

Conversations with Jesus



Five Bible Studies for Lent
John Birch

©2025 John Birch. Permission is given to reproduce copies of this Bible Study for individual church usage. If used over several churches, it would be lovely if you could purchase one per church! It should not be republished in any other way or offered for sale without the express permission of the author. More information about the author and other Bible Study Guides on www.faithandworship.com

Cover picture: Pierre Mignard I, Christ and the Woman of Samaria, 1681

Introduction

Jesus spoke to crowds - thousands gathered on hillsides and shorelines to hear him teach. His words fed the hungry, healed the broken, and shook the powerful. Yet, woven through the Gospels is another, quieter thread - the one-to-one conversations that changed lives. These are not grand sermons or public debates, but intimate encounters along the road, at a well, under a tree, in a home, or even on a cross.

We often find Jesus pausing in his journey to speak with individuals - men and women, rich and poor, insiders and outsiders, the confident and the ashamed. He listens as much as he speaks. He notices the people others pass by. He doesn't deliver pre-packaged answers but draws out hearts, questions, and possibilities. In these conversations, faith is not forced but awakened.

For Jesus, ministry was never only about proclamation; it was about relationship. His words were always connected to people - their fears, their hopes, their stories. To Zacchaeus in the tree, he said, 'Come down; I must stay at your house today.' To the woman at the well, he offered living water and dignity. To the thief on the cross, he promised paradise. Every conversation was a meeting point of divine love and human need.

These encounters show us that faith often begins not in the crowd but in the conversation. It is in the quiet exchange, the personal word, the moment of honesty, that transformation takes root. Jesus' one-to-one moments reveal a God who is not distant or abstract, but one who meets us face to face, speaks into our circumstances, and invites us to respond.

The journey to the Cross was not just a physical path through Judea and Jerusalem, it was also a journey of dialogue - of listening, questioning, and revealing truth. Even as opposition grew and the shadow of the Cross loomed, Jesus continued to engage, to ask, and to respond.

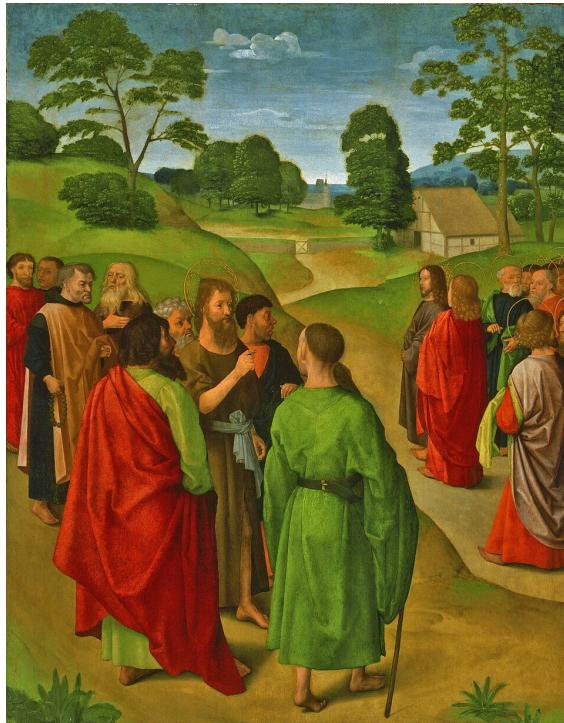
Lent, too, is a journey of conversation. It invites us to listen again to the words of Jesus, not as spectators in the crowd, but as those he meets personally on the way. Through prayer, reflection, and honesty with God, we can find ourselves drawn into the same grace-filled exchanges that shaped the lives of those who met him face to face.

Contents

Introduction	3
The conversations begin	4
Conversations in the shadows	8
Conversations at the margin	12
With words and silence	16
Words from the Cross	20
If you would like to go deeper	24
Lectio Divina	25
References	25



The conversations begin



Saint John the Baptist Pointing Out Christ as the Lamb of God, 1510 anon



When have you faced a moment of testing or decision that shaped the direction of your life?

What helped you find your footing?

Jesus and the Tempter

(Read Matthew 4:1–11)

The wilderness brings both emptiness and encounter. After Jesus was baptised in the Jordan, he was led by the Spirit to this quiet place and a challenge, to affirm his true role. The three questions beginning, ‘If you are the Son of God...’ are not so much about bread or the power that is uniquely his – but how Jesus will live out his true identity as God’s Son.

The temptation is perhaps one that is familiar to many, choosing to take the easy way out, which in this example shortcuts hunger, suffering, and trust.

Jesus answers each challenge with words grounded in Scripture. In the

silence of the wilderness, he affirms his dependence upon his Father’s word rather than his own strength.

Jesus knew from the very first moments of his earthly ministry that this would be a combination of kingship and suffering servanthood, affirmed by the heavenly voice at his baptism in the Jordan, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with whom I am well pleased.’



Which of the three temptations feels most familiar or subtle to you, and why?

What do you notice about how Jesus uses Scripture in response?

How might this story shape the way we face our own 'wilderness times'?

Jesus and the First Disciples

(Read John 1:35–51)

If the wilderness tested Jesus' identity, this part of the story reveals it, and is filled with conversation. John the Baptist points two of his disciples toward Jesus as 'the Lamb of God.' Intrigued, they make their way toward Jesus who turns and challenges their motives, asking 'What do you want?'

Jesus wanted to know whether this was just idle curiosity or something deeper, a desire to know and learn from him. They address Jesus as 'Rabbi', a term of respect for a Jewish teacher, and so he encourages them to spend time getting to know him. They may well have stayed overnight.

Then the pace of John's story increases, through conversations between Simon Peter, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, possibly John the writer, and of course Jesus.

Jesus calls his disciples via an open door rather than a command. These early conversations set the tone for discipleship through seeking, responding, and walking alongside. Like those first followers, we're invited to explore rather than to have everything figured out.



What do you think Jesus' question 'What do you want?' means for us today?

How does the simple invitation 'Come and see...' describe Christian faith?

How might this passage help us think about sharing faith with others?

'Lent is the favourable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbour. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need.'

(Pope Francis)

'The goal of fasting is inner unity. This means hearing, but not with the ear; hearing, but not with the understanding; it is hearing with the spirit, with your whole being.' (Thomas Merton)

Jesus in the Synagogue

(Read Luke 4:16–30)

Having faced temptation and gathered his first disciples, Jesus returns home to Nazareth where he grew up, and in the synagogue declares his mission. Reading Isaiah's promise, he claims that 'Today this scripture is fulfilled.'

At first, those gathered seem enthusiastic about his teaching about God's grace and proclaiming good news, and initial conversations afterwards were positive, albeit focussed on Jesus being Joseph's son rather than the Son of God. But at some point, hostility begins, along with growing disbelief that a boy growing up in their local

community as a carpenter's son could ever make such incredible claims.

Jesus knew that his calling would not be easy, and his continuing conversation with them proves this, as they drive him out of town.

Faithfulness to God's mission can provoke resistance, especially when it challenges comfort or assumption. Yet even rejection doesn't deter Jesus, who walks through the angry crowd and continues his path. The road to the Cross has begun.



Why do you think the crowd's attitude shifts so dramatically in this story?

What does this passage show us about the cost of living out our calling?

How might we respond when God's call takes us into conflict or misunderstanding?

Summing up

In these three conversations, Jesus defines his calling: resisting false paths, inviting followers into discovery, and proclaiming God's liberating mission. His words and silences shape a pattern for our own discipleship — grounded in Scripture, open to others, and faithful even when costly. As we begin our Lenten journey, we too are called to listen for the Father's voice amid other competing ones, and to walk the way that leads to life.

Think about later

Find a few quiet minutes this week - your own 'wilderness moment.'

Ask yourself: What am I truly seeking?

Listen for the still, small voice that calls you to 'come and see.'

A closing prayer

Lord Jesus,
you met temptation with truth,
called seekers with gentleness,
and spoke courageously of your mission.
As we follow you through this season of Lent,
help us to listen, to trust, and to walk faithfully
wherever you lead.

Amen.





Study two

Conversations in the shadows



Heinrich Hofmann - *Christ and the young rich ruler* 1889



Can you think of a time when you wanted to believe or understand something deeply, but found yourself unsure or hesitant?

What helped you move forward?

Nicodemus at Night

(Read John 3:1–21)

Nicodemus is introduced as a member of the upper class, conservative in his beliefs but very interested in Jesus' teaching. He's a respected teacher, and as a Pharisee a member of a strict religious sect, unlike the Sadducees who were less rigid in their beliefs.

Nicodemus would have been aware of any prevailing doctrinal trends of the day, and it would have been the miracles he had witnessed, and rumours heard, that prompted this interest in Jesus. There seems to be a genuine desire for conversation rather than confrontation, as his greeting was polite and not hostile.

Jesus assumes Nicodemus has a good knowledge of Scripture, and in their

conversation talks of being 'born again' or 'born from above,' of wind and Spirit, of life that only God can give. Nicodemus wants explanation, and Jesus offers much more, transformation.

This is a tender moment - a meeting of curiosity and confusion. It reminds us that faith often begins in the shadows where certainty wavers. Lent invites us, like Nicodemus, to bring our questions openly before God. New birth isn't about having everything sorted; it's about opening ourselves to the Spirit working in us.



What do you imagine drew Nicodemus to Jesus, despite the danger of criticism from other Pharisees?

What might 'being born from above' mean for you personally?

How can doubt or uncertainty become a doorway to deeper faith?

The Rich Young Ruler

(Read Mark 10:17–31)

Here is someone else excited at the prospect of talking to Jesus, and who sees him, at the very least, as a wise teacher.

This young man believes he has ticked all the correct religious boxes in his life, and yet senses that something is missing. Jesus responds in love, sensing the need but also the challenge his question raises.

Jesus looks him in the eye and simply asks him to let go of those things that define him most and then follow him. This is in a culture where to be wealthy was believed to be evidence of God's blessing.

Jesus doesn't condemn his wealth or attitude to life but simply names the barrier and allows him to choose.

There is no indication that Jesus' response is binding on all believers, but what Jesus does ask is that we need to lose our close attachment to material things, or risk losing focus along our journey of faith.

Lent gives us space to be aware of what we cling to - possessions, habits, status, control - and to hear again that loving call, 'Come, follow me.'



What does this story reveal about the nature of discipleship?

When Jesus talks of the 'rich' in verse 23, how would you understand the word in its context?

Why do we so often cling to things, and find it difficult to let go and move on?

'Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty—not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store.'

(N T Wright)

'Lent stimulates us to let the Word of God penetrate our life and in this way to know the fundamental truth: who we are, where we come from, where we must go, what path we must take in life...'

(Pope Benedict XVI)

The Father and a Troubled Son

(Read Mark 9:14–29)

As Jesus and three disciples come down from the Mount of Transfiguration, there is a lively conversation taking place between the other disciples, a crowd, and the teachers of the law, who were busy monitoring Jesus' preaching and miracles. Jesus arrives at the perfect moment, and the crowd make room for him in their lively discussion about a boy possessed by an evil spirit.

This father is worn out after years of caring for his child. When Jesus tells him that all things are possible for the one who believes, his humble

response is a model for all when despair becomes overwhelming; 'I do believe; help overcome my unbelief!' Jesus meets him at that place of despair and honesty.

This is good news for anyone who struggles to trust completely. The man's mixture of hope and doubt is enough for Jesus to act. In our own shadows, we can pray the same words and know we are heard.



What do the father's words, 'I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief' say about his situation?

How does Jesus respond to fragile or partial faith?

What might this passage teach us about prayer when faith feels weak?

Summing up

Nicodemus, the rich man, and the desperate father all come to Jesus from the shadows - cautious, conflicted, and uncertain. Yet each encounter reveals a God who meets seekers where they are. Faith grows not through having every answer but through bringing our questions and longings honestly to Christ. Lent is a season for such honesty - to come, to listen, and to let his love draw us from our shadow into the light.

Think about later

At some point this week, pray the father's prayer in your own words.

Ask Jesus to bring light to one area of confusion or hesitation, and be open to how his Spirit might surprise you.

A closing prayer

Lord Jesus,
you welcome those who come in fear and confusion,
you love those who cling too tightly to their treasures,
you hear those who cry, 'Help my unbelief.'
Meet us in our seeking, and draw us
into the light of your transforming grace.

Amen.





Study three

Conversations at the margin



Pierre Mignard I, *Christ and the Woman of Samaria*, 1681



Have you ever experienced a time when you felt on the outside of something - a group, a community, a situation - and someone made you feel seen or welcomed?

What difference did it make?

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

(Read John 4:1–26)

Listening to what people are saying can sometimes be crucial. Rumours abound that Jesus might be leading a messianic movement, and to avoid a direct clash with the authorities he takes a diversion in his journeying through Samaria, an area where very few Jews would normally travel.

We have a hot midday sun, a weary traveller, and an unexpected conversation at a well. It was an unusual time for a woman to come to a village well for water, and this might suggest an urgent need, or that this woman was an outsider within her local community (the jury is out on this point).

Every social convention should have kept Jesus and this woman apart - gender, religion, and possibly reputation. Yet Jesus begins not with a sermon but with a request; 'Will you give me a drink?' In asking, he offers dignity. The conversation deepens, revealing her story, her longing, and her thirst for truth.

This encounter is one of unveiling - of who she is and who Jesus is. The 'living water' offered isn't an abstract idea but the very life of God breaking into her situation and spiritual yearning.



Why do you think Jesus begins by asking her for something rather than offering something?

What does 'living water' mean to you in your own faith journey?

How does this story speak into experiences of exclusion or misunderstanding today?

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

(Read Luke 19:1–10)

The tax system, under which Zacchaeus' income came by extorting more money from people than he had contracted to pay the Roman government, evidently worked well for him, as he had a prime location in which to operate. No one in Jericho liked him, because as a chief tax collector, he was despised. And yet, Zacchaeus' desire to see Jesus was surpassed by the knowledge that Jesus was happy to see him, even inviting himself to dinner and an overnight stay!

The crowd don't understand what they have just seen, but in the willingness of Zacchaeus to welcome Jesus into his home and conversations around the table, a transformation takes place.

Restoring stolen funds 'four times the amount' was far more than the Old Testament specified for restitution (Lev 5:16). Encountering Jesus turns his priorities inside out — from greed to generosity, from taking to giving.

Salvation came to Zacchaeus not because he had finally done a good deed, but because he was now a believer and thus a 'spiritual descendant of Abraham'.



What surprises you most about Jesus' interaction with Zacchaeus?

Can you understand the response of the crowd, and how typical would that be today?

Where might we need to let grace reach beyond our own social or moral boundaries?

'Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves... What is it that stands between us and God? Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life, the life of the Spirit? Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out, without a moment's hesitation.'

(Catherine Doherty)

'Lent is a time of grace, a time for conversion, a time to come home to God.'

(Saint Maximilian Kolbe)

The Canaanite Woman

(Read Matthew 15:21–28)

The popularity of Jesus had increased greatly, along with increased scrutiny and opposition from Pharisees and teachers of the law, so Jesus takes a break from the crowds and heads for Tyre and Sidon.

Matthew is writing to a mainly Jewish audience, who would be very interested to read of Jesus doing miracles in a Gentile, or pagan, territory.

This encounter is quite startling. A desperate mother begs for her daughter's healing, and Jesus at first seems to ignore her cries. When he does respond his words sound harsh,

even exclusive; 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.' Yet, as the conversation continues, it is her persistence, and the wisdom and faith in her response that Jesus acknowledges with such love and grace, and the woman's daughter is healed.

Here, in their conversation, Jesus draws out her courage and faith, revealing God's mercy is not constrained by cultural or religious barriers. This outsider reminds us that sometimes faith is found in unexpected places.



What do you make of Jesus' initial silence and harsh words in this story?

What does this woman's persistence teach us about faith and prayer?

How does this story expand our understanding of who belongs in God's kingdom?

Summing up

At a well, in a tree, and on the roadside, Jesus meets those the world overlooks. His conversations break down barriers of class, gender, race, and reputation. In each, we glimpse a God who notices, listens, and restores. Lent invites us to follow that same pattern - to look beyond our comfort zones, to listen without judgement, and to discover Christ already at work on the margins.

Think about later

This week, notice someone who often gets overlooked - at work, in your neighbourhood, in your church.

Take a moment to offer a word, a smile, or an act of kindness that says: You are seen. You matter.

A closing prayer

Lord Jesus,
you crossed every boundary to reach us with your love.
Give us eyes to see those who feel unseen,
hearts open to offer welcome,
and courage to share the grace we have received.
Amen.





Study our

With words and silence



Here is the man, by Antonio Ciseri, c1870



Can you recall a moment when you had to speak up for what you believed was right - even when it was uncomfortable or risky?

What gave you courage?

Give to Caesar what is Caesar's

(Read Matthew 22:15–22)

The religious leaders set a trap for Jesus, disguising hostility as flattery. Rather than responding with anger or force, Jesus engages them in conversation - turning their challenge into an opportunity for discussion and reflection.

Their question about paying taxes to Caesar is a political minefield: say yes and alienate the people; say no, and risk Roman wrath. By asking for a coin and posing his own question, 'Whose image is this?', Jesus exposes their hypocrisy and reveals a far deeper truth about allegiance.

Jesus does not evade the issue, nor does he strike back at his opponents. Instead, he uses this conversation to reveal the

limits of earthly authority and to affirm God's ultimate sovereignty. His calm, thoughtful words disarm those who sought to manipulate him, transforming a trap into an opportunity for truth to be spoken.

In a world where power is often defended or challenged through force, Jesus shows that truth spoken wisely can be a more radical and lasting act of resistance. Jesus won't be manipulated by power or trapped in false choices. Lent invites us to discern the same; how to live faithfully in a world that constantly divides our allegiances.



What strikes you about how Jesus handles this attempt to trap him?

What might it mean today to 'give to God what is God's'?

How can we remain faithful when political or cultural pressures pull in different directions?

Jesus and Pilate

(Read John 18:28–38)

Pilate, the Roman governor, embodies worldly power. In John's account of Jesus' story, this is less about whether the legal charges against him will stick, and more about Jesus' concern with Pilate and his shifting attitude, after a rather vague response from the Jewish leaders to his opening question. This seems to be more a conversation with Jesus than a trial.

Pilate has the authority to release or condemn yet seems strangely powerless before Jesus. He seems reluctant to trust the word of the priests, so takes Jesus inside his palace where he can have a conversation with this man who has been condemned

to death. And it circles around the question of truth. Jesus speaks of a kingdom not of this world, and Pilate replies with weary cynicism, 'What is truth?'

Jesus doesn't argue or defend himself - his very presence is the truth. Pilate cannot grasp. In him, truth is not a concept but a person, steady and fearless in the face of lies. Lent reminds us that following Jesus means learning to bear witness to truth, not by shouting louder, but by living with integrity.



Why do you think Pilate seems both intrigued and afraid of Jesus?

What does this passage teach us about the nature of truth?

How can we bear witness to truth in quiet, steadfast ways?

'True fasting lies in rejecting evil, holding one's tongue, suppressing one's hatred, and banishing one's lust, evil words, lying, and betrayal of vows.'
(Saint Basil the Great)

'Lent is a time of renewal for the whole Church, for each community and every believer. Above all it is a time of grace.
(Pope Francis)

Jesus and Herod

(Read Luke 23:8–12)

For a long time, Herod had wanted to see Jesus; not necessarily to understand his teaching, but to be entertained with signs and wonders. But despite the many questions he throws at Jesus, silence is the response.

Herod's curiosity eventually turns to contempt, as he mocks Jesus before sending him back to Pilate.

Sometimes, silence speaks louder than words. In refusing to argue or perform for Herod's amusement, Jesus denies him the satisfaction of control. Whilst a heated argument might have escalated into spectacle, silence maintains dignity,

integrity, and a quiet defiance that unsettles those who wield authority unjustly.

This silent conversation between Jesus and Herod reveals the power of restraint in the face of oppression. Jesus communicates through what he withholds, showing that true authority is not expressed through noise or display but through a steadfast faith.

In Lent, we're invited to listen for that quiet strength, the courage to stand firm and let truth speak for itself.



What do you make of Jesus' silence before Herod?

When might silence be the most faithful witness?

How can we cultivate the kind of strength that doesn't rely on control or approval?

Summing up

Before the powers of religion and empire, Jesus speaks - and at times refuses to speak - with unflinching integrity. He will not be manipulated, dazzled, or silenced into falsehood. His authority comes from truth rooted in love. As disciples, we too are called to live in that truth, even when it costs us comfort or reputation. The way of the Cross is not the way of dominance, but of quiet, fearless obedience to the truth.

Think about later

Pay attention this week to situations where truth feels compromised - in conversation, at work, or in community life.

Ask yourself: What would it mean to live truthfully here?

Pray for wisdom to respond with both courage and grace.

A closing prayer

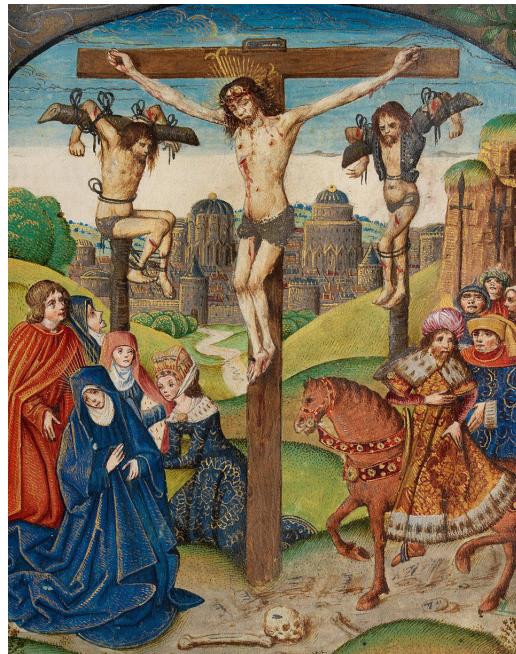
Lord Jesus,
you stood before the powers of this world
with courage, integrity, and peace.
Teach us to speak truth in love,
to know when to be silent and when to act,
and to follow your way of humble strength.

Amen.





Words from the Cross



When words are few, they often carry great weight. Can you remember a time when someone's last words, or a final conversation, stayed with you long afterwards?

What gave those words power?

Jesus and the Thief on the Cross

(Read Luke 23:39–43)

Two criminals hang beside Jesus, each facing the same death but responding differently. This conversation is unique to Luke's account, and it serves to reinforce two characteristics of his gospel, that of the innocence of Jesus, and how powerful is a moment of realisation of who Jesus is, and what that means for us.

Luke begins with the mocking comment of the one criminal, but then the other has a moment of clarity, recognising that Jesus is not a pretender and will indeed reign in some way as king. It's a whisper of faith, perhaps his first and only prayer, and Jesus' reply is immediate, assuring him he does not

have to wait, because very soon he will enjoy fellowship with Jesus in 'paradise', a word symbolising a place of beauty and delight.

Even in agony, Jesus listens and responds with mercy. His final conversation before death is one of grace. Lent leads us to this place, where all our pretence falls away and only grace remains.



What does this brief exchange tell you about Jesus' heart and priorities?

How does this story shape your understanding of salvation by grace?

What might it mean to live in the freedom of 'today you will be with me'?

Jesus, His Mother, and the Beloved Disciple

(Read John 19:25–30)

As Jesus hangs on the cross, a brave few - family, friends and followers - gather beneath him, others having fled through fear. Even in this moment of agony and surrender, Jesus continues to engage in conversation, not with power or accusation, but love and care. He entrusts his mother to the disciple (traditionally believed to be John), and the disciple to her.

Even in death, Jesus is forming a community of love and care.

This tender exchange stands in contrast to the hostility and violence surrounding the scene. Where the

powers of the world assert dominance often through cruelty, Jesus' words create belonging and responsibility. His final act is not one of condemnation but of relationship and love.

This moment reveals that faith is never solitary. At the foot of the cross, strangers become family, bound together by the love of Christ. The Church begins here. Lent invites us to notice who stands beside us and how Christ still entrusts us to one another's care.



Why do you think Jesus' final concern is to connect people rather than to speak about himself?

How does this scene shape our understanding of community and care?

What relationships might God be calling you to tend or reconcile this Lent?

'Unless there is Good Friday in your life, there can be no Easter Sunday.'
(Fulton Sheen)

'Lent is the time for greater love: listen to Jesus' thirst... Repent and believe'.
(Mother Teresa)

'God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.'
(Pope Francis)

Jesus' Final Words to the Father

(Read Luke 23:44–49)

Darkness covers the land, the curtain of the temple tears, and Jesus cries out in the midst of agony, abandonment, and injustice. He does not cry out in despair but entrusts himself fully to the Father. This moment is not just the end of his earthly life; it is the culmination of a life lived in perfect communion with God, even in this time of suffering.

His final breath is not a cry of defeat but a declaration of faith. In our own seasons of darkness - whether personal, communal, or global - this scene reminds us that surrender is not passive resignation but active faith. It is choosing to place our lives, our pain, and our hopes into God's hands.

Here, our journey through Lent finds its fulfilment in perfect obedience, perfect trust, and perfect love. His last breath becomes a prayer. For us, these words offer both comfort and challenge - a reminder that life and death alike can be placed in God's hands.

The cross, once a symbol of shame, becomes the ultimate conversation of love between Father and Son, overheard for the world's redemption.

What does Jesus' final prayer reveal about his relationship with the Father?

How might these words guide us when we face fear or uncertainty?

What does it mean, practically, to 'commit our spirit' to God each day?

Summing up

The final conversations of Jesus are brief, but they contain the heart of the gospel: mercy offered to the undeserving, love that builds community even in suffering, and trust that surrenders everything into the Father's care. Lent leads us here - to the cross where all words fall silent except those of grace. From this place, resurrection hope will speak again.

Think about later

Spend time this week with one of Jesus' sayings from the cross.

Read it slowly, perhaps aloud.

Let it become your prayer - a way of entrusting yourself, and those you love, into God's care.

A closing prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you spoke mercy to a dying thief,
love to your grieving friends,
and trust to your Father in heaven.
Teach us to listen to your voice,
to speak words of compassion,
and to rest our lives in your hands.
Amen.



If you would like to go deeper

All Visio Divina, or 'Divine seeing' requires of us is a few minutes of quiet, while we look at an image, what the artist might say to us, even putting ourselves into the artwork, and allowing God to speak to us.

The four stages of Visio Divina, assuming we are relaxed, quiet and with a copy of the picture in front of us, are listed below the image.



Niels Larsen Stevns, Christ And Zacchaeus, 1913

1. Look at the picture slowly, noting the colours, people, places, and things. Start in one corner and work your way around it. Remain with the image for one to two minutes. If you would like, jot down a few words about what you see, particularly anything you missed at first glance.
2. Take a second, deeper, look. Where is there movement? What relationships do you see? Engage your imagination. Where might you be within the picture? What do you see from that perspective? What deeper meaning emerges?
3. Respond to the image with prayer. Did the image remind you of an experience, person or issue for which you'd like to offer thanksgiving or intercession? Offer that prayer to God.
4. Be still. Breathe deeply. Relax your shoulders, arms, and legs. Rest in this quietness and let God speak.

Lectio Divina

Alternatively, If a particular passage stays with you and you'd like to spend more time with it, you might try Lectio Divina — an ancient way of prayerfully reading Scripture.

It's less about studying for information, and more about listening for God's personal word to you through the text.

1. Lectio – Reading

Choose a passage and read it slowly and attentively. Notice any word or phrase that stands out. Let the text speak to you at its own pace.

2. Meditatio – Reflecting

Read again, asking: What is God saying to me through this word or phrase? Let your heart and imagination enter the scene.

3. Oratio – Responding

Speak to God in prayer. Share your thoughts, questions, gratitude, or struggles.

4. Contemplatio – Resting

Simply rest in God's presence. Allow silence, trust, and love to fill the space.

You might finish by giving thanks for what you've heard and carrying that word with you through the week.

References

Holy Bible, New International Version® Anglicized, NIV® Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament, Zondervan; Abridged edition (April 18, 2004).

NIV Study Bible, Copyright © 1985, 1995, 2002, 2008, 2011 by Zondervan.

Zondervan Bible Commentary (One Volume), Zondervan; Illustrated edition (June 4, 2008

All images used are, to the best of my knowledge, free of copyright and via Wikipedia.

There are more Bible Studies, collections of prayers and free prayer resources available on www.faithandworship.com

