



# 2018 Lenten PRAYER GUIDE

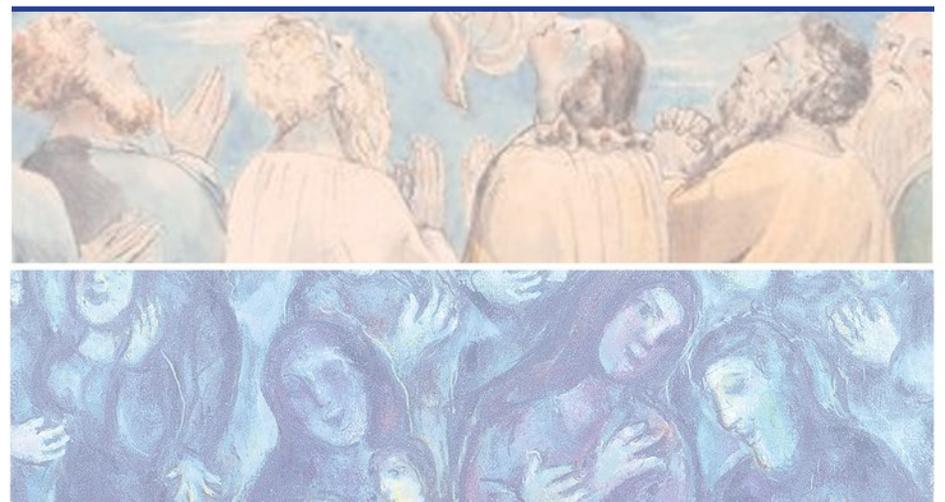
FAITH COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

*faith*  
community bible church

The © 2018 Lenten Prayer Guide was created to help members and friends of Faith Community Bible Church engage in a season of prayer around the beauty, power and saving work of Jesus Christ. You can find a digital version of it online at:

[faithcommunitybiblechurch.org](http://faithcommunitybiblechurch.org)

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# 2018 Lenten PRAYER GUIDE

The season of Lent is a time of prayer and intercession for Faith Community Bible Church (FCBC).

To help encourage our personal and group times of prayer, we have chosen four words and art images to pray and meditate on. FCBC's teaching team is focusing on Hebrews and four aspects of Jesus to focus on: Jesus as our Sacrifice, Jesus as our High Priest, Jesus as our Redeemer and Jesus as the True Word.

You can see copies of these four images on the back wall of the church. We are also making this prayer guide available. We've asked a few people to choose one of the images to meditate on to help get us started.

This guide is available in digital form through FCBC's list serv and website.

You are invited to meditate and pray through this season using the guide. You are also encouraged to write a meditation on any of these images and words yourself and then to share with the rest of us. You can share them through FCBC list serv or share them with Bobbette Rose ([info@faithcommunitybiblechurch.org](mailto:info@faithcommunitybiblechurch.org)) and she will make them available on the list serv.

At the end of this season, we intend to compile all the meditations together to make a full guide that we can continue to use and share.



## ***How To Use this Guide***

This guide is based on a prayer practice called *viseo divina*. It invites us to encounter God through images. A prayerful consideration of and interaction with a piece of art, or other visual representation can bring us into an experience with the divine in a unique and powerful way.

*Visio divina* can be practiced individually or with a small group by using a piece of art as a focal point for prayer. We are pairing scripture with each image as well in order to reflect on the scripture through the art.

### ***The process***

Pick out one of the four images. (Each day you can pick a new image or the same image or even a completely different image from the ones used in this guide. But try to reflect on one of the four aspects of Jesus even if you find a more useful image for you to meditate on than the ones presented here)

Look at the image and let your eyes stay with the very first thing that you see. Keep your attention on that one part of the image that first catches your eye. Try to keep your eyes from wandering to other parts of the picture. Breathe deeply and let yourself gaze at that part of the image for a minute or so.

Now, let your eyes gaze at the whole image. Take your time and look at every part of the photograph. See it all. Reflect on the image for a minute or so.

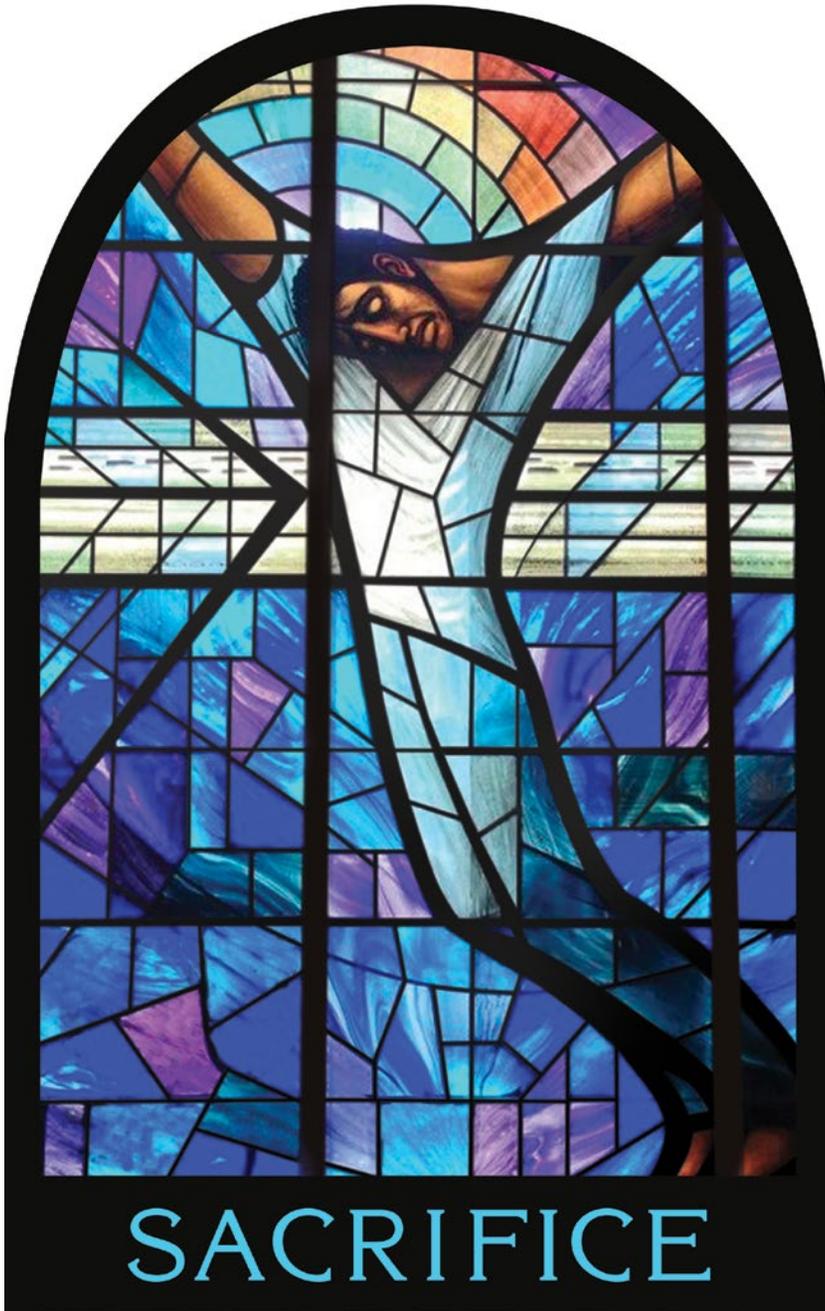
### ***Consider the following questions:***

What emotions does this image evoke in you?

What does the image stir up in you, bring forth in you?

Does this image lead you into an attitude of prayer? If so, let these prayers take form in you.

Write them down if you desire. Share any reflections you would like to with the rest of the body.



# SACRIFICE

*A Meditation by Linda Stollfus*

Sacrifices come in all sizes and shapes. Sacrifices are made with various motives behind them. Some sacrifices are from a place of love, others from necessity, others out of forced duty or social pressure. What a different feeling motives cause us to have towards our sacrifices and the recipients of our sacrifices.

I have sacrificed out of duty and pressure and have felt the limits of that. Sometimes it is necessary to sacrifice regardless of motive but often motives outside of love leaves me feeling depleted, sometimes hesitant. I have sacrificed out of love and have felt the momentum of that motive and desire to protect, cherish, see thrive the object of my sacrifice no matter the personal cost. The most clear example of this for me was when I gave birth to my son. I knew the pain would be intense and I would be injured while bringing him to the world but the sacrifice produced in me a greater love and protectiveness towards my son.

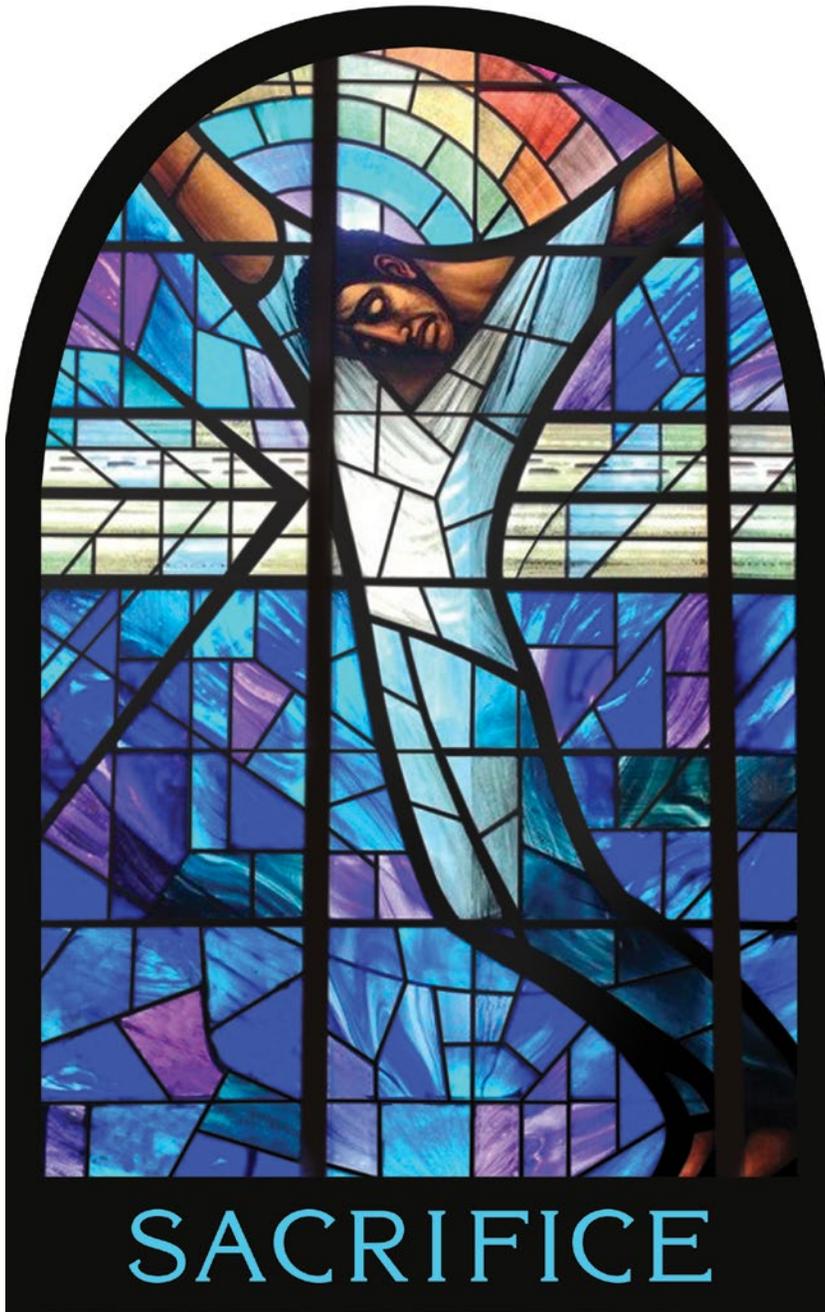
When I think about Christ's sacrifice I think of the verse,

*"For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."  
(Heb 12:2).*

Clearly Jesus' motive is joy over us. What an amazing thing to consider that Christ doesn't see us as a duty but He is carried by the power of love in His acts of sacrifice. His sacrifice brings us in closer relationship with Him. They are a force of power to bring us near.

## ***For Prayer and Meditation***

Think about sacrifices you have made and motives you have had and their results on your relationships.



# SACRIFICE

*A Meditation by Laurie Horton*

Have you ever imagined yourself the hero in a daydream scenario? I know I have dreamed of myself as the one to stand up to the bad guy, or to save the kids from the on-coming traffic. Why do I think I would be ready to sacrifice myself?

Sacrifice could be defined as “giving up something of value in favor of something else regarded as more important or worthy”. But that’s definition #3. The first definition is “the act of slaughtering an animal or a person or surrendering a possession as an offering to God.” This is how the Hebrews would have understood the word.

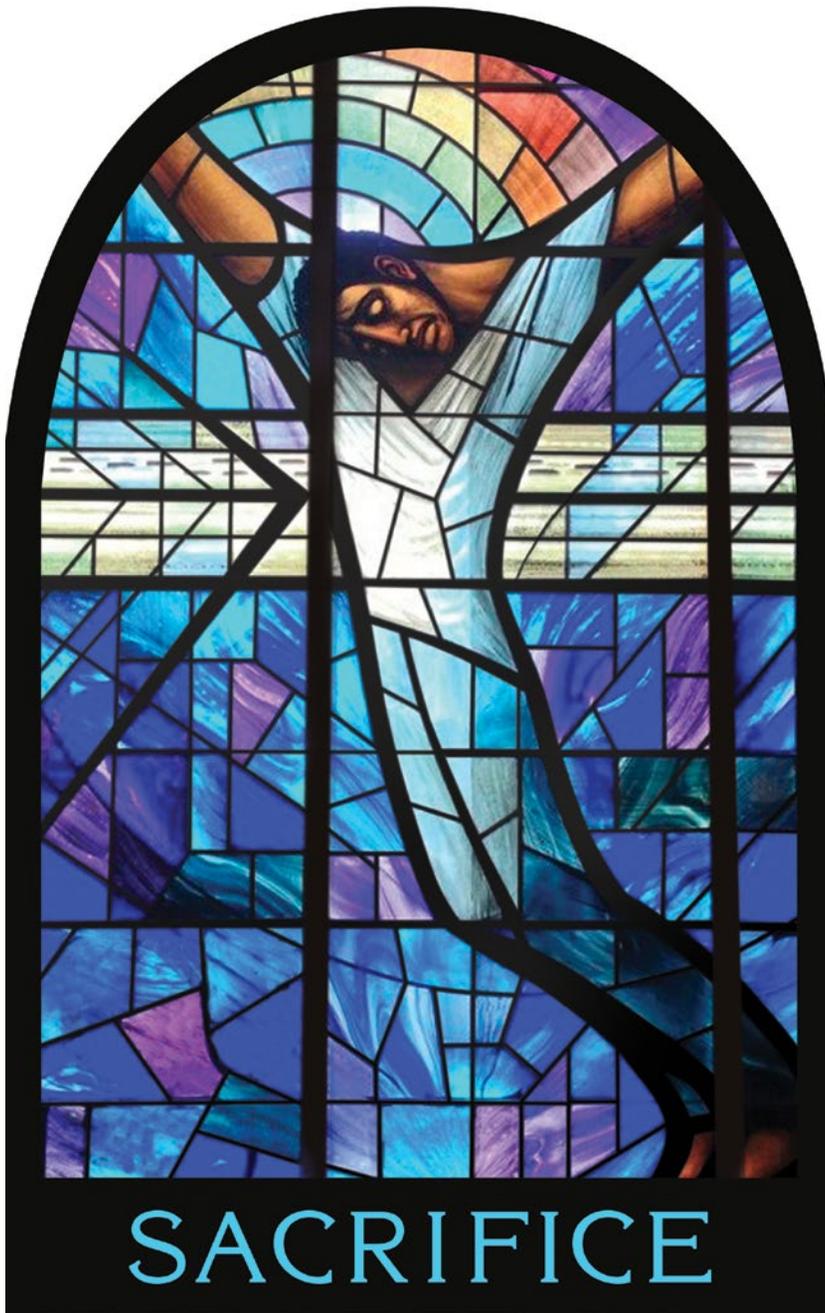
The ancient Hebrews had this extensive system of sacrifices as part of their worship of God; in obedience to God’s command. So why did the Lord say to Saul “*to obey is better than sacrifice?*” (1 Sam) Maybe because the whole point of sacrifice was never the tit- for-tat “I did something wrong now I better make it right by sacrificing an animal.” The point was obedience. Obedience out of love. The animal sacrifices without the loving obedience were never going to please God.

Jesus said, “*if you love me you will obey my commands*” (John 14:15). Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, the one to end all sacrifices, because his love was perfect. His love for the Father and for his creation opened the way for us to enter into that perfect love.

When Jesus got to the garden of Gethsemane and agonized over his impending choice to proceed toward crucifixion he prayed, “*Father if you are willing, take this cup from me*” (Luke 22:42). What was it that allowed him to add, “*yet not my will, but yours be done?*”? It was his lifetime of loving obedience. To walk in the way of Jesus is to pursue the life of loving obedience. To be a “*living sacrifice*” (Romans 12:1) is to be humble, sincere, devoted to one another in brotherly love (Roman 12:9). The one who is ready to make a big personal sacrifice tomorrow is the one who is willing to make the small sacrifices of love today.

## ***For Prayer and Meditation***

Are you entering into God’s gift of love through Jesus? Is the Holy Spirit nudging you to make a sacrifice today?



# SACRIFICE

*A Meditation by Rocky Wenz*

*"But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, 'he sat down at the right hand of God,'... For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.  
Hebrews 10:12,14*

Hebrews 10 makes it clear that Christ's sacrifice is superior to all others. The Mosaic system of sacrifices simply could not remove sin entirely. But now our Christ, having offered the one perfect sacrifice i.e. himself, now sits at the right hand of God for there is nothing more that he needs to do about this.

Here are some things to think and pray about from this and related scriptures.

**Repentance** – Since Lent is a time of prayer, we should start with repentance. This is a highly recommended starting point for every prayer. Hebrews 10:19-22 uses some odd language. "... with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." The term "washed (or "sprinkled") is a reference to the Mosaic system's means of ritually cleansing from sin. However, the author of Hebrews goes beyond what the previous system could do by using the word "hearts" here. The sacrifice of Jesus cleanses the whole person both the material and the immaterial.

**Praise** – Praise is telling God how great he is, and it is also praise if you tell God to do something he's already doing or has promised to do.

**Intercession** – Now let's go back to Hebrews chapter 10 verse 19 – 22. Verse 19 tells us something very cool. We can now walk straight into the sanctuary of God, walk straight up to our great high priest who is God himself, and present a request.

**Act** – See Hebrews 13.

## **For Prayer and Meditation**

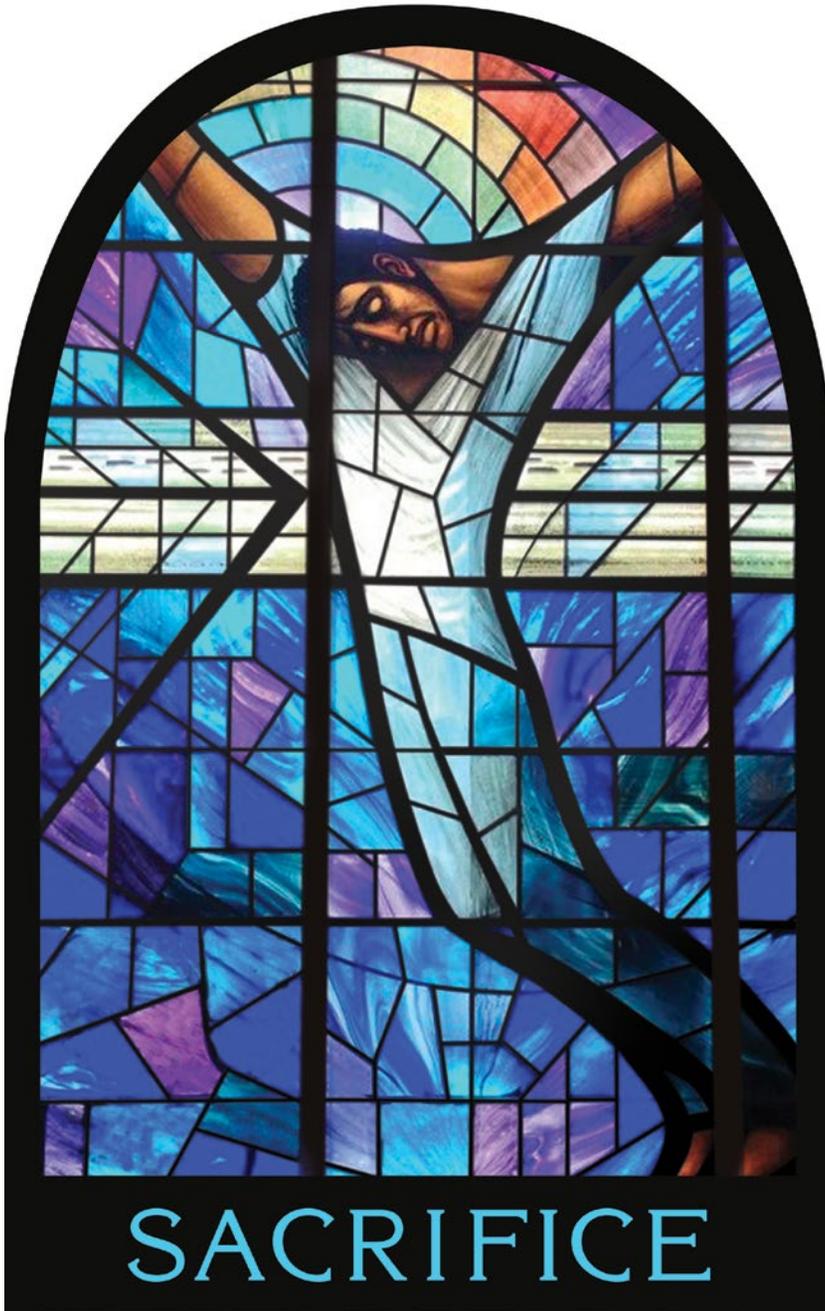
Do you have consciousness of any evil in your life? Now is the time to be washed.

Read through Hebrews chapter 10 and find some things to praise him about. *See also Hebrews 13:15.*

Listen to the father heart of God, and present your request to him.

# SACRIFICE

*Use this page for your own personal meditation  
on this word and image.*



# HIGH PRIEST

*A Meditation by Mark Gentry*

Jesus' disciples are struck with helpless wonder and astonishment as they stare at the rising Christ, now ascending into the open sky. The angels descend as Jesus rises, lending the image a sense of buoyant joy. Curiously, we do not get to see Jesus' own reaction as the event unfolds, for his back is turned to us, deepening the mystery of our redemption in him. Perhaps we recall that the high priest turned his back to the people as he entered the tabernacle to make intercession for them.

A closer look at the image reveals the pierced foot of Jesus. Even the glorified Christ still bears a sign of crucifixion in this wound-mark, transformed by his risen body into a living witness to God's triumphant presence in suffering. Our high priest lovingly presides over the suffering, mystery and joy of life, calling us into his own life. Our destiny is both one of descent, in sharing Jesus' suffering, but finally of ascent, in sharing Jesus' joy.

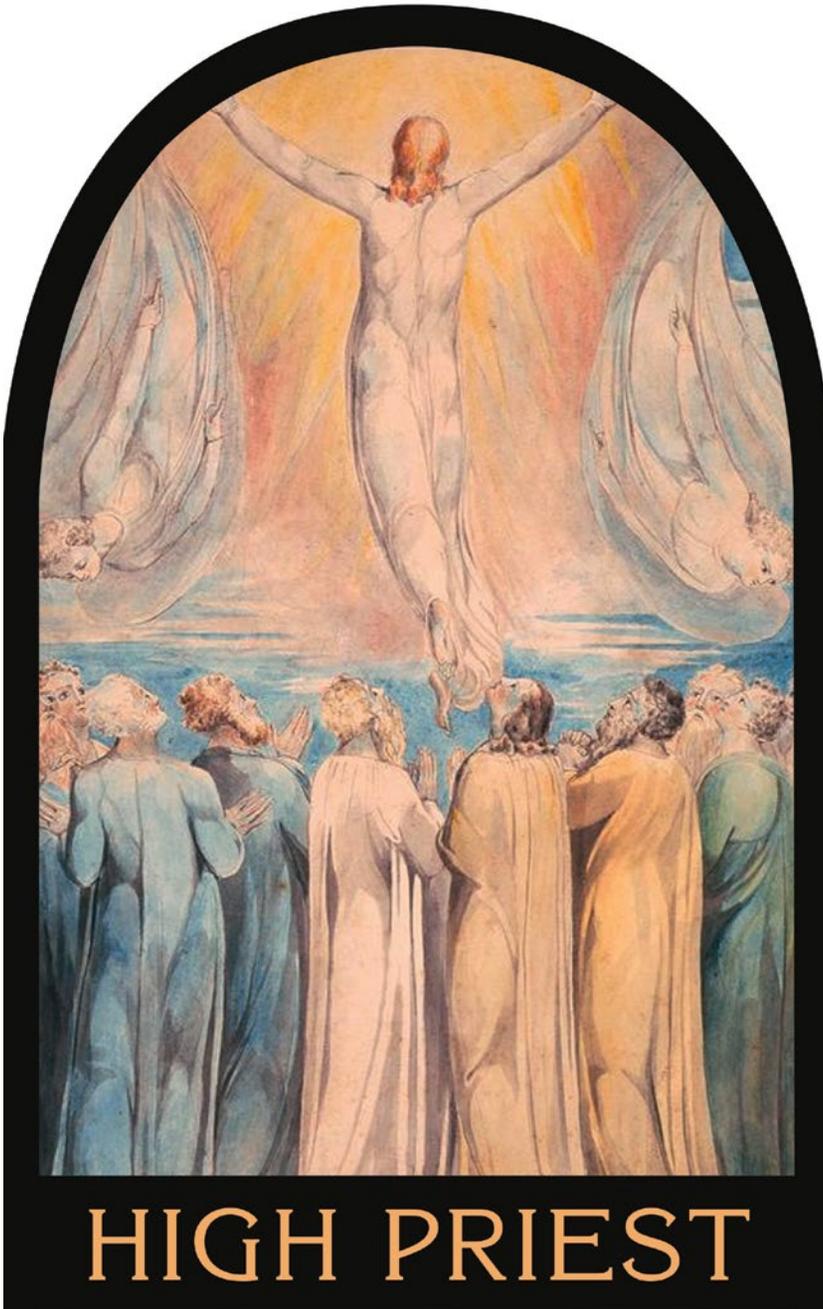
*For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our suffering... Heb.4:15*

*For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God...Col. 3:3-4*

## **For Prayer and Meditation**

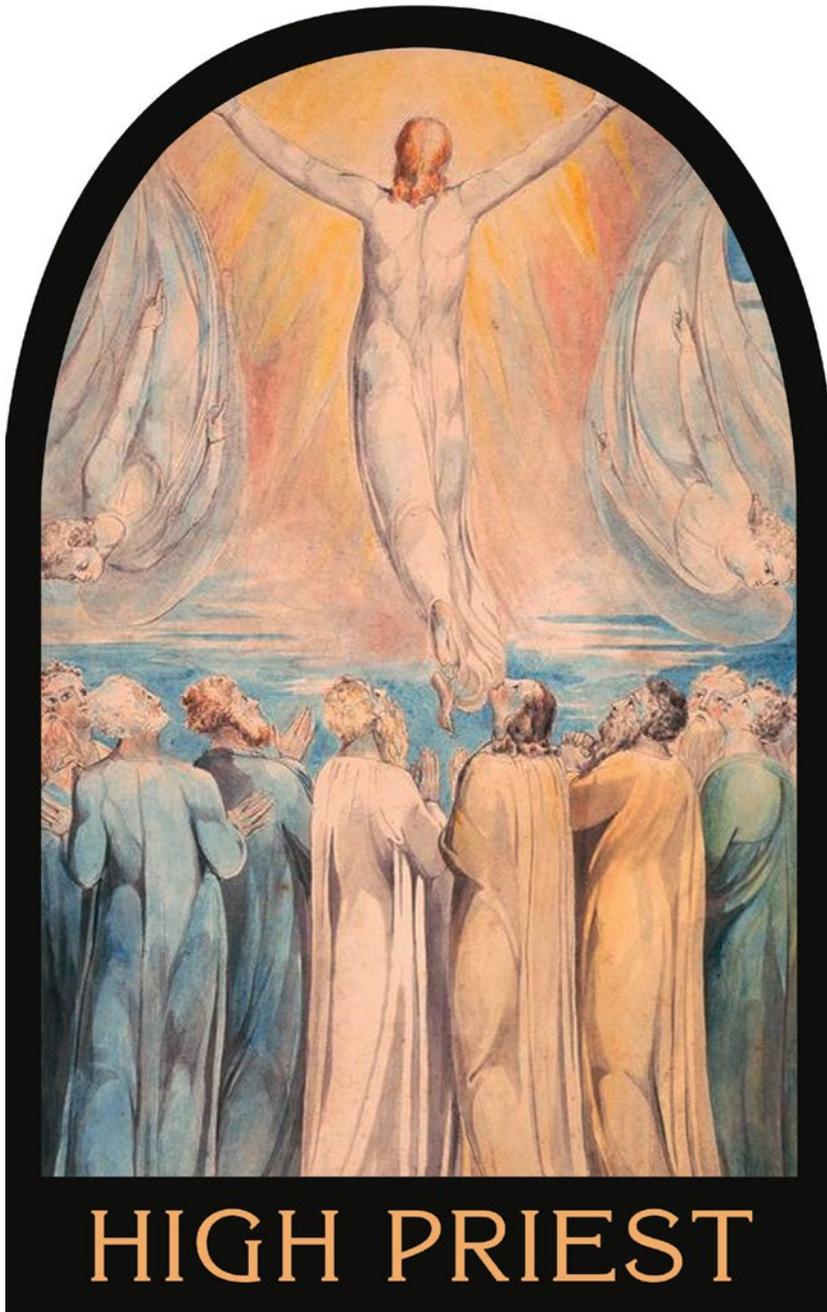
Why would our risen high priest still bear a scar from his death?

In what ways does knowing that our high priest suffered make him closer to you?



# HIGH PRIEST

*Use this page for your own personal meditation  
on this word and image.*





# REDEEMER

*A Meditation by Emily Colo*

*“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28<sup>1</sup>*

To redeem:<sup>2</sup> (1) to buy back: repurchase (2) to free from what distresses or harms (3) to change for the better

Truly great stories are few and far between.

Choosing a movie for the evening can turn into an ordeal for me. I usually find myself, tired from a week of work and activity, gravitating towards stories with simple plot lines and rosy if unrealistic resolutions. These comforting fantasies entertain, but that is about all. Then there are the critically acclaimed films. I chide myself for passing them over, but I usually do, because they tend to dwell on dark themes and the brokenness of our human condition.

Rare is the story that faces darkness square in the face and yet points toward hope.

For those of us who live comfortably, with our needs always met and our desires often fulfilled, it can be tempting to read Romans 8:28 as an echo of our pleasant lives, thinking, “Jesus, loves me, therefore my life is good.” I liken this interpretation to the comforting fantasy type films I flop down in front of on a Friday evening. Another popular interpretation is that God has a ‘higher purpose’ for darkness and suffering that actually renders it good. But this sort of denial that darkness really is dark offers no hope in the face of real anguish.

Inevitably we all face tragedy. Either tragedy that strikes close to home: the death of a loved one, a debilitating illness, financial crisis, a broken relationship. Or we face tragedies playing out daily in our community or around the world: racial inequities, grinding poverty, sexual exploitation, acts of violence. This darkness is real and it is all around us. It is easy to become mired in despair, even as believers in Jesus. Like the critically acclaimed films that dwell on tragedy, we can become experts in detailing the brokenness in and around us, but fail to envision a way out.

Romans 8:28 is one of the most powerful verses of hope in scripture, because it holds both darkness and redemption in view. It is the one-line distillation of the rarest of truly great stories. The beginning of Romans 8 makes it clear – suffering is everywhere around us, in our own stories and in the stories of those around us. According to the writer, the very creation groans in pain under the weight of that suffering. But what of it? Is it actually a good thing that we fail to recognize as such? Not according to Romans 8.

The beauty of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is that it offers us hope that he truly can redeem all things. He doesn’t look away from tragedy, because it is uncomfortable or difficult. Nor does he call darkness and suffering good. Rather he promises to bring good to us, no matter how deep the darkness that surrounds us. As redeemed ones, we long and groan along with creation for the full redemption (restoration) of everyone and everything that God has made.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bible.com/bible/100/ROM.8.28>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/redeem>

## **For Prayer and Meditation**

Are you grappling with tragedy: either personal or in our community? Ask Jesus how he wants to work redemption in it. Do you have a role to play as one of his redeemed ones to bring restoration and life into a dark situation?



# REDEEMER

*A Meditation by Bobbette Rose*

*"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship." Galatians 4:4-5 (NIV)*

*"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us..."  
1 John 4:10 (NIV)*

I've loved this painting for a long time. It's one of the few paintings I've seen where there is a crowd nestled under the crucified Christ. It's as if his arms are covering us all, saying this is for you, this is me loving you, not from a distance but right here, near you.

I have never understood why the Jewish painter, Marc Chagall, ended up painting so many images of Christ on the cross. This one, it is said, is about the Exodus and the Holocaust. In many ways the river-crossing journey, the dessert journey, the fleeing-for-safety journey, the being-lost-in-our-own-brokenness journey is part of all of our journeys. I don't want to dilute the fact that there are some paths and moments that are more horrific and hard than others but being lost is being lost and there is a way in which we do this journey together as a community, a tribe. As I gaze on this painting, I find a Jesus who sees us, is part of us, who reaches out to embrace and cover us...even in our clueless, delusional moments where we find ourselves trying to outrun our own lostness.

The people in this painting don't seem as much angst-ridden to me as they seem confused and searching and on the move. Living life and yet not settled in life. Sometimes I've thought they looked like they were flowing out from the cross and other times it's seemed like they were fleeing it.

## ***For Prayer and Meditation***

In what ways have you felt the presence of Jesus this week?

Are there moments in your life where you feel your journey is confused and hard, where you wonder if you are ever going to make it out of the desert? Are there places where you don't feel his presence?

Slow down, take a breath let everything flow over you in this moment... then look around, where is Jesus? Can you see him? If not, ask that he reveal himself to you.

# REDEEMER

*Use this page for your own personal meditation  
on this word and image.*





# TRUE WORD

*A Meditation by Brian Doty*

*"I am the resurrection and the life.*

*The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;  
and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.*

*Do you believe this?"*

*John 11:25,26 (NIV)*

Thomas.

Chosen... and sent out by Jesus with authority to raise the dead.

Courageous... "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Confused... "Lord, we don't know where you are going,  
so how can we know the way?"

Thomas.

One horrific week, Jesus gone.

Apart from the disciples the first time Jesus appeared to them, disbelieving,  
disappointed, torn. "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger  
where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Thomas.

Face to face with Jesus, the True Word.

Jesus reaches toward Thomas with one wounded hand while pointing to the  
wound in his side with the other. Thomas stretches both hands out, eyes fixed on  
Jesus, reaching for an embrace, not for the wounds, restored by the True Word.

Thomas.

"My Lord and my God!"

## ***For Prayer and Meditation***

Ask Jesus: in my confusion, pain and offense, are there any lies I have come  
to believe about you? (*Listen*)

Respond: Reject and renounce all lies. Receive Jesus forgiveness. Offer  
forgiveness to those through whom they have come, even to ourselves,  
as we have believed them. Command all darkness to go in Jesus name  
and by his wounds.

Ask Jesus: what is the truth about you? (*Listen and reflect*)

Ask Jesus: what do you think about me? (*Listen and reflect*)

Respond: You are my Lord and my God!

# TRUE WORD

*A Meditation by Christian Ezell*

*"Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight." Luke 24:31*

At first it seems ironic to me that the True Word image is one full of eyes. When I think of truth or words, eyes are not the first image that comes to mind, and yet, this piece is full of eyes. In fact, there are 18 pairs of eyes (and only 9 people!) in this image for the True Word. Why? The obvious answer is that Jesus is the True Word, and the artwork is likely depicting doubting Thomas—Thomas who had to see to believe that the word had indeed become flesh, crucified and resurrected. It's interesting, however, that Thomas has no mouth, and that not only Thomas but the full huddle of disciples is gazing at Jesus' mutilated hands and side—clearly they all want to or must see. To emphasize this, the artist has hidden most of their faces except for the eyes; like Thomas, they too appear mouthless.

Then there's that bizarrely apocalyptic Revelation "bird." The bird appears to have human hands and six wings, each of which is covered with eyes. These eyes are not looking at Jesus though; they are looking at me. But I don't feel they are looking at me in judgment; the eyes look inviting. What am I being invited to? I believe this piece is calling me to come and see. Specifically, to speak less and observe more this Lenten season in order to "see" in the fullest sense of the word...the True Word.

## ***For Prayer and Meditation***

What is the relationship between "sight" (literal or symbolic) and Jesus as the True Word?

What might Jesus, the True Word, want me to see this Lenten season?





# TRUE WORD

*A Meditation by Mike Moore*

*"The Word [Jesus Christ] became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."  
John 1:14*

Jesus lived among us as the "Word who was with God in the beginning, and was with God, and was God" (John 1:1). He fully expressed for us how to live out grace and truth in our everyday world. Grace is compassion for people—being able to give them better than their actions deserve. Grace opens the door to forgiveness and is relationship-oriented. Jesus has a passion for the truth. He spoke to people truth that they needed to hear with no compromise. Jesus was as committed to the truth as He was to grace and demonstrated how to live this out for us while He was here on earth but it led Him to the cross. Even at the cross Jesus showed us how to live out grace and truth: Sin had to be paid for and it was because Jesus paid for our sins penalty Himself.

Jesus believed & demonstrated that both grace and truth are needed to accurately represent the Father's heart so that lives can be transformed into being His disciples. Jesus told us to go and tell others that because we believe others will too. We need to be expressing grace and truth in our relationships and witness.

## ***For Prayer and Meditation***

Where do we need grace and truth in our lives? Where do we need forgiveness?

Are there people in our lives who need to know that God's grace is for them too? Are there people we need to forgive?

We are called to "speak the truth in love." Are there people or places we need to share God's truth with?

Jesus' example of grace and truth, remind us we are all in the same condition: we need help, we need love, we need forgiveness; sometimes we just need to be given a break like Jesus has done for us. Keep your eyes open to share it with others.

# TRUE WORD

*Use this page for your own personal meditation  
on this word and image.*



# Come and See Jesus

by Kim Merryman

*Come and see the tiny baby,  
sleeping on a bed of straw.  
The angels came and sang His praises,  
and shepherds watched in silent awe.*

*Come and see who's in the temple,  
listening to the rabbis teach;  
a twelve year old who asks them questions,  
His wisdom is beyond their reach.*

*"Come and see," said John The Baptist,  
"The Lamb of God sent from above.  
On Him the Father sent His Spirit,  
it came down on Him like a dove."*

*"Come and see," insisted Andrew,  
when he found Simon by the sea.  
"I believe we've found Messiah.  
Drop your nets and come with me."*

*"Come and see", cried out the woman,  
"The man who told me all I'd done.  
He said He'd give me living water.  
Could He be the Holy One?"*

*Come and see this man called Jesus.  
He heals the sick, the blind, the lame.  
Even demons are subject to Him.  
Those He touches are never the same.*

*Come and see this Jewish Rabbi,  
as He teaches on the hill.  
The crowds are spellbound by His message,  
He teaches them about God's will.*

*Come and see the righteous anger,  
of the man from Galilee.  
See Him cleanse the crowded temple,  
of the merchants and their greed.*

*Come and see the Lord at prayer,  
in the garden on His knees.  
Sweating drops of blood in anguish,  
God's will be done is what He pleads.*

*Come and see the man betrayed,  
by His own disciple's kiss.  
Sold for thirty silver coins,  
by a traitor in His midst.*

*Come and see the suffering servant,  
hands and feet nailed to the cross.  
Hear Him say, "Father, forgive them,"  
as His friends weep for their loss.*

*Come and see, His tomb is empty.  
See, the stone has been rolled away.  
The Son of God has conquered death,  
He has risen from the grave.*

*Come and see the risen Savior,  
See and touch His nail-pierced hands.  
Hear Him say, "Go preach the gospel,  
to every nation, every land."*

*Come and see, men, women, children,  
Jesus is the Life, the Truth, the Way,  
to peace and joy and life everlasting.  
Believe in Him without delay.*

A poem submitted for reflection by Rocky Wenz



## **Wales Window for Alabama**

John Petts  
1965

Stained glass window for the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, in memoriam following the 1963 bombing of the church, using funds donated by the people of Wales who were so moved by the tragedy that they wanted to give a gift to the church.



## **The Ascension**

William Blake  
1949

Watercolor



## **Exodus**

Marc Chagall  
1952 - 1966; France

Oil on canvas

*note: The color on this painting varies alot across the internet. I chose the bluer version because when I think of Chagall I think of blue. This rendition may be quite different from the original.*



## **Doubting Thomas**

Elena Cherkasova  
2010: Russia