

Ash Wednesday

Read Psalm 51 and read the first page of the *Lament & Repent* Document (even if you have read it before)

Ask God to bring to mind those things that need to be repented of personally, nationally and personally. Write them down, add to the list as God reveals more during Lent. What does *repentance* mean for each thing, is it just saying sorry? Who to?

Thursday 18th February

Read the second page of the *Lament & Repent* Document. Who do you need to forgive? Is there someone you can turn to for help in this (a friend to listen to your grievance, a priest or pastor, a counsellor)? Read Luke 15:21-24. Even if you do not want to forgive them, try to pray that God will help you to do so.

Friday 19th

Re-read and mediate on verses 1 - 6 of Psalm 51. Think about each verse and use it to form part of your conversation with God today. Refer back to the things you wrote down of personal sins on Wednesday, bring these in to the conversation. Thank God that He has forgiven you.

Saturday 20th

Read Numbers 14:17-20. God forgives those who sin against Him and calls us to forgive in the same way. Can you forgive those who have sinned against you, your nation, your race, your culture? Spend some time naming the wrongs you perceive and saying "I forgive this".

If you find that to be difficult pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you towards being able to do so through this period of Lent.

Sunday 21st February

Join in with the worship of your local church today, in person or online.

Monday 22nd

We continue to consider how to forgive those who have sinned against us. Read Ephesians 4:17-32

Today we will focus on verses 17-24. Reflect on how to ensure

your thinking is different to the Gentiles (in our context, non-Christians) around you. Reflect on some of the key teachings of Jesus that have impacted you in the past. How have you been *made new in the attitude of your mind*? Do these things help you with forgiving others?

Tuesday 23rd

Re-read Psalm 51 verses 7 - 13. David is confident that God's cleansing will bring total forgiveness and restore him to joy. Do you accept that God forgives you but refuse to forgive yourself? Use verses 10-13 and pray that God will increase your trust in His forgiveness. You might like to play this video as you meditate on this passage.

Wednesday 24th

We continue to consider how to forgive those who have sinned against us. Read Ephesians 4:17-32

Today we will focus on verses 25-32. Are there times when you have told someone who has hurt you that it's fine, only to stew with anger inside afterwards? *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.* Imagine you are the father in the Luke 15 parable we read last week, the person who has grieved you comes to say 'forgive me'. Can you imagine being exuberant like that man was?

If you can, praise God for the joy of forgiveness. If not, pray that God will reveal more of His own sacrificial love to you that you might grow in grace with Him.

Thursday 25th

Read Psalm 51:14-19 Spend time worshipping God because He has forgiven you, using David's words from this Psalm and adding your own in with them.

Friday 26th

Read again the last verse of Ephesians 4 Try to memorise this verse over the weekend. Write it down and keep it with you, say it repeatedly. Alternatively, re-write it in your own words so that you think deeply about its meaning.

Consider this verse in line with the words from the Lord's Prayer that frames this *Lament & Repent* season: Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Saturday 27th

We have been reflecting both on our own personal sin(s) and also on those who have sinned against us. It may be that this has been a difficult process, and that the sin of not forgiving others has been particularly to the fore. But God *forgives that* too! As we end our meditations from Psalm 51, thank God that He has forgiven even the most deliberate or long term sins in your life. He forgives the times we have not been the best we can be and also the times we have strayed where we should not go.

Imagine that you yourself are the reason for the party in Luke 15, and rejoice in God's love for you.

Sunday 28th February

Join in with the worship of your local church today, in person or online.

If you have any thoughts or reflections during the week that you think should be shared, use the comments section here.

Monday 1st March

Read Lamentations chapter 1 and use it as part of your

meditation throughout this week. *Remember it is written in the context of Jerusalem and the land of Israel having been invaded and destroyed, but use the language of anguish mixed with trust and despair mixed with hope to structure your own prayers this week.*

What would you lament over for our nation - for the U.K.? For your part of the nation - Wales, N. Ireland, Scotland, England? Try to see it from God's perspective and not a party political one.

Tuesday 2nd

Read Matthew 6:14,15. What, as a nation, do we need to forgive of that which has been done to us by others in the past?

Do the Welsh, Scots, Irish and English need to forgive each other? Be specific as you pray about these things, asking God to cause there

to be a growing desire to forgive each other to move across these islands.

Wednesday 3rd

Read these verses of Lamentations 1:8,9:

Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean. All who honoured her despise her, for they have all seen her naked; she herself groans and turns away.

Her filthiness clung to her skirts; she did not consider her future.

Her fall was astounding; there was none to comfort her. 'Look, Lord, on my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed.'

Use these verses to form prayers about our nation and how we need to return to the Lord.

Thursday 4th

Read again Matthew 6:14,15. If you are from overseas do you or your nation need to forgive your treatment by the British now or in the past?

Are there things the British need to forgive about the way immigrants have changed things?

Are there past *squabbles between the people who live together on these islands* that should be forgiven today?

Friday 5th

Lamentations 1: 20 says *'See, Lord, how distressed I am! I am in torment within, and in my heart I am disturbed, for I have been most rebellious.*

Outside, the sword bereaves; inside, there is only death....'

Today we continue to reflect on the ways we have been *most rebellious* against God as individuals, nations, peoples, culture. Lament our failings and pray that there is a spirit of repentance in our land.

Saturday 6th

Read Luke 23:33,34

Spend time thinking about all Jesus had gone through in the 24 hours leading up to this moment. Betrayal by a friend, desertion by others, a fake trial, whippings, beatings, humiliation, separation from family and being

alone. Crucifixion. Then he says "*forgive them Father*".

Think back on the things you have prayed about this week that need to be forgiven, and try to pray "*forgive them, Father*".

Sunday 7th March

Join in with the worship of your local church today, in person or online.

Monday 8th

Today we pray for forgiveness for the actions of others relating to Covid-19; those who have ignored guidelines and put other people at risk, the Government which has imposed a great curtailment of freedom on the people. Whatever it is that has made you angry over the past year relating to how *people* have acted or governed, aim to forgive them today.

Tuesday 9th

Read Lamentations chapter 2 and use it as part of your

meditation throughout this week. *Remember it is written in the context of Jerusalem and the land of Israel having been invaded and destroyed, but use the language of anguish mixed with trust and despair mixed with hope to structure your own prayers this week.*

Have you felt that God is *against* us at this time as the writer seems to suggest? (In context though he realises it is because they have turned from God and His blessing). Choose some of the verses to form a prayer to God about the state of our nation today.

Wednesday 10th

...as we forgive those who trespass against us. To trespass is to deliberately (or even unintentionally) come on to your territory and treat it as their own. This might have happened to you at work, it might be something a neighbour has done or even a family member or friend. You may have confronted them, the issue may have been resolved long ago, but something still causes bitterness.

Think of those trespasses that still hurt or annoy, and ask God to help you to forgive them today.

Thursday 11th

Lamentations 2:18,19 say

The hearts of the people cry out to the Lord. You walls of Daughter Zion, let your tears flow like a river

day and night; give yourself no relief, your eyes no rest.

Arise, cry out in the night, as the watches of the night begin; pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint from hunger at every street corner.

We are not yet at the point where this nation is calling out to God in this way. Today, let us pray that we will come to this point without an even greater 'shaking' by God. Pray that a spirit of repentance and calling out to God will come upon the UK.

Friday 12th

...as we forgive those who sin against us. To sin is to miss the mark, to not be the best that we can be. People might have treated you roughly, not listened properly, not valued you; this might have been due to carelessness, ignorance or deliberate.

Think of such things that still hurt or annoy, and ask God to help you to forgive them today.

Saturday 13th

Deuteronomy 28 lists blessings God longs to bestow on His people, but that if they break covenant with Him the opposite will happen. (Verses 1,2,15 say: *If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands that I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. 2 All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God..... 15 However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you....*)

The reason for the 'curse' was to wake them up to the fact that they no longer had the blessing and that must mean they needed to turn back to God.

The 'curse' of Covid-19 has installed fear, sickness, death but also economic ruin, the

loss of freedom, the loss of the idol of 'summer sun' and travel. All these things have come to mean more than God to us as a nation. Use Lamentations 2 again to lead your prayer today.

Sunday 14th March

Join in with the worship of your local church today, in person or online.

Monday 15th

Read Lamentations chapter 3 and use it as part of your

meditation throughout this week. *The author, probably Jeremiah, talks about his reaction to the way he has been treated, sensing at first he has been forgotten by God but then submitting to God's greater plan.*

Be honest about your own feelings at this time, how *Lockdown* is affecting you or has at various times, the loss of income, social life, freedom and so on. Use the way the writer prays in this chapter to create your own lament to God.

Tuesday 16th

Lamentations 3:30 says *Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace.*

Think again about those who have mistreated you, and seek God's help to be able to pray for those people even if they have brought you unjust disgrace. It's an impossible thing to do without God's help and we often need to bring ourselves back to God as old wounds re-surface. As the lament goes on to say:

For no one is cast off by the Lord for ever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone.

Wednesday 17th

Read again verses 40 to 45. On Monday we examined our own feelings and ways, today let us return to the ways of the nation and the ways of the culture or groups we belong to. Reflect on where we have strayed from God in our national life. Think back to the list you made in the first week, as you have prayed has God brought other things to mind?

Is there something you can do to help the nation to recognise its wrongs and repent? How can you do that with love, grace and forgiveness?

Thursday 18th

The end of this chapter of Lamentations sounds like the writer is not forgiving, but wanting vengeance. However, what he is doing is leaving that vengeance to God. When we forgive, it is to free ourselves of bitterness and trouble. Read and prayerfully reflect on Romans 12:18-20

Friday 19th

Verses 22-27 say:

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.'

The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly

for the salvation of the Lord.

It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young.

Reflect on these verses in the light of this pandemic, trusting God that as we turn to Him so He will bring us through as His people, and more people will become part of His Bride, the Church.

Saturday 20th

Read again Numbers 14:17-20. Moses saw that the people had offended God, they had also ignored Moses' leadership and done their own thing. He was undoubtedly hurt and grieved, yet he stood between them and God and prayed for God to forgive them *to his own personal cost* (read the entire chapter).

Can you pray for others to be forgiven even if by doing so it hurts you? That's how Jesus prayed for our forgiveness, even as He was being crucified He prayed '**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**'

Sunday 21st March

Join in with the worship of your local church today, in person or online.

Monday 22nd

Read Lamentations chapter 4 and use it as part of your

meditation throughout this week. *The author, probably Jeremiah, talks about his reaction to the way he has been treated, sensing at first he has been forgotten by God but then submitting to God's greater plan.*

We have considered the sins of the nation and our culture, but can you forgive them? Could you forgive someone like Jimmy Saville, or others who have abused children? Are there sins that we, God's people, should not be prepared to forgive? *Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us.*

Tuesday 23rd

Read verses 1 to 5 again. Contemplate how once it was that there was a Bible in a prominent place in almost every home, and that it was read frequently. Use these verses to lament the way our nation has turned from a love of the Word of God (how we thirst because of a lack of the Living Water and hunger for lack of the Bread of Life).

Has this affected the Church too, individual Christians? Do we place the Bible as a central part of our day and our thinking? Have we replaced it as our source of guidance and wisdom by the Media? Leviticus 19:31 says *Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am*

the Lord your God. The word *medium* has two plurals, the other one is *media*.

Wednesday 24th

Read 2 Peter 2:1-3. Have you been taught wrong things in the past which you believed? Perhaps by secular teachers but even by Christian leaders? Can you forgive them for misguiding you?

Israel was in the mess it was in when Lamentations was written because it had stopped hearing and believing God's Word. Is it the same for Britain?

Thursday 25th

Lamentations 4:13 says *it happened because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of*

her priests, who shed within her the blood of the righteous.

Has the Church let the nation down? Have we stopped proclaiming the truth of God in a clear way? Have we even stopped believing all He says, commands, promises and teaches in the Bible?

Think about your own life, that of the Church you are part of, that of the national Church (both the denomination you belong to and the whole of the Body of Christ in the UK)

Friday 26th

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-8. Are there Christians who have angered you? Perhaps they gave a 'bad witness' to someone you love and that person has rejected God because of it (or so they say)? Perhaps you felt rejected or unloved in a particular church, or possibly you felt they judged you in some way?

Can you forgive them? For the sake of the Body of Christ, why not *rather be wronged* and move on?

Saturday 27th

Verse 16 of this week's chapter says *The Lord himself has scattered them; he no longer watches over them. The priests are shown no honour, the elders no favour.* This is as He warned it would be in Deuteronomy 28 if they stopped paying attention to Him.

Britain is not in the same covenant relationship with God that Israel was, but the New Covenant in Jesus is for each individual and is open to all in our land. If we are with Him we are blessed, if we are not we can expect no blessing: that all comes from the Marriage Contract between the Christ and His Bride. (see more). Cry out to God for the salvation of many in our land.

Sunday 28th March

Join in with the worship of your local church today, in person or online.

Monday 29th

Read Lamentations 5 and use it as part of your meditation in

this Holy Week. It's an account of life in Israel after invasion and occupation, a lament about the fallen state of the nation. The 'foreigners' were the result of an invasion which over-ran

the country, not immigrant as we think of them today.

Try to write a similar lament about Britain, but don't forget the last few verses!

Read Jeremiah 31:33,34 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-19. God's heart

Tuesday 30th

is to forgive, and He calls us to be the bearers of this forgiveness.

If there is still anyone or anything that you find you cannot forgive, ask God to help you today: *Father, I remember now xxxxxx. It still hurts me and causes me pain/anger. I do not think I can forgive this action, but I am asking You to help me to change my mind. I am asking You that this very day You will give me a desire to forgive this sin that was done to me. Help me Lord to become more like Jesus who forgave me even before I hurt Him. I ask that the Holy Spirit will renew my mind and my desires for the glory of Jesus. Amen*

Pray too that the people of the Church in this land will be known for their forgiveness.

Wednesday 31st

Verses 16 and 17 of Lamentations 5 say *The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned! Because of this our hearts are faint; because of these things our eyes grow dim*

Use this day to again pray over the sins of this nation. As you have prayed through Lent, has your understanding of what those sins are changed? Have you heard afresh God's voice speaking about what breaks His heart, what causes Him to lament?

Maundy Thursday

As Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, including those of His betrayer Judas, and Her Majesty continues the tradition today (albeit only symbolically) we pray for those who have betrayed or hurt us. Imagine yourself kneeling before them and pray for them to be blessed, and for God to move in their lives.

The last two verses of Lamentations say

Restore us to yourself, Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old unless you

have utterly rejected us and are angry with us beyond measure.

Use those words as a prayer for the UK today, and perhaps memorise them and use them in the weeks to come.

As the pain of the nails rocketed from His limbs through His

Good Friday

whole body, as His ligaments stretched and tore, Jesus looked at those who had done this to Him and cried out:

'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And we reply "Amen, forgive us as we forgive others".