

## **Prayer**

February 26 – April 9, 2020

*“Pray then in this way” – Matthew 6:9*

Paul tells us to pray without ceasing. Jesus teaches us a prayer for all times. Yet, sometimes we still struggle to talk to God in prayer, to understand what we’re being asked to do. There are many ways to pray, many types and many occasions. We will explore some common themes of prayer, building tools to truly do as Paul counsels and pray without ceasing.

### **February 26 – Ash Wednesday**

*“Create in me a clean heart, O God” – Psalm 51:10*

Psalm 51:1-17; Matthew 6:1-15

We lay everything before God. We have wandered far and we repent. We have forgotten to listen and now we pray. We receive ashes as a remembrance of our need before God.

### **March 1 – Confession**

*“Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity.” – Psalm 32:5*

Psalm 32; Matthew 4:1-11

We try our best, but we sometimes follow our temptations. We take wrong turns in our lives and as a people. We fail to love and follow as God calls and Jesus teaches. Therefore, we bring our sins, our transgressions, our omissions into the open before God. We pray, confessing all and returning again to God.

## **March 8 – Discernment**

*“My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.” – Psalm 121:2*

Psalm 121; Matthew 17:1-9

How often do we turn to God asking for guidance? We hope for a bright light from heaven that will make everything clear. Yet, even that light can be misunderstood. So, we take steps together, going up to God, looking beyond ourselves. We seek God’s perspective and understanding. We pray for bright lights or small signs so we may follow where God leads.

## **March 15 – Praise**

*“let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!” – Psalm 95:2*

Psalm 95:1-7; John 4:5-30, 39-42

What words we have heard and sights we have seen! What is there to do but to give praise? We come asking nothing. We come with hearts open and joyful. To lift up our praise fully, we not only make a joyful noise in celebration of God; we also acknowledge God as the right recipient of our praise.

## **March 22 – Trust**

*“I fear no evil; for you are with me” – Psalm 23:4*

Psalm 23; John 9:1-34

When we struggle we are asked to trust in God, to turn to God and share our burdens. A prayer of trust pauses to name our faith in God. We speak our trust in God and God’s nature. We speak of God’s presence and God’s love.

## **March 29 – Plea**

*“Lord, hear my voice!” – Psalm 130:2*

Psalm 130; John 11:1-45

We find ourselves in the depths of need, pain, anger, sorrow. We cry out to God for help. When we cry out to God for help, as our tears dry and our sobs cease from exhaustion, we wait on God to bring about a change.

## **April 5 – Lament**

*“For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing” – Psalm 31:10*

Psalm 31:9-16; Matthew 21: 1-11, 26:14-27:66 (selections)

Sometimes in the depths of our heartbreak, there is not even space for a plea. We cry out to God our pain. We honor the reality of life’s hardships and rock-bottom-places by affirming the need for lament.

## **April 9 – Maundy Thursday**

*“he threw himself on the ground and prayed” – Exodus 3:14*

We have prayed many prayers throughout Lent as we do throughout our lives. On this night we bring our hopes and our sorrows. We share in community and find ourselves alone in silence as we walk the final steps of his earthly journey with our Savior.