

## LECTIO 365 Day Prayers

is a daily devotional resource that helps you pray the Bible every day.

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Written by leaders from the 24-7 Prayer movement, and produced in partnership with CWR, this resource helps you engage with Scripture to inspire prayer and shape your life.

Journey through the year with Pete Greig, Carla Harding, Phil Togwell, Jill Weber and international guest writers.

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***In order to listen and read at the same time, you need to select the day page then right-click the date and set your screen for two separate windows***

### January 2023

January 1	January 2	January 3	January 4
January 5	January 6	January 7	January 8
January 9	January 10	January 11	January 12
January 13	January 14	January 15	January 16
January 17	January 18	January 19	January 20
January 21	January 22	January 23	January 24
January 25	January 26	January 27	January 28
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### Audio for Each Day in MP3 Format

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#### Month of January 2023

By opening a PDF version from above along with the appropriate audio selection you should be able to read and listen at the same time with two different windows open.

January 01 2023 (click for audio)  
*Sabbath Prayer*

Today is Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and it's the first day of 2023. Happy New Year from the whole Lectio and 24-7 Prayer family!

This week we've been reflecting on, and praying about, what we remember of 2022, as well as our hopes for 2023. But today is the Sabbath, so we're taking a break from our regular pattern to pray a little differently. And as a special treat on the first day of the year, we're going to join with families around the world and pray today's Lectio for Families Sabbath prayer.

**Pause Prayer**

I start by pausing and taking a deep breath:

In and out.

In and out.

I remember that God is here, and so I prepare myself to be with God.

**Pause and pray**

On this, the first day of a brand new year, I'm focusing on the prayer that Jesus used to teach His disciples how to pray. I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit may want to say to me today.

*The Lord's Prayer  
Our Father in heaven,  
Reveal who you are.  
Set the world right;  
Do what's best—  
as above, so below.  
Keep us alive with three square meals.  
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.  
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.  
You're in charge!  
You can do anything you want!  
You're ablaze in beauty!  
Yes. Yes. Yes.  
Matthew 6:9-13 (MSG)*

What word or phrase stood out from this paraphrase of The Lord's Prayer?

Perhaps the most amazing words in this prayer are the first two, 'Our Father'. Jesus invites His disciples, and He invites me too, to join in His relationship with God. He doesn't just say 'My Father', but 'Our Father'. I am welcomed, warmly, into God's family.

And so, on this day of rest and joy, at the beginning of a new year, I reflect on what it means to belong with God, to be part of God's family.

Pause and pray

The Apostle John wrote; '*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*' (1 John 3:1a, NIV UK)

*Thank You, Father God, for loving me so much, and for welcoming me into Your family. Help me to love You more this year.*

Pause and Pray

The Apostle John also wrote; '*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.*' (1 John 3:16, NIV UK)

*Thank You, Jesus, for showing me what real love looks like. You gave Your life so that I could receive a brand new life. Help me to share Your love with others this year.*

Pause and Pray

The Apostle Paul wrote; '*For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.*' (Romans 5:5b, NLT)

*Thank You, Holy Spirit, for filling me with God's love. Send me and help me to do all I can to make the world a little bit better this year.*

Pause and pray

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming week, the first week of this new year, the Lord who loves me says in Philippians:

*'...that he who began a good work in [me] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.'*

*Philippians 1:6 (NIV UK)*

As I embark on this new year, I pray the words of the Lectio for Families Sabbath Prayer...

Sabbath Blessing

May this Sabbath bring rest and joy to our hearts and our homes.

May today be a little less go, go, go, and a little more slow... slow... slow...

May we care less about things, and care more for people.

As we relax in God's love, may we take time to listen and remember that we are all God's children.

Amen!

## January 02 2023 (click for audio)

### Prayer

Today is Monday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, and this week we are exploring the vision and the heart of Lectio 365.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*As I draw near to You God, would You draw near to me? Teach me to pray. Speak Lord, Your servant is listening.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's presence today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 73...

*Whom have I in heaven but you?  
I desire you more than anything on earth.  
My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak,  
but God remains the strength of my heart;  
he is mine forever.  
Psalm 73:25-27 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

What sits at the very heart of Lectio 365? Three loves: love of God, love of people, and love of the world – which Jesus brilliantly summarizes in the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:36-38) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19). Lectio 365 encourages six practices: prayer, creativity, hospitality, justice, learning and mission, to help me live out these loves in a balanced and holistic way.

In today's passage I explore the practice of prayer, and reflect on Jesus' invitation to draw near...

*Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.*  
*John 15:4-5 (NRSV)*

Spiritual Director Thomas Green writes: 'God is a person... and prayer is a personal encounter with him... Christian prayer is grounded in a very specific conception of God: a personal God who encounters his creatures in love.\*

\*Thomas H. Green, S.J., *Opening to God: A Guide to Prayer* (Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2006, Kindle Edition), Kindle Location 264-267.

Ask

Do I experience prayer as a task on my ‘to-do’ list, a Christian duty, or as a personal encounter with a personal God who loves me?

I place my hand on my heart, close my eyes, and quietly and slowly repeat, ‘You abide in me... I abide in You’ a few times,

‘You abide in me... I abide in You’  
‘You abide in me... I abide in You’  
‘You abide in me... I abide in You’

Pause and pray

*Jesus, today I pray for those who don’t know You personally yet, but who are reaching out to something (or someone) beyond themselves and trying prayer, perhaps for the first time. Jesus, as they seek You, may they find You.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.*  
*John 15:4-5 (NRSV)*

Years ago, while in Paris, I visited the Notre Dame Cathedral, with its vaulted ceilings, stained glass, and a potent sense of God’s presence. The Scriptures say that I am God’s temple and that if I know Jesus, miraculously, His presence lives within me! And I can find Him if I go looking.

Theophan the Recluse said, ‘To pray is to descend with the mind into the heart, and there to stand before the face of the Lord, ever-present, all seeing, within you.’\*\*

\*\*Theophan the Recluse, *The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology*, ed. Timothy Ware (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. 110

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Jesus, I descend into my heart, and stand before You. You are ever present. You are all seeing. You are within me. Today, I abide in You.*

## Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, I echo the confidence of the psalmist in Psalm 73:

*God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

*Psalm 73:26b (NIV UK)*

## Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 03 2023 (click for audio)

### *Creativity*

Today is Tuesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January, and this week we are exploring the vision and the heart of Lectio 365. Together we will pray (P.R.A.Y.) very simply each day – ‘P’: PAUSING to be still. ‘R’: REJOICING with a Psalm and REFLECTING on a Scripture. ‘A’: ASKING God to help us and others and ‘Y’: YIELDING to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Prayer of Approach

*Creator God, who formed us from dust, breathe in me again. Give me a new imagination to perceive fresh possibilities today.*

Pause and pray

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s creativity today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 89...

*The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours;  
everything in the world is yours—you created it all.  
You created north and south.  
Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon praise your name.  
Psalm 89:11-12 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

What sits at the very heart of Lectio 365? First and foremost the love of God. God invites me into a lifelong adventure of being loved by Him and living in response to His abundant love. And love is, by its very nature, fruitful.

*Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.  
John 15:4-5 (NRSV)*

Abiding leads to fruitfulness, to creativity. Creativity is not restricted to the arts or crafting. Creativity happens as the Creator of all things, living in and through me, makes all things new.

Ask

In the quiet, I cast my inner eye over the landscape of my life. What do I notice growing in and around me? New relationships? New solutions to the challenges I face? New organizational structures or new

plans for organizing my cupboards? My administrative friend reminds me that creating new spreadsheets is a spiritual gift!

Jesus, I take joy in my creations, in the same way You took joy in me as You created me(Proverbs 8:22-31).

Pause and pray

*God, I pray for those who don't feel creative – those who feel stuck in a rut or lost in a maze. Would You bring them into a spacious place, give them freedom to breathe and to be. May new life spring up within them, and flow through them to others.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.*  
*John 15:4-5 (NRSV)*

We are made to be fruitful, to create. Poet John O'Donohue tells me, 'The heart of human identity is the capacity and desire for birthing. To be human is to become creative and bring forth the beautiful.'\*

\*John O'Donohue, Divine Beauty: The Invisible Embrace(New York: HarperCollins, 2004), p. 142.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I yield to God today with lines from a poem by John O'Donohue:

*All that is eternal in me  
Welcomes the wonder of this day,  
The field of brightness it creates  
Offering time for each thing  
To arise and illuminate...  
May my mind come alive today  
To the invisible geography  
That invites me to new frontiers,  
To break the dead shell of yesterdays,  
To risk being disturbed and changed.  
May I have the courage today  
To live the life that I would love,  
To postpone my dream no longer,*

*But do at last what I came here for  
And waste my heart on fear no more.\*\**

\*\* John O'Donohue, 'A Morning Offering', Benedictus (Transworld Digital, Kindle Edition, 2009), Kindle Locations 344-363.

### Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Revelation 21:

*'I am making everything new!'  
Revelation 21:5 (NIV UK)*

### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 04 2023 (click for audio)

*Who Is At The Table?*

Today is Wednesday the 4<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week I am exploring the vision and core values of Lectio 365. I began with the first love – the love of God – and Lectio 365's practices of prayer and creativity. Today I'm exploring loving others through hospitality.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*God of welcome, You invite me into Your family. I sit at Your table and savor Your word to me. Help me receive all the nourishment You have for me today.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's generosity today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 36...

*How precious is your unfailing love, O God!  
All humanity finds shelter  
in the shadow of your wings.  
You feed them from the abundance of your own house,  
letting them drink from your river of delights.*  
Psalm 36:7-9 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on hospitality, mystery, and Jesus in disguise.

*'Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,[a] you did it to me.'*

*Matthew 25:34-40 (ESV UK)*

I'm a feeder. I love it when people come over and I get to potter in the kitchen and dish up dinner. And I especially love it when someone I don't know comes by – it feels a bit like Christmas, and they are a gift to be received and enjoyed.

But Matthew takes it further. In the book Radical Hospitality, Lonnie Collins Pratt writes: 'Jesus told his followers: If you ignore them, you ignore me. If you feed them, you feed me. So, Benedict tells his monks, receive every person as if you are receiving Christ himself. Simple statement. Huge goal.'\*

\* Lonni Collins Pratt, Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love (Brewster, Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, Kindle Edition, 2011), p. 56.

Ask

*Jesus, I ask that You would open my eyes to see You in friend and stranger, and open my heart to the gifts they (and You) bring to the table.*

Pause and pray

*Jesus, I pray for Your church, especially in cultures where hospitality is not valued as much, and where our homes are enclosed with gates, hedges, and schedules with no margin in them for the unexpected guest. May we hear You at the door. May we invite You In.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*'Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,[a] you did it to me.'*

*Matthew 25:34-40 (ESV UK)*

The invitation to practice hospitality is the invitation to eat with Jesus. Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove writes, 'Jesus is... coming for supper tonight, and he's not alone... He's standing at your door with someone whose name you don't yet know.'\*\*

\*\* Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Strangers at My Door: A True Story of Finding Jesus in Unexpected Guests, (New York: The Crown Publishing Group, Kindle Edition, 2013), p. 199.

Pause and pray

### **Yielding Prayer**

*Jesus forgive me for not recognizing You at the table, for not answering the door when You knock.  
Open my eyes, open my heart, open my life, I pray.*

### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Revelation 3:

*Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

*Revelation 3:19-20 (NIV UK)*

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 05 2023 (click for audio)

*Let Justice Roll*

Today is Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week we are delving into the heart of Lectio 365. I've looked at the practices of prayer, creativity and hospitality. Today I explore the practice of justice.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Father God, open my eyes, stir my heart, and teach me how 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with...' You today (Micah 6:8).*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's justice today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 89...

*Powerful is your arm!*

*Strong is your hand!*

*Your right hand is lifted high in glorious strength.*

*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.*

*Unfailing love and truth walk before you as attendants.*

*Psalm 89:13-15 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, I'm back in yesterday's Matthew passage.

*'Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,[a] you did it to me.'*

*Matthew 25:34-40 (ESV UK)*

Justice activist and author John Perkins writes:

God has always wanted the vulnerable in society to be cared for. He never intended for them to languish in poverty, abuse, slavery, homelessness, or other types of devastation. When we care for

individuals who are trapped in these ways, when we show them love and help them move toward freedom and wholeness... we do justice and God smiles.\*

\* John M. Perkins, *Dream with Me: Race, Love, and the Struggle We Must Win* (Ada, Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, Kindle Edition, 2017), p. 110.

Ask

*God, I want to make You smile today. I ask for a greater awareness of the injustices in my world, perhaps even where I'm part of the problem! I ask You to stir my heart, shake me up, and show me how to help people move towards freedom and wholeness.*

Pause and pray

I take a moment to pray for a justice organization I know, and the work they do to empower those who are languishing in poverty, abuse, slavery, homelessness, or other types of devastation.

*Come Lord Jesus. Let justice roll like a mighty river and righteousness like a never-failing stream* (Amos 5:24)

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I ask You to spark my imagination. I cast my inner eye across those I may know, or perhaps just know about – the poor, the sick, the prisoner.

*'Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,[a] you did it to me.'*

*Matthew 25:34-40 (ESV UK)*

One at a time, I picture their faces in my mind's eye.

Then I take a moment and look harder, look closer, look for You in the presence of those made in Your image, those who suffer as You did.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Jesus forgive me where I am oblivious to or unmoved by the suffering around me. Or perhaps I am aware of the need for justice and feel overwhelmed and paralyzed by the greatness of the need and*

*the smallness of my resources. Would You show me one thing I could do today, perhaps for just one person, to ease their suffering?*

#### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Luke 18:

*And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.*

*Luke 18:7-8a (NIV UK)*

#### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## January 06 2023 (click for audio)

*School of Life*

Today is Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week I am exploring the heart of Lectio 365. I've considered prayer, creativity, hospitality and justice. Today I think about the practice of learning.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Holy Spirit, my teacher, as I dive into the Bible would You awaken my heart, expand my mind, and shape my identity today.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's leadership today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 25...

*The LORD is good and does what is right;  
he shows the proper path to those who go astray.  
He leads the humble in doing right,  
teaching them his way.  
The Lord leads with unfailing love and faithfulness  
all who keep his covenant and obey his demands.  
Psalm 25:8-10 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on Jesus' invitation to His school of life:

*And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.  
Matthew 4:18-20 (NKJV)*

'Follow me', says Jesus. Learning in His day was hands-on, life on life learning. Eugene Peterson described Jesus' invitation succinctly: 'Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it' (Matt. 11:29 MSG). How might I approach discipleship as apprenticeship to Jesus?

Ask

*Jesus, how are You speaking to me through the Scriptures, through my circumstances, or my community? How are You inviting me to follow You today in the learning laboratory of my life?*

*How might I respond to that invitation to grow and learn, and to become more like You?*

Pause and pray

*Jesus, I pray for young adult groups both in colleges and in churches. I pray for shared lives, as well as shared beliefs, that will transform students' lives to become more like Jesus. I think of one youth group or college student worker I know and I pray for them now.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.*

*Matthew 4:18-20 (NKJV)*

I love that Jesus doesn't completely discard His newfound disciples' passion and skill set. They are going to keep fishing – just in another way! It's amazing that when they learn from Jesus, they not only become more like Him, but they also become more fully and freely themselves.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Jesus, I yield to You my natural giftings, my interests and passions. I choose the adventure of following You today – anything could happen!*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John 10:

*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

*John 10:27-28 (NIV)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## January 07 2023 (click for audio)

### *Letting Go and Taking Hold*

Today is Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week I am exploring the heart of Lectio 365. I've considered prayer, creativity, hospitality, justice, and learning. Today I complete the week by considering joining Jesus on mission.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*God of rescue and restoration, thank You for Your great and beautiful mission in the world. Here I am, Lord, fill me with Your Spirit and send me.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's saving power, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 37...

*The LORD rescues the godly;  
he is their fortress in times of trouble.  
The LORD helps them,  
rescuing them from the wicked.  
He saves them,  
and they find shelter in him.*

*Psalm 37:39-40 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am revisiting yesterday's passage and considering Jesus' invitation to mission.

*And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.*

*Matthew 4:18-20 (NKJV)*

I've been apprenticed to Jesus for almost forty years. My greatest joy? Seeing God at work in and through and around me. Cultivating attentiveness to His presence and willingness to respond to His invitations. Joining Him where He is actively at work in the world, making all things new. It has been, and continues to be, a great adventure!

Ask

Am I bored with Christianity? Have I domesticated Jesus, tamed him down?

*Jesus, I want to take a risk today. Call me from the security of my little life and help me step into Your great mission to renew the earth and to reconcile all peoples to Yourself. Here I am, send me.*

Pause and pray

*God forgive Your church for where we have played it safe, for where we have remade You in our image, for the ways we have bowed to our idols of comfort and convenience. God who comforts the afflicted, would You come and afflict the comfortable, and would You start with me?*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him.*  
*Matthew 4:18-20 (NKJV)*

Missionary Jim Elliott, who was martyred on the mission field, once wrote, ‘He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.’\*

\*This famous quote is from Jim Elliot’s journal entry for 28 October 1949, written the autumn after he graduated from Wheaton College. Held in the Billy Graham Archives, at Wheaton College, IL.

What, where, or who do I need to leave behind in order to join Jesus on mission? What do I need to let go of in order for God to get a hold of me?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

I yield today with the lyrics of a song by Reuben Morgan:

*Lord, I give You my heart  
I give You my soul  
I live for You alone  
And every breath that I take  
Every moment I'm awake  
Lord, have Your way in me\*\**

\*\*Reuben Morgan, ‘I Give You My Heart’ lyrics © 1996 Capitol Christian Music Group.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Mark 10:

*'Truly I tell you,' Jesus replied, 'no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age.'*

*Mark 10:29-30a (NIV UK)*

#### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 08 2023 (click for audio)

*A Sabbath Jesus Prayer*

It's Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> of January. This week we've been meditating on the heart of Lectio 365. Today, on this sabbath day of rest, we take a break from our usual P.R.A.Y. patterns to pray a little differently.

Author Wayne Muller reminds me that,

*'Sabbath time is set apart for remembering the holiness of life. If we speed up and saturate ourselves with accomplishment and worry, we may defile what is sacred with our mindlessness. Time is the key. Time, and attention.'*\*

\*Wayne Muller, Sabbath: Finding rest, renewal and delight in our busy lives, Bantam, (New York, 200), p196

And so, I begin by welcoming the Spirit, and giving Jesus my full attention.

Pause and pray

In Mark chapter 10 I read about a man who caught the attention of Jesus...

*...As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus... was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. 'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him.*

*Mark 10:46-51 (NIV UK)*

I imagine myself as Bartimaeus waiting in a crowded street. I spot Jesus through the throng, and desperate for His attention I repeat over and over again,

***Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!***

Pause and pray

I see Jesus turn, He's looking for me! Our eyes meet, the noise of the street fades into the background. I'm no longer aware of the crowds, I'm only aware of Jesus. Time stops, he has my full attention. He calls me to join Him and as I approach he asks, 'What do you want me to do for you?' I share with Jesus the thing I most desperately want and pray...

***Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.***

Pause and pray

*Father, open my eyes to the people in my community who go unseen and unheard by all but You. Show me who You notice; I want to give them my attention today.*

Jesus, teach the Church to pray with the passion and persistence of Bartimaeus. We tire easily. Help us not to give up but to cry out again and again and again for Your intervention in our world.

Holy Spirit, as the Church gathers across the globe today, help us fix 'our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.' (Heb 12:2 NIV UK) Interrupt our plans, our preaches and our programs; we give You our full attention.

And now I root these big prayers in my community by naming someone I know who doesn't yet know Jesus. Father, draw them to Your Son.

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.\*\*

Amen.

\*\*Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, [petegreig.info](http://petegreig.info)

## January 09 2023 (click for audio)

*Jesus and the Best Bible Study Ever*

It's Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> of January, and today we are starting a new series on Lectio 365: The Vision Is Jesus. This week we are looking at some of the places where we find Jesus in the Bible before He was born as a babe in Bethlehem – Jesus before He 'became a human being and lived among us' (John 1:14, Phillips).

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's faithfulness and unfailing love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 33...

*For the word of the LORD holds true,  
and we can trust everything he does.  
He loves whatever is just and good;  
the unfailing love of the LORD fills the earth.  
Psalm 33:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on Jesus' response to two downcast disciples as He walks with them on the road to Emmaus. Jesus, the one they had hoped would save Israel, has been killed. They have no idea who this stranger is.

*And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.  
Luke 24:25-27 (ESV UK)*

Jesus didn't try to convince His companions by saying, 'It's all right, it's Me – I'm alive again!' He didn't show them a spectacular miracle to help them believe. He did something much more radical. He took them back to the Bible – back to the deep roots of Israel's story in the Old Testament – and there he showed them that everything had been pointing to Him all along. His death wasn't a tragic ending; it was a new beginning.

Ask

Have disappointments and difficulties caused me to lose sight of Jesus? Have I stopped noticing that He is with me? Have I become slow to believe?

Pause and pray

*Lord, I pray for someone I know – a Christian who finds reading the Bible more of a chore than a delight – may You come alive to them again as they read.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

*And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

*Luke 24:25-27 (ESV UK)*

Jesus didn't just remind them of what was written in the Bible, He interpreted it as well. Jesus was teaching them, and me, to interpret the Bible 'Christologically' – to look for Him on every page.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

Lord, I have put my hope in Your word (Psa. 119:147). I will seek Your presence always (Psa. 105:4). This week as I delve into the Old Testament, help me to find You on every page.

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Jeremiah:

*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

*Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## January 10 2023 (click for audio)

### *Wisdom and Word*

Today is Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week we are looking at some of the places where we find Jesus in the Bible before He was born as a babe in Bethlehem. Together we will pray (P.R.A.Y.) very simply each day – ‘P’: PAUSING to be still. ‘R’: REJOICING with a Psalm and REFLECTING on a Scripture. ‘A’: ASKING God to help us and others and ‘Y’: YIELDING to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

*As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.*

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s creation today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 33...

*The LORD merely spoke,  
and the heavens were created.  
He breathed the word,  
and all the stars were born...  
For when he spoke, the world began!  
It appeared at his command.  
Psalm 33:6,9 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on the way the Gospel of John introduces Jesus – not with the story of a baby in a manger, but as ‘the Word’, present to God before the universe began...

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him... [nothing] was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of [humanity].  
John 1:1-4 (ESV UK)*

The prologue to John’s Gospel is probably harder to translate well than any other passage in the New Testament. The Greek word Logos can mean ‘Word’, but here it clearly means so much more, for this ‘Word’ is alive, personal, divine, and active in the creation of everything that exists.

Ask

*Lord Jesus, the Word made flesh, may I never forget that before anything else existed, You were there, with God. As I take a moment to think about You, may I never underestimate who You are.*

Pause and pray

I name someone I know who is facing a seemingly impossible situation right now. Shine Your light into their darkness. May they truly know that nothing in all creation can separate them from God's love for them in Christ (ROMANS 8:39)

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him... [nothing] was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of [humanity].*

*John 1:1-4 (ESV UK)*

I am struck by the words, 'All things were made through him'. I don't always think of Jesus, the Word, as co-creator of the universe. But knowing that makes it even more incredible that, 'The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood' (John 1:14, MSG).

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord Jesus, I yield myself to the mystery of the incarnation – that the maker of the universe has walked the earth and died for me.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Colossians:

*God has chosen to make known... the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

*Colossians 1:27 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## January 11 2023 (click for audio)

*Jesus: Priest and King*

Today is Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week we are exploring some of the places where we find Jesus in the Bible before He was born as a babe in Bethlehem.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's attentiveness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 116...

*I love the LORD because he hears my voice  
and my prayer for mercy.  
Because he bends down to listen,  
I will pray as long as I have breath!  
Psalm 116:1-2 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on a Psalm, written by David, in which Jesus recognized himself...

*The LORD says to my Lord:  
"Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool."  
The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty scepter.  
Rule in the midst of your enemies!...  
The LORD has sworn  
and will not change his mind,  
"You are a priest for ever  
after the order of Melchizedek."  
Psalm 110:1-2,4 (ESV UK)*

No king of Israel or Judah was allowed to serve as a priest. David and his royal descendants were from the tribe of Judah. The priestly families were exclusively from the tribe of Levi. But this Psalm looks forward to the coming of one who would be both priest and king – the Messiah, Jesus, the 'son of David'.

Ask

What does it mean for Jesus to be both a priest and king for me?

*Lord Jesus, would You rule in my life and ever open the way to the presence of the Father.*

Pause and pray

I think of something that is happening in the world today, where it doesn't appear to me that God's will is being done..

*Lord Jesus, may Your kingdom come and Your will be done in this situation: 'rule in the midst of your enemies!'*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

*The LORD says to my Lord:*

*"Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool."*

*The LORD sends forth from Zion*

*your mighty scepter.*

*Rule in the midst of your enemies!...*

*The LORD has sworn*

*and will not change his mind,*

*"You are a priest for ever*

*after the order of Melchizedek."*

*Psalm 110:1-2,4 (ESV UK)*

Melchizedek isn't a name you hear every day. He was the 'king of righteousness' and 'king of peace' (Heb. 7:2) who appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, in the book of Genesis. Some commentators have suggested that this might have been Christ himself appearing 'out of time'. But whoever he was, Melchizedek points me to Jesus – 'the Son who has been made perfect forever' (Heb. 7:28)!

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord Jesus, I yield to You as king of righteousness – the one who makes me right with God – and as king of peace – the one who restores my soul and brings me shalom.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Hebrews:

*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess... Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

*Hebrews 4:14,16 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 12 2023 (click for audio)

*Seervant and Sacrifice*

Today is Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week we are exploring some of the places where we find Jesus in the Bible before He was born as a babe in Bethlehem.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's kindness towards hurting people, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 22...

*Praise the LORD, all you who fear him!  
Honor him, all you descendants of Jacob!  
Show him reverence, all you descendants of Israel!  
For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy.  
He has not turned his back on them,  
but has listened to their cries for help.*  
Psalm 22:23-24 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on a prophecy from Isaiah about a suffering servant...

*For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
and no beauty that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by men;  
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.  
Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was wounded for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his stripes we are healed.*  
Isaiah 53:2-5 (ESV UK)

The book of Isaiah includes four poetic passages, which are known as the 'Servant Songs'. They center on a mysterious 'servant of the Lord'. Sometimes they seem to be describing the sufferings of Israel as a nation, but Christians have long noticed that they anticipate the suffering and death of Jesus, and the meaning of the cross.

Ask

*Lord Jesus, these are difficult words to read. Soften my heart as I pause now and say thank You that You suffered and died for me.*

Pause and pray

I name someone I know who is experiencing a time of sorrow and brokenness.

*Lord, may they know what it is for You to bear their grief, carry their sorrows, and bring them peace.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
and no beauty that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by men;  
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.  
Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was wounded for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his stripes we are healed.*

*Isaiah 53:2-5 (ESV UK)*

The moment of Jesus' crucifixion is told in the Gospels in just three words, 'they crucify him'. It is left to this passage, written hundreds of years earlier, to fill in the gaps. Here Isaiah's prophetic imagination helps me to engage with both the experience and the meaning of the cross. Here I meet Jesus as God's suffering servant, who brings healing emotionally, spiritually, and physically – saving me from sorrow, sin, and sickness.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord, I yield myself wholly – body, soul, and spirit – to Your grace, to You who lived and died for me.*

## Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Colossians:

*God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Christ], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

*Colossians 1:19-20 (NIV UK)*

## Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 13 2023 (click for audio)

*Jesus: Bridegroom and Lover*

Today is Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week we are exploring some of the places where we find Jesus in the Bible before He was born as a babe in Bethlehem.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in the beauty of God today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 45...

*Beautiful words stir my heart.*

*I will recite a lovely poem about the king,  
for my tongue is like the pen of a skillful poet.*

*You are the most handsome of all.*

*Gracious words stream from your lips.  
God himself has blessed you forever.*

*Psalm 45:1-2 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on one of the most unusual books in the Bible. The Song of Solomon reads like a piece of theater or love poetry. In the Jewish tradition it has long been understood as an allegory of the relationship between God and Israel. And since the time of the early Church Fathers, it has been interpreted as an expression of the relationship between Christ and His bride, the Church...

*My beloved speaks and says to me:*

*"Arise, my love, my beautiful one,*

*and come away,*

*for behold, the winter is past;*

*the rain is over and gone.*

*The flowers appear on the earth,*

*the time of singing has come,*

*and the voice of the turtle-dove*

*is heard in our land.*

*The fig tree ripens its figs,*

*and the vines are in blossom;*

*they give forth fragrance.*

*Arise, my love, my beautiful one,*

*and come away.*

*Song of Solomon 2:10-13 (ESV UK)*

When Karl Barth, the notable and very serious, twentieth century theologian, spoke to students at the university of Chicago in April 1962, the story goes that someone asked him to summarize his theology in one sentence. He apparently replied, in the words of a song he had learned as a child, 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so'. There is a divine romance at the heart of the universe, and I am included in it.

Ask

I think of today's passage as an invitation from Jesus to me. I imagine him saying, 'come away with me. Leave the busyness, distraction and demands behind, my love; even if only for a few minutes. Come and spend time with the one who loves you most...'

Pause and pray

*I name someone I know who is looking for love. Perhaps someone single, someone who feels unloved or someone who has lost a partner. Lord Jesus, would You comfort them with Your love, and satisfy their soul. May they see themselves through Your eyes, for You know the love they need.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*My beloved speaks and says to me:*

*"Arise, my love, my beautiful one,  
and come away,  
for behold, the winter is past;  
the rain is over and gone.*

*The flowers appear on the earth,  
the time of singing has come,  
and the voice of the turtle-dove  
is heard in our land.*

*The fig tree ripens its figs,  
and the vines are in blossom;  
they give forth fragrance.*

*Arise, my love, my beautiful one,  
and come away.*

*Song of Solomon 2:10-13 (ESV UK)*

After experiencing a series of visions, the fourteenth century English mystic, Julian of Norwich, wrote the book *Revelations of Divine Love*. 'I was taught', she said, 'that love was our Lord's meaning. And I saw quite clearly... that before God made us, he loved us... And in this love, he has done all his work... And in this love our life is everlasting.'\*

\*Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, chapter 86, translation by Liz Broadwell:

<http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/154.html>

Pause and pray

### Yielding Prayer

*Jesus, I cannot understand the depth or passion of Your love for the world, and for me. Though it feels inadequate, I offer You my response today by repeating three simple words... I love You.*

### Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 1 John:

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.  
1 John 4:16b (NIV UK)*

### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## January 14 2023 (click for audio)

*Jesus: Son of Man*

Today is Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, and this is the last day this week that we are exploring passages in the Old Testament that point toward Jesus.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's glory today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 113...

*Blessed be the name of the LORD  
now and forever.  
Everywhere—from east to west—  
praise the name of the LORD.  
For the LORD is high above the nations;  
his glory is higher than the heavens.  
Psalm 113:2-4 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today I am reflecting on an extraordinary vision witnessed by Daniel, a young Jewish exile in Babylon.

*"I saw in the night visions,  
and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a son of man,  
and he came to the Ancient of Days  
and was presented before him.  
And to him was given dominion  
and glory and a kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him;  
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
which shall not pass away,  
and his kingdom one  
that shall not be destroyed.  
Daniel 7:13-14 (ESV UK)*

'Son of man' was a common Hebrew phrase that could just mean a man or a human being. In the Gospels, it was a name Jesus often applied to Himself. But when He began to speak of 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom' (Matt. 16:28), it became clear that Jesus was saying, 'I am more than I seem, I

am the mysterious figure from Daniel's vision', and my 'kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom' (Dan. 7:27).

Ask

How do I see Jesus when I pray? Which 'Son of man' do I need right now? – the 'human one', who can sympathize with my need and my pain, or the one who comes with the clouds of heaven, with authority, glory, and great power.

Pause and pray

I think today of a nation where it is dangerous to be a Christian, and where to openly preach the gospel is both illegal and almost impossible.

*Lord, would You send dreams, visions, and revelations of Christ to people there, as You did for Daniel in Babylon*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*"I saw in the night visions,  
and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a son of man,  
and he came to the Ancient of Days  
and was presented before him.  
And to him was given dominion  
and glory and a kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him;  
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
which shall not pass away,  
and his kingdom one  
that shall not be destroyed.*

*Daniel 7:13-14 (ESV UK)*

Daniel's vision describes Jesus coming on the 'clouds of heaven' to receive a kingdom of 'all peoples'. When Jesus was transfigured, a voice from a cloud said, 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!' (Mark 9:7). And at His ascension, a cloud took Jesus out of sight of the disciples. Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, people from many nations heard about Jesus and began to follow Him, a first glimpse of Daniel's vision becoming a reality.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord Jesus, Son of Man, I yield to Your invitation to serve You – alongside those of every language, people, and nation – in Your everlasting and indestructible kingdom.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 2 Corinthians:

*God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.*

*2 Corinthians 4:6 (NIV UK)*

#### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 15 2023 (click for audio)

*A Sabbath Jesus Prayer*

It's Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> of January. This week we've been meditating on passages in the Old Testament which point us towards Jesus. Today, on this Sabbath day of rest, we take a break from our usual P.R.A.Y. patterns to pray a little differently.

Author Wayne Muller reminds me that,

'Sabbath time is set apart for remembering the holiness of life. If we speed up and saturate ourselves with accomplishment and worry, we may defile what is sacred with our mindlessness. Time is the key. Time, and attention.\*

\*Wayne Muller, Sabbath: Finding rest, renewal and delight in our busy lives, (New York: Bantam, 2000), p.196.

And so, I begin by welcoming the Spirit, and giving Jesus my full attention..

Pause and pray

In Mark's Gospel I read about a man who caught Jesus' attention...

*As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus ... was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. 'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him.*  
*Mark 10:46-51 (NIV UK)*

I imagine myself as Bartimaeus, waiting in a crowded street. I spot Jesus through the throng and, desperate for His attention, I repeat over and over again:

***Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.***

Pause and pray

I see Jesus turn, He's looking for me! Our eyes meet, the noise of the street fades into the background. I'm no longer aware of the crowds, I'm only aware of Jesus. Time stops, He has my full attention. He calls me to join Him and, as I approach, he asks, 'What do you want me to do for you?' I share with Jesus the thing I most desperately want and pray...

***Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.***

Pause and pray

*Father, open my eyes to the people in my community who go unseen and unheard by all but You. Show me who You notice; I want to give them my attention today.*

*Jesus, teach the Church to pray with the passion and persistence of Bartimaeus. We tire easily. Help us not to give up but to cry out again and again and again for Your intervention in our world.*

Holy Spirit, as the Church gathers across the globe today, help us fix 'our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith' (Heb. 12:2, NIVUK). Interrupt our plans, our preaches and our programs; we give You our full attention.

And now I root these big prayers in my community by naming someone I know who doesn't yet know Jesus. Father, draw them to Your Son.

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.\*\*

Amen.

\*\*Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, [petegreig.info](http://petegreig.info)

## January 16 2023 (click for audio)

### *Jesus' Hunger*

Today is Monday the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, and we are continuing our series fixing our eyes on Jesus at the beginning of a new year. This week we are diving into the Gospels to reflect on Jesus' humanity.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's protection today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 18...

*I love you, LORD;  
you are my strength.  
The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;  
my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.  
He is my shield, the power that saves me,  
and my place of safety.  
Psalm 18:1-2 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Jesus has stepped into the spotlight: He's been baptized by John, filled with the Spirit, and affirmed by His Father (Matt. 3:13-17). Today I reflect on what happened next...

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."'*  
Matthew 4:1-4 (ESVUK)

Jesus was isolated, weak, and hungry, and this was the moment the tempter chose to show up. With one little 'if' the devil questioned Jesus' identity and tried to drive a wedge between Father and Son. But after 40 days of fasting and prayer, Jesus was weakened physically, but strengthened spiritually. In His vulnerability, Jesus remained confident in who He was, and in whom He could trust.

Ask

Do I feel vulnerable, isolated, or weak right now? Am I struggling with my identity or faith?

*Father, show me if the tempter is at work and speak into my questions and doubts.*

Pause and pray

I don't know what temptations I will face in 2023, but I wonder, is God calling me to fast and pray to prepare for what's ahead.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*

*Matthew 4:1-4 (ESV UK)*

How do I live on God's word?

In order for Jesus to respond to the devil with a verse from God's law, He'd obviously done more than simply read Deuteronomy (8:3). Jesus had memorized it. He had meditated on it. So He knew that a lesson learned by the Israelites in their wilderness applied to this wilderness and the temptation He faced.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Holy Spirit, today I choose not only to read the Bible, but to pick a verse from today's passage and memorize it. As I continue to think about it throughout today, would You increase my understanding and embed its truth deep in my heart?*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John's Gospel:

*'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again.*

*Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'*

*John 6:35 (NLT)*

### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 17 2023 (click for audio)

### *Jesus' Ambition*

Today is Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week we are exploring the humanity of Jesus displayed in the Gospels. Together we will pray (P.R.A.Y.) very simply each day – ‘P’: PAUSING to be still. ‘R’: REJOICING with a Psalm and REFLECTING on Jesus’ life. ‘A’: ASKING God to help us and others and ‘Y’: YIELDING to His will in our lives.

#### Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

#### Pause and pray

#### Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

#### Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God’s strength today, joining with the ancient praise of all God’s people in the words of Psalm 91...

*Those who live in the shelter of the Most High  
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

*This I declare about the LORD:*

*He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;  
he is my God, and I trust him.*

*Psalm 91:1-2 (NLT)*

#### Pause and pray

Yesterday I reflected on how the devil tested Jesus’ identity and tried to undermine His relationship with the Father. Today I read about the next two temptations Jesus faced.

*Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,  
“He will command his angels concerning you’,  
and*

*“On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.”*

*Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written,*

*“You shall worship the Lord your God  
and him only shall you serve.”*  
Matthew 4:5-10 (ESV UK)

Do the ends justify the means? By miraculously surviving a leap from the Temple, word of Jesus would have spread fast. Likewise, by bowing down to the devil, Jesus would have gained the world in an instant. Both the leap and the bow seem like a quick win, but Jesus wasn't willing to take the fast track only to miss the finish line. Though the path He took was slower and marked by sacrifice, when He defeated sin and death on the cross, He disarmed the devil and brought real freedom, not a cheap imitation for all.

Ask

*Father God, is there an area of my life where I am avoiding pain, choosing to compromise, or trying to cut corners? Are You calling me to take a different, and maybe more difficult path?*

Pause and pray

*Jesus, thank You that You did not back down from Your mission to bring salvation to the kingdoms of the world. I name my nation before You now and pray again, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, here as it is in Heaven.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

*“He will command his angels concerning you’,*

*and*

*“On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.”*

*Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”*

*Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written,*

*“You shall worship the Lord your God  
and him only shall you serve.”*

Matthew 4:5-10 (ESV UK)

Standing at the pinnacle of the Temple, Jesus didn't choose to increase His popularity or build Himself a platform. His ambition was for something far greater. What's my ambition? Do I secretly long for popularity or platform? Father, I pause to be honest with You now...

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Jesus, I choose again to follow You today. To follow You even when You lead me towards insignificance over power, into sacrifice instead of empty wins. I am conflicted, my motives aren't always pure, but I want to be more like You.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John's Gospel:

*Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*

*John 12:25 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## January 18 2023 (click for audio)

*Amy Carmichael, Hero of Mission and Creativity*

Today is Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> of January, feast of the missionary and author, Amy Carmichael, who died on this day in 1951. On Feast Days we pause from our usual rhythms to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: prayer and creativity, justice and hospitality, learning and mission. Today therefore we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of Amy Carmichael, a tireless hero of mission and creativity.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*God of rescue and restoration, thank You for Your great and beautiful mission in the world. Here I am, Lord: fill me with Your Spirit and send me.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's love today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 48...

*O God, we meditate on your unfailing love  
as we worship in your Temple.  
As your name deserves, O God,  
you will be praised to the ends of the earth.  
Your strong right hand is filled with victory.  
Psalm 48:9-10 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Born in the north of Ireland in 1867, Amy Carmichael felt the call to mission at a young age. She served briefly as a missionary in Japan and Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka) before eventually traveling to India – all long before the days of intercontinental air travel!

Her focus was rescuing young women from temple prostitution, and the community, which she founded in 1901 – the Dohnavur Fellowship – came to provide sanctuary for more than a thousand children. Amy served in India for 55 years without once returning home on furlough. She was also a prolific author, publishing more than 30 books about her missionary work.

She wrote,

‘Blessed are the single-hearted, for they shall enjoy much peace. If you refuse to be hurried and pressed, if you stay your soul on God, nothing can keep you from that clearness of spirit which is life and peace. In that stillness you will know what His will is.’\*

\* Amy Carmichael, *Candles in the Dark: Letters of Hope and Encouragement* (Fort Washington: CLC Publications, 1981) p.56

In the middle of all the complexities of cross-cultural mission, and with all the intensity of front-line justice work, Amy made it a priority to pursue God’s presence and peace. She understood that to have a wide impact, she needed to cultivate a deep spirituality.

Ask

I ask myself, am I single-hearted? Have I allowed the complexity of my life and the notifications on my phone to crowd out God’s presence and drown out His still, small voice?

*In the quiet, Lord, I turn my heart towards You. I still myself and listen.*

Pause and pray

*God, I pray for Your servants in distant places, those living in inhospitable environments, and facing insurmountable challenges. Would You be their peace? May they know what it is to rest in Your presence. I think of someone I know and name them before You now.*

Pause and pray

Yield

In her book, *A Very Present Help*, Amy Carmichael wrote of God’s tests:

*‘The tests are always unexpected things, not great things that can be written up, but the common little rubs of life, silly little nothings, things you are ashamed of minding one scrap.’\*\**

\*\*Amy Carmichael, *A Very Present Help*, Compiled by Judith Couchman (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 1996).

Amy’s life was characterized by some big ‘yeses.’ She said yes to a life of singleness, yes to leaving her homeland and family and serving in a culture completely different to her own, and yes to the risky work of rescuing the vulnerable from sexual slavery. But here she emphasizes not the big yeses but the small ones. The ‘common little rubs of life’; the ‘silly little nothings.’ The decisions about the seemingly small and mundane – these are yeses that matter.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*God, I yield to You my preferences and those things to which I feel entitled. Help me say the smaller yeses to You, as well as the bigger ones, to endure hardships both large and small, as a faithful soldier for Christ.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Isaiah:

*[He] will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast,  
because they trust in [Him].*

*Isaiah 26:3 (NIV UK)*

#### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 19 2023 (click for audio)

### *Jesus' Anger*

Today is Thursday the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week we are exploring the humanity of Jesus displayed in the Gospels.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's mercy today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 30...

*Sing to the LORD, all you godly ones!*

*Praise his holy name.*

*For his anger lasts only a moment,*

*but his favor lasts a lifetime!*

*Weeping may last through the night,*

*but joy comes with the morning.*

*Psalm 30:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Jesus is teaching at the Temple and the Pharisees and other religious groups have been doing their best to outsmart or undermine Him. After answering their questions, Jesus turns to the crowd and makes His feelings known...

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.*

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."*

*Matthew 23:25-28 (ESV UK)*

This isn't a smiley, happy Jesus. This is a disappointed, possibly angry Jesus, publicly berating respected religious figures. But why? What is it that's got under Jesus' skin? The beginning of Matthew

chapter 23 gives me a clue: the Pharisees love telling others how they should live. They set themselves up as experts in God's law. But take a close look at their lives and it becomes clear: they don't practice what they preach.

Ask

Jesus' words make me uncomfortable. Is there anything in His critique of the Pharisees that hits a little too close to home in my life and faith? Am I practicing what I preach?

Pause and pray

It's not easy to be a Christian leader (James 3:1), so today I take time to pray for the leaders in my community.

*God, help them to draw even closer to You, and to grow continually in integrity and love.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.*

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."*

*Matthew 23:25-28 (ESV UK)*

When Jesus faced the popular and well-respected Pharisees, he didn't flinch from the truth, or fail to bring correction when warranted. How do I respond to influential people? Am I willing to be like Jesus and speak truth, even to powerful people?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Jesus, I want to live with integrity, but I can sometimes be more concerned with keeping up appearances. I receive Your challenge to live differently today.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Matthew's Gospel:

*...those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.*

*Matthew 23:12 (NIV UK)*

#### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 20 2023 (click for audio)

### *Jesus' Sorrow*

Today is Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> of January, and this month we are starting the new year by fixing our eyes on Jesus. This week we're reflecting on how the Gospels displayed Jesus' humanity.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's compassion today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 6...

*I am worn out from sobbing.  
All night I flood my bed with weeping,  
drenching it with my tears.  
My vision is blurred by grief...  
The LORD has heard my plea;  
the LORD will answer my prayer.*  
Psalm 6:6-7a,9 (NLT)

Pause and pray

Today I reflect on Jesus' tears. Lazarus, his friend, has died. As Jesus encounters Lazarus' grieving sister, I notice His response...

*Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"*

*John 11:32-36 (ESV UK)*

John's Gospel tells me that Jesus knew exactly what He was doing. He knew he would arrive too late to heal His friend. And Jesus also knew that God was about to give Lazarus a second chance at life (John 11:4, 11)! So it begs the question, what brought Jesus to tears?

Maybe it was because Jesus chose not to rush ahead to the miracle, but instead He took the time to listen to His friends and allowed Himself to be affected by their grief.

Ask

Jesus is listening to me right now. If I'm honest, how am I doing? Am I content, depressed, enthused, stressed, grieving, or something else? Like Mary, I take a moment to share how I'm feeling...

Pause and pray

I think of someone I know who is grieving, maybe they're facing the new year without someone they loved and have lost.

*Jesus, meet with them and join them in their tears. Help me to resist the easy platitudes and instead to weep with them (ROM 12:15)*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage I listen for a particular word or phrase that the Holy Spirit is highlighting to me today...

*Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"*

*John 11:32-36 (ESV UK)*

What word or phrase jumped out at me from these verses?

I am struck by the response, 'See how he loved him!' The love of Jesus looks like tears staining His cheeks. It looks like His arms stretched wide as He exchanged His life for mine. And it looks like grave clothes abandoned in an empty tomb – resurrection life for each and every one of His friends.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Jesus, I am stunned by the depth of Your love. Today I imitate Mary; I get on my knees before You and worship You as the Lord of my life.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in 1 Peter:

*The God of all grace, who called [me] to his eternal glory in Christ, after [I] have suffered a little while, will himself restore [me] and make [me] strong, firm and steadfast.*

*1 Peter 5:10 (NIV UK)*

#### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 21 2023 (click for audio)

### *Jesus' Playfulness*

Today is Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> of January, and it's the last day this week that we will fix our eyes on Jesus by exploring His humanity displayed in the Gospels.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Pause and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's creative power today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 89

*The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours;  
everything in the world is yours – you created it all.  
You created north and south.  
Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon praise your name.  
Powerful is your arm!  
Strong is your hand!  
Your right hand is lifted high in glorious strength.  
Psalm 89:11-13 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

This week I have noticed Jesus' hunger, ambition, anger and sorrow. Today I reflect on Jesus' creativity...

*"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell, and great was the fall of it."*

*And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. Matthew 7:24-29 (ESV UK)*

Jesus' story seems ridiculous from a modern perspective, but in a time without diggers or cement mixers, middle eastern builders had to dig down through clay soil until they found bedrock on which to build securely. In summer the clay was hard and compact, so the lazy might convince themselves that it was stable. But when the winter rains came and the soil was soaked, only those who had kept digging until they found a truly firm foundation could weather the storms."\*

\*Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* (London: SPCK, 2008), pp. 322-324.

Ask

Until a storm arrives, it's hard to notice where my life is built on something other than the foundation of Jesus.

*Holy Spirit, I don't want to wait for disaster to arrive. Show me the things I have foolishly put my trust in.*

Pause and pray

Jesus may have been speaking metaphorically but today, Habitat for Humanity reports that 1.8 billion people don't have adequate homes.\*\*

\*\*<https://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk> (accessed 29.11.2022).

*Lord, I ask You to empower and mobilize governments, NGOs, and local communities to provide safe and secure housing for the most vulnerable.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."*

*And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.*

*Matthew 7:24-29 (ESV UK)*

There were simpler ways for Jesus to make His point, but at the end of His famous teaching series – the Sermon on the Mount – He deliberately chose to tell this funny little story about two homeowners. I can imagine the smile on Jesus' face and the chuckle from His audience as the story reached its climax. It's so memorable and evocative that it's told repeatedly today and has even inspired children's songs (with actions).

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Jesus, I love Your playfulness and imagination. Sometimes I choose efficiency over creativity. Today, help me to communicate Your life and love to others in a fresh and creative way.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Isaiah:

*'See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone,  
a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation;  
the one who relies on it  
will never be stricken with panic.'*  
Isaiah 28:16 (NIV UK)

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 22 2023 (click for audio)

*A Sabbath Jesus Prayer*

It's Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January. This week we've been meditating on Jesus' life in the Gospels. Today, on this Sabbath day of rest, we take a break from our usual P.R.A.Y. patterns to pray a little differently.

Author Wayne Muller reminds me that,

*'Sabbath time is set apart for remembering the holiness of life. If we speed up and saturate ourselves with accomplishment and worry, we may defile what is sacred with our mindlessness. Time is the key. Time, and attention.'\**

\* Wayne Muller, Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal and Delight in our Busy Lives,(New York: Bantam, 2000), p.196

And so, I begin by welcoming the Spirit, and giving Jesus my full attention.

Pause and pray

In Mark's Gospel I read about a man who caught Jesus' attention...

*As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus ... was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. 'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him.*

*Mark 10:46-51 (NIV UK)*

I imagine myself as Bartimaeus waiting in a crowded street. I spot Jesus through the throng and, desperate for His attention, I repeat over and over again:

*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*

Pause and pray

I see Jesus turn, He's looking for me! Our eyes meet, the noise of the street fades into the background. I'm no longer aware of the crowds, I'm only aware of Jesus. Time stops, He has my full attention. He calls me to join Him and, as I approach, He asks, 'What do you want me to do for you?' I share with Jesus the thing I most desperately want and pray...

*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*

Pause and pray

*Father, open my eyes to the people in my community who go unseen and unheard by all but You. Show me who You notice; I want to give them my attention today.*

*Jesus, teach the Church to pray with the passion and persistence of Bartimaeus. We tire easily. Help us not to give up but to cry out again and again and again for Your intervention in our world.*

Holy Spirit, as the Church gathers across the globe today, help us fix 'our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith' (Heb. 12:2, NIVUK). Interrupt our plans, our preaches and our programs; we give You our full attention.

And now I root these big prayers in my community by naming someone I know who doesn't yet know Jesus. Father, draw them to Your Son.

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.\*\*

Amen.

\*\*Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, [petegreig.info](http://petegreig.info)

## January 23 2023 (click for audio)

*Jesus Is Alive*

Today is Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January and we are continuing our series, fixing our eyes on Jesus at the start of a new year. This week we are reflecting on the resurrection of Jesus.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today in God's grand plan for salvation, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 68...

*Praise the Lord; praise God our savior!  
For each day he carries us in his arms.  
Our God is a God who saves!  
The Sovereign LORD rescues us from death.  
Psalm 68:19-20 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, I am reflecting on Matthew's account of what happened just two days after Jesus had been crucified...

*Now after the Sabbath, towards the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay."*

*Matthew 28:1-6 (ESV UK)*

Jesus had died on a Friday, just before the Sabbath began – burial could not take place on the Sabbath, and so he was buried in a hurry. The women prepared spices to anoint Jesus' body, and they prepared their hearts to quietly grieve and mourn. However, the two Marys were completely unprepared for what they found when they arrived at the tomb on Sunday morning... the ground was shaking, the

guards were terrified, and an angel that looked like lightning told them that something impossible had happened!

‘The Christian life begins here,’ writes Eugene Peterson, ‘a community... gathered at the place of impossibility, the tomb.’\*

\* Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*(London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2005), p. 230.

Ask

When I hear that phrase - ‘gathered at the place of impossibility’ - what comes into my mind? What feels impossible to me right now?

*Lord God, help me to remember that I am following the one who was dead but is now (and forever) alive. Nothing is impossible for You.*

Pause and pray

Like the two Marys, people often look for Jesus in the wrong places.

*Lord Jesus, I name those I know who are searching for You right now, and especially those who don’t realize that it’s You they’re really searching for. May they find You – the risen Jesus.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*Now after the Sabbath, towards the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.”*

*Matthew 28:1-6 (ESV UK)*

‘The God who remained apparently silent on Good Friday is having the last word,’ says the author and theologian, NT Wright. ‘And what God is doing is not just an extraordinary miracle, a display of supernatural power for its own sake, or a favor to Jesus. What God is doing is starting something new, beginning the new world promised long ago.’\*\* \*\* NT Wright, *Matthew For Everyone*(Part 2), (London: SPCK, 2002), p. 198.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord Jesus, You are alive! You were resurrected, and You are the resurrection. I yield to the impossibility and the mystery of the resurrection life that You offer to me.*

#### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John's gospel:

*'I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.'*  
*John 11:25 (NLT)*

#### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## January 24 2023 (click for audio)

### *Receive The Holy Spirit*

Today is Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week we are reflecting on the resurrection of Jesus. Together we will pray (P.R.A.Y.) very simply each day – ‘P’: PAUSING to be still. ‘R’: REJOICING with a Psalm and REFLECTING on a Scripture. ‘A’: ASKING God to help us and others and ‘Y’: YIELDING to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice that God provides what I need today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 29...

*The LORD rules over the floodwaters.*

*The LORD reigns as king forever.*

*The LORD gives his people strength.*

*The LORD blesses them with peace.*

*Psalm 29:10-11 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Mary Magdalene has told everyone about her encounter with the risen Jesus, but the disciples are confused and afraid as they meet later that evening. I imagine myself in the room with them...

*On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”*

*John 20:19-22 (ESV UK)*

As Jesus says, ‘Peace be with you!’, I become aware of how much I need peace and wholeness. I carry all sorts of fears and insecurities which stop me from being myself and from giving the best of myself to others.

As Jesus reveals the scars in His hands and His side, I become aware of the scars that I carry too, the ones on the inside as well as the ones on the outside.

Resurrection life is for 'scarred people and scared people', writes Brian McLaren. 'When we come together as we are, we begin to rise again, to believe again, to hope again, to live again.'\*\* Brian McLaren, *We Make The Road By Walking*(London: Hodder & Stoughton (2014), p. 214.

Ask

As I continue to imagine myself in the room with Jesus, what am I most aware of? Something that I feel scared about? A particular scar that I am carrying?

As I bring this to Jesus, I notice the warmth in His eyes, and the smile on His face as He breathes on me and says, 'Peace be with you. Receive the Holy Spirit.'

Pause and pray

At a time when every online image is edited and airbrushed to make people look a particular way, it can be hard for those who carry visible scars or, for that matter, anything about them that they feel is 'different'.

*And so, Lord Jesus, I pray for those who are struggling to love themselves as they look in the mirror today. I ask that, somehow, they would see themselves with the warmth and the love that You see them.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*

*John 20:19-22, (ESV UK)*

In chapters 13 to 17 of John's Gospel, Jesus says two things over and over again. First, He tells the disciples that He is leaving them, and second that the Holy Spirit is coming. In fact, Jesus says that it's good that He goes, because only then will the Holy Spirit come to them (John 16:7).

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord Jesus, You are alive! I yield to You, and I receive Your breath – the Holy Spirit – into every part of my life.*

#### **Yielding Promise**

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John's Gospel:

*"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide [me] into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to [me] the things that are to come."*

*John 16:13 (ESV UK)*

#### **Closing Prayer**

Father, help me to live this day to the full,

being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,

being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost,

proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## January 25 2023 (click for audio)

### *Jesus Appears To Many*

Today is Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of January and we are continuing our series, fixing our eyes on Jesus at the start of a new year. This week we are reflecting on the resurrection of Jesus.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today that God's name will be known, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 138...

*Every king in all the earth will thank you, LORD,  
for all of them will hear your words.  
Yes, they will sing about the LORD's ways,  
for the glory of the LORD is very great.  
Psalm 138:4-5 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, I am reflecting on some verses from the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Corinth in which he lists the many occasions that Jesus appeared to people after His death and resurrection...

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.*

*1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (ESV UK)*

I can hear the urgency and the effort in Paul's words. It's like he's saying, 'Look, I'm not making this up! Jesus' resurrection isn't fake news! He appeared to a lot of us! He even appeared to me!'

A little later he claims that 'if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world' (1 Corinthians 15:19, NLT). If the resurrection of Jesus didn't happen, it's no exaggeration to say that nothing else really matters.

Ask

What difference does Jesus' resurrection make to my life?

*Lord Jesus, help me to live this day to the full... to experience just a little more of the resurrection life that You have given to me.*

Pause and pray

I noticed in today's Bible passage that Paul repeatedly used the phrase 'he appeared to...'

*Lord Jesus, I think of the places around the world where there are few, if any, churches, and where there are no Bibles in the local languages yet. I pray that You would appear to people... in dreams and visions and in other miraculous prays.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.*

*1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (ESV UK)*

Paul makes it clear that the resurrection of Jesus changes everything. C.S. Lewis puts it like this:

The New Testament writers speak as if Christ's achievement in rising from the dead was the first event of its kind in the whole history of the universe. He is the 'first fruits,' the 'pioneer of life.' He has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought, and beaten the King of Death. Everything is different because He has done so. This is the beginning of the New Creation: a new chapter in cosmic history has been opened.\*

\* C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: HarperCollins, 1947), pp. 236-237.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord Jesus, You are alive! And You have given me a new life too! I don't think I understand even a tiny percentage of what it means to live the resurrection life that You have given to me, but I want to, and so I yield myself wholeheartedly to You once again.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John's Gospel that:

*[He has] come that [I] may have life, and have it to the full.*  
John 10:10 (NIV UK)

#### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 26 2023 (click for audio)

### *Jesus Commissions*

Today is Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup> of January and we are continuing our series, fixing our eyes on Jesus at the start of a new year. This week we are reflecting on the resurrection of Jesus.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's presence with me today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 121...

*I look up to the mountains—  
does my help come from there?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth!  
Psalm 121:1-2 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, I am reflecting on the final occasion that the risen Jesus appeared to his disciples before returning to be with His Father...

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

*Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV UK)*

Throughout the Bible, mountains are places of encounter and commissioning. After his ark came to rest on Mount Ararat, Noah's family were commissioned by God to be fruitful and fill the whole earth (Genesis 8). It was on Mount Sinai that Moses received the Ten Commandments, and it was on Mount Horeb that the prophet Elijah received his recommissioning from God after fleeing in fear from Jezebel (1 Kings 19). And it was on another mountainside that the Devil himself made Jesus an offer – the kingdoms of the earth in return for His devotion (Matthew 4).

Jesus refused, choosing a different, more difficult path, which ultimately led to the moment He stood on the mountainside and commissioned His disciples, declaring that all authority had been given to Him by His Father.

Ask

How am I responding to Jesus' commission to 'Go and make disciples'? Who am I reaching out to with good news of Jesus in some way?

I take a few moments to pray specifically for those who come to mind.

Pause and pray

Who do I know that is serving Jesus in a nation other than their own?

*Lord Jesus, I pray for them now. Comfort them whenever they feel far from home and those they love. Give them the strength and the resources that they need to keep going. And open doors of opportunity for them to tell others about You, and to make disciples.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

*Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV UK)*

I imagine myself on the mountainside with the disciples, watching Jesus and listening to what He has to say. Am I one of those feeling doubt? Am I still afraid? How do I feel when Jesus calls me to go and make disciples?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord Jesus, You are alive! Thank You for calling me, even though I sometimes have doubts, and I'm afraid at other times too. Thank You for promising to be with me, to the very end of the age. I yield – I say yes – once again to Your calling, Your commissioning.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Isaiah 41:

*Don't be afraid, for I am with you.  
Don't be discouraged, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you.  
Isaiah 41:10a (NLT)*

#### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 27 2023 (click for audio)

*Jesus Intercedes*

Today is Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, and this week we are reflecting on the resurrection of Jesus.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice today that God saves me, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 18...

*I love you, LORD;  
you are my strength.  
The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;  
my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.  
He is my shield, the power that saves me,  
and my place of safety.  
Psalm 18:1-2 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Today, I am reflecting on what the Apostle Paul tells me the resurrected Jesus is doing right now...

*If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died - more than that, who was raised - who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Romans 8:31b-34 (ESV UK)*

What an incredible thought... the resurrected Jesus is praying and interceding for me. And John's Gospel gives me some insights into what Jesus may be praying about: that God will protect me with His power (17:11), that I will be united with others (17:11), that I will be filled with joy (17:13), that even though I may experience trouble, I will be kept safe from the evil one (17:15), that I will be made holy (17:17), that God will teach me (17:17), and that I will be 'in and with God' (17:21).

Ask

I wonder what Jesus is praying and interceding for me today? Maybe something from John's list, or something else?

*Lord Jesus, You know me better than I know myself – what do You think I need? I want to join my prayers with Yours.*

Pause and pray

Jesus prayed that those who believe in Him would be one, just as He and the Father are one.

*Lord Jesus, I pray for those who believe in You – Your Church around the world. Forgive us for trying to win arguments instead of winning people. Help us to remember that we are all part of one body. Help us to love one another in such a way that the world sees You amongst Us.*

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to Paul's letter to the church in Rome, I imagine that I am reading it for the very first time. I realize that whenever Paul writes about 'us', he is writing about 'me', and so I listen carefully for a word or phrase that the Holy Spirit might want to particularly bring alive to me today.

*If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died - more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Romans 8:31b-34 (ESV UK)*

What word or phrase stood out to me today?

'If God is for me, who can be against me?' This doesn't, of course, mean that everything is going to go my way. I will stumble and fall. I will struggle and suffer. Jesus even promises that 'in this world [I] will have trouble'. 'But take heart,' He adds, 'for I have overcome the world' (John 16:33). When everything is said and done, it's going to be OK.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord Jesus, You are alive! So much of what I pray for myself is temporary – the things that I think I need – but You know what I really need. I yield myself to Your priorities - to whatever You are praying for me right now.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in John 3:

*...that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.  
John 3:16b (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 28 2023 (click for audio)

*Thomas Aquinas, Hero of Learning*

Today is Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, feast of the theologian and priest, Thomas Aquinas, who was born in the year 1225. On Feast Days we pause from our usual rhythms to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: prayer and creativity, justice and hospitality, learning and mission. Today therefore we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of the medieval scholar known as 'The Angelic Doctor', Thomas Aquinas, a hugely influential hero of learning.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly; to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Holy Spirit, my teacher, as I look to You today, would You awaken my heart, expand my mind and shape my identity anew.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's unfailing love and faithfulness today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 117...

*Praise the Lord, all you nations.  
Praise him, all you people of the earth.  
For his unfailing love for us is powerful;  
the Lord's faithfulness endures forever.  
Psalm 117:1-2 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Thomas Aquinas was the youngest son of a wealthy Italian family. He was educated by Benedictine monks from an early age, and his family hoped he would eventually become one himself. But when he was nineteen, Thomas decided to join a monastic order called the Dominicans instead. This relatively new community impressed Thomas with their intellectual depth and openness, but his family were so upset they imprisoned him in a castle for a year before finally letting him pursue his sense of calling!

Today he is recognized as perhaps the greatest of the philosopher-theologians of the Middle Ages and the most influential thinker of his time. Thomas taught that reason can lead us to believe in God, but only revelation can show us God as He really is.

Thomas Aquinas wrote:

*Three things are necessary for the salvation of man: to know what he ought to believe, to know what he ought to desire, and to know what he ought to do.*

For Aquinas, neither right beliefs nor right actions alone were enough. Rather, it is the transformation of our desires – the inner orientation of our hearts – along with right belief and action, that demonstrate the life of God within us.

Ask

*God, reveal Yourself to me the way You really are. I invite You not only to change my mind, but also my affections and my actions. In this time of quiet, I invite You to renew me again today.*

Pause and pray

Who around me struggles to line up head, heart, and hands? I pray for them now. God, would you help us to give our lives wholly to you, in mind, heart, and action.

Pause and pray

Yield

In 1273, after years of study and teaching at the University of Paris, and later in Naples, the story goes that one day, as Thomas lingered in prayer, with tears, before an icon of the crucified Christ, the Lord spoke to him. ‘You have written well of me, Thomas. What reward would you have for your labor?’ Thomas responded, ‘Nothing but you, Lord.’\*

\* G.K. Chesterton, ‘Essay on St. Thomas Aquinas’, The Spectator, 27 February 1932.

Aquinas is famous for saying, ‘The things we love tell us what we are.’

In the quiet, I wonder, what things are foremost in my heart? What do I most truly love?

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*God, I hold the things I love before You. I thank You for every good gift You have placed in my life, and I receive them with joy. And God, I give them all back to You. May they take their rightful place in my affections.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Romans:

*‘Hope does not put [me] to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into [my] heart through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to [me].’*

*Romans 5:5 (NIV UK)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.

## January 29 2023 (click for audio)

*A Sabbath Jesus Prayer*

It's Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> of January. This week we've been reflecting on the resurrection of Jesus. Today, on this Sabbath day of rest, we take a break from our usual P.R.A.Y. patterns to pray a little differently.

Author Wayne Muller reminds me that,

*'Sabbath time is set apart for remembering the holiness of life. If we speed up and saturate ourselves with accomplishment and worry, we may defile what is sacred with our mindlessness. Time is the key. Time, and attention.'*\*

\* Wayne Muller, Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal and Delight in our Busy Lives, (New York: Bantam, 2000), p. 196.

And so, I begin by welcoming the Spirit, and giving Jesus my full attention.

Pause and pray

In Mark's Gospel I read about a man who caught Jesus' attention...

*As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus ... was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'*

*Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.'*

*So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.*

*'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him.*

*Mark 10:46-51 (NIV UK)*

I imagine myself as Bartimaeus waiting in a crowded street. I hear Jesus through the throng and, desperate for His attention, I repeat over and over again:

*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*

Pause and pray

I can hear a change in the commotion – Jesus has stopped! People begin to call to me, all around me, nudging me to tell me that Jesus has turned towards me and wants me to come towards him. The noise of the street fades into the background. I'm no longer aware of the crowds, I'm only aware of Jesus. Time stops, He has my full attention. He calls me to join Him and, as I approach, He asks, 'What do you want me to do for you?' I share with Jesus the thing I most desperately want and pray...

*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.*

Pause and pray

*Father, open my eyes to the people in my community who go unseen and unheard by all but You. Show me who You notice; I want to give them my attention today.*

*Jesus, teach the Church to pray with the passion and persistence of Bartimaeus. We tire easily. Help us not to give up but to cry out again and again and again for Your intervention in our world.*

Holy Spirit, as the Church gathers across the globe today, help us to fix 'our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith' (Heb. 12:2, NIVUK). Interrupt our plans, our preaches and our programs; we give You our full attention.

And now I root these big prayers in my community by naming someone I know who doesn't yet know Jesus. Father, draw them to Your Son.

Pause and pray

Sabbath Blessing

May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home.

May God's image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied.

May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down.

May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness.

May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come.\*\*

Amen.

\*\* Pete Greig, Sabbath Blessing, [petegreig.info](http://petegreig.info)

## January 30 2023 (click for audio)

*Jesus in the Future*

Today is Monday the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, feast of the author and civilrights leader Coretta Scott King who died on this day in 2006. On Feast Days we pause from our usual rhythms to celebrate the stories and learn from the lives of heroes of faith, whose collective witness embodies our six practices at the heart of Lectio 365. These are: prayer and creativity, justice and hospitality, learning and mission. Today therefore we are thanking God for the extraordinary example of Coretta Scott King, a fearless hero of creativity and justice and 'First Lady of the American Civil Rights Movement'.

Pause

As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

Father God, open my eyes, stir my heart and teach me how 'to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with...' You today(Micah 6:8).

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's justice today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 9...

*...the LORD reigns forever, executing judgment from his throne.*

*He will judge the world with justice and rule the nations with fairness.*

*The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.*

*Psalm 9:7-9 (NLT)*

Pause and pray

Born in Alabama in 1927, and raised in that deeply divided and racially segregated Southern state, Coretta Scott, a talented singer and musician, became active in the emerging civil rights movement while in college in Ohio. Later she won a scholarship to the New England Conservatory of music in Boston, where she met the man who would become her husband, Martin Luther King Jr.

Scott married the charismatic young minister, who had accepted an invitation to become pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. There they were thrust into the heart of the protest movement. Meanwhile, Coretta continued to use her music to spread the civil rights story. She later wrote,

*We found ourselves in the middle of the Montgomery bus boycott ... As the boycott continued, I had a growing sense that I was involved in something so much greater than myself, something of profound historic importance. I came to the realization that we had been thrust into the forefront of a movement to liberate oppressed people, not only in Montgomery but also*

*throughout our country, and this movement had worldwide implications. I felt blessed to have been called to be a part of such a noble and historic cause.\**

\*<https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/this-week-in-history-coretta-scott-king-born-in-1927/>

Ask

As a Jesus follower, I know I am called to do the work of God's kingdom. But is there a specific 'noble cause' which God might be calling me to join?

Pause and pray

*Lord, I pray for those who today, in my country, are working tirelessly to liberate oppressed people and bring about justice for those to whom justice has been denied.*

Pause and pray

Yield

Martin Luther King Jr wrote in his autobiography, 'My wife was always stronger than I was through the struggle.' After his assassination, Coretta Scott King continued to be a fearless and passionate activist for civil rights. She was also the driving force behind the campaign to mark Dr Martin Luther King Day as a US federal holiday, which was finally signed into law in 1983.

'I'm fulfilled in what I do,' she wrote, 'I never thought that a lot of money or fine clothes – the finer things of life – would make you happy. My concept of happiness is to be filled in a spiritual sense.'\*\*

\*\*<https://www.thoughtco.com/coretta-scott-king-quotes-3530056>

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Lord, I yield to Your best purpose for my life. May I never be side-tracked by the allure of comfort, but rather find fulfillment in making a difference in the lives of other people. Help me change someone's life for the better today.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in the Psalms:

*I will fulfill my purpose for you. Adapted from Psalm 138:8 (NRSVA)*

Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen.

## January 31 2023 (click for audio)

*Jesus: Exalted*

Today is Tuesday the 31<sup>st</sup> of January. This week we're exploring what the Bible says about Jesus in the future. Together we will pray (P.R.A.Y.) very simply each day – 'P': PAUSING to be still. 'R': REJOICING with a Psalm and REFLECTING on a Scripture. 'A': ASKING God to help us and others and 'Y': YIELDING to His will in our lives, come what may.

Pause

And so, as I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-center my scattered senses upon the presence of God.

Pause and pray

Prayer of Approach

*Jesus, in this new season, I invite You to shape my life and set the direction of my year. I listen to Your word; I long to imitate Your works and I welcome Your Spirit as I fix my eyes on You.*

Rejoice and Reflect

I choose to rejoice in God's glory and care today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the words of Psalm 138:

*Though the LORD is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly;  
though lofty, he sees them from afar. Psalm 138:6 (NIV UK)*

Pause and pray

Today I'm reflecting on how Paul describes the resurrected Jesus. In this beautiful letter, he has just celebrated the extraordinary humility of Jesus...

*Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*  
*Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV UK)*

From His lowly birth in a stable to His criminal's death on a cross, Jesus' life on earth is marked with striking humility.

As He makes Himself a servant and is laid low into the grave, God's response is to raise Him up: out of the grave and over every throne and nation in heaven and on earth.

In Jesus I see the upside-down, counter-intuitive pathway to flourishing in the Kingdom: that the way up is down, and the pathway to honor is humility.

Ask

In Luke 18:14, Jesus says: 'For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.'

*In a world of self-promotion, God, how might I follow in the upside-down footsteps of Jesus and pursue humility rather than applause today?*

Pause and pray

This passage reminds me that one day every knee will bow in the presence of the exalted Christ. I think now of those in my life who don't yet follow Jesus.

Getting onto my knees now, if I'm able, or taking this moment to look at my knees as I pray, I think of those loved ones meeting Jesus, and pray that their hearts would be turned toward Him.

Pause and pray

Yield

As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your word, and my heart to yield to Your will once again.

*Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

*Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV UK)*

How do I feel at the mention of the name Jesus?

As I take a moment to name and worship the exalted Christ Jesus, I picture His hands and see tattooed on His palm my name.

The name that is above every name carries my name in His heart and on His hands.

Pause and pray

Yielding Prayer

*Jesus Christ, name above every name, I celebrate that my name and my life are hidden in You, and rest once again in the shadow of the Almighty. I resist the temptation to try and 'make a name for myself'.*

*Lowly and exalted Christ, teach me to walk in Your footsteps, choosing to tread the path of the meek and the humble.*

Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Isaiah:

*See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands*

*Isaiah 49:16 (NIV UK)*

### Closing Prayer

Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.  
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.  
Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.  
Amen.