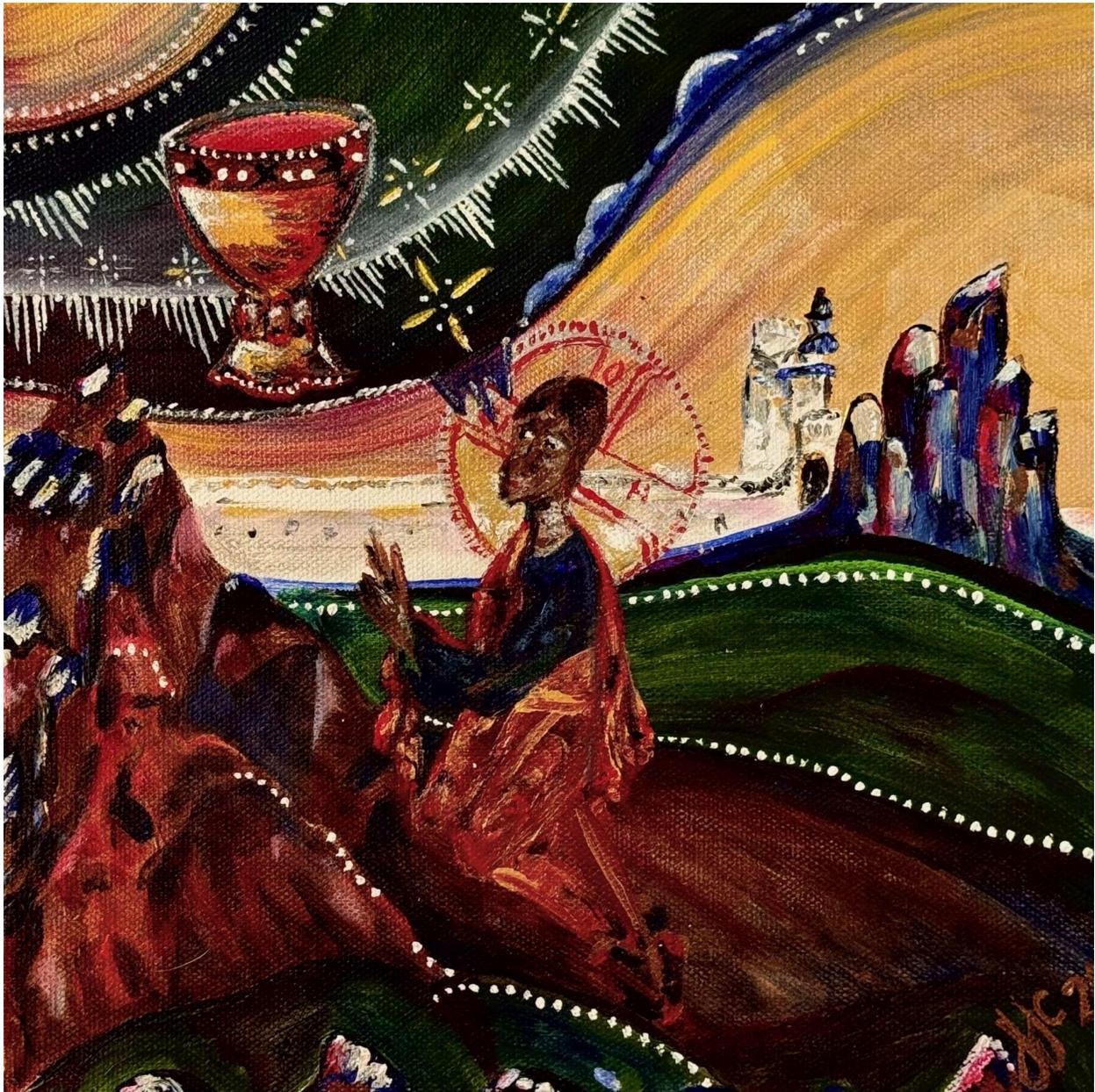


Prayerful Reflections for Lent 2026



Week 3

March 8-March 14, 2026

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March 8-March 14, 2026

Edited by Julia L. Styles
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This is part 3 of a six-part Lent reflection series, divided by week. You can download other weeks at www.prayerfulreflections.com

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About Prayerful Reflections

Prayerful Reflections is a daily resource for connecting with God and the broader Christian community during the season of Lent, the 45 days leading up to Easter. Christians around the world practice Lent as a way to meditate/reflect on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and how Jesus influences our lives today.

Inspired by the ancient practice of *Lectio Divina*, or sacred listening, each daily reflection will be an opportunity to **Read** the Bible, **Reflect** on the message, **Respond** to what we have heard, and **Rest** in the love of God through prayer. This devotional could be read independently or with a community. If you would like to connect virtually, the reflections are posted daily at www.prayerfulreflections.com. Unlike past volumes, this Lent's *Prayerful Reflections* will be published each week as separate editions, emailed to subscribers, and found online at www.prayerfulreflections.com.

I publish Prayerful Reflections to share my thoughts about God and uplift female theologians. This devotional features women who are pastors, authors, teachers, and community leaders from diverse backgrounds across North America and Europe. What unites us is our devotion to Jesus and our call to share God's insights through scripture. Though written by women, this devotional is meant for everyone. I extend my gratitude to all the women whose contributions made this collection possible.

Drawing from the Well of our Ancestors

A Reflection for the Second Sunday of Lent by Rev. Anna Traynham

Lectionary reading for 03/8/2026: [Exodus 17:1-7](#), [Psalm 95](#), [Romans 5:1-11](#), [John 4:5-42](#)

Selected passage for reflection: John 4:5-30

Read

5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.[a])

10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

11 "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

17 "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

19 "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

21 "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said, "I know that the Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

26 Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

27 Just then, his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

Reflect

It’s interesting to imagine Jesus sitting by the well that day, thirsty and without a bucket to draw water. He may have been waiting for a kind stranger to come along, confronting the very real feeling of thirst. When you’re parched, it’s hard to think straight; your mouth feels dry, making it difficult to speak. This aspect of the story is significant: Jesus was thirsty.

While we often contemplate Jesus’s divinity—being God incarnate—it’s important to remember that he had a physical body. Jesus was a real person, and people get thirsty. After traveling for days, he sat alone by a well and asked a Samaritan woman for compassion, leading to a mutual exchange of kindness in a context many wouldn’t expect.

This encounter was surprising for several reasons. First, Jesus was a Jewish man speaking with a Samaritan woman. The division between Jews and Samaritans runs deep, originating in ancient disputes over worship, but over generations, it solidified into prejudice. “They are not like us,” they said—words that have always led to division.

Jesus, at Jacob’s well, conversed with a Samaritan woman, despite their stark differences. There’s no evidence to suggest that this woman was sinful or shameful, as some sermons imply. Instead, her history of five husbands likely reflects a tragic story of widowhood or divorce, possibly due to societal pressures. She might have been ostracized by her community, which is why she was alone at the well in the midday heat. Yet, despite their differences, both Jesus and the Samaritan woman shared a profound truth: they were human, and that connection was enough.

The world today feels heavy. Violence—including that perpetrated by our own government—against immigrants and citizens is alarming. Yet, amid the chaos, there are peaceful protests and a resilient spirit that endures. As a pastor, I hear the fears of immigrants and citizens alike—many seek lawful immigration reform yet wish to avoid the turmoil surrounding it. People are scared, hurting, and angry.

They are thirsty; perhaps even we are. When Jesus found himself thirsty, he approached the ancestral well and met a Samaritan woman. Their shared humanity was sufficient for a meaningful connection.

Now is the time for us to draw from that well. Let us embrace the wisdom of prophets like Amos and Micah, who spoke against injustice, as well as the apostles who proclaimed their faith despite danger. We can draw courage from figures like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemoller, who opposed racism with conviction, and find peace in the legacies of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Desmond Tutu, whose nonviolent resistance brought about change.

Just as the brave Samaritan woman first proclaimed Jesus as Messiah, our witness can effect change. Jesus met her at the well—two individuals connected by their shared humanity. This connection matters to God. The world needs the church's hope and our voices more than ever. If we're feeling thirsty, let's return to the ancestors' well, where we can find kindred spirits and renewed purpose. May we lift His living water to our lips and share it with the world.

Respond

Are you thirsty? What well of wisdom can you draw from today? Consider one of the theologians and peacemakers listed above (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Niemoller, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu, or another brave change-maker). Consider reading a book or watching a documentary on their life to inspire you.

Rest

God, today we recognize our shared humanity. We are hurting, fearful, and vulnerable. Help us connect with one another and with our ancestors. May we find hope and inspiration in scripture and in the justice workers and truth-tellers from history. And may we embody that Good News and share it with our community. Amen.

About the Author



Rev. Anna George Traynham serves as Senior Pastor of Shallowford Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Sound of Awakening

A Reflection for Monday, March 9 by Rev. Dr. Rose Lee-Norman

Lectionary reading for 3/9/26: [Psalm 81](#); [Genesis 24:1-27](#); [2 John 1:1-13](#)

Selected passage for reflection: Psalm 81

Read

Psalm 81 (NIV)

Sing for joy to God our strength;
shout aloud to the God of Jacob!
Begin the music, strike the timbrel,
play the melodious harp and lyre.
Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon,
and when the moon is full, on the day of
our festival;
this is a decree for Israel,
an ordinance of the God of Jacob.
When God went out against Egypt,
he established it as a statute for Joseph.
I heard an unknown voice say:
"I removed the burden from their shoulders;
their hands were set free from the basket.
In your distress you called and I rescued
you,
I answered you out of a thundercloud;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah.
Hear me, my people, and I will warn you—
if you would only listen to me, Israel!
You shall have no foreign god among you;

you shall not worship any god other than
me.
I am the Lord your God,
who brought you up out of Egypt.
Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.
"But my people would not listen to me;
Israel would not submit to me.
So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts
to follow their own devices.
"If my people would only listen to me,
if Israel would only follow my ways,
how quickly I would subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes!
Those who hate the Lord would cringe
before him,
and their punishment would last forever.
But you would be fed with the finest of
wheat;
with honey from the rock I would satisfy
you."

Reflect

I've grown to see Lent as an awakening.

Not the gentle stirring kind, but the kind that calls you out of sleep. It is a season when we allow God to shake us out of numbness. It's an invitation to be honest about injustice, suffering, and the places where fear and control shape us more than love does. Lent is an invitation to listen again to God's beckoning voice.

Psalm 81 is an invitation to awakening. It begins in joyful song – a melodious harp, the sounding of a ram's horn, and full-fledged celebration – remembering the God who lifts burdens and sets

people free. But then the tone shifts. God laments in verse 8, “If only my people would listen to me.” The grief in the psalm is not anger alone; it is heartbreak. A longing for people to awaken to a better way, to trust the voice that leads to life instead of the instincts that lead to harm.

I live and pastor in Minneapolis, MN. And living in Minneapolis during Operation Metro Surge, I saw immense fear move through communities already carrying deep wounds. Families braced for separation. Neighbors wondered who might disappear next. Heartbreak seemed to reverberate through our community, the state, and across our country over humans being reduced to their immigration status, met by a cruel and hardened system of oppression.

But as the country and world saw, Minnesotans didn’t retreat or stay silent. There were many ways people stepped up, seeking to be good neighbors during such a tumultuous time. The extensions of love were vast and exceptionally creative. We likely all heard reports of people delivering groceries, giving rides to work and school, and keeping alert outside schools and daycares. I also know people who shared their airline miles to help people released from detention centers in Texas fly back home. I know some who drove down to Texas, not knowing anyone who was detained, but offering free rides back to Minnesota. There were marches and prayer vigils, neighborhood watch groups, and whistles distributed block by block.

I was especially moved when a group called Singing Resistance began forming marches of peaceful protesters singing songs of dissent. After church one Sunday afternoon, I decided to join them. We met in a large church and learned a few songs together. The place was packed, with hundreds who couldn’t even make it inside the church’s sanctuary. We were around 2,000 in number, and our objective was to encourage ICE agents to defect; to put down their weapons, choose humanity, and stop the cycle of harm.

Marching to hotels in downtown Minneapolis where ICE agents were staying, we sang, “It’s okay to change your mind. Show us your courage, leave this behind. And you can join us, join us anytime.” Then one song that caused tears to well up, “We walk the same road, but we’ve been torn apart. Put down your weapons, come sing your part.” As we sang these choruses in rounds, it provided a form of ventilation of hope into a season of suffocation.

Our songs were not naïve. They were an offering. We sang because we believed awakening is possible. For individuals, communities, and systems broken by sin in our world.

Psalms 81 reminds us that God desires to free all of us. A desire to liberate the oppressed from the suffering of the unjust - and the powerful from the lie that domination brings security. Lent awakens us to this deeper truth that we are more than just individuals with a personal faith, but we are a collective people called to emulate the way of Jesus, whether that’s deep concern for our neighbor (chosen or not), risky love of our enemy, or audacious hope that all broken things can be made right.

Singing in the cold streets of downtown Minneapolis, I heard in my own voice the fervent hope of the psalm: If only we would listen. If only we would turn. If only we would awaken to the God who longs to feed us “honey from the rock,” instead of the bitterness of endless cycles of harm. May we all be awakened this Lent.

For more information on Singing Resistance Twin Cities, [see this article](#).

Respond

What needs to be awakened in your life?

Where has your hope dimmed amidst the pain and suffering in this world?

How is God inviting you to draw closer to Him and, in doing so, soften you toward your neighbor?

When fear, complacency, or cynicism seek to rob you of hope, how can you return to the promise of God's love and restoration?

Rest

*God who calls your people to listen,
Awaken us.*

Awaken us to your hope, love, compassion, and justice.

Awaken us to one another.

Free us from fear and the habits of harm.

Teach us to long for honey from the rock instead of the bitterness of exclusion and suspicion of one another.

May our lives become invitations to peace, repentance, courage, and restoration.

Amen

About the Author



Rev. Dr. Rose Lee-Norman serves as Executive Pastor at Sanctuary Covenant Church in North Minneapolis, MN. She received her Doctor of Ministry from Boston University's School of Theology and is ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church. She teaches as adjunct faculty at Bethel University in St. Paul, MN and North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL. She is married to Ryan and they have two daughters.

Listening in a New Way

A Reflection for Tuesday, March 10 by Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Lobello Edwards

Lectionary reading for 03/10/2026: [Psalm 81: Genesis 29:1-14: 1 Corinthians 10:1-4](#)

Selected passage for reflection: Psalm 81:1-7

Read

Psalm 81: 1-7 *The Message*

1-5 A song to our strong God!
a shout to the God of Jacob!
Anthems from the choir, music from the band,
sweet sounds from lute and harp,
Trumpets and trombones and horns:
it's festival day, a feast to God!
A day decreed by God,
solemnly ordered by the God of Jacob.
He commanded Joseph to keep this day
so we'd never forget what he did in Egypt.

I hear this most gentle whisper from One
I never guessed would speak to me:

6-7
"I took the world off your shoulders,
freed you from a life of hard labor.
You called to me in your pain;
I got you out of a bad place.
I answered you from where the thunder hides,
I proved you at Meribah Fountain.

Reflect

"I hear this most gentle whisper from One I never guessed would speak to me..."

Have you ever learned something that allowed you to listen in a new way?

My daughter is in speech therapy, and through her evaluations and conversations with the therapists working with her, I have learned so much about the physical movements you must make with your mouth to produce specific sounds. For example, in order to help my daughter learn to make "blended" sounds - "st" (stop), "sl" (slow), etc. - we've had to take each word and break it down letter by letter to listen carefully to where the "s" sound stops and the rest of the word blends and continues. Once we identify where the word blends together, we work on making our mouths make the correct sounds. We've played many games sticking out our tongues and touching our tongues to the tops of our mouths and back of our teeth to make certain sounds - and while the end goal is speaking clearly, we can't get there without careful listening first. Careful listening that leads to action.

Today, our scripture calls the worshiping community to celebration and then offers a pause as a reminder from God (a voice not expected and in other Biblical translations, not known) pulls the community to remember the mighty acts of God's salvation: answering their cries, rescuing them from bondage, and leading them safely through the wilderness. Listening to this voice redirects their worship from a regular liturgical celebration to a response to God's gracious acts toward Israel in the past. The scripture continues to show that the worshiping community forgets these acts of God and does not listen, yet God still calls. God's voice continues to ring out in the wilderness. And listening to God's voice leads to action.

I wonder how you best listen to God speak in your life? Watching my daughter patiently work on parsing words and sounds together, I am reminded that active listening can lead to major transformation, but that transformation takes time and requires work and perseverance.

Where is God speaking in your life?

How can you actively listen in ways that lead to transformation in your life and in your community?

Respond

Today, you are invited to give space to actively listen for God's transforming word through prayer. Pick a short verse of scripture that is familiar or challenging and offer it as a prayer by repeating the verse and leaving off the final word until you are left with only one word. After each time you repeat this scripture, leave space and silence to listen.

Here is an example of this practice using Psalm 46:10. Feel free to use this as your prayer today.

Psalm 46:10a: "Be still and know that I am God."

Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know that I am

Be still and know that I

Be still and know that

Be still and know

Be still and

Be still

Be

Rest

Holy and Merciful God,

In your grace, you call to us each day. Forgive us when we do not take the time to slow down and listen. Open our ears and our hearts that we may hear your voice and allow our lives to be transformed as we remember your mighty deeds and live our days in the promise of your love. Amen.

About the Author



Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Lobello Edwards is an elder in the United Methodist Church, currently on family leave. Elizabeth received her MDiv and DMin from Candler School of Theology and resides in Atlanta with her children (Willow and Thomas), Great Dane (Pepper), and husband (Adam). She enjoys hosting nerdy board game nights and exploring new restaurants around the city.

Dry, Cracked Cisterns Hold No Water

A Reflection for Wednesday, March 11 by Rev Alicia Vela Anderson

Lectionary reading for 03/11/2026: [Psalm 81](#); [Jeremiah 2:4-13](#); [John 7:14-31, 37-39](#)

Selected passage for reflection: Jeremiah 2:9-13

Read

Jeremiah 2: 9-13 NRSVUE

Therefore once more I accuse you,
says the Lord,
and I accuse your children's children.
Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look;
send to Kedar and examine with care;
see if there has ever been such a thing.
Has a nation changed its gods,
even though they are no gods?
But my people have changed their glory
for something that does not profit.

Be appalled, O heavens, at this;
be shocked; be utterly desolate,
says the Lord,
for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living water,
and dug out cisterns for themselves,
cracked cisterns
that can hold no water.

Reflect

At the beginning of Lent, in search of something to fast from, I asked myself the question, "What's something that is no longer serving me?" It was a softer way of urging me to take a harsh look at my patterns and what I was filling my time and space with. Rather than try to shame myself out of certain behaviors or reliances, I wanted to use this season to take a deeper look into the places in my life where I was digging out my own cistern rather than drinking from the Living Water offered to me.

Lent is often seen as a time of creating rhythm or practice in our lives, but it can also be a good time to disrupt the pattern. We all have the ability or tendency to keep something around because it's easy or comfortable. The thing we do because it's routine, it could even be a helpful habit, or neutral. We couldn't dream of not doing that thing.

But in reality, it's something that's become less of a choice and more of an automatic. Every time I open my phone, my fingers naturally go to this app, even if I opened it for something else. My morning doesn't start until I've had my morning cup of coffee. We can get to the point where our lives are just moving from one pattern to the next. One task to another without even thinking about it.

It's not until we have an interruption that we even really think about what that action was doing for or to us. I uncovered one of these patterns when I found myself coming home from work, sitting on the couch, and completely dissociating with my phone. Suddenly, it was an hour later,

and I had no idea where the time had gone. I would tell myself I deserved the time because of everything that had transpired that day. I needed the “rest” of checking out.

And yes, once in a while, we need to check out. But every day for months on end? Probably not. Because when I was actually honest with myself, checking out was actually my way of not dealing with the toxicity of my workplace. It was keeping me from telling the truth that I was drowning, and something needed to change.

The prophet Jeremiah says there were two ways the people were falling short: not only were they not going to the God of Living Water, but they were also digging their own cisterns to quench their thirst, ones that wouldn't even hold water. It's one thing to refuse to take your thirst and hunger to God; it's another to try to find the sustenance elsewhere.

Because honestly, nothing is going to give you that deep, satisfying fullness like the love and beauty of the Creator. Nothing will fill your cup in the same way. I've seen the evidence in my own life: putting down the habit that was providing me with the “rest” of checking out and picking up the habits of rest that draw me closer to the heart of God gave me the confidence to find better for myself.

Respond

My guess is that the Spirit is already bringing up something for you to examine after reading these words. Take a moment to quiet your mind and body and connect yourself to the heart of God, inviting you in. Ask the Spirit to show you where you've dug your own cistern rather than drawing up the living water.

Rest

Creator God, I know you by your Spirit, remind me that I am your beloved child. Guide me back toward your arms, where I find belonging and unwavering grace. Amen



About the Author

Rev. Alicia Vela Anderson serves as a Spiritual Formation Coach at a nonprofit that builds on the strengths, skills, and potential of young moms. She is passionate about guiding others through discovering the beauty of God in their own stories and journeys. She lives in Chicago, IL, with her husband, where she enjoys exploring, reading, and living locally.

Sisters Before Mistery

A Reflection for Thursday, March 12 by Leana Lopez

Lectionary reading for 03/12/2026: [Psalm 23](#); [1 Samuel 15:10-21](#); [Ephesians 4:25-32](#)

Selected passage for reflection: Ephesians 4:25-32

Read

Ephesians 4:25-32 (NIV)

Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Reflect

There's a kind of anger that doesn't announce itself. It doesn't raise its voice or slam doors. It shows up quietly — in the way you answer someone's question with a little less warmth than usual, in the way you "forget" to return a call, in the way you smile while saying something that was never quite meant as a kindness. That's the anger this passage has been speaking to me about lately. Not the big, dramatic kind — the kind we can easily name — but the anger that lives in the margins of our daily interactions, the kind we rarely admit to ourselves that it is even there.

In college, I lived with my best friend, and we did everything together until one day when she showed up with a boy. And just like that, I was no longer the priority. It's an age-old story that I'm sure many can relate to. You have this friend, and you swear allegiance to them. They become your ride or die. You proclaim "Sisters before misters!" until one of you goes and gets a boyfriend. She just simply wasn't around. And when she was, I felt unseen, dismissed, like my needs simply didn't register on her radar.

I never said anything directly. I told myself I was happy for her. And when she was around, I was just tired. Just busy. Just being realistic about who they were and what they could do. But if I'm honest, I had quietly made a decision about them. I started responding to their texts a little slower. I stopped sharing the things that actually mattered to me. When they asked how I was doing, I said "fine" — and meant it as a wall, not an answer. I was still physically showing up. I was still being kind in all the technical ways. But I had emotionally checked out, and I was using

my composed exterior as a kind of punishment I didn't have to own. I wasn't yelling — I was disappearing. Then one day, my friend left a note on my pillow with the lyrics of “Be Here Now” by Mason Jennings. The lyrics were asking me to come back, to be present and real with her. That slow, deliberate withdrawal from my friend was its own kind of falsehood. Paul's words cut right through me: *put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor*. I had been lying — not with my words, but with my lack of presence.

In my work as a therapist and grief counselor, I see this pattern constantly. So much of what brings people to my office isn't grief they can name easily — it's anger they've never once called anger. It's the mother who says she's "just exhausted" but hasn't let anyone be truly close to her in years. It's the adult child who insists they're "over" the parent who left, but can't sustain any relationship without eventually sabotaging it. Grief and anger can sometimes share the same house. And when we refuse to name the anger, it doesn't leave — it just changes clothes. It becomes distance, sarcasm, perfectionism, or that particular coldness that masquerades as strength.

Paul doesn't tell us not to feel anger. He says, *"In your anger, do not sin."* The feeling isn't the problem. The hiding is. The festering is. The letting it quietly rot into bitterness while we tell everyone — and ourselves — that everything is fine. That's the foothold the enemy gets: not in the honest moment of anger, but in the long, unexamined silence that follows it. The path toward being people who build others up begins with the courage to tell the truth about what is happening inside us.

The Lyrics to Be Here Now, by Mason Jennings

*“Be here now, no other place to be
Or just sit there dreaming of how life would be
If we were somewhere better
Somewhere far away from all all worries
Well, here we are, You are the love of my life*

*Be here now, no other place to be
All the doubts that linger, just set them free
And let good things happen
And let the future come into each moment
Like a rising sun
You are the love of my life, You are the love of
my life, Yeah, you know you are
Sun comes up and we start again, Sun comes
up and we start again
And it's all new today*

*All we have to say
Is be here now
Be here now, no other place to be
This whole world keeps changing, come change
with me
Everything that's happened, all that's yet to
come
Is here inside this moment, it's the only one
You are the love of my life, You are the love of
my life, Yeah, you know you are
Sun comes up and we start again, Sun comes
up and we start again
It's all new today
All we have to say
Is be here now”*

Respond

Take a moment today to sit honestly with yourself and ask: *Is there an anger I have been unwilling to name?* You don't have to resolve it— you just have to be willing to call it what it is.

Rest

Lord God, you know what lives beneath the surface of us — every hurt we've quietly swallowed, every bitterness we've dressed up as something else. Give us the courage to be honest with you, with ourselves, and with one another. Teach us to speak truth in love, to let go before the sun goes down, and to receive the same grace we are called to extend. Amen

About the Author



As a nonprofit and healthcare leader, I've dedicated my career to transforming behavioral health systems and expanding access to quality care. My work centers on designing compassionate, innovative solutions that better serve vulnerable populations and drive meaningful change across clinical and community settings.

As the Owner & CEO of [Flex Therapy](#), I focus on developing and consulting on collaborative, data-driven models that improve outcomes for high-risk communities. I work closely with stakeholders to build culturally responsive approaches that strengthen care delivery.

I'm also passionate about the power of creativity—through art, writing, and innovative problem-solving—to inspire growth, enhance well-being, and spark meaningful transformation.

The Lord is my Shepherd

A Reflection for Friday, March 13 by Rev. Dawn Holt Lauber

Lectionary reading for 3/13/2026: [Psalm 23](#); [1 Samuel 15:10-21](#); [Ephesians 4:25-32](#)

Selected passage: Psalm 23

Read

Psalm 23 *King James Version*

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Reflect

Throughout the scriptures, the Lord is described as the Shepherd who provides for and protects His sheep. Sometimes “His sheep” refers to the people of Israel, and at other times we see ourselves as “His sheep.” In Isaiah 40:11, the Lord tends to His flock - the children of Israel. He gathers His lambs in his arms and draws them close to his heart. In John 10, Jesus speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep, declaring: “*I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me.*” In 1st Peter, Jesus is described as the Chief Shepherd, the guardian of our very souls, who gives to all those who believe in Him the crown of glory that never fades away.

At the center of this psalm is our deep need for a Savior, a Shepherd, a Messiah: The Lord is my Shepherd. We are one of the sheep resting in the protection of God, who is our Shepherd. Faith in the Good Shepherd takes away any desire for something other than God; it is the end of want and dissatisfaction. Because all of our needs are supplied by the LORD, we proclaim: “I shall not want.”

God provides the rest and assurance we need. The Shepherd knows when we should rest and where we should rest. We are not left alone in our choices. We lean on the wisdom of the Lord. The Lord makes us rest in places that are safe and fertile – places of true refuge for our weary

souls. Trusting in the Good Shepherd leads us to green, plentiful, abundant spaces and calm, comforting places that refresh us.

On our own, sheep stray from green pastures and do not know where still waters are. *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”* We do not need to do this life alone. We have a loving Savior who guides and sustains us. For the glory of the Shepherd’s own name, He leads us in the right paths. The closer we follow the Lord and trust in His good word, the calmer and more confident we become in our concerns and questions.

God leads us to the abundance of green pastures and the safety of still waters, and through uncertain pathways. Life has peaks and valleys and every kind of height and depth in between. We cannot navigate any of these paths without God. Even in the darkest valley, we have nothing to fear because God is with us. We are not alone. The presence of the Shepherd casts out all fear of evil – not the presence of evil, but our fear of it. Evil is still present in this world, but we can withstand it because God goes before us. We do not face evil alone. *“The Lord is for me; I do not fear.”*

From the valley, we turn to the Lord’s rich and abundant table. Even in the presence of our enemies, we trust that the Lord has not abandoned us. God anoints us with oil and fills us until we overflow with His mercy. Despite the deadly valley we have traversed, and in the presence of our enemies, we enjoy the goodness of the Shepherd’s provision at the table.

The psalm ends with a prayer of thanksgiving: grateful that God’s goodness and steadfast love pursue us all of our earthly days and all our days in heaven.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He is the one who restores our souls, leads us in the paths of righteousness, accompanies us through danger, spreads the holy supper before us in the presence of sin and death, and pursues us in His gracious love all the days of our lives.

Respond

Are you in a place of want? Do you wonder where God is in the day-to-day, or in the midst of a troubling time? Are you seeking abundance from the Lord? Do you need to be filled by the Holy Spirit? Or perhaps you need the calm, comfort, and security of stillness – away from chaotic waters? Ask God to help you find some space and silence often in the days leading up to Holy Week to give these needs over to the Lord.

Rest

Be our Shepherd, O Lord, and bless us with all good things that we may be refreshed with your overflowing cup and dwell in your house forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

About the Author



Dawn Holt Lauber is a pastor, poet, singer, and songwriter. Her original sacred jazz, as well as jazz arrangements of favorite hymns, can be found at www.dawnholtlauber.com. Dawn is an ordained minister with the Evangelical Covenant Church and serves as Associate Pastor of Congregational Life at Glen Ellyn Covenant Church in Illinois.

Reflecting the Light

A Reflection for Saturday, March 14 by Ruth Zschoche

Lectionary reading for 03/14/2026: [Psalm 23; 1 Samuel 15:32-34; John 1:1-9](#);

Selected passage for reflection: John 1:1-9

Read

John 1:1-9 *New Living Translation*

In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God,

and the Word was God.

² He existed in the beginning with God.

³ God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.

⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created,^[a]
and his life brought light to everyone.

⁵ The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it.^[b]

⁶ God sent a man, John the Baptist,^[c] ⁷ to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. ⁸ John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹ The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

Reflect

I have been reflecting on this passage recently. In John 1, I read about the Word. This Word existed in the beginning. This Word was with God. This Word was God. Who is this Word who was from the beginning and through whom all was created? It is Jesus, the Son of God. Nothing was created except through Him! This Word is named the Light!

The Scripture goes on to tell me about John the Baptist, who himself was not the Light but came to tell everyone about the Light.

My husband retired recently, and now we are traveling a lot! In fact, I am writing this from a ship in the middle of the Tasman Ocean near Tauranga, New Zealand. As I have thought about travel and how it is impacting my “ministry”, I have at times felt that being gone would mean I wasn’t able to continue in ministry. But that is a very faulty and narrow conception of ministry. I am reminded that I am not the light. I am a reflection of the Light! John 1:8 says that John himself wasn’t the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light.

When I began to shift my perspective about ministry from a job to being called to reflect the light, I started seeing the people around me as part of my calling to ministry. I have had so many

special conversations with people from around the world, people I would never have met and spoken with if I had stayed home thinking I needed to “do” ministry in that single space. The world is open to me. I am reflecting the Light to many people who work quietly in the background, who are often unseen and unknown.

John spoke loudly, shouting to the crowds. I am not shouting; I am just daily praying that I am reflecting the light to those around me.

Respond

Recently, in a Lectio 365 morning devotion, I was challenged by the following question and prayer. “With every person I meet, would you show me something you particularly value in them? Give me an opportunity to encourage them, serve them, or promote their interests.”

How about you? How are you a reflection of the Light in your daily life, regardless of where you are or what you are doing? How might you use this question and prayer as you go about your day? At the end of the day, as you reflect on your day, possibly with an examen, write down the person/s to whom you reflected the Light. Then keep them in your prayers through the coming days and weeks.

Rest

Lord, today, please help me be a reflection of your light. Open my eyes to see those who may be missed by others. Draw me into conversation, so I may reflect your love and care. May Your Light in me be an opportunity to encourage, serve, or just give an extra touch of love.

About the Author



Ruth loves her calling as a Spiritual Director. She delights in holding space and walking alongside those who are listening for God’s movement in their lives. She is mom to one son, a daughter-in-love, and Omi to two beautiful granddaughters. She loves to travel with her husband, who recently retired. She enjoys hiking, biking, swimming, reading, playing the piano, and praising God wherever she is in the world, but loves living in the beautiful Colorado mountains.