A JOURNEY TO EASTER

LENTEN MEDITATION WEEK 1

The forgiveness of sins.

Almighty, forgive my doubt, my anger, my pride. By thy mercy abase me, by thy strictness raise me up. *Dag Hammarskjöld.*

HYMN

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name;
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his love as he told me to.
He said, "Freely, freely you have received, freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe, others will know that I live."

All power is giv'n in Jesus' name,
in earth and heav'n in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his pow'r as he told me to.
He said, "Freely, freely……"

God gives me life in Jesus' name,
he lives in us in Jesus' name;
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his peace as he told me to.
He said "Freely, freely, ……." *Carol Owens*.

CONFESSION

I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. *Psalm 51.3*
If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1.8,9, BCP.*
May the God of al healing and forgiveness draw us to himself and cleanse us from all our sins that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. (Common Worship).

READINGS and REFLECTIONS

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst. *(1 Timothy 1 v 15)*.

We may not feel, like Paul, that we are the worst of sinners, but if we compare our sinful lives with Christ's, we might be driven to despair. But when we look to him, we see not only our model but also the one who came into the world to save sinners. *Eternal God, as a loving father, you have heaped on me innumerable blessings and I have heaped up many sins. I have despised that which is good, holy, pleasant and acceptable in your sight, and I have chosen that which was delicious, pleasant and acceptable in my sight…. I count myself one of the most wicked and miserable sinners in the world because I have been so contrary to Christ my Saviour. Christ was obedient to you, his Father, even to the death of the cross, and I was stubborn and disobedient….Shall I fall in desperation? No, I will call upon Christ, the Light of the world, the Fountain of life, the relief of all careful consciences…, the only health and comfort of all true repentant sinners. (Catherine Parr).*

They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. *(Zechariah 12.10)*.
During Lent we reflect on Christ's sufferings and death on the cross, which, as Martin Luther explains, are a reflection of our sin. God's love is expressed in Christ, who willingly suffered for our sins. As we look at the cross, we are led away from self-confidence, and then we are led towards confidence in God.
If you miss the opportunity to still your heart, then you will never secure peace and must finally despair in doubt. For our sins will become too strong to manage and they will live forever. But when we fearlessly believe that our sins are laid on Christ and that he has triumphed over them by his resurrection, then they are dead and become as nothing……. When your heart is established in Christ in this way, and you are an enemy of sin (out of love rather than out of fear of punishment), only then should Christ's sufferings also be an example for your life…. If a day of sickness

weighs you down, think how trifling that is compared with the nails of Christ. If you must do something that is distasteful to you, think how Christ suffered for your sake.
Martin Luther.

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.
(Mark 2.17).

We come to Jesus confessing our sins. One might think that acknowledging our sin is the worst way to come to God, who is pure and without sin. However, those who are repentant are exactly the sort of people Jesus came to save. God delights to show mercy to those who acknowledge their sins.
Dear Saviour, we come to you as beggars, dependent on your heavenly charity. You are a Saviour, always looking out for those that need saving. And here we are, and here we come, the men and women you are looking for, men and women needing a Saviour. Great Physician, we bring to you our wounds and bruises……. We bless you that you receive us and our wounds, and by your stripes we are healed. You receive us and our sins, and by your sin-bearing we are set free from sin… May we who love you, love you much more, You have been precious to us, your name has been music to our ears, and your love for us is inexpressibly strong….With all the capacity that there is in us, may we love our Lord in spirit and in truth. (Charles Spurgeon).

PRAYERS Loving God, we praise and thank you for the many blessings of this life, for family and friends, for those we love, but above all for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and the hope of glory.

O Lord, the house of my soul is narrow: enlarge it, that you may enter in. It is in ruins, please repair it. It is displeasing to you: I know and acknowledge it. But to whom can I call for help, to clear and repair it, but you? Cleanse me from my secret faults, O Lord, and spare your servant. *(Augustine of Hippo).*

Forgive me for the angry words
I didn't mean to say,
Forgive me for the fit of sulks
That spoiled a happy day.
Forgive me for my selfishness
And all my little sins,
And help me to be better
When another day begins. *(Kathleen Partridge).*

We pray for your church here on earth, that we may unite in reflecting your love to us……..
(a moment for our own prayers).
Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**.

We pray for the nations of the world, bringing before you the places where there is conflict, where there is repression, where people live in fear, for refugees and the dispossessed……..
Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**.

We pray for the sick in mind, body or spirit, naming those in our thoughts……..
Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**.

We pray for ourselves, that we may nurture each other, for our spiritual growth during this season of Lent.
Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**.

Christ Jesus, following you is discovering this Gospel reality: you are praying within each one of us. Your forgiveness and your presence bring to birth the clarity of trust and you offer an inner healing. *(Brother Roger of Taizé).*

We say the **LORD's PRAYER** (in traditional language).

Upon that place stood a Cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a Sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the Cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the Sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome. *(John Bunyan).*

We share **THE GRACE**.

The reflections and linked quotations are derived from "An Ocean of Grace" by Tim Chester (© The Good Book Company).