

*A 2019 LENTEN SERIES*

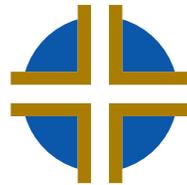
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*40 DAYS WITH JESUS  
& HIS MERCY*

*Weekly Group Bible Studies*

*Brought to you by the Atlantic District of the LC-MS*

*“Engaging the World with the Gospel of Hope”*



**THE ATLANTIC DISTRICT**  
*of the LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD*

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# The Mercy of His Forgiveness

## *Opening Prayer*

### *Introduction*

Share your name and share a circumstance when forgiveness was important to you. (Just say "pass" if you cannot remember or if prefer not to share a circumstance.)

#### **A. Jesus Teaching Forgiveness**

Read and discuss the following verses which contain some of what Jesus teaches about forgiveness:

Matthew 6:12, 14-15      Forgive as you have been forgiven.

Matthew 18:21-35      How many times shall I forgive?  
Parable of the unforgiving servant.

Luke 6:36-38      Freely Forgive!

#### **B. Jesus Showing Forgiveness**

Read and discuss the following verses which show Jesus forgiving people.

Mark 2:1-12      The preeminence of forgiveness

Luke 7:36-50      The power of forgiveness

Luke 23:33-34      The length of Forgiveness

Share with the group one quality of Jesus from the above reading that encouraged you.

#### **C. Jesus' Cross Bringing Forgiveness**

Read and discuss the following verses which describe the meaning of the Cross of Christ.

Luke 24:45-48      Through his suffering, forgiveness is proclaimed.

Acts 3:18-19      Through the cross, sins are wiped out.

Ephesians 1:7      Through His blood, we have forgiveness.

Share with the group how you might reply to a friend who asks you this question: "What is the meaning of the cross?"

#### **D. The Power to Forgive Others**

Read and discuss the following verses which encourage Christians to rely upon Christ's power to forgive.

John 20:19-23      Christ's peace and the Holy Spirit empower us to forgive.

Ephesians 4:32

The forgiveness of Jesus is a storehouse of forgiveness.

1 John 1:8-2:2

Confess and trust you are forgiven.

## ***Conclusion***

On the evening of June 17, 2015, Dylann Roof, a 21-year-old white supremacist, brutally murdered nine African Americans (including the senior pastor, state senator Clementa C. Pinckney) during a Bible Study at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. If possible, watch the following video (1.5 minutes in length) which portrays the forgiveness of family members toward Dylan Roof:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCMnYIsbH94>

There are many aspects of forgiveness you could discuss. But focus in on and discuss where the family members may have gotten the power to forgive someone who had committed such a horrible act. What messages do these brothers and sisters in the Lord bring to you? How can you honor their message of forgiveness?

## ***Closing Prayer***

(Be sure to include those struggling with forgiveness, as well as any thanksgivings or requests.)

*Prepared by Pastor Victor Nelson  
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Cairo, NY*

# The Mercy of His Presence

## *Opening Prayer*

### *Introduction*

Share your name and a circumstance when Jesus' Presence comforted you or inspired you to action. (Just say "pass" if you cannot remember or if prefer not to share a circumstance.)

#### **A. Announcing Jesus' Presence.**

Read and discuss the scripture passages below, and what each tells you about the presence of Jesus.

Matthew 1:21-23	Immanuel - God with us.
Matthew 18:19-20	Where two or more are gathered in His name He is present.
Matthew 28:18-20	The Great Commission - Jesus with us to the end of the age.

#### **B. Jesus makes his Presence known to His People**

The following passages represent some of the many ways Jesus' Presence touches the lives of His People. Read (or skim, paraphrase longer readings) & discuss their application then and now:

Mark 1:16-20	Jesus' presence changes the disciples' lives forever.
Matthew 5-7	Jesus personally teaches God's truths - Sermon on the Mount.
Lk 5:18-25	Jesus' presence brings physical & spiritual healing.
Matthew 11:28-30	Jesus' presence brings rest for the weary.
John 6:1-13	Jesus personally supplies our needs - Feeding of the 5,000.

Are there other passages in the Gospels that come to mind as you ponder the Presence of Jesus in the lives of His people?

If there is time, or on your own, consider how the "I am" words of Jesus express aspects of His Presence in your life:

- The Bread of Life (John 6:35)
- The Light of the World (John 8:12)
- The Door (John 10:9)
- The True Vine (John 15:1)
- The Way and The Truth and The Life (John 14:6)
- The Good Shepherd (John 10:11)
- The Resurrection and The Life (John 11:25, 26)

### C. **Jesus' Presence in His Supper**

Read Matthew 26:26-29

Because Jesus says "...this is my body... this is my blood", Lutherans believe in the Real Presence - that Christ's body and blood are really present "in, with and under" the bread and wine. What blessings are there for you because Christ is really present in the Lord's Supper?

### D. **Jesus' Presence on the Cross**

Read and discuss the following verses in light of Jesus' Presence on the cross.

Matthew 27:39-44            Jesus was taunted & insulted because he remained present on the cross.

Matthew 27:46            Jesus' presence on the cross necessitated His loss of the Father's presence.

John 3:16                 Jesus' presence on the cross demonstrated God's love & obtained eternal life for all who believe in Him.

How would you reply to a friend who asks this question: "Why couldn't God forgive our sins & give us eternal life without Jesus suffering and dying on the cross?" (In other words, "Why was Jesus' presence on the cross necessary?")

### E. **Jesus' Presence through His People**

Jesus came to serve, not to be served (Mk. 10:45). Read and discuss the passages below, considering how Christians bring the Presence of Jesus as they serve others in His name:

John 13:12-14            Jesus washes the feet of the disciples.

Matthew 25:35-40        When we serve others in His name, we are serving Jesus.

1 Corinthians 12:27     We are the Body of Christ.

Colossians 3:23-24     Serve the Lord in whatever you do.

1 Peter 4:10-11         Using our God-given gifts to serve others.

Matthew 5:6             Our good works glorify God.

Is there a particular Bible verse, listed above or another, that inspires you to serve others in the name of Jesus?

### ***Closing Prayer***

Be sure to include those who have not yet received Christ's Presence in their lives, as well as any thanksgivings or requests.

*Prepared by Deacon Shirley Algozzine  
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# The Mercy of His Patience

## *Opening Prayer*

### **Introduction**

Share your name and share a situation when you found it difficult to show patience. (Just say “pass” if you want everyone to know how impatient you are with these types of questions!!!)

#### **A. Jesus Teaching Patience**

Read and discuss the following verses which contain some of what Jesus teaches about patience:

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Luke 13:1-9     | Patience for sinners.                  |
| Matthew 24:9-13 | Patience for salvation.                |
| Romans 15:1-7   | Patience of Christ, an example for us. |

#### **B. Jesus Showing Patience**

Read and discuss the following verses which show Jesus being patient with people.

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| John 14:5-11  | Patience with Philip.                               |
| Luke 10:38-42 | Patience with Martha.                               |
| Mark 9:17-27  | Patience with Disciples and the foolish generation. |

Share with the group one quality of Jesus from the above readings that encouraged you.

#### **C. Jesus’ Perfect Patience on the Cross**

Read and discuss the following verses which describe the patience of Christ for us on the cross.

- |                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Hebrews 12:1-3  | Patience to endure for us. |
| 1 Peter 2:22-25 | Patience to suffer for us. |
| 2 Peter 3:8-9   | Patience to save us.       |

Share with the group how you might reply to a friend who asks you this question: “Why are you so patient with \_\_\_\_\_?”

#### **D. The Power to be Patient with Others**

Read and discuss the following verses which encourage Christians to rely upon Christ’s power for patience.

- |                 |                                  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Peter 2:19-21 | Patience to submit, like Christ. |
| James 5:7-11    | Patience to suffer, like Christ. |

Colossians 3:12-17      Patience to forgive, like Christ.  
1 Thessalonians 5:12-24      Patience to encourage, like Christ.  
1 Timothy 1:12-16      Patience to be merciful, like Christ.

## ***Conclusion***

“If you’re not too long, I will wait for you all my life.” (Oscar Wilde) There are times in our lives when we practice “conditional” patience... giving into temptation, giving up on people. Discuss the perfect, unconditional patience taught and shown by Jesus, and some practical ways we can strive to follow His example in everyday life.

## ***Closing Prayer***

Be sure to include those struggling in body and soul, and ask the Lord for continued strength to be patient in all things.

*Prepared by Pastor Steven Williamson-Link  
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Cairo, NY*

# The Mercy of His Welcome

## *Opening Prayer*

### *Introduction*

Share your name and a time you felt truly welcomed by someone.

#### **A. Jesus extends the mercy of his welcome to people in their everyday life.**

In the following encounters, how does Jesus meet people?

Luke 5:1-11                      Jesus joins fishermen on the job.

Luke 19:1-10                     Jesus calls out to a man on a limb.

John 4:5-26                      Jesus and the thirsty woman.

What are some practical ways you can extend the mercy of Jesus' welcome with the people you work with or see on an everyday basis?

#### **B. All who faithfully come to Jesus are welcomed and received by Him.**

In these passages, Jesus is approached by people who were considered "unclean" or "less than" in his society. What do you discover about Jesus in His welcome of each below?

Luke 7:36-50                      A party crasher.

Luke 5:17-26                      A helpless cripple.

Mark 5:25-34                     A diseased woman.

Mark 10:13-16                    Little Children.

Although we may not use language like "unclean" or "less than" to describe people in our community, there are definitely people who are seen as "outsiders" in our society and our peer groups today. How can we, as individuals and as the church body as a whole, extend the mercy of Jesus' welcome to them today?

#### **C. What do each of the following verses tell you about Jesus' invitation and welcome?**

Matthew 10:40                    We receive the Father when we receive Jesus.

Matthew 11:28-30                Christ's welcome brings much-needed rest to the weary.

Colossians 2:6-7                 Once we receive Christ, we are encouraged to walk in Him.

#### **D. How are you at welcoming others?**

How do each of the following verses challenge you in showing a merciful welcome to others?

Romans 15:7                      Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.

Luke 14:12-14                    Reach out to those who cannot repay you.

Matthew 25:34-40                Help those in need.

Watch the following video (6.5 minutes in length) individually or as a group, about a pastor who disguised himself as a homeless man.

<https://youtu.be/7qftpoMfe08>

How have you (as an individual) reacted to church visitors who look differently than the average church member at your congregation? What helps you (and the Church) to be more welcoming and inclusive to visitors who are different?

## ***Conclusion***

Through His mercy, Jesus welcomed all who genuinely sought him and reached out to those who did not seek him. He met people where they were in life, regardless of if they seemed “deserving” by society’s standards. He lovingly spent time with sinners, the sick and the outcasts all to show them the Father’s mercy and immeasurable love. As you continue to actively reflect on Jesus’ mercy throughout the rest of these 40 days, ask God to give you a compassionate and merciful heart to reach those who need to be welcomed by Christ’s love.

## ***Closing Prayer***

*Prepared by Deacon Amanda Marie Freemann  
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# The Mercy of His Giving

## *Opening Prayer*

### **Introduction**

Share your name and share a time when someone gave you a needed gift. (Just say “pass” if you cannot remember or if prefer not to share a time.)

#### **A. Jesus Teaching on giving.**

Read the following verses, responding to the question:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Luke 6:38       | How does being a giver enable us to receive?      |
| Acts 20:35      | Why is it more blessed to give than receive?      |
| Matthew 5:41-48 | What is the contemporary meaning of these verses? |
| Mark 12:41-44   | In what ways is Jesus like this poor widow?       |

#### **B. Jesus’ Life Shows His Giving.**

Read the passages below and analyze what each one says about the giving of Jesus.

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| John 1:1-14      | Jesus gives Himself, as the Word became flesh. |
| Matthew 14:13-21 | Jesus gives bread for the feeding the 5000.    |
| John 14:27       | Jesus gives peace that the world cannot give.  |
| John 20:22,23    | Jesus gives His Holy Spirit.                   |

#### **C. Jesus’ Cross – An Act of giving.**

Read each passage below and discuss what it one says about Jesus giving Himself on the cross.

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Matthew 20       | The Son of Man came... to give His life a ransom for many.  |
| John 10:17,18    | Jesus freely lays down His life.                            |
| Matthew 26:52-54 | Jesus could have called 12 legions of angels to rescue Him. |
| Galatians 1:3,4  | Jesus gave himself for our sins.                            |

#### **D. The Power to Be Giving.**

Read each passage below. Discuss the source of power, motivation and strength to be a giver.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 2 Corinthians 8:8-9 | Jesus became poor so we might be rich and lovingly give. |
| 2 Corinthians 9:7,8 | God loves a cheerful giver.                              |

Ephesians 5:1,2

Love as you are loved.

I John 3:16-18

Love in deed and truth.

## ***Conclusion***

Let each person consider the following questions and respond. (You may pass on these questions if you desire):

1. In what area of our life God is calling you to step up in your giving?
2. What mercy do you receive from Jesus that will enable you to respond to God's call to be a better giver?

## ***Closing Prayer***

Pray for one another as God calls each to respond to Jesus' giving by giving. Also include any thanksgivings or requests.

*Prepared by Pastor Victor Nelson  
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Cairo, NY*

# The Mercy of His Death and Resurrection

## *Opening Prayer*

### ***Introduction***

Share your name and share a Holy Week worship service, custom or event that blesses you. (Just say “pass” IF YOU WANT YOUR PASTOR TO YELL AT YOU!!!)

#### **A. Mercy to a Thief.**

Read Luke 23:39-42.

Jesus was crucified between two thieves. Our focus is on the thief that defended Jesus. What did that thief say that he deserved? What did he confess about Jesus? Describe the mercy that Jesus gave to that dying thief and what that mercy would have meant to him, at that moment of his life.

#### **B. Mercy given to Mary Magdalene.**

Read Luke 8:1-3. Describe what you learn about Mary Magdalene.

Mary Magdalene was present when Jesus died on the cross and when Jesus’ body was placed in the tomb. Discuss some of the wrenching emotions that she would have felt both at the cross and at the tomb.

Read John 20:11-18.

What do you learn about the mercy of Jesus as He appears first to Mary Magdalene after His resurrection?

#### **C. Mercy Given to Peter.**

Read John 18:17, 25-27. How might Peter have felt after the cock crowed?

Read John 21:5-17. What do you learn of the mercy of Jesus as He restores Peter? Can you think of a time in your life when God transformed a sin or loss into a great mercy?

#### **D. Mercy to Thomas.**

Thomas, one of the Jesus’ disciples, was not present when Jesus appeared on that first Easter night.

Read John 20:24 & 25 and discuss Thomas’ reaction.

Read John 20:26-29. What are some of the ways that Jesus could have responded to Thomas? How was Jesus merciful to Thomas? What impact do you think this mercy had on Thomas’ life?

## **E. Mercy Shown to Paul**

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17. What was Paul's life like prior to meeting the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus? How did Jesus show Paul mercy? How did the mercy of Jesus toward Paul change Paul's life?

How has that example of mercy made a difference to other people?

## ***Conclusion***

God's mercy is a pure gift. In what part of your life do you need to receive or remember that gift? To what undeserving soul do you need to extend the gift of mercy?

## ***Closing Prayer***

Be sure to include thanksgiving for God's mercy given in the death and resurrection of Jesus, as well as any thanksgivings or requests

*Prepared by Pastor Victor Nelson  
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Cairo, NY*