



THE LIVING  
WORD  
OF  
LENT

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

February 26 - March 4



## SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

As we begin the second week of Lent, a season that sharpens our focus on our need for a Savior, we see recurring themes of the need for strength beyond ourselves—divine strength—and of the extraordinary things God can do with ordinary people who rely on divine power.

Jesus addresses this need in John 3 when he tells Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” Nicodemus, a leading Pharisee, comes to see Jesus, a relatively new rabbi. The conversation recorded in John 3:1-17 occurs on multiple levels. Nicodemus, hearing Jesus’ words literally and naturally, wonders how someone can re-enter the womb after being born. He is confused by what Jesus is saying. But Jesus is speaking on a spiritual level, with implications that reach into eternity, when he says, “You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again’” (v. 7). Definitive language.

Nicodemus is surprised because he’s been getting along quite well in life, relying on his own strength, abilities, and knowledge. What is so powerful (and necessary in all our lives) is that he stays in conversation with Jesus! He is longing to unpack what Jesus is talking about. Jesus is talking about our need for help. Supernatural help. A Savior.

We find other instances in Scripture where Jesus uses decisive language. John 3:7, “... you must forgive them ...”; John 13:34, “... you must love one another ...”; John 21:22, “... you must follow me ...”. All of these require us to depend on more than our own strength, or they will lead to mediocrity at best and are unsustainable in the long run.

We need to turn to the Triune God for help. We need their divine strength working in us, for us, and with us. Take time to read Galatians 5:19-21 to see how ugly our sinful nature is compared to the beauty of the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Which one is most evident in your daily life? Most prominent in your interactions with others?



We need a Savior to make us new. This is shown clearly in another instance, where Jesus uses the word “must”—Luke 19:1-10, the story of Zacchaeus. In verse 5, Jesus says, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.”

*I must.* By inviting himself to dinner, Jesus formed a relationship with someone who realized “the must” to be born again. The transformation was so swift that he repaid those he had taken from and then gave away more than half his wealth. This sparked a wave of love that touched hundreds of impoverished people.

***The Triune God can and will do extraordinary work through ordinary people when we’re not surprised by “you must be born again.” How do you need this rebirth right now?***

## FOR reflection



***Breathe in me, Holy Spirit,  
that I may think what is holy.  
Move me, Holy Spirit,  
that I may do what is holy.  
Attract me, Holy Spirit,  
that I may love what is holy.  
Strengthen me, Holy Spirit,  
that I may guard what is holy.  
Guard me, Holy Spirit,  
that I may keep what is holy.***

*- St. Augustine of Hippo*



# SCRIPTURE

## READINGS FOR THE WEEK

<b>Thursday</b>	Psalm 121; Isaiah 51:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:3-7
<b>Friday</b>	Psalm 121; Micah 7:18-20; Romans 3:21-31
<b>Saturday</b>	Psalm 121; Isaiah 51:4-8; Luke 7:1-10
<b>Sunday</b>	Psalm 121; Genesis 12:1-4a; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9
<b>Monday</b>	Psalm 128; Numbers 21:4-9; Hebrews 3:1-6
<b>Tuesday</b>	Psalm 128; Isaiah 65:17-25; Romans 4:6-13
<b>Wednesday</b>	Psalm 128; Ezekiel 36:22-32; John 7:53-8:11

### *Why do the daily readings begin on Thursday?*

The daily readings for each week begin on Thursday and end on the following Wednesday. The Thursday through Saturday readings prepare the reader for the Sunday ahead. The Monday through Wednesday readings reflect on what was presented on Sunday.

# The Morning Liturgy

## **Opening Scripture**

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

*Luke 15:18-19*

## **Opening Prayer** (based on Psalm 51)

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. *Amen.*

## **Scripture Reading** (read Psalm and Gospel text here)

## **Period of Silence**

## **Confessing Our Faith** (Apostles' Creed)

## **The Lord's Prayer**

## **The Collect**

*O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever.*

*Amen.*

## *A Midday Prayer*

Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms. Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your mercies' sake. *Amen.*

## *An Early Evening Prayer*

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

## *A Bedtime Confession and Prayer*

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. *Amen.*



*Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*



