maybe it's the story of how your parents met and fell in love, or the story of how your great-grandma immigrated to America as a teenager, or the story of how your grandpa built his house with his bare hands, or the story of how your grandma taught you how to sew, or the story of how your brother stood up for his convictions no matter the cost, or the story of how your cousin lived as if Jesus really is everything.

Whoever it is, and whatever their story, there is something spectacular about sharing someone else's story. Whenever we share the stories of those we love, we are living evidence of their love and impact on us. Their stories have been etched on our hearts. When we take time to share their stories with others, not only does their story live on, but the reality of their love shines through us – the storytellers. As storytellers, we are the ones who have been loved by those whose stories we love to tell.

In the beginning of Paul's letter to the Romans, he writes,

So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith," (Romans 1:15–17).

Once Paul encountered Jesus himself, and learned more about the true life of Jesus and the way of Jesus, Paul loved to tell Jesus' story every chance he could. Paul especially enjoyed sharing the story of Jesus with people who had never heard the story before – in fact, it became his life's passion. Paul regularly risked everything and endured hardship so the story of Jesus would be told, heard, believed, and passed onto others (including us).

Near the end of Paul's letter to the Romans, he writes,

...and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand," (Romans 15:20–21).

When Paul met Jesus, he was on his way to kill Christians. But God stepped in and used Paul to bring life rather than death. We still talk about Paul today because of his relentless passion for Jesus and the truth of Jesus taking root in hearts everywhere "from faith for faith."

Whoever God placed on your heart to bless over these 40 days, it was no accident. The reason you desire to bless those 4 people is because God desires to bless those 4 people, and God wants to use you to do so. If you think of those people, pray for those people, love those people and hope for those people, it is only because God did so first.

As children of God, we have inherited the family business of redemption. If you look up "redemption" in the dictionary, you will see it's a fancy word for "rescue." If you read your Bible from Genesis to Revelation, you will notice the common thread woven throughout each of its 66 books is that God loves to rescue God's people. As we spend this week learning from the story of Jesus, told by Jesus himself and others who know him, pay close attention to the role rescue plays in the story.


The greatest gift you can ever give someone is the gift of Jesus' story. As Paul said, "it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." You have been blessed to be a blessing.

Blessing is relationship. There is no greater blessing than knowing God and being known by God. The only way we know Jesus is because someone took the time to tell us his story. If you have received and believe the story of Jesus, it's your turn to tell it! Embrace your identity as God's rescued storyteller and watch what God will do when you do!

We love where we live by sharing the story of the only one who is true life: Jesus Christ.

Sunday,
March
28

Practice Sharing His Story (The Gospel) with Jesus

 **JOHN 3:16-21 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 16-17)**

- What does this passage teach us about sharing his story (the gospel)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for yourself as you prepare for this week of blessing?

- How will you practice what God showed you today?

- Take time to reflect with Jesus and try to write his story (the gospel) in 3 points:

○ 1:


○ 2:

○ 3:

Monday,
March
29

Practice Sharing His Story (The Gospel) with Person #1

Home/Family: _____

 **JOHN 14:1-7 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 5-6)**

- What does this passage teach us about sharing his story (the gospel)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #1?

- How will you share his story (the gospel) with Person #1?


- Text or email Person #1 to confirm your time to meet this week.
- As soon as you hit “send,” stop and pray ahead of time for Person #1 and your time together.

- Whenever you meet, look for the door God opens for you to share your story and share his story (the gospel). Pause and listen as you go to see if Person #1 has something they would like to contribute to the conversation. Ask follow-up questions like, “was there anything about my story that resonated with you? Was there anything about Jesus’ story that stuck out to you?”
- If prompted by the Holy Spirit, feel free to ask if Person #1 has experienced the same life-changing, eternity – altering hope Jesus offers each of us (that you just shared about). If they say yes, ask them to tell you more about their personal experience. If they say no or they’re not sure, ask them if they would like to do so now. Be prepared for whatever their response may be. Trust God is working and drawing them to know Christ, whether that day is today or another day – it’s not in your hands.

Tuesday,
March
30

Practice Sharing His Story (The Gospel) with Person #2

Friend: _____

 **ROMANS 5:1-11 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 1-2, 6-11)**

- What does this passage teach us about sharing his story (the gospel)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #2?

- How will you share his story (the gospel) with Person #2?

- Text or email Person #2 to confirm your time to meet this week.
- As soon as you hit “send,” stop and pray ahead of time for Person #2 and your time together.

- Whenever you meet, look for the door God opens for you to share your story and share his story (the gospel). Pause and listen as you go to see if Person #2 has something they would like to contribute to the conversation. Ask follow-up questions like, “was there anything about my story that resonated with you? Was there anything about Jesus’ story that stuck out to you?”


- If prompted by the Holy Spirit, feel free to ask if Person #2 has experienced the same life-changing, eternity – altering hope Jesus offers each of us (that you just shared about). If they say yes, ask them to tell you more about their personal experience. If they say no or they’re not sure, ask them if they would like to do so now. Be prepared for whatever their response may be. Trust God is working and drawing them to know Christ, whether that day is today or another day – it’s not in your hands.

Wednesday,
March

31

Practice Sharing His Story (The Gospel) with Person #3

Co-worker/Classmate: _____

 **ROMANS 10:1-17 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 9-11, 13-15)**

- What does this passage teach us about sharing his story (the gospel)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #3?

- How will you share his story (the gospel) with Person #3?

- Text or email Person #3 to confirm your time to meet this week.

- As soon as you hit “send,” stop and pray ahead of time for Person #3 and your time together.

- Whenever you meet, look for the door God opens for you to share your story and share his story (the gospel). Pause and listen as you go to see if Person #3 has something they would like to contribute to the conversation. Ask follow-up questions like, “was there anything about my story that resonated with you? Was there anything about Jesus’ story that stuck out to you?”

- If prompted by the Holy Spirit, feel free to ask if Person #3 has experienced the same life-changing, eternity – altering hope Jesus offers each of us (that you just shared about). If they say yes, ask them to tell you more about their personal experience. If they say no or they’re not sure, ask them if they would like to do so now. Be prepared for whatever their response may be. Trust God is working and drawing them to know Christ, whether that day is today or another day – it’s not in your hands.

Thursday,
April

1

Practice Sharing His Story (The Gospel) with Person #4

Neighbor: _____



**JOHN 8:12-36 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 12, 24, 34)**

- What does this passage teach us about sharing his story (the gospel)?

- Based on this passage, how can you pray for Person #4?

- How will you share his story (the gospel) with Person #4?

- Text or email Person #4 to confirm your time to meet this week.
- As soon as you hit “send,” stop and pray ahead of time for Person #4 and your time together.

- Whenever you meet, look for the door God opens for you to share your story and share his story (the gospel). Pause and listen as you go to see if Person #4 has something they would like to contribute to the conversation. Ask follow-up questions like, “was there anything about my story that resonated with you? Was there anything about Jesus’ story that stuck out to you?”
- If prompted by the Holy Spirit, feel free to ask if Person #4 has experienced the same life-changing, eternity – altering hope Jesus offers each of us (that you just shared about). If they say yes, ask them to tell you more about their personal experience. If they say no or they’re not sure, ask them if they would like to do so now. Be prepared for whatever their response may be. Trust God is working and drawing them to know Christ, whether that day is today or another day – it’s not in your hands.

Good
Friday,
April

2

Reflect on Your Week



READ ROMANS 6:1-23
(HIGHLIGHT VERSES 20-23)

- What does this passage teach us about sharing his story (the gospel) with others?

- What has God taught you through this week of blessing?

- Text or call your 1 friend you picked to be a blessing with you. Ask them, “How is blessing going this week? What is God teaching you? How can I pray for you?”
- Then, share with your friend what God is teaching you and how they can pray for you, too.
- Pause and pray for each other.

REFLECT ON THIS GOOD FRIDAY

Head into this weekend mindful of how God demonstrated his own love for us in this way on this day so many years ago: that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

Saturday,
April

3

Sabbath – Rest



READ HEBREWS 4:1-14

- What does this passage teach us about Sabbath?

- What does this passage teach us about rest?

- What does this passage teach us about God?

- What does this passage teach us about people?

- How will you practice what God has shown you today?

Celebrate

CELEBRATE EASTER SUNDAY WITH YOUR 4 PEOPLE IN UNIQUE WAYS

You did it! You made it through these 40 days of loving where we live with Jesus! What better way to celebrate than by celebrating the resurrection of Jesus (Easter) with the 4 people you have blessed over these 40 days, and the 1 person who blessed with you?

Just like when we served one another in love, we encourage you to get creative and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you consider how you can celebrate the gift of Easter with one another. Keep in mind, Easter is a reason for rejoicing!

Coming out of 2020, we have all been mourning on a large scale for a long time. Grief does not have to disappear for joy to appear. Grief is not betrayed when joy comes to stay. Jesus rose from the dead right in the middle of people's mourning. The reality of our hope in Jesus is that it permeates the deepest darkness and the most supreme sorrow.

We all need a reason to rejoice. Let us rejoice in the Lord, always, and let us invite others to join us!

Below are a number of ways you can celebrate the resurrection of Jesus with your people, but this list is only the beginning. We would love to know how you choose to celebrate Easter with one another!

- Invite them to worship with us on Easter Sunday in-person or online at www.pcbc.org/live
- If they have kids, offer to host an outdoor Easter egg hunt for their family (and yours, if you have one)
- Mail them a hand-written Easter card
- Text them a Happy Easter GIF
- Invite them to a safe, outdoor Easter lunch/brunch/dinner/dessert/tea/etc. you host in your backyard
- Take them out for an Easter meal on a patio at a restaurant
- Bake some Easter cookies or grab some Easter candy from the store and drop off a treat bag at their house

Remember, little gifts of joy go a long way! Whatever is most natural, authentic, and meaningful for the people involved will be the best way to celebrate! Happy Easter and have fun continuing to love where you live!

Easter Sunday,
April

4

Easter Blessing



READ JOHN 20:1-22 (HIGHLIGHT
VERSES 16-22)

What does this passage teach us about being blessed?

What does this passage teach us about being a blessing?

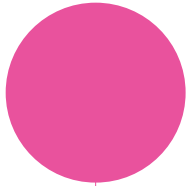
What does this passage teach us about God?

What does this passage teach us about people?

How will you practice what God has shown you today?

Happy Easter!

We hope this 40-day journey of blessing has changed your life, and we pray the relational rhythms you developed in this season will continue to be a regular part of your lifestyle. This week, please use the next few pages to process the past 40 days of loving where you live and prepare for the next 40!



Process & Prepare

PROCESS

- Though the last 40 days were about being a blessing to others, how did God end up blessing you along the way?

- What was the most challenging part of this journey for you?

- What was the most rewarding part of this journey for you?

- What did you learn about God through this journey?

- What did you learn about yourself through this journey?

- What did you learn about your family/friends/co-workers/classmates/neighbors through this journey?

- What is the biggest lesson you learned over the course of this journey that you don't want to forget?

PREPARE

- How do you hope these 40 days of loving where you live will change your life?

- In the next 40 days, how will you continue to grow in your relationship with Jesus?

- In the next 40 days, how will you continue to grow in your relationship with your 4 people?

- In the next 40 days, how can you continue to be a blessing to others (beyond your 4 people)?

- In the next 40 days, who can you teach to be a blessing with you?

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
BEING A BLESSING, READ:**

**B.L.E.S.S.
5 Everyday Ways to
Love Your Neighbor and
Change the World**
by Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson

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