



Devotional for the Season of Lent, 2025

First Presbyterian Church of Ambler

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Ash Wednesday

Written by Leslie Wise

Read: John 13:1-5, John 13:35

Reflect: Today is the first day of Lent. Ashes will be applied in solemnity. The forty-day season of prayer, fasting and alms giving will begin. Some will be recovering from Fat Tuesday celebrations, Mardi Gras parties or from an overabundance of Fasnacht donuts. It's our last chance to overindulge before the privations of Lent begin. In many churches, Lent ends with a Maundy Thursday foot washing service. Jesus Himself washed the disciples' feet before the Last Supper. Aspects of discipleship will be explored in this upcoming sermon series. Being a disciple of Jesus can mean many different things. But Jesus expresses it best. "By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another." To love another can be a humbling self-sacrifice. Jesus laid aside His garments and bowed low to wash the disciple's feet. He knows the paths our feet have taken. Consider love to be the highest calling for the next forty days. Jesus set the example. He "loves us to the end".

Prayer: Help us not to wear our ashes as a symbol of religious obligation. We are but dust and, to the same, we will one day return. Thank you that you love our dusty souls and big ideas. Walk with us through the wilderness these forty days as a friend and redeemer.

This week's devotions were written by Debi Ferrarello

Monday, March 10, 2025

Read: John 1:35-42

Reflect: I encourage you to read this short passage several times. Ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher. What stands out to you? One of the first things that stands out to me is that Andrew and another person were followers of John the Baptist before becoming followers of Jesus. They were *seekers*, turning toward God. I am encouraged that Jesus promises all who seek will find (Matthew 7:7) and so perhaps it is not surprising that when John said, "Look, the Lamb of God," the two turned and followed Jesus. Andrew and his companion felt the "tug" of the Holy Spirit and acted on it by following Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Prayer: Lord, help us to pay attention to the tug of your Holy Spirit. To quiet ourselves before you and listen for your voice. Guide us to you, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Who takes away *my* sins. Help me to follow the feet of my Rabbi.

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Read: John 1:35-42

Reflect: Remember the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. God performed miracles through Moses to soften Pharaoh's heart and let God's people go. The final miracle was the killing of all the firstborn males of the land. But all who put the blood of an unblemished lamb on their doorposts were spared. John rightly pointing to Jesus as the Lamb of God, the One whose blood saves us from death. The book of Revelation refers to Jesus multiple times as the Lamb. Humble. Spotless. Surrendered. Sacrificed, yet victorious, turning evil on its head. Rev 17:14 says, "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." The Lamb of God is Lord of lords and King of kings and we are the called, chosen, and faithful. Does that make you cry out, Hallelujah!?

Prayer: Lord, thank you for being the Lamb by which we are saved. You, the King of kings and Lord of lords humbled yourself to be led as a lamb to slaughter, all for our sake. Forgive us every bit of our prideful posturing and help us to following the dust of our Rabbi, Jesus the Christ.

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Read: John 1:35-42

Reflect: Andrew and the other disciple left John the Baptist and followed Jesus. Jesus turned to them and asked, “What do you want?” That is a question for all of us. What do we want? If what we really want is Jesus, he will satisfy. That will require a turning though, intentionally turning our back on the driving forces of our culture and deliberately turning *to* Jesus. Jesus calls us to a life of radical, sacrificial love. In return, he gives us a full, abundant life. Life that matters. Life that lasts. As Paul said to the Philippians, “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” A worthwhile prize indeed.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, search my heart. What do I really want? I *want* to want you. Help me to turn from all that is not of you, to shift my perspective to that of your kingdom, to be your faithful follower. I invite you to do business in my heart, in my life, for your glory and to fulfill your good purposes.

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Read: John 1:35-42

Reflect: Andrew and the other disciple asked Jesus, “Where are you staying?” Jesus responded, “Come, and you will see.” This makes me think of “Taste and see that the LORD is good” from Psalm 34. Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, invites us to come and see. When we spend time with him in prayer, not with a list but with a listening heart, we taste and see that he is good, and we receive guidance for the Kingdom work he created in advance for us to do (Eph 2:10). This makes life an adventure! It is exciting to come and see what God is doing and to be a part of his Kingdom restoration.

Prayer: Lord, I come to follow you and see. You are so good! I look forward to your leading. Help me to hear your voice and follow you. Thank you for inviting me, yes, even me.

Friday, March 14, 2025

Read: John 1:35-42

Reflect: The first thing that Andrew did after spending the day with Jesus was to find his brother, Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah,” and he brought him to Jesus. Are you struck by all of this “find”ing? Andrew found his brother and told him they had found the Messiah. What have you found in Jesus? Have you found forgiveness? Comfort? Purpose? Light and Love? Who can you find to tell what you have found in Jesus?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for all I have found in you. In you I have meaning, purpose, and the deepest of loves. Help me to share what I have found in you with others who are seeking. May you create the tug and use me to share what I have found.

This week's devotions were written by Debra Lee

Monday, March 17, 2025

Read: Luke 5:1-11

Reflect: Jesus calls on Simon Peter, a fisherman who was cleaning his nets after a long, fruitless night of fishing, to teach from his boat a short distance off the shore. Afterwards, he has Peter launch the boat out into deep water, where Peter has a miraculous catch so huge that he needed help from his partners in another boat! Peter was so astonished that he fell before Jesus, saying, "Go away from me Lord for I am a sinful man." Jesus replied, "Don't be afraid. From now on you will fish for people" Peter and his partners pulled their boats on shore, left everything and followed him.

Prayer: Lord, enter my heart fully to reveal how like your first disciples I can follow you and be a "fisher of people."

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Read: Luke 5:1-3

Reflect: The crowds are pressing in on Jesus at the Sea of Galilee, excited to be near Him for healing and to hear the news of the Kingdom of God. There were two boats by the lake. The fishermen are nearby, cleaning their nets after a long, fruitless night. Jesus entered Simon Peter's boat. In this first act of obedience, Peter responds favorably to Jesus' request to go out once again, remarkable given his likely fatigue and frustration. In this Gospel, Jesus takes His ministry to the people—to ordinary places where ordinary people spend their days. The boat becomes Jesus' pulpit—a solution to the press of the crowd.

Prayer: Lord, enter my heart to reveal how my ordinary, everyday resources can be used by you to bring your Word to others. Enter my heart that I may respond favorably to you, as Peter did, despite any discouragement, fatigue or frustration I may feel.

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Read: Luke 5:4-5

Reflect: Peter's common sense tells him that there is no reason to put out his nets again. He voices his doubt to Jesus but nevertheless addresses Jesus as Master --a person who stands over the others in authority --a title used by the disciples in the Gospel for Jesus only.

Peter's act of obedience is remarkable as Jesus' instructions are counterintuitive to Peter's common sense as an experienced fisherman. Letting down the nets again will necessitate additional cleanup—not an attractive prospect for tired, frustrated fishermen.

But Peter accepts Jesus' word as authoritative. His response in the face of doubt opens the door to the miracle. So with us! Only when we are obedient can we harness Christ's power and experience his miracles.

Prayer: Lord, enter my heart and mind in the face of doubt that I may follow you and trust you so that I may harness your power to do your will for Your Kingdom.

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Read: Luke 5:6-7

Reflect:

The great catch is a miracle demonstrating God's power in meeting human needs! Peter did what Jesus asked because he believed in Him, not because the circumstances seemed right and his faith was well rewarded.

When Jesus *directs* our work, it makes all the difference. We can work hard for a long time with no or little fruit. But when Jesus directs our work, we see results. We'll always miss something great when we think we know better, instead of allowing Jesus to direct our work.

Prayer: Lord, open my ears so that I may hear your direction in my work. Give me discernment to know when it is your direction guiding me, and trust in you for results that can only come from you.

Friday, March 21, 2025

Read: Luke 5: 8-11

Reflect: When Simon Peter saw the great power of Jesus it made him realize his own spiritual bankruptcy compared to Jesus. In our better moments, we kneel in God's presence, acknowledging our debt to God for every breath we take. Simon is correct when he says that he is a sinful man, but Jesus has come to redeem sinners and outcasts.

Prayer: Father, I am a sinful person! Yet you love me and make me your own. Help me to grow in my relationship with you and confirm my calling to be a disciple. Teach me today through your Holy Spirit to step forward in obedience and faith to serve for the sake of your Kingdom, in Jesus' name.

This week's devotions were written by Leslie Wise

Monday, March 24, 2025

Read: Psalm 37:5

Reflect: There are many verses in the Bible that write about training, whether physical or spiritual. Before starting a fitness program, we are often asked to consider what our intentions might be. Are they to lose weight, improve fitness or to gain strength? Physical training improves many aspects of our lives. It enables us to be fit enough to engage in everyday activities. The Lenten season also involves intention. What shall I give up for forty days? And for what reason? Is it because of religious tradition or just what you're "supposed to do?" Lenten intentions may involve prayer, service and/or fasting. It is not a time to prove the strength of our own self-discipline and strong will. Meditating on the purpose of the objective enables us to embrace the goal daily and to carry it on through the goal posts with shouts of joy.

Prayer: Father, we intend to do so many things. Yet, how often they sit unfinished were we left them. Help us to align our intentions with yours. Give us the strength to carry that intention to completion.

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Read: Hebrews 12:1

Reflect: Endurance is defined as the ability to “keep going despite hardship, stress, fatigue or pain”. Paul compares our life in Christ to an athlete training for a race. To compete, certain things need to be set aside; there are changes to be made. Training is often arduous, stretching us beyond our comfort zones to reach the goal. The long haul can be a course strewn with discouragement and impediments. It is so easy to give up. But we show up and continue on. Eventually, there comes that time when we pin our race number to our shirts and walk to the starting line. God does not hand us a piece of paper to acknowledge our participation in the race but rather places a crown upon our heads as He utters the words “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Prayer: Father, just getting through one day may require every ounce of strength and endurance we have. Help us not to look at the difficulties we may face but enable us to see the joy set before us as we journey.

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Read: Micah: 4:5, 1 John 2:6, Ephesians 4:1

Reflect: One of my friends has the discipline of a nightly walking through his neighborhood in prayer. I’m sure many readers also have this prayer intention. Some of us have participated in a walk sponsored for a specific cause or we walk in honor of a loved one. God says in Micah 4:5, “Though all the peoples walk each in the name of his god, as for us, we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and forever.” Consider walking during this Lenten season. Stepping away from indoor pressures can provide perspective and a precious time of peace. Whether it’s under the stars or basking in sunlight, this will be a great blessing to you and to the recipients of your prayers.

Pray: Dear Lord, please give light to our paths that we may walk in a manner worthy of our calling. Let humility, gentleness and patience go before us as we follow your leading.

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Read: Matthew 5:1-12

Reflect: In weight training there is a concept called tension. Tension refers to “the amount of time a muscle is under strain during a set.” It is through time under tension (TUT) that muscle mass is gained. There are many ways to increase tension during weight training to maximize gains. There is also a state of tension between what the world offers and what the Bible commands us to do. The result of living in a state of tension can be uncomfortable. But this is where the growth happens. It’s the push/pull on a muscle that produces gain. I often don’t want to live with the discomfort of growing in Christ. If a weight being lifted is considered too heavy or dangerous, a spotter will often assist or guide the lifter safely. When the tension between the two worlds becomes too great, consider asking a spotter/friend for help. A spotter can help ease the weight and bring you the encouragement to keep stretching. Time under tension becomes bearable if shared.

Pray: Father, we need each other for help and assistance to live the life you ask. Even the disciples did not work alone. Give us the sensitivity to discern when others need a “spot” when carrying too heavy of a burden.

Friday, March 28, 2025

Read: 2 Corinthians 12:9

Reflect: A number of years ago, I decided to give up sweets for Lent. My old sweet tooth was going to suffer big time. I was able to go about two weeks without sweets when I made a fatal decision. After spending time at the Flower Show that year, we walked over to Reading Terminal Market for lunch. It was after lunch that I “happened” upon Termini Bakery. Needless to say, I left with an assortment of cannoli, a variety of pastries, and a cream cake. In the forefront of my mind was this idea that Sundays are not technically a part of the forty days of Lent. The minute I arrived home, the boxes were opened. It was not Sunday! Being a disciple often requires us to acknowledge our flaws and humble ourselves before others. I did not continue with my “sweet fast”. The time for that had gone. The crumbs left in the boxes were a testament to my weakness. Jesus loved me just the same.

Prayer: Lord, you know how often we take one step forward and two steps back in our walk with you. We want to be perfect in your presence. In so being, we are defeated even before beginning the race. Give us the grace to acknowledge our frail human state before you. What we lack, you provide and make us whole. Your grace is sufficient.

This week's devotions were written by Beth Hedges.

Beth grew up at FPCA. She was involved in children's choir and children's bell choir, Sunday school, Youth Group and helping her parents, Bob and Jane with many projects for the church. Since graduating from seminary in 1986 she has been with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship serving university students. She moved to Armenia in 2016 to serve with the local student ministry as the International Coordinator.



Monday, March 31, 2025

Read: Luke 8:1-3

Reflect: Here we meet Jesus' team: the 12 apostles and some of the women who were travelling with Jesus. They are people who have not just heard about Jesus, or seen Jesus, they are people who have *experienced* Jesus and are now travelling with him. Where am I in the process of becoming a follower of Jesus: 1) heard of 2) seen for myself 3) experienced Jesus, or 4) travelling with Jesus? What is the next step that I need to take now?

Prayer: Jesus, I thank you for the ways I have heard of you, seen you, and experienced you. Show me more of what it means to travel in life *with* you. Show me where I am settling for the crowd's experience instead of travelling with you. I pray for those I know who have settled for just hearing about you – show them who you are and help them experience and walk with you.

Song: I will follow him (music [Franck Pourcel](#), lyrics [Norman Gimbel](#))

Sister Act- I Will Follow Him <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPpd-6X3tEo>

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

Read: Luke 8:49-8:56

Reflect: Here Jesus' team changes as he does a mind-blowing miracle of bringing this little girl back from the dead. Note that the jeering crowd is not part of Jesus' team and he even leaves most of the 12 behind. But Peter, James and John and her parents are invited by Jesus to see and experience all he is going to do. What do I think these 5 were expecting? Imagine what they are feeling as they witness this miracle, a miracle that only they know about. Where do I long to see Jesus at work?

Prayer: Father, Son, and Spirit I take time now to think about places where I have seen you work in my life and in the lives around me. (take time to do that) I am amazed, grateful, and in awe of you. Forgive me for the times I have decided "to not bother" you with my needs and desires. I also think of times when I have been confused and hurt by what You are not doing. Show me how to think about those difficult times. May I be in Your presence and recognize when You work in power, even in private. Amen

Song: Eagle's wings

Eagle's Wings (Live at Team Night) Hillsong Worship - Lyric video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4KNJeoJuU>

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Read: Luke 9:1-5

Reflect: Here “Team Jesus” is sent out. Jesus gives them authority to drive out demons, heal the sick, and preach the message he had been preaching about the Kingdom of God. He also tells them what it means to be on His team on this mission - that they are to be dependent on God and not curry favor with people. Being on “Team Jesus” means allegiance to him and his agenda. Where do I need to check my loyalties between the world and Jesus? Where do I need to step into the truths of the Kingdom of God in my life?

Prayer: Spirit, search me and reveal my heart. Show me where my loyalties are divided. (pause to let the Spirit speak) Reveal the places where I need to show and speak about the Kingdom of God to those around me. (pause again). Thank you, Spirit, for showing me my heart and my purposes. Lead me in your paths and show me your ways that I may walk with you.

Song: **Walk with Jesus**

Consumed By Fire - Walk with Jesus (Official Lyric Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GPzrNxlyYo>

Thursday, April 3, 2025

Read: Luke 9:1-6 (rereading 1-5)

Reflect: Here the 12 get a chance to follow in Jesus' footsteps doing what He has been doing. They are given the amazing privilege of showing the power of Jesus and speaking about His Kingdom. Who told me about Jesus and what it means to be a part of His Kingdom? Where was I open and closed when they shared? What changed to bring me faith? Who do I know who needs the power, presence, and good news of Jesus? Trust is often the first step in coming to Jesus, so how can I build deeper trust with those around me?

Prayer: God, I thank you for those who shared the power and message of the Kingdom of God with me. Bless them and continue to use them to help others to come to believe. I pray for (pray by name), that you might build my relationship with them that I might help them become curious and open to hearing about your Kingdom. Open the eyes of their hearts that I might share with them your power and goodness.

Song: The Love of God is greater far ([Author: Frederick M. Lehman \(1917\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fqp27lvdbSo))
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fqp27lvdbSo>

Friday, April 4, 2025

Read: Luke 9:10 (the conclusion of the 12 being sent out)

Reflect: Here we see “Team Jesus” come back to Jesus. They have been out doing ministry, working in God’s power and preaching about the Kingdom that Jesus brings. Our work in the Kingdom is grounded in Jesus and His life and mission so we need to be in touch with Him. Here Jesus takes His team away for a time of rest and prayer as Jesus Himself has done at different times in His ministry. They withdraw from the crowds, the work, the healing and preaching to be alone with Jesus. Jesus invites us to also to withdraw and be with Him.

Prayer: Jesus You are the source, You are the Rock, You are the Power. Where I am tired and weary of serving others, empower and refresh me. As I come now meet with me. Give me what I need now to rest and be with You. (take a moment to rest and just be. Is there something that Jesus is showing or telling you?)

Jesus thank you for calling me to You and showing me these things. I rest in You.

Song: Lily In The Valley - John P. Kee & NLCC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZ3KMuXQZw8&list=PLQWOgauw9hH1BVxihjZqCBwJaAW1Upli&index=5>

This week's devotions were written by Debi Ferrarello

Monday, April 7, 2025

Read: John 13:36-38

Reflect: I can relate to Peter. There have been times I've been fired up for Jesus, ready to give my all, only to falter once I leave the sanctuary of the Sanctuary and again encounter the headwinds of our culture. I am afraid to appear as "a fool for Christ." (1 Cor 4:10) Can you relate? In Matthew 16:25 Jesus tells us that "whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it." In *The Weight of Glory*, C S Lewis wrote, "Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." Where do we hold back, and why? What do we gain when we give our all?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, forgive me for denying you, for not trusting you with the life you've given me, for holding back. Show me the thoughts and patterns I hold onto that are not helpful and help me to live the abundant life you have for me. May this be for your delight and your glory. Amen.

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Read: John 18:12-27

Reflect: Jesus's words, "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." Then Peter, brave enough to follow Jesus and the soldiers, still lacking the courage to acknowledge his relationship, denying he knew the Teacher. Perhaps Peter justified his denial. After all, how could he help his Rabbi if he, too, were arrested? And then the cock crowed. Imagine Peter's heart sinking at the rooster's call, recalling the prophetic words spoken. Put yourself in the scene with Peter, warming your hands by the fire, fearful, filled with dread. What would you do?

Prayer: Jesus, there are times we are tempted to deny we know you. There are times we are afraid of what will happen if we take a stand for you or even for what is right. Forgive us, Lord. We ask you to fill us anew with your Holy Spirit and to give us holy boldness to represent you well. May we be salt and light to those around us.

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Read: Mark 16:7

Reflect: Those words from Jesus break me. "But go, tell the disciples *and Peter* that he is going ahead of you to Galilee..." And Peter. Did he no longer consider himself a disciple? Did he feel too unworthy? The mercy of God's Kingdom is seen right here as the angel singles Peter out. You may have denied Jesus. I know I have. But Jesus. Oh, Jesus. Jesus forgives and restores. We turn to him, and he runs to us, clothes us in his own spotless robes. None of us have strayed too far for his forgiveness. This is the God we worship. A God who forgives and heals. A God who redeems and restores. A God who deserves our honor and praise.

Prayer: Oh Lord God. We thank you for your redeeming love. We thank you that the minute we turn to you, you run to us with open arms. Forgive us for holding onto our sin, for believing we or anyone else is beyond your grace. As we reflect on this amazing grace, help us to forgive as extravagantly as you do, by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Read: John 20:1-10

Reflect: In John's gospel, he often refers to himself as "The disciple Jesus loved." That makes me wonder. Did all of Jesus's disciples consider themselves the one Jesus loved? We know he had such good friends in Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Did they feel they were "the ones" Jesus loved? What about Peter, renamed by Jesus the minute he met him? I wonder if Jesus sees all his children as the "one" he loves. Do you think we are to see each other that way, too?

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for loving me so well. Please help me to truly believe my belovedness...and also to believe that my neighbor is the "one" you love. Help me to love those I have trouble loving, those who have hurt or rejected me. Help me to love the way you love. I can do this only by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Friday, April 11, 2025

Read: I Corinthians 15:3-5, John 21:15-17

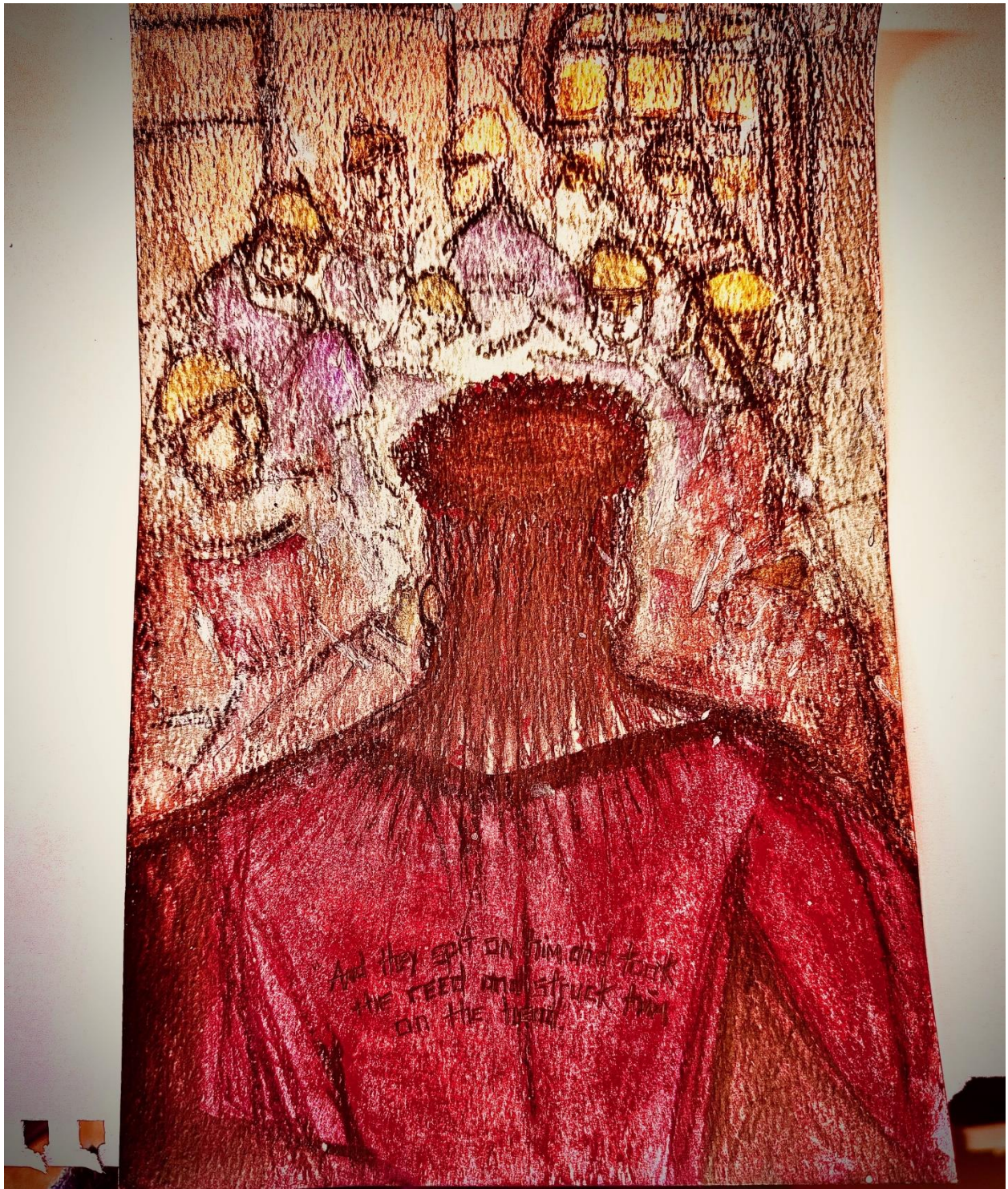
Reflect: Do you ever wish you could have a do-over? Imagine how Peter must have felt. He denied knowing his teacher and friend, watched him die an agonizing, humiliating death, and was now bereft, lost, in utter misery. But Jesus, in his great mercy, appeared to Peter before the other disciples. Do you remember Peter's restoration on the shore? "Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep." Peter's slate was wiped clean, and Jesus so gently restored him and gave him work to do. I fall short every day, failing to love God with my whole heart, failing to love my neighbor as myself. You, too? In Christ, we are forgiven, washed clean, and given work to do. Do we love him? Feed his sheep.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for your amazing grace. We confess that we have denied you, strayed from you, loved poorly. We ask you to forgive us anew and help us to follow you, doing what you did, caring for your sheep. May this be for your delight and your glory and the good of those you love.

Artwork by Suzanne Shockley for your meditation during Holy Week



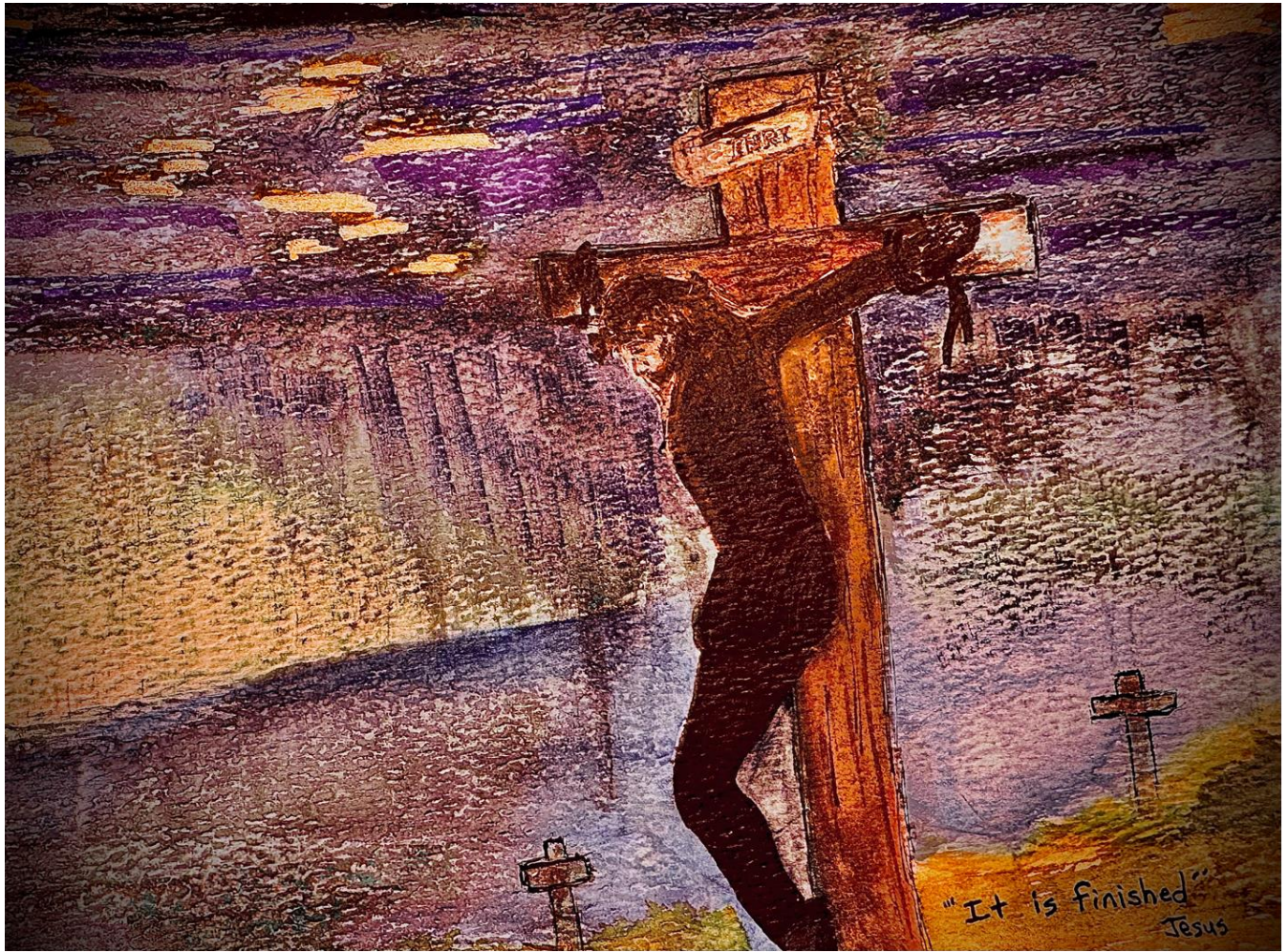
Servant



Sacrificial Lamb



Comforter



Redeemer



Beloved



He is not here, for he is risen as he said.

"I am
the resurrection
and
the light

Anyone who believes
in me
will live
even after dying."

John 11:25-26

Amen.



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A place where lives are changed by Christ
and we live out our faith together.

