

FEBRUARY 28, 2021
SECOND SUNDAY
IN LENT



The difficulty and joy of discipleship.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 8:31-38	Jesus predicts his death
Monday	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16	Sign of the covenant
Tuesday	Romans 4:13-25	God's promise
Wednesday	2 Timothy 2:1-13	A good soldier of Christ
Thursday	2 Timothy 2:14-26	A worker approved by God
Friday	Proverbs 8:32-36	Listen to what you are taught
Saturday	Psalms 22:23-31	Suffering and praise
Sunday	John 2:13-22	Jesus cleanses the temple

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."

Mark 8:35 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, help us to remember that it is in giving that we receive and in caring for others that we experience the joy of following Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, as you satisfy us with this food and for all that blesses us this day, we give you thanks. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God who gives life to the dead and who calls into existence things that do not exist bless you with faith. (Romans 4:17b)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Take My Life, That
I May Be*



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is something you didn't want to do because it was too difficult?
- Do you think it is difficult to follow Jesus? Why or why not?
- How would you describe a life of faith that lives for others?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 8:31-38.

These are some of the most difficult words to hear as followers of Jesus. To truly live as people of God, we are to live for the needs of others, just as Jesus did. It is hard for Peter—and us—to hear that Christ must suffer and die a criminal's death before rising to glory. It is hard for us to imagine picking up the cross, the tool of torture and death, and courageously walk with it daily for the sake of the good news of Christ and the needs of others. The Gospel of Mark is not a happy text for disciples. The Gospel ends with Jesus' followers running away and Peter denying his Lord in the courtyard of the high priest. Our challenge is not to run away and deny the needs of others. According to Mark, we don't do this well. The good news is that Jesus never gives up on us. To the disciples who ran away from him and denied him, he says in essence, "meet me in Galilee, where your ministry and life will truly begin" (Mark 16:7). By the end of Mark, there are no great stories of bravery and success of the disciples. What exists is a promise that Jesus will go before them and be with them into the future. The disciples will continue to hear Jesus' words, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (v. 34). What have you found to be difficult to do as a follower of Jesus? What have you found to be a joy as a follower?

Pray: Dear God, thank you for never giving up on us as we seek to lovingly give of ourselves for the needs of others and the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SERVICE

Making pretzels is a Lenten tradition. Pretzels are shaped like arms folded in prayer and can remind us to pray to God for our needs and the needs of others. Choose some people beyond your household to pray for by name this week. Make or buy pretzels to give to them as a sign that you are praying for them.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Jesus tells us that following him means taking up our cross, that is, saying no to ourselves and sometimes suffering for him. This week make a cross from wood, card stock, or other materials. Hold the cross during your devotional time this week while reading the *Daily Bible Readings*. Say the *Prayer for the Week* and add your own prayers. End the time by saying:

Remember that you are God's, and to God you shall return.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org