

A large, leafless tree silhouette is the central focus, set against a bright, hazy sunset or sunrise sky. The sun is positioned behind the tree's trunk, creating a lens flare effect. The background shows a calm body of water reflecting the light. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Humility

Reflect on the word Humility. Take a few moments to think, to hope and to pray about how God might create humility in your life. How might your reflection shape you, change you and join you and Christ together? After you have taken a few minutes to reflect here, turn the page and read further.

The Twenty-third Day of Lent

Monday, March 15, 2010

Invocation

*O Son of God,
Wrapped in the tender makings of human flesh,
Coax us down on our knees when we remember Your human form
living among desperate, broken people like us.
Your humility and act of emptying yourself—a King!
To become our servant is continually changing us.
Help us to remember our brokenness and constant need for Your
regenerating Spirit.*

Change us, mold us, and create us like You, humble servants for our Lord.

Amen.

Song

*"We fall down
We lay our crowns
At the feet of Jesus
The greatness of
Your Mercy and love
At the feet of Jesus
And we cry holy, holy, holy
Is the lamb."*

"We Fall Down" by Chris Tomlin

Reflection

Perhaps we do not know humility as well as its close cousin, humiliation. A bad dream of being stripped bare with nothing but pointed fingers and laughs brings us out of a deep sleep in a sweat. We wring our hands in prayer in our lap before a business presentation, begging God for mercy in our fear of potential embarrassment. We demand respect and honor in all our endeavors and obsessively compete for the nonexistent prize of immunity from scorn. And, undoubtedly, at the end of the day of doing all of this, we are tired. We are human, after all.

How often do we forget that Jesus the Christ was also taking on the same human form—not in humiliation, but in humility. He humbled Himself to all the nuances of a clumsy, awkward human life. He became like us so that we could be like Him. He's tasted tears, smelled our sweat, and washed our dirty feet. He knows us—and our skin—better than we often remember.

This week is an opportunity for us to recall this tremendous act of love on Christ's part. May your exposure in front of God be an invitation for communion. May your weakness only allow Him to be strong. May Jesus challenge you away from your five-year plan for success to remind you that He dwells among "the least of them." Discover the anomaly of a servant King whose coming to earth was both preposterous and necessary.

Benediction

*May you be enriched by your observance of Lent,
and may God fill your heart and mind with
wisdom, love and understanding. Amen.*

Your reflections...

The Twenty-fourth Day of Lent

Tuesday, March 16, 2010

*"Before destruction one's heart is haughty,
but humility goes before honor."*

– Proverbs 18:12

*"The reward for humility and fear of the LORD
is riches and honor and life."*

– Proverbs 22:4

In "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe", Mr. Beaver seems baffled that Lucy hopes that Aslan, a lion and King of "the whole wood," is safe.

"Safe?...Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good."

Dangerous and good seem oddly paired, just as the Savior of the world was with His infant bed of hay. The Proverbs verses do the same as they speak of humility coming before honor, but not before the fear of the Lord. C.S. Lewis suggests in "The Problem of Pain" that this fear of the Lord is the act of being awestruck by the knowledge of your inadequate comparison. And yet, with the ability to drive us to tears and to our knees with one roar, Jesus beseeches us to join Him, to live in Him, and He in us.

For this week, ask God to show you this holy fear in worship and prayer. Meditate for a few minutes on His infinite love that constantly fuels the pursuit of His people.

Your reflections. . .

The Twenty-fifth Day of Lent

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

"From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him. When they came to him, he said to them: 'You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews.' "

– Acts 20:19

Paul didn't deny that serving God was difficult. His Damascus conversion drastically changed his life. One way that changed his life was when he found that his fellow Jewish colleagues were no longer his peers. Paul had previously held a respected place among them, but his conversion and mission to share Christ's message made the Jews angry enough to plot for his demise. Up against this kind of persecution, many might question their faith and possibly even walk away from such a hard road. But as Paul tells us here, he did not.

Is there a hardship or awkward situation that keeps you from humbling yourself as a follower of God? Perhaps it is easier to bypass those who are homeless on your way to work. Maybe it is embarrassing to ask for forgiveness from a child. Perhaps serving someone else knowing that you will never be thanked, or even disrespected because of it, keeps you from the act.

Write down these "hard" things today. Pray over them, asking God for the strength to do them and follow Him with great humility.

Your reflections. . .

The Twenty-sixth Day of Lent

Thursday, March 18, 2010

"If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, 'Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch'? All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence."

– Colossians 2:20-23

A recent episode of "The Office" on NBC depicts Dwight, a laughable, albeit scheming, character, choosing to do good deeds for others with the mindset that one day, they will have to repay him. As in any comedy, his plans are thwarted once another character pays him back immediately with another good deed. Dwight battles this with another good deed following that one, and chaos ensues with both men trying to out-serve each other, one act after another.

False humility is similar to deceptive servanthood and fabricated piety. Paul encourages fellow believers in these Colossians verses to remember that true humility is not manufactured or compromised. Those who do, will find themselves in a faulty spiritual mindset with futile acts of worship to another god or gods altogether.

Are there moments where you find yourself going through the motions in order to check off a "spiritual checklist"? Do you ever find yourself caught up in others' incorrect assumptions of what a "good Christian" should do? Confess these things to the Lord today. Thank Him for His Spirit that shines a light on the Truth and ask Him to help you live authentically and humbly as His follower.

Your reflections. . .

The Twenty-seventh Day of Lent

Friday, March 19, 2010

"In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' "

– 1 Peter 5:5

Hearing the older generation tell of walking to school in the snow uphill both ways makes a younger generation shudder and ask how it's possible to walk uphill both ways in the first place. In our cushy, technological world, we don't stop long enough in our texting and tweeting to listen to these stories from our older, wiser mentors who have walked the same road of faith. Many times, they have overcome obstacles that can prevent our next stumble or fall if we adhere to their wise counsel.

Is there someone whom you can learn from but haven't taken the time to listen? Whether older or younger, seek out those individuals today with a phone call or visit. Take time to listen to their stories and seek out the wisdom of their days.

Your reflections. . .

The Twenty-Seventh Day of Lent

Saturday, March 20, 2010

"Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

– Matthew 18:4

Imagine the disciples' bewilderment when they witnessed Jesus lift up a humble child as an example of what is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Their religious acts, temple sacrifices, and Hebrew studies did not broach the value of this dependant character of a child. The children easily drew near to Jesus during His time on earth, despite the shooing of His followers, and we, too, are invited to come to the Throne of Grace with the same ease and candor.

Look at your world through a child's eyes today. Do you see the injustices that you would normally reason away? Is creation as astonishing now as it was when you were little? Approach your Heavenly Father in the spirit of humility today. Pray without ceasing, conversing with Him without an agenda or routine. Think of the simple act of a child crawling into their father's lap without reason, and do the same in your moments with Him.

Your reflections. . .

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 21, 2010

Celebrating the Spiritual Disciplines: *Submission*

Within the spiritual discipline of submission is the freedom to "let go and let God." "Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker."

– Psalm 95:6

To practice the spiritual discipline of submission, consider taking up a posture of humbling yourself to our God through kneeling. Kneeling is not meant to be comfortable, but is an act of submission to someone greater. Its appearance denotes both begging and physically being unable to stand. Through the gift of Grace, the Holiest of Holies is now approachable, and, yet, it is by this very measure that kneeling is merited.

As you kneel, consider these meditations: --How do I feel in this position? What is my reaction in prayer in this position? Am I more apt to pray a certain way? If so, why? How do I view God when I am kneeling? How might this change my worship? How might this change my spiritual behavior?

*This Lenten Season
Create in me. . . Harmony
Create in me . . . Purpose
Create in me. . . Forgiveness
Create in me. . . Courage
Create in me. . . Humility
And now bring me to Passion
That I may seek God's will
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*