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# RECONCILING ALL THINGS

*An EEN Lent  
Devotional Journey*

# INTRODUCTION

*“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” – Colossians 1:19–20 (NIV)*

Dear Reader,

*Reconciling All Things* guides you through seven weeks of reflection, offering a space to examine what lies dormant within your soul, waiting to be awakened.

This devotional journey parallels the patient transformation from death to life that we see in God’s creation. Just as seeds need darkness before reaching toward light, so our spiritual growth often demands seasons of introspection and surrender.

Each week offers scripture, reflection, and a prayer designed to feed the soil of your soul. You’ll explore themes of repentance, sacrifice, and hope, not as heavy burdens but as meaningful pathways toward a deeper communion with God.

As we journey through Lent together, may these pages help you uncover the dormant seeds of divine possibilities waiting to emerge with resurrection power when the right season arrives.

Blessings on you this Lent,

**Rev. Dr. Jeremy Summers**

Director of Church & Community Engagement  
Evangelical Environmental Network





Reflection 1

# ASH WEDNESDAY

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**Rev. Dr. Jessica Moerman**  
*EEN President & CEO*

# SCRIPTURE

## Luke 3:1-6 (NIV)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.  
Every valley shall be filled in,  
every mountain and hill made low.  
The crooked roads shall become straight,  
the rough ways smooth.  
And all people will see God’s salvation.”

# DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

As we see in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus’s earthly ministry did not start on a whim. While to many it may have seemed like this carpenter rabbi appeared out of nowhere from the backwaters of Nazareth, God had been preparing this from the very beginning.

This includes the miraculous birth of Jesus’s cousin, John the Baptist, whose own ministry was “to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.” (Luke 1:17)

The focus of the Lenten season is preparation for Easter. Ash Wednesday specifically invites us to take up the postures of preparation and repentance.

The Greek word for repentance used in the New Testament, *metanoia*, simply means “to change one’s mind.” It’s the act of turning and aligning our hearts, our ways, and our lives with Christ. Quoting from the Book of Isaiah and using God’s own creation as an illuminating motif, Luke 3:3-6 gives us a beautiful picture of what the fruit of repentance and heart alignment with Christ looks like: of crooked roads made smooth and straight and of hills and valleys made level and flat. To the weary, burden-laden traveler, a smooth and flat path is a welcome sight compared to the difficult, and often treacherous, terrain of a jagged, hilly road.

This Ash Wednesday, let us prepare for the darkness and victory of Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday by adopting a posture of repentance. Let us, in view of God’s mercy, offer up praise and worship by presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Let us, by repentance and the renewal of our minds, be transformed to be more like Christ. (Romans 12:1-2) Let us embark on a journey together to prepare for the renewal of all things, in heaven and on earth, made possible through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

# QUESTION TO PONDER

Consider what steps you can take today with the help of the Holy Spirit to adopt the posture of a “people prepared.” How is God leading you in this season of preparation and repentance to turn toward Him and renew your heart and mind?

# PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for your mercy and kindness that lead us to repentance. Today, we come to you in the posture of your son Jesus, offering ourselves as a living sacrifice. Prepare our hearts and minds for the gift of transformation, renewal, and salvation made possible through the cross, the resurrection, and your great love for us. In this season of preparation, align our hearts and minds with yours.

Amen



Reflection 2

# IS THE CARE OF CREATION A CHOICE?

**Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon**  
*General Superintendent  
Emerita & Ambassador of  
The Wesleyan Church*



# SCRIPTURE

## Genesis 2:15 (NIV)

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

# DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

I grew up on the plains of Western Oklahoma. We did not have mountains, blue streams, green grass, or large trees with branches for shade. We had wide open fields with wheat, a horizon that never left the eye, constant wind, and moderate rain. In Sunday school, we would have lessons about the importance of taking care of God's creation. The pictures used were all very foreign to my surroundings. Therefore, I thought *that* was the creation God made, and I needed to take care of that type of creation. Maybe when I went to Colorado to visit my grandmother, I needed to be careful about the rocks I climbed. But my home surroundings did not count.

However, one day in my social studies class, I heard about the dust bowls that had literally engulfed the counties next to where I lived. People even died from the dust. I inquired as to why this had happened, and to my chagrin, I learned it was due to a failure to fully care for creation. Land owners and farmers had found the soil so productive for wheat and other crops that they never gave it rest. There was a demand for the crops, hence, they continued to produce and earn more money. Suddenly, a drought ensued, the winds picked up, and the soil erosion began. As we know now, this took a catastrophic toll on the land, families, towns, economy, churches, and the farming industry for generations to come. This is a key example of using the earth for our personal gain rather than caring for its long-term flourishing.

As I reflect on our text today, Genesis 2:15, I am reminded of the most recent fires, floods, and droughts that are occurring because of the

lack of obeying these simple words God spoke as He created this earth. God wants us to flourish and enjoy His creation. Therefore, these words are not harsh but do have consequences when not followed. It is how He set up the rhythms of the universe.

Following the scriptures to care for Creation is not about a political agenda; it is about being a follower of Jesus. It is about discipleship, which is an everyday walk.

# QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Do you really consider the care of creation as a discipleship issue, or do you regard it as a choice?

When did you realize that creation was a gift from God? What prompted this?

# PRAYER

O God, the Creator of the Universe, keep my eyes open today to the creation around me, no matter where I find myself. May I discover new ways to care for your creation. I also lift up those in war-torn countries who are mourning the loss of trees, grass, and flowers and the absolute destruction of life around them. Please be near them.

Thank you for helping me see today how you are reconciling all things on heaven and earth to yourself.

Amen



Reflection 3

# CREATION REVEALS GOD

**Rev. Dr. Jeremy Summers**  
*EEN Director of Church &  
Community Engagement*

# SCRIPTURE

## Psalm 19:1-6 (NIV)

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they reveal knowledge.  
They have no speech, they use no words;  
no sound is heard from them.  
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world.  
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.  
It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.  
It rises at one end of the heavens  
and makes its circuit to the other;  
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

# DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Have you ever stood beneath a star-filled sky on a clear night, or watched a magnificent sunset paint the heavens in brilliant hues? In these moments, we experience what King David described in Psalm 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

David understood something profound: creation testifies to God's existence and character. Like a master artist signing their masterpiece, God has left His fingerprints throughout the universe. Each sunrise speaks of His faithfulness, every star tells of His power, and nature's intricate design reveals His wisdom.

The psalm tells us this divine revelation continues "day after day" and "night after night." There is no place on Earth where creation's testimony cannot be heard. Even without words, the message rings

clear: there is a Creator, and He is glorious.

Consider how the sun, which David describes as a "bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion," brings light, warmth, and life to our world. Its perfect position in relation to Earth speaks of God's precise care in design. Nothing is random; everything serves a purpose.

In our modern world of concrete and screens, we can easily become disconnected from this daily sermon of creation. Perhaps today, we need to pause, step outside, and really look at the world around us. Whether it's a delicate flower pushing through a sidewalk crack or the vast expanse of the night sky, creation continues to fulfill its purpose—declaring the glory of its Maker.

Take a moment today to observe God's creation around you. Let it renew your sense of wonder at God's power, wisdom, and care. As you witness the world around you, join with all creation and praise the One who designed it all with such precision and beauty.

# QUESTIONS TO PONDER

When did you last pause to observe God's creation? What spoke to you most deeply in that moment?

In what ways has technology or busyness dulled your awareness of creation's testimony? How can you intentionally create space this week to listen to what creation is declaring about God?

# PRAYER

Creator God, Your glory shines through all You've made. Open our eyes to see your artistry in stars and sunsets. During this Lenten season, help us pause and hear the creation's testimony. May we join its unending praise and draw closer to You through the wonder of Your works.

Amen



Reflection 4

# WHAT WE HAVE RECEIVED

**Kim Anderson**  
*EEN Director of  
Member Mobilization*



# SCRIPTURE

## 1 Corinthians 11:23-28 (NIV)

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

# DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

Like many people, my family attended church virtually for a while in the year 2020. During this time, our congregation would hold communion periodically and allow people to pick up the elements at our church building during set hours. Well, on Easter, we missed the pickup time and found ourselves without the appropriate elements for communion but still wanted to participate in the practice virtually with our church body.

So, we did what we’ve become so good at as parents: we improvised. We used what was on hand, which—during quarantine—was lemonade and hot dog buns.

My family has been a part of various churches over the years, finding different congregations that met our needs during different times of our lives. One of our pastors had been raised in a church that he felt was too ritualistic in general, and this included communion. So we

held communion periodically rather than regularly. At the next church we attended, we had communion on a weekly basis in order to have more regular reminders of Jesus's sacrifice.

What is important is *why* we take communion and the heart with which we approach it.

1 Corinthians 11:23-24 says, "the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'" We no longer need the sacrificial rituals of the Old Testament because of the final and complete nature of Jesus' sacrifice.

Twice in these verses, we are told to "do this in remembrance of me." This is foundational to our faith, but can nonetheless be forgotten in the daily grind of our lives. And sometimes, being our own worst critics, we can forget that we are worthy of this sacrifice. So, whether it is done on a weekly basis or not, it is good to have that very basic reminder in our lives. For so many reasons, we need periodic reminders, and Jesus knew that. Communion is such a beautiful time to stop and take a moment to remember this.

What is required of us? First, the passage tells us, "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup." In addition to remembering Jesus, we are told to examine ourselves. This periodic reminder to look inward before this remembrance almost seems counter-cultural to our society today, which is full of distractions every moment. But checking ourselves is fundamental to experiencing the full cleansing nature of communion.

1 Corinthians 15:26 says, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Through the taking of communion, we are proclaiming Jesus's death and sacrifice. And, remembering him on a regular basis helps us to continuously proclaim this to those in our circle. Earlier in this chapter in 1 Corinthians, we are told to "hold fast to the word." (15:2)

This language implies that we need a reminder to not forget these truths, as the world or those around us might encourage us to do.

Whether we're using wafers or holy hot dog buns, let us remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us and take some time to reflect on what this means to us this Lenten season.

# QUESTIONS TO PONDER

The next time you find yourself in a place to partake in communion, how can you take a moment to “examine” yourself? What other reminders help you regularly remember Jesus’s death and sacrifice?

# PRAYER

Dear Jesus, this Lenten season, help us to remember and truly understand the sacrifice you made for us. Help us hold fast to these truths and proclaim your death through communion and as we go about our daily lives.

Amen



Reflection 5

# PARASITE OR STEWARD OF CREATION?

**Dr. Marvin Ruffner**

*Assistant Professor of Biology  
at Asbury University*

# SCRIPTURE

## Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

## Romans 1:20; 8:18-25 (NIV)

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

# DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

As a biologist, God's creation continually amazes and fascinates me. God, without doubt, reveals Himself to me through all forms of His creation. As an educator at a Christian liberal arts university, one of my primary goals is to integrate my faith with science. As such, one of my top and emphasized learning outcomes for my students is to continuously highlight the amazing and near endless amounts of

biodiversity on Earth, especially by incorporating outdoor, experiential learning of biodiversity, which is a direct reflection and revelation of God's creation. In other words, as children of Christ, we are mandated to be creation stewards, and I believe one of the first steps in this is learning and understanding God's creation. Thus, I hope this leads to growing respect and a nurturing stewardship worldview for God's creation in new generations of young people. As the conservation biologist Jane Goodall stated: "Only if we understand can we care. Only if we care, we will help. Only if we help, we shall be saved."

I have always felt an innate desire to steward God's creation, despite not realizing during early adulthood (before my committed journey with Christ) that was exactly what I was doing! As an invasive species and conservation biologist, I directly experience the suffering and "groaning" of creation (Romans 8:18-25), which we may all agree (or not) is the result of the Fall (Genesis 3). As such, the consequences of our sin have resulted not only in the suffering of humanity but also in the suffering of all of creation.

One particular shrub I study is Amur Honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*). It was introduced from the Asia region into the central and eastern U.S. in the late 1800s/early 1900s for various anthropogenic-centered reasons. Consequently, since its introduction, it has spread throughout the landscape and has had a plethora of adverse impacts on natural areas (i.e., God's creation). As a result, my research currently focuses on strategies to "heal the land" and restore woodlands and forests to their natural state by removing invasive Amur honeysuckle. Thus, my profession as a conservation biologist directly interfaces with my faith and calling from God to care for His creation.

Paul stresses in Romans 8:22: "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together..." During this Lenten season, as we reflect on Christ's sacrifice for us and the salvation we receive through faith and faith alone, how will you sacrifice for all of creation? How will you help redeem creation as Christ has provided redemption of our souls through eternal life?

As we are reminded of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection, we all patiently await redemption and unification of all creation. I encourage us all to sacrifice for creation as He sacrificed for us: plant a tree, shop locally, support local farmers, get involved and support a faith-based creation care organization such as the Evangelical Environmental Network or Biologos, get involved and support other conservation and humanitarian organizations, be sustainably-minded and reduce consumption and waste (i.e., your "footprint") on creation in some way: be a creation steward, practice creation care, and don't be a creation parasite.

# QUESTIONS TO PONDER

As you consider the sacrifice of Christ this Lent, what can you sacrifice or offer to join Christ's redemption of creation?

# PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, we praise you and thank you for all of your creation. We are forever grateful for your love, mercy, and grace you afford all of us despite our transgressions. We thank you for your Son, His sacrifice, forgiveness for our sins—especially those sins we impart on your amazing creation—and His gift of salvation. Please open our hearts to be increasingly better stewards of your creation, as loving people means caring for creation; and to remind and encourage us to sacrifice for your creation this Lenten season, be increasingly less selfish, and forever remember Christ's sacrifice for us, which is a direct reflection of your love for us.

Amen



Reflection 6

# SERVING LIKE JESUS



**Lauren Kim**

*YECA National Organizer  
& Spokesperson*

# SCRIPTURE

## John 13:1-17 (NIV)

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.

“Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

## DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

In John 13:1-17, we find one of the Bible’s most startling and humbling acts of service. Jesus, knowing His time on earth was short, chose to wash the feet of His disciples—a task typically reserved for lowly servants. He did this as an example of humility and to teach us the importance of humbly serving others.

Jesus washing feet was not a performative ritual, but rather, a public demonstration of love. In ancient times, feet were often dirty from traveling on dusty roads, and washing them was seen as an unpleasant, menial task. Yet God lowered Himself and washed the feet of His disciples. He knew that one would betray Him, one would deny Him, and all would scatter. Still, Jesus served the disciples with grace anyway. Which begs the question, of all the imperfect humans in our lives, who should we serve with unreserved grace?

Jesus said, “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13:15) His words challenge us today to serve others because He first loved us so. Jesus washed the disciples’ feet without looking for recognition or reward. Instead, His example shows that true service comes from a yearning for Christ. When you love someone, you cannot help but be changed to resemble them more. As people after God’s own heart, we have to put others’ needs before our own to meet people where they are and to love our neighbors as Christ loves us.

As we serve, we reflect Christ's love and character. It's not always about big acts of service; sometimes, it's the small, unseen tasks that demonstrate the heart of Jesus. Whether helping a neighbor, supporting a friend, or giving to those in need, let's remember that we honor Christ's example in serving others. As we humble ourselves in service, we become more like the One who washed His disciples' feet, showing the world His love through our actions.

# QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What groups of people do you walk with in life, and how do they need to be served?

What costly, under appreciated, or humble task can you help with today?

# PRAYER

Father, thank You so much for Your example. Through Jesus, we know what it means to truly love others and how to serve. We thank You for washing feet and souls since the beginning of time. You make all things clean. You are a God of service, renewal, and humility. As I re-read and ponder John 13, will you help me to reflect on service this Lent? Please challenge me to serve in ways I have not before. Will You remove any selfish hidden desires behind our service and replace them with just a passion for pursuing You? And this season, will You show us new ways to serve the people around us? May we demonstrate Your Character to all who know us.

Amen



Reflection 7

FOR GOD  
SO LOVED THE  
WORLD



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**Rev. Mitch Hescox**  
*EEN President Emeritus*

# SCRIPTURE

## John 19:17-30 (NIV)

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.”

Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

“Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,

“They divided my clothes among them  
and cast lots for my garment.”

So this is what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

## DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

What emotion comes over you when you see someone wearing a cross? We see it all the time on all sorts of celebrities, from NBA players to film stars. Is it a sign of faith or simply a fashion statement? What if instead of a cross, the same celebrities wore an electric chair, a hangman’s noose, or a lethal injection syringe—what then would be your reaction?

In the first century, the cross represented the most cruel and inhumane execution method, carried out in public as a frightening reinforcement of Rome’s power.

Yet the incarnate God, Jesus, willingly walked the Via Dolorosa. Was it simply a way for forgiveness and the ticket to heaven for those who believe, or was it something much, much more?

In the last couple of centuries, Good Friday has become a day to represent the atonement for our personal sins. This atonement provided the way for us as individuals to be in a relationship with God, and—upon death—for our individual souls to be transported to the heavenly realm for eternity. The atonement part is spot on; all of us must seek forgiveness. But the cross is about so much more than just me.

Unfortunately, in the United States and most of the Western World, Christianity has been transformed exclusively into a personal relationship with God. We have segregated our faith into a private world where our politics, careers, and broader actions and

relationships don't matter; it's all about me. Starting in the early part of the 19th century, faith became completely separated from the rest of our lives. Faith became private and individualistic, and society at large placed great focus on the "me" instead of the "us."

Many years ago, I invited Len Sweet to a weekend of teaching and preaching in my local community. One of Len's comments will always stick with me. Amid the first release of the Nintendo Wii gaming console, Len noted, "America is the only place where we spell 'we' with two I's." Our hyper-focus on the "I" and "me" causes many American evangelicals to continue to misinterpret the most widely quoted piece of scripture: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* (John 3:16, NIV) God loves the entire creation, including all of humanity. Yes, God offers redemption for us as individuals but also desires the restoration of the whole creation to its envisioned majesty. We see this same idea in the first chapter of Ephesians:

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.* (Ephesians 1:7-10)

Lesslie Newbigin's 1978 classic, *The Open Secret*, states, "The Bible, then, is covered with God's purpose of blessing for all the nations. It is concerned with the completion of God's purpose in the creation of the world and of man[sic] within the world. It is not, to put it crudely, concerned with offering a way of escape for the redeemed soul out of history, but with the action of God to bring history to its true end."

In *The Day the Revolution Began*, N.T. Wright goes even further. According to Wright, Jesus's sacrificial death separates the Apostle Paul's present age (the age of chaos and evil) from the age to come

(the Kingdom of God). On the cross, Jesus defeated evil forever, “not that we could sort out abstract ideas, but so that we, having been put right, could be part of God’s plan to put his whole world right.”

This Good Friday, look to the cross not only as the key for our salvation, but as the hope for all creation. Jesus’s crucifixion and death restore our relationship with God so that we may be partners in redeeming all creation as we await heaven coming to earth.

Good Friday sets the stage for the first day of the new creation that will arrive on Easter Sunday.

As for the cross, humbly wear it often and always, reminding people it no longer represents death but instead symbolizes life for all God’s children and all creation. The cross provides hope, not to escape this world, but to bring God’s will on earth, “as it is in heaven.”

# QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Spend a few minutes reflecting on the power of Jesus's crucifixion to restore all creation. How can you use your newfound freedom to assist building God's Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven?

Then, slowly pray the Lord's prayer several times, listening for God's calling on your heart to take part in this often-forgotten part of discipleship: creation care.

# PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from the evil one.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory, forever.

Amen





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