ANTIOCH
BAPTIST CHURCH

40 Days

Journey to the Cross of Christ

A Journey Toward the Cross and Resurrection

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40-Day Scripture Reading Journey

A Journey Toward the Cross and Resurrection

Introduction

40 Days: Journey to the Cross of Christ

Beloved Antioch Family and Friends of the faith,

Lent is more than a season; it is an invitation. For forty days, we slow our steps and turn our hearts toward the Cross of Christ. Before there was an empty tomb, there was a rugged cross. Before resurrection, there was surrender. Before victory, there was sacrifice.

This journey is not about routine, but relationship. Together, we will walk with Jesus through repentance, testing, humility, surrender, and hope. We are not rushing to Easter; we are walking deliberately to the Cross.

Read slowly. Reflect honestly. Apply courageously. Pray sincerely.

Each week has a spiritual focus:

• Returning to the Lord

• Walking in the Wilderness

• Following the Servant King

• Counting the Cost

• From Suffering to Hope

• Journeying to Calvary

My prayer is that something in us dies that needs to die and something holy is raised to new life.

This is our journey to the Cross. And we will walk it together.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Regina Garris

Week 1 – Return to the Lord | Theme: Repentance & Realignment

Day 1 – Psalm 51:1-12

Reflection 1: What words or phrases reveal David's understanding of true repentance?

Reflection 2: Where do I need a clean heart and renewed spirit right now?

Life Application: Write a personal prayer of confession today.

Closing Prayer: Lord, create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Restore my joy and realign my life with You. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 2 – Joel 2:12-13

Reflection 1: What does it mean to return to God with all your heart?

Reflection 2: Have I been outwardly religious but inwardly distant?

Life Application: Set aside 10 uninterrupted minutes to return to God in honest prayer.

Closing Prayer: Merciful God, I return to You not with performance but with sincerity. Draw me close again. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 3 – Isaiah 55:6-9

Reflection 1: What does this passage teach about God's ways versus ours?

Reflection 2: Where must I surrender my limited thinking?

Life Application: Release one worry into God's hands today.

Closing Prayer: Lord, Your ways are higher than mine. Help me trust what I cannot see. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 4 – Luke 15:11-24

Reflection 1: What does the father's response teach about God's heart?

Reflection 2: Do I truly believe God welcomes me back?

Life Application: Approach God boldly, not shamefully.

Closing Prayer: Father, thank You for running toward me when I return. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 5 – Proverbs 28:13

Reflection 1: What is the difference between concealment and confession?

Reflection 2: What am I tempted to hide from God?

Life Application: Name one hidden struggle before God.

Closing Prayer: Lord, I choose honesty over hiding. Cover me with Your mercy. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 6 – 1 John 1:5-9

Reflection 1: What does it mean to walk in the light?

Reflection 2: How can I live more transparently?

Life Application: Invite accountability in one area of growth.

Closing Prayer: God of light, cleanse me and help me walk openly before You. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 7 – Psalm 139:23-24

Reflection 1: Why does David invite God to search him?

Reflection 2: Am I willing to let God examine my motives?

Life Application: Sit silently for 5 minutes asking God to search your heart.

Closing Prayer: Search me, O God, and lead me in Your everlasting way. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Week 2 – Walking in the Wilderness | Theme: Testing & Trust

Day 8 – Matthew 4:1-11

Reflection 1: How did Jesus respond to temptation?

Reflection 2: What wilderness test am I facing?

Life Application: Respond to temptation with Scripture.

Closing Prayer: Lord, strengthen me to stand firm in every test. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 9 – Deuteronomy 8:2-5

Reflection 1: Why does God allow wilderness seasons?

Reflection 2: What has hardship revealed about my heart?

Life Application: Thank God for one lesson learned through difficulty.

Closing Prayer: Faithful God, use every wilderness season to grow me. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 10 – James 1:2-4

Reflection 1: How can trials produce perseverance?

Reflection 2: What is God developing in me?

Life Application: Shift from complaining to trusting.

Closing Prayer: Lord, mature my faith through every challenge. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 11 – Psalm 63:1-8

Reflection 1: What does spiritual thirst look like?

Reflection 2: Do I long for God more than comfort?

Life Application: Begin your day seeking God before distractions.

Closing Prayer: God, my soul thirsts for You. Satisfy me with Your presence. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 12 – Hebrews 11:6

Reflection 1: What pleases God according to this verse?

Reflection 2: Where do I need to trust more deeply?

Life Application: Take one step of faith today.

Closing Prayer: Lord, help my faith grow bold and confident in You. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 13 – Exodus 16:2-15

Reflection 1: What does manna teach about daily dependence?

Reflection 2: Am I trusting God daily or hoarding security?

Life Application: Pray for daily bread—not future anxiety.

Closing Prayer: Provider God, teach me to trust You one day at a time. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 14 – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Reflection 1: What does Paul learn about weakness?

Reflection 2: How can weakness become strength in Christ?

Life Application: Offer your weakness to God without shame.

Closing Prayer: Lord, Your grace is sufficient for me. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Week 3 – Following the Servant King | Theme: Humility & Obedience

Day 15 – Philippians 2:5–11

Reflection 1: What does this passage reveal about the mindset and humility of Christ?

Reflection 2: In what areas of my life is pride resisting surrender?

Life Application: Choose one act of humility today that no one will see or applaud.

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, You humbled Yourself for my salvation. Shape my heart to reflect Your obedience and humility. Give me Your mind and Your posture. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 16 – Mark 10:42–45

Reflection 1: How does Jesus redefine greatness in this passage?

Reflection 2: Do I measure success by status or by service?

Life Application: Intentionally serve someone today without seeking recognition.

Closing Prayer: Servant King, teach me that true greatness is found in serving. Remove my need for applause and anchor me in love. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 17 – John 13:1–17

Reflection 1: What does Jesus washing the disciples' feet teach about leadership?

Reflection 2: Who is difficult for me to serve with humility?

Life Application: Show practical kindness to someone you may normally overlook.

Closing Prayer: Lord, teach me to kneel in love. Let humility become my strength and service my worship. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 18 – Micah 6:8

Reflection 1: What does God require of His people according to this verse?

Reflection 2: Am I walking humbly, or simply appearing righteous?

Life Application: Practice justice, mercy, and humility in one intentional action today.

Closing Prayer: Righteous God, align my life with Your requirements. Let my walk match my worship. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 19 – Romans 12:3–8

Reflection 1: What does this passage teach about sober self-assessment?

Reflection 2: Am I neglecting or misusing the gifts God has given me?

Life Application: Identify one spiritual gift and use it purposefully today.

Closing Prayer: Lord, help me see myself clearly — neither inflated nor insecure. Use my gifts for Your glory. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 20 – Colossians 3:12–15

Reflection 1: Which virtue in this passage stands out most to you?

Reflection 2: Where do I struggle to “put on” Christlike character?

Life Application: Intentionally practice patience, kindness, or forgiveness today.

Closing Prayer: Clothe me, Lord, in compassion and humility. Let the peace of Christ rule my heart. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 21 – Psalm 25:4–9

Reflection 1: What does this Psalm teach about being teachable?

Reflection 2: Am I truly open to God's correction and guidance?

Life Application: Before making a decision today, pause and ask for God's direction.

Closing Prayer: Lead me in Your truth, O Lord. Make me teachable and tender to Your voice. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Week 4 – The Cost of the Cross | Theme: Sacrifice & Surrender

Day 22 – Luke 9:23–25

Reflection 1: What does Jesus mean when He says to deny yourself and take up your cross daily?

Reflection 2: What “self” must I deny in order to follow Christ more faithfully?

Life Application: Identify one habit, attitude, or desire that competes with Christ’s lordship and surrender it intentionally today.

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, teach me what it means to follow You daily. Give me courage to lay down what hinders and carry what refines. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 23 – Isaiah 53:1–6

Reflection 1: What do you notice about the suffering described in this passage?

Reflection 2: Do I truly understand that Christ bore my griefs and carried my sorrows?

Life Application: Spend time thanking Jesus specifically for what He carried on your behalf.

Closing Prayer: Suffering Savior, thank You for bearing what I could not. Let my heart never grow casual about the cost of my redemption. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 24 – Romans 12:1–2

Reflection 1: What does it mean to present your body as a living sacrifice?

Reflection 2: Where is my thinking in need of renewal?

Life Application: Replace one negative or worldly thought with Scripture truth today.

Closing Prayer: Transforming God, renew my mind and reshape my desires. May my life be holy and pleasing to You. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 25 – Galatians 2:20

Reflection 1: What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?

Reflection 2: Is Christ truly living through me in my daily responses?

Life Application: Before reacting today, pause and ask, “What would Christ express through me?”

Closing Prayer: Lord, let Your life be seen in mine. Help me decrease so You may increase. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 26 – Matthew 16:24–26

Reflection 1: What does Jesus say about gaining the world but losing the soul?

Reflection 2: What am I tempted to pursue at the expense of my spiritual health?

Life Application: Reprioritize one area of your schedule to reflect eternal values.

Closing Prayer: Eternal God, anchor my heart in what truly matters. Guard my soul from misplaced ambition. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 27 – Hebrews 12:1–2

Reflection 1: What “weights” or sins might be slowing your spiritual race?

Reflection 2: How does fixing your eyes on Jesus change your endurance?

Life Application: Release one distraction that has been draining your focus.

Closing Prayer: Jesus, author and finisher of my faith, help me run with perseverance. Keep my eyes fixed on You. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 28 – Psalm 40:6–8

Reflection 1: What does delighting in God's will look like?

Reflection 2: Do I obey reluctantly or joyfully?

Life Application: Obey God promptly in something you have delayed.

Closing Prayer: Lord, I delight to do Your will. Write Your law upon my heart and make obedience my joy. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Week 5 – From Suffering to Hope | Theme: Endurance & Promise

Day 29 – John 16:33

Reflection 1: What does Jesus promise about trouble?

Reflection 2: How does His victory give you courage?

Life Application: When faced with difficulty today, declare aloud: “Christ has overcome.”

Closing Prayer: Overcoming Savior, steady my heart in trials and fill me with courage. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 30 – 1 Peter 1:3–9

Reflection 1: What does this passage teach about living hope?

Reflection 2: Is my joy rooted in circumstances or in resurrection promise?

Life Application: Write down three eternal truths that anchor your hope.

Closing Prayer: God of living hope, help my faith endure and my joy remain anchored in You. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 31 – 2 Corinthians 4:7–18

Reflection 1: What does it mean to have treasure in jars of clay?

Reflection 2: Where have you seen God's power in your weakness?

Life Application: View one challenge today as an opportunity for God's strength to shine.

Closing Prayer: Lord, though I feel pressed, let me not be crushed. Shine through my weakness. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 32 – Romans 8:18–25

Reflection 1: How does Paul compare present suffering to future glory?

Reflection 2: What hope sustains you when circumstances feel heavy?

Life Application: Meditate on the promise of future glory when discouragement arises.

Closing Prayer: Faithful Father, remind me that present pain is not permanent. Anchor me in future glory. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 33 – Lamentations 3:22–26

Reflection 1: What does this passage teach about God's faithfulness?

Reflection 2: How have you experienced His mercies as new?

Life Application: Begin the day by thanking God for fresh mercy.

Closing Prayer: Great is Your faithfulness, Lord. I will wait quietly for Your salvation. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 34 – James 1:12

Reflection 1: What promise is given to the one who perseveres?

Reflection 2: What motivates you to endure faithfully?

Life Application: Encourage someone else who is enduring hardship.

Closing Prayer: Crown my endurance with faithfulness, Lord. Strengthen me to stand firm. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 35 – Psalm 30

Reflection 1: How does this Psalm describe sorrow and joy?

Reflection 2: Where have you seen joy come after a night of weeping?

Life Application: Reflect on one season where God brought you through.

Closing Prayer: Lord, thank You that weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Holy Week – Journey to Calvary | Theme: Love Poured Out

Day 36 – Matthew 21:1–11 (Palm Sunday)

Reflection 1: How did the crowd respond to Jesus' arrival?

Reflection 2: Is my praise consistent when expectations are unmet?

Life Application: Offer intentional praise, not conditional praise.

Closing Prayer: Hosanna, Lord. I welcome You as King of my heart. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 37 – John 12:23–33

Reflection 1: What does Jesus teach about a seed falling into the ground?

Reflection 2: What must “die” in you to produce greater fruit?

Life Application: Surrender something that feels costly but necessary.

Closing Prayer: Glorify Yourself through my surrender, Lord. Let my life bear fruit. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 38 – John 13:1–15, 34–35 (Maundy Thursday)

Reflection 1: What commandment does Jesus give His disciples?

Reflection 2: How visible is Christ's love in my actions?

Life Application: Express tangible love to someone today.

Closing Prayer: Lord, help me love as You have loved me. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 39 – John 19:16–30 (Good Friday)

Reflection 1: What words from the Cross speak most deeply to you?

Reflection 2: What does “It is finished” mean for your salvation?

Life Application: Sit in quiet gratitude for the finished work of Christ.

Closing Prayer: Crucified Savior, thank You for completing what I never could. I receive Your finished work. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Day 40 – Matthew 28:1–10 (Resurrection Sunday)

Reflection 1: What emotions do you imagine the women felt at the empty tomb?

Reflection 2: What in your life needs resurrection hope today?

Life Application: Declare boldly: “He is risen, and I will live in resurrection power.”

Closing Prayer: Risen Lord, because You live, I live. Fill me with resurrection courage and joy. Amen.

Additional Journaling:

Concluding Reflection – The Journey Continues

Beloved Antioch Family,

For forty days, we have walked together toward the Cross.

We slowed our steps. We examined our hearts. We surrendered what needed to die. We trusted God in the wilderness. We counted the cost. And we stood at Calvary.

Now we stand at the empty tomb.

But this is not the end of the journey—it is the beginning of resurrection living.

The Cross was not only something we remembered. It reshaped us.

Resurrection is not simply an event we celebrate once a year. It is a life we now live.

Because He lives, we forgive more freely, serve more humbly, trust more boldly, and love more deeply.

Carry the Cross in your character. Carry the resurrection in your courage. Carry Christ in your daily living.

This was never just a forty-day exercise. It was transformation.

And the journey continues.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Regina Garris