

Lent
DEVOTIONAL

PAUSE, REFLECT, AND JOURNEY
THROUGH LENT TOGETHER.

WEEKLY CONVERSATION ROOTED IN THE SCRIPTURE OF JOHN



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EXPERIENCE THE SEASON OF LENT WEEKLY ROOTED IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

Welcome to this Lenten journey. Whether you've observed Lent for decades or this is your first time intentionally stepping into these forty days, I'm glad you're here.

Lent is often associated with "giving things up," but the heart of this season isn't about denying oneself but more of living into the best parts of who God created us to be. Lent is a dedicated time to think and reflect on your life...to be intentional about slowing down and reading scripture and reflecting. It's my belief that this kind of prayer allows us to listen to the voice of God rather than speaking.

To get the most out of this devotional, here is a simple guide on how to integrate it into your daily rhythm.

I'm so grateful you're on this journey.

Blessings,
Bryan Rezen

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

1. Create a "Sacred Space"

You don't need to be at church; a quiet corner with a comfortable chair will do. Try to be consistent about the time and place. Engage with the reading at the same time each day to build a spiritual habit.

2. The Daily Rhythm

Each entry is designed to be brief but deep. I suggest following this three-step flow:

- **Read:** Slowly read the scripture passage and reflect, then reread. Don't rush to make sense of it, let the words sit with you.
- **Reflect:** Every day includes a reflection question. These are designed to move the message from your head to your life.
- **Respond:** Close with a time of silence focusing on your breath. Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God."

3. Grace, Not Perfection

If you miss a day (or three), don't feel the need to "catch up" by power-reading five entries at once. Simply start on the current day. This isn't a task to be completed; it's a type of prayer that needs to be nurtured.

MEET THE WRITERS

Pastor Bryan Rezen:

Bryan is the Pastor of Discipleship here at Good Shepherd. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from Friends University in Organizational Management and Leadership and a Master's Degree from Saint Paul School of Theology. He loves to read and talk about books and a special love for the scriptures. He is happily married to his wife Tara of 30+ years and they have two adult children.

Leanne Wasleski:

Leanne has called Good Shepherd home for 16 years. She has an associates in Paralegal Studies from Penn Valley Community College, a Bachelors in Communications from Southern New Hampshire University and a Masters of Divinity from Saint Paul School of Theology. She is a former Governing Board Chair at Good Shepherd, she presently serves on the Hospitality Team and in Children's and Youth Ministry. Leanne has twins who are currently seniors at Staley High School. She loves books, Lego, and karaoke.

Steve Girard:

Steve has made Good Shepherd his church home for the past 5 years. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Advanced Political Theory from the University of Missouri and a Masters of Arts Degree in Christian Education from the Nazarene Theological Seminary with Faith Development as his area of concentration. He finds great satisfaction in helping adults navigate their Spiritual development regardless of their life stage. He has created and presented Adult level classes and presentations at Good Shepherd. Steve and his wife Pam will celebrate their 47th wedding anniversary this summer.

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COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 1

Authored by: Bryan Rezen

THE VOICE OF THE GREAT "I AM"

In the Gospel of John, Jesus does not merely offer advice; He offers Himself. Through seven "I Am" statements, Jesus uses the language of self-revelation to bridge the gap between the ancient holiness of Sinai (the mountain where God revealed the 10 Commandments to Moses) and the immediate needs of the human heart.

THE SCANDAL OF THE NAME

To the New Testament audience, these were not poetic metaphors—they were explosive claims. When Jesus uttered "I Am," He was intentionally echoing Exodus 3:14, where God revealed His name to Moses as YHWH.

To a first-century Jew, the divine name was unspeakable (when reading a passage from the Torah the priest would pause with one breath when coming to the word YHWH). By claiming it, Jesus was doing more than using a title; He was asserting that the God of Abraham was now standing in their presence, wearing human flesh. This is why His listeners often reached for stones to kill him as they recognized His claim to divinity and, without the lens of the resurrection, viewed it as the ultimate blasphemy.

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 1

MORE THAN A DEFINITION

Jesus' audience was a people defined by their history with God. When He said, "I am the bread of life" or "I am the good shepherd," He was claiming roles that the Scriptures reserved for God alone.

- Bread: He is the new Manna.
- Shepherd: He is the fulfillment of Psalm 23.
- Light: He is the end of Israel's exile.

A CALL TO LOYALTY

For the early Church, these statements were boundary markers. In a Roman world full of "lords," confessing Jesus as the "I Am" was a radical act of political and spiritual defiance. It meant reordering every loyalty around Him.

Today, these words invite us beyond abstract theology into a personal encounter. Jesus isn't just a teacher of truth; He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is not a resource we use, but the source we inhabit.

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 1

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How have you experienced Jesus as a present, sustaining reality rather than just a historical figure?

Which area of your life is currently being refined by His Light? Is there a "dark corner" of your habits or heart where you are resisting His transforming grace as He leads you toward greater holiness?

How are you personally participating in "seeking the lost" alongside the Shepherd?

DAILY READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: THE WORD AND THE WITNESSES

Monday - John 1:1–18 (The Prologue: The Word made flesh)

Tuesday - John 1:19–51 (John the Baptist and the first disciples)

Wednesday - John 2 (The Wedding at Cana and clearing the Temple)

Thursday - John 3:1–21 (Nicodemus and the new birth)

Friday - John 3:22–36 (John the Baptist's final testimony)

Saturday - John 4:1–42 (The Woman at the Well)

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 2

Authored by: Steve Girard

THE PROMISE OF COMPLETE SATISFACTION

In John 6:35, Jesus declares, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” What a powerful promise for our restless hearts. So often we try to fill our emptiness with achievements, relationships, possessions, or distractions. Yet the hunger always returns. The thirst is never fully quenched.

THE INVITATION

Jesus invites us to something deeper. He doesn't offer temporary relief — He offers Himself. Just as bread sustains the body daily, Christ sustains the soul moment by moment. When we come to Him in faith, prayer, and trust, He nourishes the parts of us that nothing else can reach.

TODAY & FOREVER

Today, notice where you feel spiritually hungry or emotionally drained. Instead of striving harder or reaching for quick fixes, bring that need to Jesus. Sit with Him. Speak honestly in prayer. Open His Word. Receive His presence.

The promise still stands: in Him, we find true satisfaction. Not a life without challenges, but a heart that is continually filled by the Bread of Life.

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 2

A CALLING FOR LIFE

Real life doesn't come from Rome's grain supply, Caesar's power, or temple systems —

It comes from Christ - Who is our Bread of Life.

FINAL THOUGHT

During the Exodus, Manna kept people alive for a day. Jesus gives life that death itself can't take away.

This passage invites us to move from:

- Seeking signs → to trusting the Person
- Wanting bread → to wanting Christ
- Temporary provision → to eternal life

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

This week, how will you strengthen your union with Christ and allow the Bread of Life to nourish you?

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 2

DAILY READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: AUTHORITY AND CONFLICT

Monday - John 4:43–5:15 (Healing at the Pool of Bethesda)

Tuesday - John 5:16–47 (The authority of the Son)

Wednesday - John 6:1–21 (Feeding the 5,000 and walking on water)

Thursday - John 6:22–59 (The Bread of Life discourse)

Friday - John 6:60–71 (Many disciples desert Jesus)

Saturday - John 7:1–31 (Jesus at the Festival of Tabernacles)

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 3

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Authored by: Leanne Wasleski

FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES

When Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world," in John 8, He was standing in the temple court following the Festival of Tabernacles which featured lamps meant to harken back to the pillar of fire that led the people of Israel through the wilderness. It was more than a poetic expression of faith; it was a promise of the enduring truth of God's provision.

WALKING IN DARKNESS

Jesus promises that following Him will mean that one need not walk in darkness. He says this in the presence of religious leaders that are trying to catch Him in misuse of religious teachings. Jesus offers a new testimony that it is in mercy and not in condemnation that they might find God's presence. Jesus didn't placate the religious leaders; He was there to comfort but not to be comfortable.

LIGHT FOR A WORLD IN NEED OF LOVE

In a world too often shaped by fear and uncertainty, the promise of Jesus as Light is not simply metaphorical, it is a real-world call toward love. His light exposes systems that harm the vulnerable, it did then and it does today. Light disrupts illusions and invites transformation. It reminds us that darkness is not final.

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 3

A LIGHT TO SEE BY

Knowing that sometimes it is simpler and safer to exist in shadow, Jesus calls us out into the light that radiates from His love. Jesus is still calling us to live in His light, the same light that guided the Israelites through the wilderness, the same light that challenges you to live not in fear or darkness but in truth, mercy, and love.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How have you experienced Christ's light as a present, guiding reality rather than just a distant spiritual idea?

Which area of your life is being illuminated right now? Is there a place where you are tempted to remain in the shadows rather than step into His truth, mercy, and love?

Where is Christ's light exposing fear, injustice, or illusion around you—and how is He inviting you to become a source of light for others?

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 3

DAILY READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: LIGHT, SIGHT, AND THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Monday - John 7:32–52 (Officers sent to arrest Jesus)

Tuesday - John 8:12–30 (Jesus, the Light of the World)

Wednesday - John 8:31–59 (The truth that sets you free)

Thursday - John 9:1–41 (Healing the man born blind)

Friday - John 10:1–21 (The Good Shepherd)

Saturday - John 10:22–42 (Conflict at the Festival of Dedication)

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 4

I AM THE TRUE VINE

Authored by: Steve Girard

THE BIG PICTURE

In John 15:1–5, Jesus paints a simple yet profound picture: He is the true vine, and we are the branches. At its heart, this passage is an invitation—not to strive harder, but to stay closer.

STAY CONNECTED

Jesus doesn't tell the branches to produce fruit by effort alone. Instead, He emphasizes abiding. A branch does not anxiously force grapes to grow; it simply remains connected to the vine. In the same way, our spiritual vitality flows from our union with Christ. When we drift into self-reliance, we often feel dry, weary, and unproductive. But when we intentionally remain in Him—through prayer, Scripture, worship, and obedience—His life naturally flows through us.

OUR FATHERS ROLE

The Father's role as the gardener is also deeply comforting. Pruning can feel uncomfortable. Seasons of discipline, waiting, or even loss may leave us wondering what God is doing. Yet Jesus reminds us that pruning is purposeful. The Gardener never cuts carelessly; He trims so that we may bear more fruit—more love, more patience, more Christlike character.

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 4

A MOST HUMBLING THOUGHT

Perhaps the most humbling line is this: “Apart from me you can do nothing.” Not little. Not less. Nothing of eternal value. But the good news is equally powerful: with Him, fruitfulness becomes inevitable.

Today, instead of striving to be more productive for God, focus on staying connected to Him. Abide. Remain. Rest in the Vine—and trust the fruit will come in His perfect time.

REFLECTION QUESTION

This week, how will you strengthen your union with Christ and abide more deeply?

DAILY READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: LIFE, DEATH AND THE KING

Monday - John 11:1–27 (The death of Lazarus)

Tuesday - John 11:28–57 (Jesus raises Lazarus)

Wednesday - John 12:1–11 (Mary anoints Jesus)

Thursday - John 12:12–19 (The Triumphal Entry)

Friday - John 12:20–36 (Jesus predicts his death)

Saturday - John 12:37–50 (Belief and unbelief)

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 5

I AM THE WAY

Authored by: Leanne Wasleski

THE WAY IN THE UPPER ROOM

In John 14 we find Jesus surrounded by the disciples in the Upper Room. It is on the night before His arrest that He says to the disciples, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” He says this after washing the feet of those He has shepherded, those He has taught, and those who had and would betray Him. He was talking to friends who were feeling ill at ease. He spoke into that uncertainty with a model of how to live life in service to others. He was showing them the way.

A WAY SHAPED BY SERVICE

In John 13, Jesus kneels, takes a towel, and washes the dusty feet of His disciples. This was the work of the “lowest” person in the home. Jesus takes up this posture to the surprise and against the urgings of the disciples. Jesus explains that His behavior is not service out of obligation or even simple kindness, it is rejecting a pattern of hierarchy, status and power in place of a pattern of humility, grace, and love.

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 5

NOT A DOOR BUT A MAP

Jesus speaks of being the way in a moment after He has shared a meal and a moment of vulnerable intimacy with His betrayer. In a culture where breaking bread was a sign of acceptance and belonging this act isn't small; it is a radical expression of love. Jesus isn't offering the way as a doorway to enter a single time but a map to outline the way of offering grace before it is deserved and choosing love when fear and anger are so much simpler.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How have you experienced Jesus not just as a teacher of truth, but as a present guide on your journey?

How is Jesus inviting you to follow His way of humble love and service in your relationships or community this week?

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 5

DAILY READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: THE UPPER ROOM

Monday - John 13:1–30 (Jesus washes the disciples' feet)

Tuesday - John 13:31–14:14 (The Way, the Truth, and the Life)

Wednesday - John 14:15–31 (The promise of the Holy Spirit)

Thursday - John 15:1–17 (The Vine and the Branches)

Friday - John 15:18–16:15 (The work of the Spirit)

Saturday - John 16:16–33 (Grief turning into joy)

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 6

Authored by: Bryan Rezen

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In first century Mediterranean culture, a shepherd was a protector, a provider, and a constant companion. When Jesus declares, "I am the good shepherd," in John 10:11-14, He isn't just offering a poetic metaphor. He is drawing a line in the sand between a hired hand who flees when he encounters a wolf and a good shepherd who will stand his ground.

The beauty of the Good Shepherd lies in two profound realities: sacrifice and intimacy.

First, Jesus defines goodness by His willingness to lay down His life (pointing towards the cross). While a hired hand views the sheep as a paycheck, Jesus views them as worth dying for. He doesn't just manage the flock; He shields it with His own body. In your moments of deepest fear or failure, remember that your Shepherd didn't just come to guide you, He came to die so that you might live.

Second, there is the miracle of being known. Jesus says, "I know my sheep and my sheep know me." In a world where we are often reduced to data points, algorithms, or social media handles, Jesus offers a relationship of profound recognition. He knows everything about you, He knows your secrets, He knows the goodness of your heart. You aren't just part of a faceless crowd; you are a known soul following a familiar voice.

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 6

Today, if the world feels loud or the wolves of anxiety feel close, lean into the silence. Listen for the voice that calls you by name. He isn't running away; He is right here, holding the gate.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In what areas of your life are you currently listening to the voice of a "hired hand" (culture, ego, or fear) instead of the Good Shepherd?

Jesus says He knows His sheep. What is one "hidden" part of your heart that you need to invite the Good Shepherd to speak into today?

How does the reality that Jesus already "laid down His life" for you change the way you view your current struggles or insecurities?

COME & SEE: WHO IS JESUS? WEEK 6

DAILY READINGS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: SACRIFICE AND RESURRECTION

Monday - John 17 (The High Priestly Prayer)

Tuesday - John 18:1–27 (Betrayal and Peter's denial)

Wednesday - John 18:28–19:16 (Jesus before Pilate)

Thursday - John 19:17–42 (The Crucifixion and Burial)

Friday - John 20 (The Resurrection and Thomas' doubt)

Saturday - John 21 (Breakfast by the lake and Peter's restoration)

easter

At Good Shepherd



SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH 2026
NORTH OAK: 8:30AM, 9:45AM, 11AM
GLADSTONE: 9AM & 10:30AM

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