

Reflect.

Give. Serve. Restore.



Manor Presbyterian Church
Lent 2018

March 25 – April 3, 2018,
Part 6

Table of Contents

3	Lent 2018
5	Reflect (Devotionals)
18	Serve (Projects)
20	Get Ideas

Lent 2018

“Preparing Our Hearts for Easter”

What is Lent? The word “Lent” comes from the Old English word “lengten,” which simply means “spring” — when the days lengthen and new life springs forth. It is a time in which we anticipate the victory of the light and life of Christ over the darkness of sin and death. It is, to borrow a phrase from C.S. Lewis, a season of a kind of “happiness and wonder that makes you serious.”

It is our prayer that as you journey with us from Ash Wednesday to Easter, you would be reminded of the reality of our broken humanity, but as days grow brighter, you would experience with greater abundance the reality of God’s redeeming grace. And so, just as we carefully prepare for big events in our personal lives, such as a wedding or commencement, Lent invites us to make our hearts ready for remembering Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Our ultimate goal is to **KNOW** the LORD: **the God** who made us and loved us before the creation of the world; **the Son** who gave his life to redeem us and broke the bonds of death giving us eternal life; and **the Holy Spirit** who dwells in us, teaches us and comforts us.

This year we will be following and reflecting on Christ’s journey to Jerusalem. Throughout the gospel of Luke, Jesus had a fruitful ministry. Early in chapter 9 He sends out the Twelve, so that they might experience the ministry of the gospel; He feeds the five thousand; and Peter confesses that Jesus is “the Christ of God.” Jesus takes Peter, John and James up onto a mountain where they witness the glory of the transfiguration and then He completes the healing of the boy with the evil spirit that the disciples were unable to do.

Even with this success, darkness is beginning to gather. *“Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men (9:44).”* And then, of all things, his disciples have a squabble about which of them would be the greatest.

Even so, he never loses sight of the mission for which he came. *“As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem (9:51).”* He begins His journey to Jerusalem to accomplish our salvation, and along the way he teaches and models discipleship.

So, to that end we invite you to journey with us through this Lenten season. This journey is in four parts – all of which help us to KNOW the LORD better. The included daily devotionals help us **REFLECT** on the Lord and his Word. There is one devotional for each day of the week, beginning Wednesday, February 14, 2018, and ending Easter Sunday. They are short and focused, containing a portion of scripture, a thought and a prayer. You may want to use these for family devotions.

Another part of our journey is to **SERVE**. We serve because Jesus served:

“He [Jesus] served: we serve. Really, he serves through his body, the church, us. Without the ministry of mercy, the body is so incomplete. As though without an arm, a leg, the church seeks to stand, walk, run, but falls in confusion and uncertainty. In diaconal ministry we work out the salvation of the Lord with fear and trembling, until we see how that great gift touches everything and everybody that we touch. **At every point of contact with his body the world sees and senses the love of God in Christ Jesus, love which commends and commands a ministry of mercy, diaconal ministry.**

Dr. George C. Fuller
The High Calling of Deacon
(Emphases by the editor)

We are encouraging each Christian, each family, each small group to take part in acts of service during this Lenten season. We are trying to make it as easy as 1, 2, 3: **One** – take part in a service project (Serve your community and a local nonprofit by signing up for a coordinated project or taking action on your own); **Two** – this year we will be asking the church to take part in *Notes of Encouragement*, writing a personalized card for a teacher or staff person from our public schools; and **Three** bring a monetary gift (\$3 per child, or \$30 per adult) to be collected to support “Getting Ahead,” a program empowering those in poverty to build resources for themselves and their communities.

The final part of the journey is to share the stories of how you’ve been blessed by serving others or something that God revealed to you in the devotionals. What an encouragement for the church to see the church serving the community. Send an email to office@manorpresbyterian.com with “1,2,3” in the subject line. We’ll post your stories. We can’t wait to share the results with you.

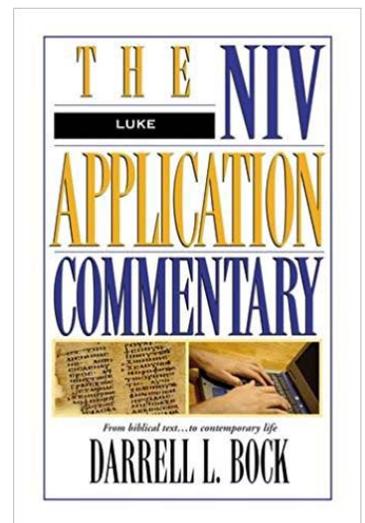
So that’s it: REFLECT, GIVE, SERVE, RESTORE, so that we might KNOW Him better through this Lenten season. Enjoy the journey!

Blessings.

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Editors note: I have included only brief excerpts from Mr. Bock’s commentary for this devotional. If you have found the insights provided to be thoughtful and helpful, I would encourage you to consider the obtaining this wonderful volume. It is material that is accessible enough for daily devotions and challenging enough to encourage us in our discipleship.

It is available through Christian Book Distributors and Amazon.



Reflect.

Preparation Through Prayer

Luke 22:39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. **40** On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” **41** He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, **42** “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” **43** An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. **44** And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. **46** “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”

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This passage reveals at least two exemplary points about the character of Jesus as he faces the trial of the cross. (1) Jesus takes both his pain and his need to God in prayer. His custom of communing with God is not altered by the unique events that descend on him. Often when we are the busiest, we neglect to take the time to go to God with our needs. Trials often force us to our knees, but frequently the hectic pace of life keeps us on the run and inhibits us from praying. That is not the case for Jesus. His pattern reminds us that prayer is important, even in the most frantic of times. And his prayer is not a matter of merely checking in, it is full of honesty, emotion, and pain. Real prayer takes work. Too often we bow our head, close our eyes, and let our minds wander, rather than laboring in prayer.

(2) Jesus manifests honesty and humility in prayer. He sincerely desires that God will not make him go through what lies ahead and honestly shares that, yet he is even more committed to being in God’s will. The prayer, though different from the laments in Psalms, is similar in that those petitioners also took their innermost feelings and pain to God. The private confrontation that takes place in prayer often produces the solace we need to take our next steps holding God’s hand. Moreover, prayer is not a haphazard exercise. Jesus prays with his entire being as he seeks God out in the midst of his situation. He even sweats drops like blood. Jesus can walk with God because he regularly seeks God.

We as his disciples must not regard prayer time at our meetings and functions as a formal preamble to the event, but part of the work of ministry itself, where a genuine transaction of relationship takes place between us and God.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, teach me to pray. Help me to honestly bring my need and my pain before the Father seeking the solace that only comes from him. Give me humility and an expectant heart as I bow before him.*

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The Betrayal and the Arrest

Luke 22:47 While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, **48** but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

49 When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?” **50** And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

51 But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? **53** Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”

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There is only one explanation for what is happening: “This is your hour,” and that of “the authority of darkness” (lit.). Satan’s attempt to stop Jesus is underway. Though a valiant effort, it will be stopped short – not by preventing Jesus’ death, but through resurrection. Ironically, the cross will accomplish the exact opposite of what the darkness wishes. Such is the mystery of God’s ways. Though the Jewish leadership seems to be in control, God and his agent are really in control.

As his enemies arrest him and approach him as a dangerous criminal, he gives testimony to the threat by stopping his disciples from fighting back and by healing the high priest’s servant. The irony and the picture are a cameo of the gospel. Jesus ministers to sinners in need. What Judas and the high priest’s crowd represent is what Jesus came to minister to. How amazing that such hardness of heart and blindness see Jesus perform such a gracious act and then turn around to arrest him! Everything Jesus does indicates that he is not who they think he is.

There is something in Jesus’ response and absence of violence that communicates a sense of confidence in God’s sovereignty. He renounces the use of force. Defense comes through the injustice of his suffering, not through the sword. A day is coming when Jesus will do battle (see Rev. 19), but we do not need to take up the sword for Jesus now. Our call is to share the Word, love our neighbor, and work for the unity of the saints.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, it seems so hard. Even in betrayal you remained focused on the plan that you and the Father had determined. You were 100% committed, and you didn’t let Judas, the Jewish leadership, Satan or “fairness” get in the way. Help me to resolve to tell this to all who will hear. Help me to love as you loved.

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The Trials and the Denials

Luke 22:54 Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. **55** And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. **56** A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him."

57 But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

58 A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them."

"Man, I am not!" Peter replied.

59 About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean."

60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

61 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." **62** And he went outside and wept bitterly.

63 The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. **64** They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" **65** And they said many other insulting things to him.

66 At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. **67** "If you are the Messiah," they said, "tell us."

Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, **68** and if I asked you, you would not answer. **69** But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God."

70 They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You say that I am."

71 Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."

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On the narrative level, each of the characters reveals something. (1) The failure of Peter stands in stark contrast to the nerve of Jesus. This disciple fails because peer pressure of the world and the threat of death are too great for him to bear. (2) The soldiers show how some in the world do not take Jesus seriously. For them religion is a game, and this leader is a joke to be played with. Their mockery and belittling of Jesus reveal a spirit that is not unusual in our world. (3) The Jewish leaders are more civil than the soldiers, but their view of Jesus is just as negative. He is someone whose presence and visibility need to be removed. He is a nuisance, not a king or Savior.

Finally, Jesus is standing before his accusers and facing a fate he has been predicting (13:31-35). He does not lose nerve. Like a sheep going silently before its shearers and like a lamb headed for the slaughter, he faces death so others may have life. How ironic that the trial of Jesus is really our trial, for what we think of it reveals what we think of him. He is really the judge. In a theological sense Jesus is on trial for us. He stands where we ought to be standing. Without our sin he would not have been there. This is one of the most timeless messages in the Bible. And in Jesus' resurrection, he assumes a place at the right hand of the Father, so that his claims are vindicated. The judged becomes the judge and calls on us to issue a verdict about this trial, where he took our place. We all face the simple question: How will we respond to the Son of Man, who is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, it was my sin that made it necessary for you to die. I would, and should, be judged as guilty before God, but in what can only be true love, you stood in my place. Help me to repent everyday and constantly choose life. Help me to willingly bow my knee to you as prophet, priest, King – Saviour.

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Before Pilate and Herod

Luke 23:1 Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. **2** And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.”

3 So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

4 Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

5 But they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

6 On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. **7** When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. **9** He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. **10** The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. **11** Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. **12** That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

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The portrait of the leadership’s charges against him shows how some reject him so thoroughly that they even misrepresent what he is about, though that misrepresentation does contain a small dose of truth. They are right that Jesus is a king, but they fail to appreciate that role other than to see it as a threat. When people are hostile to Jesus, I they fail to understand him. If they do perceive his key claims, they reject them out of hand.

The rejection of Pilate and Herod is more subtle. They do not react against Jesus. Their position is virtually a neutral one. He is not guilty, but neither is he to be believed. This type of approach to Jesus reckons him with a little respect, but does not respond to him as he deserves. Pilate and Herod’s failure to act on their awareness of Jesus’ innocence is a form of cowardice. Once again Luke indirectly calls on the reader to choose sides. He outlines a variety of responses to Jesus, but any failure to embrace him, whether through active rejection, passive neglect, or frivolous reaction, is not commendable.

When we engage in sharing Jesus, we can expect a wide array of responses to him. Some will be decidedly hostile, while others will be more disinterested, just as in the trial scene. But both constitute rejection. Evangelism often requires patience. At the same time, it is important to remember that even in the midst of rejection, the initial reaction may be no clue to the eventual response. Who would have predicted Saul would become an ardent follower of Jesus? Yet others may never change their minds. Our primary responsibility before the Lord is to continue to share him.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, the trials and rejection go on and people can’t see, they just don’t get it. Yet, without your Spirit working in my heart, and your mercy and unfathomable grace I wouldn’t have gotten it either. Give me a steadfastness in my desire to share the reality of Jesus with others.

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Barabbas, Not Jesus

Luke 23:13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, **14** and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. **15** Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. **16** Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.”

18 But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” **19** (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. **21** But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

22 For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.”

23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. **24** So Pilate decided to grant their demand. **25** He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

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The exchange of Barabbas for Jesus testifies to two things. (1) As Pilates’s own reaction shows, there is something incredulous about the preference for Barabbas. Here the blindness and logical character of sin are at work. Given the option between a teacher of righteousness and a murderous criminal, the crowd chooses the latter. It shows the kind of passion religious belief can generate and the kind of hostility that it can produce in people. Words are more dangerous than a blade, the soul more important than life. In one sense, the judgment, as irrational as it seems at the surface, is appropriate, for if Jesus is wrong about his claims, he is a very dangerous figure. On the other hand, if he is right (and innocent!), then there can be no worse judgment. The line between truth and falsehood is often the thin thread of a correct perception.

(2) A theological message is wrapped up in the exchange. Romans 5:5-8 summarizes Jesus’ death as the just for the unjust. He dies (literally) in an unjust person’s place. Though the sin we commit many not be murder, nonetheless Jesus suffers on the cross for our sin. That message resounding from the cross is timeless. Barabbas represents the position we are all in as a result of Jesus’ death: We are able to live because he died. In the midst of all the injustice, the grace of God shines through. The message of the cross is the miracle built into God’s plan for the ages.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, the just for the unjust – how could it be? Because of your grace and your gift, let me judge rightly and live daily in the shadow of your wings. May your name be glorified.

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Crucifixion

Luke 23:26 As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. **27** A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. **28** Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. **29** For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ **30** Then

“they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’”

31 For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. **33** When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. **34** Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar **37** and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

38 There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? **41** We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

43 Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, **45** for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. **46** Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.

47 The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.” **48** When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. **49** But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

As he awaits his death, Jesus turns again to the Father in prayer, asking that the actions of his enemies be forgiven. He speaks of their ignorance in slaying him. His point is that they have not really comprehended what they are doing. By praying for his enemies, Jesus has fulfilled an ethical standard he himself noted in 6:29, 35, to pray for one's enemies. Jesus evidences his love and compassion here and models his own instructions on discipleship.

The people "watch" what is taking place, and the leaders "sneer" (v. 35; both verbs appear in Ps. 22:7). Their taunts are ironic. "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One." Their sarcasm shows just how much confidence and passion there is in Jesus' enemies. They are comfortable with his execution. The ultimate irony, however, is that God will actually perform their request in Jesus' resurrection.

The New Testament uses many images to describe what the cross is and how we should see it. It is a ransom (Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6), a payment for the debt of sin. It is a substitution – Jesus offers himself in our place (Luke 22:18-20; John 6:51-52; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; cf. Isa. 53:10). It is a propitiation, satisfying the justice of God by dealing with sin (Rom. 3:25). It represents the "lifting up of Jesus," and through it Satan is overthrown (John 3:14-15; 8:28; 12:31-32; 18:32). It is the means by which the church is purchased (Acts 20:28). It is the sacrifice that ends all other sacrifices for sin (Heb. 8-10). It is the precursor to the Lord's being lifted up and seated at God's side (Acts 2:16-39; Heb. 1:3). It is the basis on which God sets apart his children as a holy community (1 Peter 1:2, 18-25; 2:1-11). On the cross Jesus became a curse for us, a mediator of our guilt before God (Gal. 3:13, 19-20). There reconciliation takes place between God and humanity, as well as between Jew and Gentile (Rom. 5:8-11; 2 Cor. 5:20-21; Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 1:21-22; 2:11-15). So God can now justify us, that is, declare us righteous before him (Rom. 3:21-31).

In a real sense, the ultimate application of the cross involves relating to others on a different basis, because we now operate in the world as forgiven people who know where and how they fit in the creation. The cross becomes the ground of all Luke's passages of discipleship (9:51-19:44). Another way to say this is that at the center of God's plan stands Jesus, and at the center of Jesus' work stand the cross and resurrection.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, my heart cringes as I read this account. Hatred, spite, satisfaction with the cruel events – all poured out on you; and yet you prayed for your enemies. You could see beyond the moment, beyond life, beyond death; and you knew what this terrible, wonderful plan of salvation would do. Please give me this vision as I minister in your name.*

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Burial

Luke 23:50 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, **51** who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. **52** Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. **53** Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. **54** It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. **56** Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

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The text does reveal a couple of examples of deep concern shown for Jesus. The people here want Jesus to have an honorable burial and be appropriately cared for. Their concern is admirable.

One other important detail emerges. The resurrection was not an anticipated event. Jesus receives the normal treatment a dead person received. He was definitely laid to rest, and the preparation of spices shows that the women expect him to remain there. The resurrection catches everyone by surprise.

It is not unusual for God to be active in our midst and even to tell us about what he is doing, but we miss the point. We can get so locked into a routine of how things normally take place that we risk missing what God is doing out of the ordinary. A text like this reminds us to keep our eyes open and look carefully for God's promises, which might show up in surprising ways.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, help me to meditate on the meaning of your death and burial. Fill me with sweet anticipation for the completion of your glorious plan. May you be glorified.*

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Resurrection Discovered

Luke 24:1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. **2** They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, **3** but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. **4** While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. **5** In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? **6** He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: **7** ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” **8** Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. **10** It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. **11** But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. **12** Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

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This unit is full of discovery, surprise and wonder. The resurrection consistently catches the disciples off guard, and they have a difficult time adjusting to the reality that Jesus is alive again. Yet Jesus’ remarks drive home the point that Scripture predicted these events would take place. God keeps his word, even when it involves things that seem impossible.

There is one feature about this account that differs little from the modern world: its skepticism about resurrection. What is often lost in the familiarity of this account is the attitude of the disciples. They are usually characterized as open to miracles. But on this occasion they have to be persuaded. The women are more responsive to what God has done than most of the gathered group of disciples. This note is important, because resurrection is a central hope of Christian faith (1 Cor. 15), but the church did not come to believe it easily. The initial “show me” attitude of the disciples fits well with the modern spirit.

We have already noted how important the idea is that God keeps his promises. The resurrection is one of the greatest of God’s promises. According to the Christian hope, God gives everlasting life to his children in a world that he will remake and renew (cf. Rev. 21-22). If such a world is to come and if God keeps his promises, then preparing for it is one of the most basic tasks of life. The life to come is, of course, of much longer duration than life here and now. Thus, preparing for it is more important than any short term issues we face today. Our allegiance should be to the citizenship that flows into the future.

In sum, resurrection changes everything. Luke wants us to ponder the “so what” of Jesus’ resurrection – that Jesus is alive and offers forgiveness, so that I can have the new relationship with God through him. For believers, resurrection is a reminder that new life is a gift from God that calls us to a walk of gratitude. To those who do not know him, Scripture calls them to embrace what the resurrection means.

We should not ignore Luke’s shift to the name “Lord” here. Jesus is the one with authority, divine authority, over salvation. As Lord of all, the gospel must go out to all. One of Luke’s great burdens is to show that God’s plan is revealed to the person who understands just who and how great Jesus is. As Lord he worthy to be trusted, worshiped, and followed. No one is more worthy of praise. In light of his majesty and position, we should all be willing subjects, resting in his care and direction.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for the resurrection! Through it you conquered our great enemy, death. You gave us life that is truly life and we can live for you. Help me to live a life that shows you can be trusted, worshipped and followed without question. May your Name be raised on high! May you be glorified! Hallelujah!! Amen!!

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The Journey on the Emmaus Road

Luke 24:13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. **14** They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. **15** As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; **16** but they were kept from recognizing him.

17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. **18** One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

19 "What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. **20** The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; **21** but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. **22** In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning **23** but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. **24** Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. **29** But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. **31** Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. **32** They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together **34** and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." **35** Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

This passage highlights the trustworthiness of God's Word as expressed in promise. Jesus contends that the twofold division of suffering followed by glory is the messianic portrait of the Old Testament. This is a fresh understanding of the Jewish Scriptures.

We know that the Jewish faith, rooted in the promise to Abraham, pondered how to put the Old Testament revelation together when it came to how God would finally deliver his people and bring his rule back to earth. There were passages of hope that the end would produce a great prophet, a great king, a great figure who received authority from God, a servant figure who would proclaim God's hope and yet suffer, and a salvation where God would be present in the life of the community with an intimacy that meant the law written on the heart. All these strands of prophecy contended with each other in Judaism, along with various priestly images. The Jews struggled to determine how many end-time figures there might be and what their relationship to each other would be. In to this world Jesus stepped.

In the Gospels and in Acts, Jesus claimed that the Old Testament promise was unified in him. He was the prophet like Moses, the Son of David, the Suffering Servant, the Messiah, and the Son of Man all wrapped together in one person. His career involved both suffering and triumph. The bridge between the two states was the resurrection.

Jesus' place at the right hand of God means that he possesses authority over all those forces that stand opposed to humanity, both in this age and in the age to come (see Eph. 1:19-23). Such authority stands behind his ability to give us new birth (Eph. 2:1-10).

This aspect of resurrection hope is important, since we often feel that our sin or the devil is more powerful than we are. Yet in the context of Jesus' power obtained through his resurrection, we have access to the one who enables us to overcome whatever obstacles Satan places in our path.

There is perhaps no better commentary on this passage than Hebrews 1:1-4. God has spoken to us in his Son, who, as heir of all things, has sat down at the right hand of the Father, having made purification for sins and become superior to the angels, reflecting in the process the name, nature, and role of Son. There is no greater privilege than knowing the Son of God. He is known only through the recognition that God raised him from the dead to become the centerpiece of his promise and plan.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, again, thank you for the resurrection! You are the summation of all the promises of the Scriptures. You fulfilled each role more completely than we can know. You are the first fruits of the resurrection and in that we can rest with assurance that we too will be resurrected. Help me to love you and your Word more each day!*

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Jesus' Commission, Promise, and Farewell

Luke 24:36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. **38** He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? **39** Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. **41** And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" **42** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he took it and ate it in their presence.

44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. **46** He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, **47** and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses of these things. **49** I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. **51** While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. **52** Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. **53** And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Insights: **The NIV Application Commentary: Luke, Copyright © 1996 by Darrell L. Bock**

Repentance as rooted in the Old Testament is an important concept, since the Hebrew concept of repentance involves a "turning." That is, to repent is to change direction from allegiance to idols to serving the living and true God (cf. 1 Thess. 1:9-10). This change of perspective embraces Jesus and produces the forgiveness he offers. This message of salvation extends to all the nations, though the disciples will take ten chapters of Acts before they see that "the nations" means more than Diaspora Jews. They must preach to every tribe and nation – a fact we take for granted today, but was revolutionary at the time, since religions had a stronger ethnic character to them.

The disciples have served as witnesses of the events surrounding Jesus. They saw him hang on the cross and have now seen his resurrected body. Their calling is to share that what they know has taken place according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-5). Jesus will send them out, but not before he has equipped them. To this end he will send to them the Spirit from his Father, in an event described as being "clothed with power from on high" (see Acts 1:8; 2:1-11). The allusion here is to Joel's promise of the Spirit in the end time and to Jeremiah's promise of the Spirit as part of the new covenant. The Spirit is the one who enables us to witness and testify to Jesus effectively (Luke 12:11-12). As God's plan moves ahead, the disciples are a major part of its advance. But until the Spirit comes, they must remain in Jerusalem.

Jesus blesses the disciples as he departs to continue his work from God's side. What follows for them are worship and joy. They return to the temple, where Luke's story began with Zechariah, in order to praise God for all that has taken place. Luke never forgets that the heart of a believer's walk involves responding to God with joy.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may your Spirit fall fresh on me. I love your Word, I love your person. Here I am, send me.

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Serve.

This year Manor has become part of the Constellation Network, a group of local churches in the area that have joined to serve together. What is the Constellation Network? Here is how they introduced themselves last year:

“A multi-church project during the season of Lent (**February 14-April 1**) encouraging everyone to love and serve their community in three tangible ways, from **donating time** through a service project, **writing notes of encouragement to teachers and staff of the local schools** and **a small donation** for an inspiring project – *Getting Ahead*, a program empowering those in poverty to build resources for themselves and their communities.

“We were inspired by the impact of [Be Rich](#) from [North Point Ministries!](#) For this initiative, we’re taking on the ... **1-2-3 Challenge**”

In their words, “We believe that all people are made to thrive. And that when we work together where we already are - every man, woman, and child in our community can have the opportunity to flourish. We know that we can only revitalize our community and create opportunities for all of our neighbors to thrive through leveraging the strengths of many. We do this as a backbone organization by accelerating good work already being done in the community, incubating new concepts, and collaborating with individuals, community organizations and churches.”

The constellation we envision is a network of people and organizations that work together to advance the common good.

On the following page is a description of how we would like to implement the program this year and some ideas from the Constellation Network on service projects:

1. Service Project

We can show our love for our neighbors and towns by **giving of our time and energy**. Get involved by **signing up for a coordinated project** as the Deacons advertise them or **taking action on your own**.

Children are highly encouraged to participate! There are great opportunities to demonstrate kindness toward neighbors or classmates. Get creative! Regardless of how you serve — individually or as a group, on your own or with a planned project — **be sure to tell us how it went!**

If you have an idea for another coordinated project, **let the Deacons know!**



2. Notes of Encouragement

Write a personalized card for a teacher or staff person from our public schools. We will be providing more information, along with names and addresses, during our Lenten season.

3. \$3 Dollars (Kids) / \$30 (Adults)

Donations will benefit *Getting Ahead*, a program empowering those in poverty to build resources for themselves and their communities. Bring your donations to Manor on **Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018**.

GET IDEAS

Service Projects

The challenge is 1 service project, and that includes serving the people in your immediate community, like your neighbors and co-workers. Here are lots of ideas for how you can serve on your own, and we believe that all of these acts of service will add up to big impact! If you take the initiative on a project by yourself, with your family, or in a group, **let us know!** We're excited to hear about your creativity and share your ideas.

Projects "On Your Own"

2018 Lenten Work Project Ideas

1. Visit church shut-ins, those no longer able to come to church.
2. Send cards to shut-ins.
3. Take a meal to someone who needs encouragement.
4. Volunteer at one of our local ministries:
 - The Parkesburg Point (610-857-3393) 700 Main St, Parkesburg, PA 19315
 - The Lighthouse Youth Center (610-467-6000) 245 Commerce St, Oxford, PA 19363
 - The Bridge (610-869-9500) AG Chr. of the Nazarene, 240 State St, West Grove, PA
 - Pregnancy Resources at Cornerstone (717-442-3111) 5380 Lincoln Hwy., Gap, PA(Contact any of the ministries above and ask for available opportunities to volunteer. Some of the ministries require clearances from the state of Pennsylvania.)
5. Provide supplies at one of our ministries above. (Call to find out what they can use)
7. Provide baby supplies at the Crisis Pregnancy Center.
8. For an elderly neighbor:
 - Do a project in the home (outdoor, ironing, cleaning)
 - Pick up groceries
 - Provide transportation
9. Send emails or cards of encouragement to missionaries.
10. Develop a list of neighbors and begin praying for them.
11. Babysit for a young mom so she can get out without the children.
12. Do extra cleaning at the church. (Contact RE John Rosecrans, 610.659.6708)
13. Take pizza or doughnuts and coffee to the second or third shift police on duty.

Additional Project Ideas

Make something

- Collect supplies and make hygiene kits (combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc) for [Ronald McDonald House](#), [Sunday Breakfast Mission](#), or another local shelter.
- Make a meal for a friend or neighbor who lost a job, had an illness, or recently had a baby.
- Make (and deliver!) valentine cards for senior citizens.
- Make a meal or cookies for the people who serve you, like postal workers, firefighters, police officers, librarians, and trash pick-up.

Give time

- Take a neighbor who can't drive to run errands or go grocery shopping.
- Spend time with a sick or elderly neighbor.
- Plan a board game night at a nursing home.
- Write and deliver thank you cards for people who serve you.
- Help at a local library.
- Volunteer at an animal shelter.
- Go on a prayer walk in your neighborhood.
- Visit a nursing home and talk with the residents about their favorite memories.

Give a service

- Become a mentor at The Parkesburg Point.
- Provide repair work on a neighbor's house.
- Babysit for someone who needs rest.
- Rake leaves, clean up sticks, or shovel snow for a neighbor.
- Wash a friend's car.
- Pick up litter on a local street or in a park.

Give away things

- Collect clothing and donate to the [Kennett Clothing Closet](#), [The Bridge Compassionate Ministry Center](#), or [Oxford Area Neighborhood Services Center](#).
- Collect sheets and towels and donate to local animal shelters.