

# FROM THE ASHES

*•embracing the full life of God•*

**SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS**

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

- 1) Begin with prayer. Below are examples of prayers appropriate for personal study time and small group use. Your small group may want to consider using Living Room Liturgy by Winfield Bevins, Seedbed Publishing 2020.

Personal prayer- *Father God, help me to know the wonderful things you have freely given me through your Son, Jesus Christ. I listen now for his voice as I look to the Scriptures and study. Jesus grant me a spirit of wisdom and revelation so that I will serve and love well. Holy Spirit, teach me and help me to live by faith that I may bring all glory to God. Thank you for teaching me to do what is good and leading me in the way I should go. May your Word be a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. Amen.*

Small group prayer- *Dear Lord, you created us for relationship and community. The earliest Christians devoted themselves to the breaking of bread and prayer, to the apostles' teaching and reflection on your word, they ate together with glad and sincere hearts, and served those who were in need. We thank you for the gift of this small group fellowship. May we grow together by following their examples of mutual prayer, support, and encouragement. Unite us together in the bonds of this fellowship and use our small group as a means of grace that we may draw closer to you. Amen.*

- 2) Watch/ listen to the sermon again prior to your study or meeting.
- 3) Read the suggested text in preparation for the meeting. Consider reading in several different Bible versions (suggestion- use <https://www.biblegateway.com> to access other versions). Are there nuances that help you to see different things in the text?
- 4) Consider reading the suggested text aloud at your small group meeting.
- 5) Important questions to consider: What is the context of this scripture? What was happening at the time in which the scripture was written? How does this passage relate to our world now?
- 6) Utilize your Bible Study Notes if you have a study Bible. Compare notes from different group members Bible versions. Some may be very text specific; others may provide good cross references and others may be more application oriented.
- 7) Consult a biblical commentary or trusted website for additional insight or guidance if you desire a more in-depth understanding or if you are unsure.
- 8) Encourage everyone to participate and be respectful of your group members. Try not to dominate the conversation.
- 9) Practice confidentiality. Never share personal thoughts or struggles of other group members.
- 10) End your personal study or small group time with a prayer thanking God for what has been.



## Ash Wednesday – February 22, 2023

**Text:** Hebrews 12: 1- 6

**Topic(s):** Faithfulness, We have examples to follow, Jesus is the ultimate Example

1. **Core Value(s):** Worship, Fellowship

**Main Idea:** Invitation to the Lord's discipline on a personal level as we live and journey with one another in community.

**Application:** God is the perfector of our faith.

### Bible Study Questions:

1. Who are the *pioneers* (The Message) or *witnesses* that the writer of Hebrews mentions in verse 1?
2. Do you think the metaphor of training for a race is accurate for describing our lives as Christians?
3. When we are slowing down in the *race*, what can we do to get a shot of ...*adrenaline into our souls?* (The Message)

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you from the reading and studying of the passage?
2. What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
3. Name or someone well-known that you consider to be a hero of the faith. What makes them a hero?
4. Name or describe someone you know who has been a *pioneer* or *witness* in your faith journey.
5. How can we pray for you?



# FROM THE ASHES

*-embracing the full life of God-*

## **Week 1 – February 26, 2023**

**Text:** Daniel 9: 3- 11, 15- 19

**Topic(s):** Confession, Prayer

**Core Value(s):** Worship, Learning

**Main Idea:** Prayer of confession.

**Application:** God answers our prayer of repentance because of his grace.

### **Bible Study Questions:**

1. Why do you think the first two verses are so specific about people and places? Contrast this with the opening of the Job.
2. How long does Daniel understand that Jerusalem will lie in ruins? How does he know that?
3. Break down Daniel's prayer into 3 or four major sections? Why is the sequence of the sections important?
4. What is Israel's only hope for Israel? For us?

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you from the reading and studying of the passage?
2. What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
3. Verses 5 and 6 list several ways Israel has sinned. List them. Are these *sins* today?
4. The Israelites had been in captivity in Babylon for almost 70 years when this prayer was written. Did they learn anything from their years in captivity?
5. Does God still punish us for rebellion, turning away, and not listening? If so, what forms might those punishments take?
6. How can we find our way back to God?
7. How can we pray for you?



## **Week 2 – March 5, 2023**

**Text:** Psalm 77: 1- 15

**Topic(s):** Despair, Remembering God's past actions, God's faithfulness

**Core Value(s):** Worship, Learning

**Main Idea:** Remembering the faithfulness of God helps us to repent.

**Application:** Even in our darkest hour, God hears the cries of a repentant heart.

### **Bible Study Questions:**

1. How many ways does the Psalmist express their despair?
2. Does God forget His manners (The Message) or forget to be merciful (NIV)? (See verse 9) Why would the Psalmist even think this?
3. What brings the Psalmist out of their despair? Do you think this instantly fixed everything the Psalmist was feeling?

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you from the reading and studying of the passage?
2. What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
3. Would a daily practice of prayer prevent the kind of despair the Psalmist expresses?
4. In your opinion, what are the top few things people usually pray for?
5. Are there more important things to pray for? Why?
6. How can we pray for you?



### **Week 3 – March 12, 2023**

**Text:** Psalm 121

**Topic(s):** Trust, Confidence

**Core Value(s):** Worship

**Main Idea:** Acknowledging God as our source of help and strength.

**Application:** Look to God for help. He is watching over us.

#### **Bible Study Questions:**

1. Why do you think the Psalmist uses mountains as a contrast to God as the source of their strength?
2. What is the significance of saying twice that God never sleeps? (verses 4 & 5)
3. Why does the Psalmist say God will watch over you, not only now, but forever?

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you from the reading and studying of the passage?
2. What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
3. What *mountains* do we look to for our help? Why do these *mountains* always disappoint?
4. How do you resolve the promise that God will keep you from all harm (verse 7) with the experiences of your actual life?
5. How can we pray for you?



## **Week 4 – March 19, 2023**

**Text:** Joel 2: 12- 13, 28- 32

**Topic(s):** Repentance, Forgiveness, Restoration

**Core Value(s):** Worship, Mission

**Main Idea:** The prophet calls for repentance from the heart and the Lord responds with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

**Application:** There is no escape from sin. The Lord gives the Spirit to everyone who repents.

### **Bible Study Questions:**

1. Joel 2:12 starts a call to repentance. What has caused the need to turn back to God (repent)? See Joel 2:1-11
2. Why do you think Joel urges people to tear their hearts instead of their clothes? Tearing one's clothes was a way of expressing grief in the ancient world.
3. Verse 28 starts with *Then after all these things...*(NLT) What *things*?

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you from the reading and studying of the passage?
2. What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
3. Some Bible commentators say that this was written at a time when a huge swarm of locusts came across Judah and ate everything in their path—the invading army of verse 2 is an army of locusts. When disaster strikes—natural or human made—is it the direct result of having turned from God? Does this imply that not turning from God will avoid all disaster?
4. Why is the repentance called for in verse 12 so hard? Do you think it is harder for older or younger people to repent?
5. When disaster strikes our lives, how do we express our grief (tear our clothes) instead of our hearts?
6. How can we pray for you?



### **Week 5 – March 26, 2023**

**Text:** Ephesians 2: 1- 10

**Topic(s):** Salvation, New Life

**Core Value(s):** Worship, Mission

**Main Idea:** Understanding that it is by grace we are saved.

**Application:** We are saved by grace and from our salvation flow good works.

#### **Bible Study Questions:**

1. What was our previous relationship to God? What did we deserve?
2. Verse 3 says we were ...*objects of wrath...* (NIV) or ...*subject to God's anger...*(NLT). *The Message* includes the following sentence: *It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us.* Which do you think better expresses our sin condition?
3. Instead of *doing away with the whole lot of us*, what did God do? Why did (does) God bother with us?
4. What is the result of God's action in our lives? (see verse 10)

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you from the reading and studying of the passage?
2. What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
3. Have you ever heard someone say something like, "Her or she was such a good person God has to let them into Heaven?" Is that really how it works?
4. If we are saved by God's grace alone, why do good works matter (they can't save us)?
5. Why is it so hard for us to accept that salvation is only through God's grace? What is our society telling us about how to save ourselves?
6. How can we pray for you?



## **Week 6 (Palm Sunday) – April 2, 2023**

**Text:** Matthew 21: 1- 17

**Topic(s):** Triumphal Entry, Praise, Miracle

**Core Value(s):** Worship, Fellowship, Mission

**Main Idea:** What threat does Jesus poses to the chief priests that they plot to kill him?

**Application:** Jesus prioritizes God's kingdom which challenges those in power and threatens the establishment.

### **Bible Study Questions:**

1. Why does Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey instead of a horse? Why the colt instead of its mother?
2. What is the significance of the sequence of events (v1-11; 12-13; 14-15)
3. Why are the leaders of the temple indignant about what Jesus is doing? Are they most upset because Jesus threw out the money changers or because people are flocking to Him?

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you from the reading and studying of the passage?
2. What is one thing that stood out to you from this week's message?
3. Why enter Jerusalem with such fanfare? Wouldn't it be smarter to enter quietly?
4. As if entering with crowds shouting wasn't enough to upset the Pharisees (not to mention the Romans), Jesus challenges a long-standing temple practice of changing money to guy acceptable sacrifices. Why this seemingly deliberate provocation of the religious leaders?
5. What was the result of the money changers being thrown out? What long-standing practices do we have that might be standing in the way of the *blind* and the *lame* being able to worship?
6. How can we pray for you?

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Books**

Dennis, Marie; Golden, Renny; Wright, Scott. *Oscar Romero: Reflections on His Life and Writings*. New York: Orbis Books, 2000.

Metaxas, Eric. *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010.

- **Websites**

<https://www.biblegateway.com> (free Bible passage lookup with multiple versions available)

<https://www.logos.com> (Best all-around Bible software for purchase and download)

<https://www.qideas.org> (Qideas is the Christian Ted Talks.)

- **Helpful Bible Study Apps**

PARALLEL PLUS Bible-study app (Great Bible study app that allows you to compare versions on the screen. FREE)

Bible (Wonderful and most recognized Bible app in the world. FREE)

BibleProject (Complete app with videos and so much more. FREE)

- **Helpful Prayer Apps**

Lectio 365 (FREE)

Lectio 365 for Families (FREE)

CenteringPrayer (FREE)

- **Small Group Apps**

GroupME (Small group chat app.)

DiscipleshipBands (Small group app for those who want to follow Methodist band meeting.)