

GPS GUIDE: APRIL 2, 2023 G r o w . P r a y . S t u d y .

Series: Discipleship Pathway

Sermon: A Faith Worth Sharing

Monday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

Today you are invited to practice breathing as you read the texts from Sunday. What questions are stirred in your spirit? What might God be revealing through the words of these passages? Sit with your question as you breathe deeply.

Matthew 21:1-11 (Inclusive)

As they approached Jerusalem, entering Beth-Phage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent off two disciples with the instructions, "Go into the village straight ahead of you, and immediately you will find a tethered donkey with her colt standing beside her. Untie them and lead them back to me. If anyone questions you, say, 'The Rabbi needs them.' Then they will let them go at once." This came about to fulfill what was said through the prophet: "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Your Sovereign comes to you without display, riding on a donkey, on a colt—the foal of a beast of burden.'" So the disciples went off and did what Jesus had ordered. They brought the donkey and her colt, and after they laid their cloaks on the animals, Jesus mounted and rode toward the city. Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while some began to cut branches from the trees and lay them along the path. The crowds—those who went in front of Jesus and those who followed—were all shouting, "Hosanna to the Heir to the House of David! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Most High! Hosanna in the highest!" As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred to its depths, demanding, "Who is this?" And the crowd kept answering, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee!"

Psalm 31 (NIV)

In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.

Turn your ear to me,
come quickly to my rescue;
be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.
Since you are my rock and my fortress,
for the sake of your name lead and guide me.
Keep me free from the trap that is set for me,
for you are my refuge.
Into your hands I commit my spirit;
deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.
I hate those who cling to worthless idols;
as for me, I trust in the Lord.
I will be glad and rejoice in your love,
for you saw my affliction
and knew the anguish of my soul.
You have not given me into the hands of the enemy
but have set my feet in a spacious place.
Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress;
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,
my soul and body with grief.
My life is consumed by anguish
and my years by groaning;
my strength fails because of my affliction,
and my bones grow weak.
Because of all my enemies,
I am the utter contempt of my neighbors
and an object of dread to my closest friends—
those who see me on the street flee from me.
I am forgotten as though I were dead;
I have become like broken pottery.
For I hear many whispering,
“Terror on every side!”
They conspire against me
and plot to take my life.

But I trust in you, Lord;
I say, “You are my God.”
My times are in your hands;
deliver me from the hands of my enemies,
from those who pursue me.
Let your face shine on your servant;
save me in your unfailing love.
Let me not be put to shame, Lord,
for I have cried out to you;
but let the wicked be put to shame
and be silent in the realm of the dead.
Let their lying lips be silenced,
for with pride and contempt
they speak arrogantly against the righteous.
How abundant are the good things
that you have stored up for those who fear you,
that you bestow in the sight of all,
on those who take refuge in you.
In the shelter of your presence you hide them
from all human intrigues;
you keep them safe in your dwelling
from accusing tongues.
Praise be to the Lord,
for he showed me the wonders of his love
when I was in a city under siege.
In my alarm I said,
“I am cut off from your sight!”
Yet you heard my cry for mercy
when I called to you for help.
Love the Lord, all his faithful people!
The Lord preserves those who are true to him,
but the proud he pays back in full.
Be strong and take heart,

all you who hope in the Lord.

Tuesday

We have been engaging in the spiritual practice of the labyrinth each week during Lent. We've used different shaped labyrinths for different prayer practices. Today you will learn to draw your own labyrinth.

You will need some paper and something to write with. There are several easy steps outlined in the instructions below. Try using different colored pens, pencils, or crayons for each step so that you can see your progression in the building process. Once you know how to draw a labyrinth you can do it whenever you like: on a piece of paper with a pen, on the street with chalk, on a sandy location with a stick; there are endless possibilities.

You will notice that the labyrinth design begins with a cross. Our faith is centered on God's power and our decision to follow Jesus in discipleship. After you have drawn your labyrinth, you are invited to offer this prayer practice:

As you trace or color the pathway toward the center of the labyrinth, meditate on the ways your faith has been molded, shaped, as you have followed Jesus in discipleship. What is the most important aspect of your faith?

As you spend time in the center of the Labyrinth give thanks to God for the ways your faith has continued to be molded through God's loving care.

As you trace your way back out of the labyrinth meditate on the ways God might be calling you to share your faith with others.

How to draw a labyrinth

To draw a seven-circuit classical labyrinth, just follow these steps.



Wednesday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

The Other Lord's Prayer

We usually consider the Lord's Prayer as Jesus' model prayer, but as we make our way through Holy Week, let's see what we can take from his, very different, Gethsemane prayer. The Gethsemane Prayer is a prayer of desperation, of petition.

There are three parts in Jesus' Gethsemane Prayer:

1. "Abba, everything is possible for you." A reminder that we are addressing our divine parent and there is no question God can do what we ask.
2. "Take this cup from me." Here's where we, like Jesus, can present our heart's desire. Jesus wasn't afraid to be honest, and neither should we.
3. "Yet not what I will, but what you will." Throughout this brief prayer we acknowledge who God is and what God can do. We've been honest about our own needs and desires. Now we end by giving God the last word. We entrust the outcome to the one who holds us in constant care.

And how did God answer Jesus? With a big fat NO, it would seem. But this prayer isn't a magic formula to get wishes granted—it's a way to voice our desires and needs and to reconcile them to and with God.

For centuries writing has been seen as a personal exercise, a method of meditation. The process of thinking, then writing, then re-reading, then writing some more allows the writer to turn a thought over and over. After several lines our hands have memorized the shapes of the letters, and our minds are able to reflect on the ideas behind what we are writing.

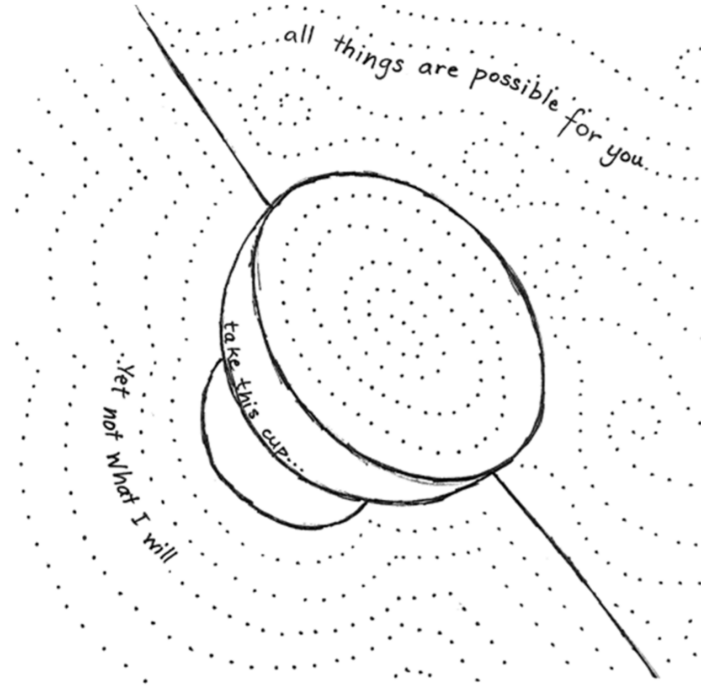
Take some time to consider your heart's greatest desire—your own "Take this Cup from Me" prayer. It might be something you'd like removed or something you'd like God to add to your life.

When you are ready, you are invited to use the journaling template to begin writing the first part of the prayer on the dotted lines on the top half of the template (avoiding the cup). This is a sky-like place to reflect the unlimited love and power of God. Continue writing or drawing until you have filled this area. If certain words stand out to you, repeat or emphasize them as you write. Throughout this experiment, you might need to rotate the page to change directions as you write.

Now following the dotted lines again, fill in the cup with your own heartfelt request. Again repeat until this section is filled, highlighting important words, if you like.

Finally, complete the lower section of the template. A ground-like space, since this sentiment is the foundation of every prayer—filling in the area around the base of the cup by repeatedly writing the final part of the prayer: "Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Spend a few minutes quietly reflecting on God's presence in all moments of your journey.



Thursday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

Today you are invited to offer this prayer for Holy Week and meditate on your own journey on the discipleship pathway

God of our lives,
Six weeks ago we began our Lenten journey walking the discipleship pathway
We reflected on our need for each other, on our need for you, on our call to follow Jesus.
We have journeyed day by day to Jerusalem,
to the procession of palms and hosannas,
to the temple and to the streets,
to the Garden of Gethsemane and what lies beyond.
We are grateful, God, that we have not been alone on this way.
We are grateful that you have been with us all the while,
supporting us even as you confront us.

We are grateful that you have created us to be in community with each other, and in days like this we know why.
Thank you for this **worshiping community**,
cast in your image, shaped by your love.

Help us, as we follow Jesus together,
to develop deep and abiding **holy friendships**;
friendships that are honest and vulnerable.

Capture our hearts and minds with a vision of your kingdom,
and inspire us to live out our **sacred purpose**
to bring your holy vision to life here on earth as it is in heaven.

You have shown us, God, what it means to love as you love.
In Christ, you have shown us what it means to give everything to this call,
to live lives of **dynamic spirituality**,
ever growing in your limitless love.

Lord, may we live our lives with such **joyful generosity**
that we might find the courage to open our hearts and hands
in order to give life to others—indeed, abundant life for all.

God, you call us to be a part of your kingdom;
you call us to lead others to it.
So help us recognize that we have a **faith worth sharing**
A faith that helps all people embrace your creation
A faith that invites all people to explore your purpose for their lives
And a faith that extends love and respect to all.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Friday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

Today you are invited to pray this Good Friday prayer – a reminder of God's limitless love:

Good Friday Prayer

God loved the world so much
that God sent Jesus the son
so that all who believed in him
would have eternal life
God loved the world so much
love gave everything it had
that anyone who grasped the story of love
would be grasped by love's story

and find what is eternal

God loved the world so much
heaven opened up itself completely
so that whoever welcomed the kingdom in
through works of love and justice
would find the lasting wholeness of life

God loved the world so much
Jesus put on flesh and lived among us
so that the face of God would be clear to humanity
and the word of God would be clearly heard
that no life is cheap enough to destroy

God loved the world so much
God went there Gods-self
so that anyone who banked on love
would discover life's ultimate value
and in so doing live in its fullness

God loved the world so much
God let Jesus gamble everything on love
through to crucifixion and death
so that all who ventured to love in that way
would know what had been distilled in eternity

God loved the world so much
that God sent Jesus the son
so that all who believed in him
would have eternal life

~ written by Roddy Hamilton

Saturday

As we engage in a practice of discipleship throughout the season of Lent, each day you'll find an invitation to contemplate what God wants for you in this moment.

Today you are invited to pray this prayer of transformation.

I breathe in God's grace.

May it transform my insecurities

So that I breathe out God's love

I breathe in God's love

May it transform my fears

So that I breathe out God's hope

I breathe in God's hope

May it transform my doubts

So that I breathe out God's faithfulness

I breathe in God's faithfulness

May it transform my heart

So that I breathe out the Good News of Christ Jesus

I breathe in the Good News of Christ Jesus

May it transform me

So that I breathe out God's grace...