

# LENTEN

## devotionals

### ASH WEDNESDAY

**FEBRUARY 17**

Today is Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is the gateway into the season of Lent. Lent is our annual journey with Jesus towards a deeper relationship through the cross and into resurrection life.

*Take a moment to pause and breath in and out slowly.*

*Intentionally.*

*Rest in and welcome God's grace-filled presence.*

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**When you think of Lent what comes to mind? What experience with Lent do you have? What questions or hopes do you have as we enter into this annual journey with Jesus toward the cross?**

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In many ways, Lent is an interruption. It's an interruption to the many distractions and responsibilities that fill the normal rhythms of our lives. Yet, when welcomed and embraced, Lent is an interruption that enables us to reflect on our lives in ways that help focus our attention by remembering how Jesus interrupted this world through His life, death and resurrection so that we may have new life.

In the past, you may have approached Lent out of ritual or duty.

*Search me, O God,  
and know my heart;  
test me and know my  
anxious thoughts.  
Point out anything in  
me that offends you,  
and lead me along the  
path of everlasting life.*

Psalm 139:23-24, NLT

This year we invite you to enter into Lent in pursuit of relationship.

This 40-day journey offers us a powerful way to create space to reflect on our relationship with Jesus so we can recognize and release anything in our lives that hinders God's transforming grace.

During this season of Lent, we will reflect on God's circles of commitment to us, known in the Scriptures as covenants.

These covenants reveal how God has continually pursued us to interrupt our distracted and unfaithful lives, so we may continue to be blessed to be a blessing.

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**When you hear that God is in pursuit of us what comes to mind? Is it comforting? Frightening? Hopeful? Unbelievable?**

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At the beginning of our Lenten Journey, we offer a prayer of invitation for God's transforming presence.

As you prepare your heart and mind to reflect and pray this invitation, do so with the knowledge that, in this moment, God is offering an open, loving hand of commitment to you.

**Read Psalm 139:23-24 (left)**

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**How are your thoughts right now? Anxious? Peaceful? Indifferent? Why?**

**When you heard "Point out anything in me that offends you," what entered your mind? What are you willing to do about it? Do you need to reach out for help to continue moving toward God?**

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As you hear this Scripture again, pay attention to any resistance to this invitation—allowing God access to those things you have hidden.

**Read Psalm 139:23-24 again**

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**In these final moments today, talk to Jesus about what comes to the forefront of your mind and heart when you offer this prayer of invitation.**

**Ask Jesus for the faith and willingness to turn over those things that have hindered your relationship.**

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**Lord Jesus, search us,  
and know our hearts;  
test us and know  
our anxious thoughts.  
Point out in us anything  
that offends you,  
and lead us along  
the path of everlasting life.  
Amen.**