

2018年大齋
美國聯合衛理

節期靈修思語
教會華裔協會

祂

H I S

U N D Y I N G

F A I T H F U L N E S S

不朽的
信實



Forward

At the United Methodist Church (UMC) National Chinese Caucus (NCC) Convocation last November, we decided to publish the first Chinese and English Bilingual “Lenten Devotional,” written by current and retired Chinese pastors, and those pastors currently serving all Chinese United Methodist Churches in the United States. They were invited to write either in Chinese or English, and due to the tight deadline, we decided not to translate. We sincerely hope this “Lenten Devotional” created by the pastors of the UMC NCC will build up every believer and allow everyone to get to know the Chinese Churches of the UMC. Furthermore, we hope to follow the traditions of Lent, to renew our spirits through reflection upon Christ.

This is a new beginning, since Rev. Chin Cheak Yu participated in writing of the Lenten devotional for the Bible Society of Singapore when she served at the Singapore Trinity college, so she reached out to them regarding the publishing of the Lenten Devotional. We received generous guidance: including scripture selection, writing direction, and the theme “His Undying Faithfulness” from Rev. Rev Ezekiel Tan, the General Director of the Bible Society of Singapore. We want to express our gratitude to every pastor, minister and lay servant who participated in writing this devotional. We also extend our gratitude to the editorial team, which include Rev. Chin Cheak Yu, Rev. Puong Ong Lau, Rev. John DL Yang, Rev. Peter Lau, Pastor Helen Kung, Rev. Jerry Owyang, Irene Wu and Joseph Sin from First UMC San Gabriel; to Yang Long Chen from the Flushing UMC for the cover design; and to Fornia Tsang from San Gabriel First UMC for layout and formatting.

May we all treasure the experience of using this “Lenten Devotional” and read each daily passage with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We believe this will bring deep contemplation and form a closer relationship with our Lord Jesus.

Peace, Your servants in Christ,
Chair Rev. Puong Ong Lau
and Vice Chair Rev. John D.L. Yang

前言

在去年十一月的美國聯合衛理教會華裔協會領導大會，我們決定嘗試第一次出版中英文版《大齋節靈修思語》，並由我們在任及退休華裔牧師，加上所有在華裔教會共服事的牧師來執筆，隨他/她們決定的中或英執筆；因時間緊迫我們這一次就沒有翻譯。真實盼望透過這一次華裔美國聯合衛理教會同心聯合出版的《大齋節靈修思語》能造就每一位信徒，彼此認識全美國華裔衛理教會，並遵循大齋節的傳統，幫助信徒默想基督，得以靈命更新。

這是新的開始，而余清杰牧師在新加坡三一神學院的時候有參與新加坡聖經公會的《大齋節靈修思語》的投稿，所以向他們請教，並承蒙新加坡聖經公會的總幹事陳業偉牧師慷慨分享經文的主題“祂不朽的信實”，經文的選擇及寫作指南。在此特別鳴謝。特別感謝每一位參與撰寫的牧師、傳道和教會同工。也謝謝校對稿件的余清杰牧師，劉本恩牧師，楊東龍牧師，劉金福牧師，Helen Kung 傳道，Rev Jerry Owyang、胡翠媚姊妹和單樂生弟兄（聖蓋博第一聯合衛理公會）；封面設計的法拉聖衛理公會 陳揚龍弟兄；及設計/排版的加州聖蓋博第一聯合衛理公會曾何佩雲姊妹。

願我們都珍惜使用《大齋節靈修思語》，每一天簡短的信息靠著聖靈的引導，相信必會帶給你更深的思考，與主耶穌有更親密的關係

平安，您主內的同工
主席劉本恩和副主席楊東龍牧師

序言

教會年曆的高峰是復活節。在那天，我們歡慶主耶穌基督戰勝死亡的事實。大齋節期是一段 40 天之久（不包括聖周）的節期，目的是要通過默想基督，特別這次的主題：“基督不朽的信實”，來預備教會進入復活節。大齋節期是由聖灰節開始，而以聖周的濯足日和受難節為亮點，並在復活節前夕的守夜達到頂峰，慶賀基督的死裡復活。

“40” 這個數字在聖經中含有特殊的意思。耶穌在曠野度過 40 日，為日後的事工做準備，且勝過一切可能導致祂放棄使命與呼召的試探。更正教和天主教鼓勵信徒在大齋節期的 40 天中，操練內省、自審，並且悔改；在這段期間，我們把焦點放在自己與基督復活的生命和我們在基督裡的盼望。這季節提醒我們極需要神的恩典，幫助我們預備復活節慶賀上帝奇妙救贖之節期。

大齋節期在教會歷年來慣常的標誌有：默想基督，並以某事上操練放棄和實踐順服的敬拜舉動，來效法基督的捨己。所以這靈修本的格式：默想、禱告、實踐；希望鼓勵大家一同來參與這神聖預備的標誌。例如：由於我們需要默想基督，我們選擇放棄或禁某些食品、酒精、電視節目或社交媒體。若能把剩下來的金錢和時間轉投于禱告、善工或施捨，那我們的“齋”就顯得更有意義。其他在大齋節所能培養的屬靈操練包括沉默、獨處、貞潔、節儉、查經、和認罪。

藉着這些操練，我們的目標是操練內在自由、潔淨內心，靈命更新，使我們重新體驗耶穌捨己的生活方式。

讓我們藉著大齋節的靈修，回到上帝的道理，默想基督的愛中，來尋索生命的指標、吸取生命的活力。讓我們美國華人聯合衛理公會，來得著主裡的合一和更新。這是我們第一季出版這大齋節節靈修思語，有許多不足的地方，請在主的愛中包容和彼此代禱，更為着寫的牧師傳道及他們所服事的教會禱告，以下是使用這靈修日語的一些建議：

1. 請選擇一個不會令你分心或者被打擾的安靜地方；
2. 請選定一個時段，並在每日靈修開始前，唱一首短的聖詩或讚美詩，預備心領受上帝的話語。
3. 請花時間朗讀及反思每日經課中所包含的真理。
4. 請按照每日所提供的實踐內容，或聖靈的感動，真誠地委身上帝。
5. 若你對某日的反思內容有所感觸，請記錄你靈裡的洞察，並請至少與一人分享心得。
6. 你也可以選擇以這靈修思語與家人一起靈修，請讓家人輪流讀經及分享心得。
7. 施舍。在大齋節期，請默想如何加強施舍和憐憫的舉動來祝福你周圍的人。

願大家與主更親近，我們都能效法基督的捨己，並且在主裡茁壯成長。

余清杰牧師
加州聖蓋博第一聯合衛理公會

Preface

The highpoint of the Christian church calendar is Easter. On Easter Sunday, we celebrate the truth of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a period of 40 days (excluding Sunday and Holy Week) for Christians to reflect on Christ, especially our topic this year is “Christ’s Undying Faithfulness,” to prepare the church for Easter season. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, with highlights during the Holy Week, such as Maundy Thursday (Last supper and the washing of feet); and Good Friday (arrest, trial, crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ). Many Christians keep watch overnight before Easter Sunday to celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

The number 40 has special meaning in the Bible. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness in preparation for His future ministry. He overcame all temptations that would have caused Him to give up on His calling and mission. Reformists and Catholics encourage believers to spend the 40 days of Lent in meditation, self-reflection and repentance. During this time, we focus on the resurrected life we gained from Christ, and our hope in Christ. This season reminds us that we are deeply in need of God’s grace, and it helps us prepare for the celebration of God’s wonderful salvation on Easter.

Over the years, churches have encouraged many spiritual practices during Lent: Meditation on Christ, giving up indulgences or taking on tasks in service to imitate Christ’s sacrifice. This booklet attempts to duplicate these traditions with a reflection, prayer and suggested actions; in hope that everyone will find blessings through participation. For example, in order to focus on Christ, we choose to give up or forbid certain food, alcohol, television or social media. If we save money or time because we are fasting, and if we put the saved resources into prayer, giving or charity; then our period of fasting can become more meaningful. Other spiritual practices include silence, solitude, chastity, frugality, scripture reading and confession of sins. Through these practices, our goal is to upgrade our inner freedom, purify our hearts, and renew our spirits; so that we can experience again the sacrificial lifestyle of Jesus.

Let us return to God's way and Jesus' love through the practice of devotion, so we can find our lives' direction, and absorb the vitality of life. Let the National Chinese Caucus of the United Methodist Church come to be one with God and be renewed. This is our first publication, please forgive our imperfections and pray with love and inclusive spirits for each other. Furthermore, please pray for the writers: whether they are pastors or ministers; and for the churches they serve. The following are some suggestions on how you can use this booklet in your daily devotion:

1. Please find a quiet place without distraction of interruptions.
2. Please choose a set time, start the devotion by singing a short praise song or hymn, to prepare your heart to receive God's words.
3. Please spend time to read out loud the lessons and reflect upon the truth from that lesson.
4. Please do the suggested action, or be guided by the Holy Spirit, sincerely give yourselves to God.
5. If you are moved by a certain lesson, please record your spiritual understanding, and share this experience with at least one person.
6. You are welcome to do the devotion with your family. Please take turns reading the devotional and sharing each other's thoughts.
7. Give. During the season of Lent, please increase your giving, acts of charity and kindness to bring blessings to all those around you.

Let us draw closer to the Lord, learn to imitate Christ' sacrifice, and grow and thrive in Christ.

Rev. Chin Cheak Yu
San Gabriel First United Methodist Church

2018 Lenten Devotion 大齋節期讀經表

| Day 日期 | Titles 目錄 | Pages 頁數 |
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| 2/14 | 慈愛：潔除我的罪 | 10-11 |
| 2/15 | 跟從人子的脚步 | 12-13 |
| 2/16 | The righteous shall live by faith | 14-15 |
| 2/17 | 上帝所要的禁食 | 16-17 |
| 2/18 | 我會紀念我所立的約 | 18-19 |
| 2/19 | 耶和華的律法勝過罪 | 20-21 |
| 2/20 | 上帝的兒女行公義 | 22-23 |
| 2/21 | 尼尼微人信服上帝 | 24-25 |
| 2/22 | On the day I called, you answered me | 26-27 |
| 2/23 | 惡人死亡，豈是我所喜悅的呢？ | 28-29 |
| 2/24 | Flesh Crucified; Set free in Christ | 30-31 |
| 2/25 | 我願為上帝背起怎樣的十架？ | 32-33 |
| 2/26 | Daniel's Confession on behalf of his people | 34-35 |
| 2/27 | 向至高者還你的願 | 36-37 |
| 2/28 | 我們若忽略這麼大的救恩，怎能逃避呢？ | 38-39 |
| 3/1 | 活出上帝的生命 | 40-41 |
| 3/2 | 你們心中的眼睛照亮在基督裡的盼望 | 42-43 |
| 3/3 | 祢必將我們一切的罪投于深海 | 44-45 |
| 3/4 | Provoke one another to love and good deeds | 46-47 |
| 3/5 | 我的脚緊緊跟隨祢的脚踪 | 48-49 |
| 3/6 | Israel put Ephraim before Manasseh | 50-51 |
| 3/7 | I always do the things that are pleasing to him | 52-53 |
| 3/8 | To Melchizedek, Abraham apportioned a tenth | 54-55 |

2018 Lenten Devotion 大齋節期讀經表

| Day 日期 | Titles 目錄 | Pages 頁數 |
|--------|--|----------|
| 3/9 | 當歸向耶和華，用言語向祂 | 56-57 |
| 3/10 | Take up the whole armour of God | 58-59 |
| 3/11 | But the LORD God helps me | 60-61 |
| 3/12 | 那人信耶穌所說的話 | 62-63 |
| 3/13 | Help us, O God for the glory of your name | 64-65 |
| 3/14 | 僅只一次獻上祂的身體就得以成聖 | 66-67 |
| 3/15 | 靠着耶穌的血得以坦然進入 | 68-69 |
| 3/16 | 我讓耶和華常在我面前 | 70-71 |
| 3/17 | If anyone thirsts, let him come to me | 72-73 |
| 3/18 | 祂因所受的苦學了順從 | 74-75 |
| 3/19 | 只要你們持守信仰 | 76-77 |
| 3/20 | 一望這銅蛇就活了 | 77-79 |
| 3/21 | If you abide in my word you are truly my disciples | 80-81 |
| 3/22 | I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation | 82-83 |
| 3/23 | 一粒麥子不落在地裡死了 | 84-85 |
| 3/24 | He has made me a byword of the peoples | 86-87 |
| 3/25 | Your king is coming to you; humble and mounted on a donkey | 88-89 |
| 3/26 | 我的僕人……我所揀選的 | 90-91 |
| 3/27 | Boast...in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ | 92-93 |
| 3/28 | 專一注目耶穌 | 94-95 |
| 3/29 | 我們縱然失信，祂仍是可信的 | 96-97 |
| 3/30 | 因為你聽從了我的話 | 98-99 |
| 3/31 | Order the tomb to be made secure until the third day | 100-101 |
| 4/1 | 你們尋找那釘十字架的拿撒勒人耶穌，祂已經復活 | 102-103 |

Steadfast love: cleansing from sin

慈愛：潔除我的罪

2月14日・聖灰日・禮拜三

Psalms 詩篇 51：1-18

¹神啊，求你按你的慈愛憐恤我！按你豐盛的慈悲塗抹我的過犯！²求你將我的罪孽洗除淨盡，並潔除我的罪！³因為，我知道我的過犯；我的罪常在我面前。⁴我向你犯罪，惟獨得罪了你；在你眼前行了這惡，以致你責備我的時候顯為公義，判斷我的時候顯為清正。⁵我是在罪孽裡生的，在我母親懷胎的時候就有了罪。⁶你所喜愛的是內裡誠實；你在我隱密處，必使我得智慧。⁷求你用牛膝草潔淨我，我就乾淨；求你洗滌我，我就比雪更白。⁸求你使我得聽歡喜快樂的聲音，使你所壓傷的骨頭可以踴躍。⁹求你掩面不看我的罪，塗抹我一切的罪孽。¹⁰神啊，求你為我造清潔的心，使我裡面重新有正直的靈。¹¹不要丟棄我，使我離開你的面；不要從我收回你的聖靈。¹²求你使我仍得救恩之樂，賜我樂意的靈扶持我，¹³我就把你的道指教有過犯的人，罪人必歸順你。¹⁴神啊，你是拯救我的神；求你救我脫離流人血的罪！我的舌頭就高聲歌唱你的公義。¹⁵主啊，求你使我嘴唇張開，我的口便傳揚讚美你的話！¹⁶你本不喜愛祭物，若喜愛，我就獻上；燔祭，你也不喜悅。¹⁷神所要的祭就是憂傷的靈；神啊，憂傷痛悔的心，你必不輕看。¹⁸求你隨你的美意善待錫安，建造耶路撒冷的城牆。

默想：

詩篇五十一篇是大衛與拔示巴犯了姦淫和借刀殺人之罪，先知拿單責備他後寫的悔罪詩。此詩篇的形式清楚描

述大衛求上帝以祂的慈愛潔除他的罪。從第 1-18 節大衛用了 11 次求上帝赦免他，讓他經歷真正的赦免：讓他“得聽歡喜快樂的聲音”（8）讓他“重新有正直的靈”（10）“不要丟棄他，不要收回聖靈”（11）；讓他“仍得救恩之樂”（12）讓他“脫離流人血的罪”（14）和“讓他的口能傳揚讚美神：（15）並求神“不要因他的罪拖累錫安”（18 節）。

我們是否有丟過洗不掉污跡的衣服嗎？即使衣服似乎已經漂白了，但我們仍然記得那污跡在哪裡，甚至我們不得不把非常喜歡且珍貴的衣服丟掉。大衛這悔罪篇蒙上帝悅納，因為他明白了上帝的傷痛，明白了基督愛的特徵：上帝是何等不願意放棄他的子女，甚至在他們還做罪人的時候為我們死。大衛一次又一次求上帝赦免他。他體會了上帝為人受苦及人因罪受的煎熬；那就是上帝一次又一次希望他的子女快悔改，相信神的愛能潔除他心靈的污跡和控告。

禱告：

慈愛憐恤我們的天父，求 按祢的慈愛憐恤我！按祢豐盛的慈悲塗抹我的過犯！讓我的心靈經歷基督的愛使我得自由。阿門！

實踐：

在這聖灰日，請嘗試以下操練：

- 1) 列出耶穌在你生命的恩典和你所經歷過耶穌愛你的一件事，與人分享。
- 2) 試試將你隱藏多年的心魔、心靈的垃圾、負面的情緒、以及傷痛，用大衛的禱告文求上帝釋放你和你的家庭。
- 3) 用以上的禱告文為你受捆绑的朋友代禱。

余清杰牧師
聖蓋博第一衛理公會

In the Footsteps of the Son of Man

跟從人子的脚步

2月15日・聖灰日後・禮拜四

Luke 路加福音 9:22-25

²² 又說：人子必須受許多的苦，被長老、祭司長和文士棄絕，並且被殺，第三日復活。²³ 耶穌又對眾人說：若有人要跟從我，就當捨己，天天背起他的十字架來跟從我。²⁴ 因為凡要救自己生命的，必喪掉生命，凡為我喪掉生命的，必救了生命。²⁵ 人若賺得全世界，卻喪了自己，賠上自己，有甚麼益處呢？

默想：

耶穌在門徒面前作了一次驚人的宣告：「人子必須受許多的苦、被長老、祭司長和文士棄絕、並且被殺、第三日復活。」(路加福音 9:22) 祂明確的表白與一般人所認定的基督完全不一樣；人們要的是一位孔武有力、戰勝一切，帶領他們打倒仇敵的彌賽亞。事實上，耶穌必須受許多的苦，並且會被以色列的宗教領袖們無情的拋棄，將被殺掉、喪失生命，但第三天從死裡復活。可見，耶穌所行的經歷是受苦、被殺和復活的道路。

接著，耶穌就邀請門徒跟從祂、並說：「若有人要跟從我、就當捨己、天天背起他的十字架來、跟從我。因為凡要救自己生命的、必喪掉生命；凡為我喪掉生命的、必救了生命。」(路加福音 9:23-24) 可見任何人若要跟隨主的腳蹤就必須捨己和背起自己的十字架；並為耶穌喪掉生命的、必救了生命。「捨己」的意思是願意放下自我、尊主為大，遵行祂的旨意、讓耶穌來掌管我們生活的一切；「背起十字架」的意思是將自己無私的擺上、為了耶穌基督願意面對接受一切的責難和困境。因此，我們將會無怨無悔的在神的光中接受十字架的破碎與拆毀，而得到一個嶄新而豐盛的生命。

請不要忘記！主耶穌又告誡我們說：「人若賺得全世界、卻喪了自己、賠上自己、有甚麼益處呢？」(路加福音 9:25) 願我們都能夠放下世界，相互勉勵、一起跟從人子的腳步、榮神益人！

禱告：

我們在天上的父！讚美祢！感謝主透過今天閱讀的經文與聖靈的光照、幫助我們不要忘記起初的愛；使我們能夠放下自我、背起自己的十字架，專心的跟隨祢、學習祢的榜樣，盡心盡力的服事神、服事人。奉耶穌基督的名禱告，阿們！

實踐：

一位真正跟從主的基督徒，是會放下榮華與尊貴、天天背起自己的十字架，來服事周遭那些軟弱無助需要幫忙的人們。請問？你能做到嗎？

曾慶華牧師
阿罕布拉市第一聯合衛理公會

The righteous shall live by faith

義人必因信得生

February 16 – Friday after Ash Wednesday

Galatians 加拉太書 3:1-14

¹You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! ²The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? ³Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? ⁴Did you experience so much for nothing? —if it really was for nothing. ⁵Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? ⁶Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” ⁷so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. ⁸And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.” ⁹For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed. ¹⁰For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law.” ¹¹Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for “The one who is righteous will live by faith.” ¹²But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, “Whoever does the works of the law will live by them.” ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—¹⁴in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Meditation:

In the scripture above, the Galatian church was struggling to know that God's grace is received by faith alone rather than earned through obedience to the laws of the Old Testament. They asked “Is it really true that God’s love and favor cannot be earned?” Let me tell you a short story from my life that helped me to understand the powerful truth of God’s unending love for me.

I remember the day that my son was born. He was wrapped in a little blue blanket and handed to me. I was a bit uncertain about how I

was going to take care of him. But I held him carefully in my arms and looked at his face. I was surprised by his big bright eyes as they stared up at me. I wasn't sure what to say, so I whispered to him "you are my son." At that moment, I felt that a powerful connection was created between us, and I knew that I would love this small child for the rest of my life. I knew that this type of love was not based on what he might do with his life, whether ambitious or trivial, but solely on the fact that he was my child.

I believe that God feels that way about each of us. When we accept the gift of God's loving grace in our lives, we are born into God's eternal family. Nothing we might do in our lives can change God's great love for us. Suppose that my son was to say to me "What can I do to earn your love so that I can be part of this family?" I would tell him that he is thoroughly loved and that he was already part of the family from the moment of his birth. All that he would need to do is live fully and freely in the confidence that nothing would ever change that.

Prayer:

God thank you for making me be part of your family. When I doubt that your grace is sufficient for me, help me to remember your love. Help me to trust in your love and to live fully into the calling that you have for my life that I might share this good news with others through my words and actions in Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Practice:

Do your spiritual practices reflect a deep trust in God's loving grace, or a desire to win God's favor? Take a moment to write down the various religious activities that you have done in the past couple of weeks. For each item that you write down, consider whether your motivation is out of joyful obedience to God, or from a begrudging hope to please God? Lift up each item to God in prayer trusting that God's grace is sufficient for you. Acknowledge where you may need to let go of your own ambitions and trust God and live more at peace in the fullness of God's abundant love.

Rev. David Palmer
Faith UMC of Temple City

God's chosen Fast

上帝所要的禁食

2月17日・聖灰日後・禮拜六

Ephesians 以賽亞書 58:6-14

⁶我所揀選的禁食不是要鬆開兇惡的繩，解下軛上的索，使被欺壓的得自由，折斷一切的軛嗎？⁷不是要把你的餅分給飢餓的人，將飄流的窮人接到你家中，見赤身的給他衣服遮體，顧恤自己的骨肉而不掩藏嗎？⁸這樣，你的光就必發現如早晨的光；你所得的醫治要速速發明。你的公義必在你前面行；耶和華的榮光必作你的後盾。⁹那時你求告，耶和華必應允；你呼求，他必說：我在這裡。你若從你中間除掉重軛和指摘人的指頭，並發惡言的事，¹⁰你心若向飢餓的人發憐憫，使困苦的人得滿足，你的光就必在黑暗中發現；你的幽暗必變如正午。¹¹耶和華也必時常引導你，在乾旱之地使你心滿意足，骨頭強壯。你必像澆灌的園子，又像水流不絕的泉源。¹²那些出於你的人必修造久已荒廢之處；你要建立拆毀累代的根基。你必稱為補破口的，和重修路徑與人居住的。¹³你若在安息日掉轉你的腳步，在我聖日不以操作為喜樂，稱安息日為可喜樂的，稱耶和華的聖日為可尊重的；而且尊敬這日，不辦自己的私事，不隨自己的私意，不說自己的私話，¹⁴你就以耶和華為樂。耶和華要使你乘駕地的高處，又以你祖雅各的產業養育你。這是耶和華親口說的。

默想：

禁食禱告乃是重要的屬靈操練，幫助我們更加親近神，懇切尋求神。當我們面對人生重要的抉擇或是生活上極大困境時，禁食禱告就扮演著極重要的角色了。然而，我們該如何禁食呢？神對禁食有什麼要求呢？我們當如何禁食才能蒙神的喜悅呢？

以賽亞先知指出，以色列人的禁食是不蒙神喜悅，因為他們口是心非，雖在神面前刻苦己身，但心裡卻沒有完全順服神。他們禁食，但生活上卻是充滿競爭、自私和惡毒。他們為自己的私慾禁食，卻沒有關心貧窮人的需要。他們帶著錯誤的動機禁食，結果神不悅納他們的禁食。

神所喜悅的禁食帶有什麼條件呢？首先，神期待我們禁食時高舉他，尊他的名為聖，讓他掌權居首位。禁食的焦點不是我們的個人的需要，而是尋求神的旨意，明白神的引導。第二，在禁食的時候也要紀念那些有需要的人，憐憫他們和滿足他們的需要。換句話說，言行一致是非常重要的。我們不單要全心來到神面前尋求他，我們也當日常生活中按照神的原則生活。

當我們言行一致，帶著正確的動機禁食禱告，神應許我們：“那時你求告，耶和華必應允；你呼求，他必說：我在這裡。”

禱告：

天父上帝，求祢憐憫我，施恩于我。每當我來到祢面前，帶著正確的動機禁食禱告，尋求祢的時候，求祢讓我尋見祢，更明白祢對我生命的旨意。阿門！

實踐：

在這大齋戒期間，花一段時間來到神的面前操練禁食禱告，將焦點專注在神面前，讓他居首位，並順服在他的帶領中。

許昔富牧師
恩雨堂聯合衛理公會

I will remember my Covenant

我會紀念我所立的約

2月18日・大齋期第一主日

Genesis 創世記 9:8-17

⁸ 神曉諭挪亞和他的兒子說：⁹ 我與你們和你們的後裔立約，
¹⁰ 並與你們這裡的一切活物、就是飛鳥、牲畜、走獸，凡從方舟裡出來的活物立約。¹¹ 我與你們立約，凡有血肉的不再被洪水滅絕，也不再有洪水毀壞地了。¹² 神說：我與你們，並你們這裡的各樣活物所立的永約，是有記號的。¹³ 我把虹放在雲彩中，這就可作我與地立約的記號了。¹⁴ 我使雲彩蓋地的時候，必有虹現在雲彩中。¹⁵ 我便記念我與你們，和各樣有血肉的活物所立的約，水就再不氾濫毀壞一切有血肉的物了。¹⁶ 虹必現在雲彩中，我看見就要記念我與地上各樣有血肉的活物所立的永約。¹⁷ 神對挪亞說，這就是我與地上一切有血肉之物立約的記號了。

默想：

這是聖經所提及神與人所立的第一個約，一般稱作「挪亞之約」。此約的內容是「凡有血肉的不再被洪水滅絕，也不再有洪水毀壞地了。」對象不單是所有血肉的活物，而且還包括土地。為何此約包括土地呢？因為當全地充滿了人的敗壞和強暴時，地被人的罪惡波及而遭殃，神就把地與人一併毀滅。可見一個人的行為，不單會影響別人，還會波及土地！此約有「記號」，即彩虹。有意思的是，神將虹放在雲彩中不是給人類看的，而是給神自己看的！當神看到這記號時，神就記得祂曾與地和所有血肉之物立過此永約。雖然人是健忘，但是神卻不會忘記我們。神藉著先知以賽亞告訴我們：「婦人焉能忘記他喫奶的嬰孩，不憐恤他所生的兒子，即或有忘記的，我卻不忘記你。」(以賽亞書 49:15) 此約是「永約」；無截止日期。眾

所周知，人類並沒有吸取歷史的教訓，還是重蹈覆轍。神曾在摩西面前宣告說：「耶和華、耶和華、是有憐憫、有恩典的神、不輕易發怒、並有豐盛的慈愛和誠實。為千萬人存留慈愛、赦免罪孽、過犯、和罪惡，萬不以有罪的為無罪，必追討他的罪，自父及子，直到三世代。」(出埃及記 34:6-7) 感謝神，「挪亞之約」是沒有截止日期，神的憐憫是無限量的。否則我們不能活到今天！不過，人若藐視神豐盛的慈愛和無限量的憐憫，故意背逆神，「贖罪的祭就再沒有了，惟有戰懼等候審判和那燒滅眾敵人的烈火」(希伯來書 10:26-27)。如今神寬容我們，「不願有一人沉淪，乃願人人都悔改。」(彼得後書 3:9)。但是，後現代的世界越來越敗壞，強暴越來越多，順性變逆性越來越普遍，離神越來越遠，基督徒與教會也面對越來越嚴厲的迫害，我們當仰望主：「主耶穌阿、我願你來。」

禱告：

主耶穌阿，求祢憐憫我們。我們常常憑己意而行，不但沒有盡心、盡性、盡意、盡力的去愛祢，更拒絕聖靈的感動而遠離了祢。求主幫助我們以信心踏上祢的道路，順從祢的旨意，遵守祢的聖道，活出愛祢的心。但願我們每一天都能更深刻認識祢，更虔誠敬拜祢，更緊緊地跟隨祢，直到祢再來。阿們！

實踐：

您曾與神立過約否？還記得您受洗的約、領聖餐的約否？您有沒有與神立百年之後的約？請將您與神所立的約寫下來，每主日默想一回如何在本週內把它們化為行動。

劉金福牧師
加州年議會的退休長牧

Victory over sin by the Law of the LORD

耶和華的律法勝過罪

2月19日・大齋期第一周・禮拜一

Psalms 詩篇 19:7-14

⁷ 耶和華的律法全備，能甦醒人心。耶和華的法度確定，能使愚人有智慧。⁸ 耶和華的訓詞正直，能快活人的心。耶和華的命令清潔，能明亮人的眼目。⁹ 耶和華的道理潔淨，存到永遠。耶和華的典章真實，全然公義。¹⁰ 都比金子可羨慕，且比極多的精金可羨慕；比蜜甘甜，且比蜂房下滴的蜜甘甜。¹¹ 況且你的僕人因此受警戒，守著這些便有大賞。¹² 誰能知道自已的錯失呢？願你赦免我隱而未現的過錯。¹³ 求你攔阻僕人，不犯任意妄為的罪，不容這罪轄制我，我便完全，免犯大罪。¹⁴ 耶和華我的磐石，我的救贖主啊，願我口中的言語、心裡的意念在你面前蒙悅納。

默想：

聖經不同的部分為我們帶來活潑的靈命生活。多種多樣的命，每個年齡、性別、職業都有不同的挑戰，可以按著那時刻靈命的需求，從不同的經節中領會到聖靈的啟示。詩篇所帶給我們的是有節奏的、有旋律的、抒發情感的機會。而這篇經文作者用了活潑重復的節奏來啟發我們律法在生命中所扮演的角色。在重復的朗讀過程中，歡迎律法進入我們的心中，鼓舞我們的靈。

最有福的基督徒，帶著純粹的信來到神的面前，因為謙卑信靠而可以在神的跟前充滿喜樂，因為神的保守而卸下重擔。這樣沒有疑慮的人，面對律法不但不覺得拘束，反而因為有耶和華的規律而得自由。知道該做的、公義的、憐憫的；因為愛耶和華的律法而得以親近神。

罪是背向神，那麼悔改赦罪就是回轉仰望神。律法扮演的角色是我們生命中的警鐘，讓我們知道已經漸漸離開

神的道，而幫助我們回轉。當然救贖的生命是耶穌捨命的恩典：我們的永生無法僅靠自己努力守律法得來，而是耶穌白白地賜給我們的；可是理解這恩典之後，我們可以在律法的規範中自由喜樂，無憂無慮地在神面前蒙悅納。

禱告：

慈愛又公義的耶和華，我們為祢的律法可以在我們生命中帶來甘甜獻上感恩；為祢的恩典與慈愛獻上感恩。求祢聖靈時時與我們同在，指引我們如何依靠祢所賜的救贖與自由，在這世上建立祢公義的國度。奉耶穌基督的名而求。阿們！

實踐：

請試着打拍子朗讀這一篇經節，將重音與感情放在讀『耶和華』的部分。思考如何增加你對於律法的認識。

God's children practise righteousness

上帝的兒女行公義

2月20日・大齋期第一周・禮拜二

1John 約翰一書 3:1-10

¹ 你看父賜給我們是何等的慈愛，使我們得稱為神的兒女。我們也真是他的兒女。世人所以不認識我們，是因未曾認識他。² 親愛的弟兄阿，我們現在是神的兒女，將來如何，還未顯明。但我們知道主若顯現，我們必要像他。因為必得見他的真體。³ 凡向他有這指望的，就潔淨自己，像他潔淨一樣。⁴ 凡犯罪的，就是違背律法。違背律法就是罪。⁵ 你們知道主曾顯現，是要除掉人的罪。在他並沒有罪。⁶ 凡住在他裡面的，就不犯罪。凡犯罪的，是未曾看見他，也未曾認識他。⁷ 小子們哪，不要被人誘惑，行義的才是義人。正如主是義的一樣。⁸ 犯罪的是屬魔鬼，因為魔鬼從起初就犯罪。神的兒子顯現出來，為要除滅魔鬼的作為。⁹ 凡從神生的就不犯罪，因神的道存在他心裡。他也不能犯罪，因為他是由神生的。¹⁰ 從此就顯出誰是神的兒女，誰是魔鬼的兒女。凡不行義的，就不屬神。不愛弟兄的也是如此。

默想：

“你是誰？” “他是誰？” “我是誰？” 回答起來答案肯定各不一樣，那是因為每個人都有各自的身份。當你為你的身份感到自豪時，表示你已接納和認同了自己的身份，並為此而努力，讓你的身份成為自己、家庭、宗族的榮耀。而當我們身份的認同出現問題時，往往是因為我們有過失敗和軟弱。

作為基督徒，我們有個尊貴的身份，那就是天父上帝的兒女。我們相信這既是因為祂的救恩，也是因為我們的決志，是來之不易的。一方面乃是出於神的揀選，不是出自

于我們的聰明和努力，乃是上帝的主權，因為他想恩待誰就恩待誰；另一方面，我們被選上後，並非就高枕無憂，而就當珍惜這個身份，行事為人與這個身份相稱。因為我們若要像耶穌的無罪，就當愛慕祂的聖潔，遠離魔鬼的誘惑，行公義之事；因為行義的才是義人，以此表明耶穌是我們的主，我們也經祂成為的兒女。

禱告：

感謝主，約翰讓我們知道，我們乃是上帝兒女，承受那永恆的基業，因此，我們行事為人當與得救之恩相稱，做神所喜悅的事，成為眾人的祝福。

求主繼續恩待我們，保守我們的心懷意念，並有信心和能力行公義的事，見證我們的身份。阿門！

實踐：

讓我們常常默想這段聖經，因為神會借著聖經向我們說話，建立我們對上帝的信。

楊東龍牧師
紐約法拉盛衛理公會

The people of Nineveh believed God

尼尼微人信服上帝

2月21日•大齋期第一周•禮拜三

Jonah 約拿書 3:1-10

¹ 耶和華的話二次臨到約拿說：² 「你起來！往尼尼微大城去，向其中的居民宣告我所吩咐你的話。」³ 約拿便照耶和華的話起來，往尼尼微去。這尼尼微是極大的城，有三日的路程。⁴ 約拿進城走了一日，宣告說：「再等四十日，尼尼微必傾覆了！」⁵ 尼尼微人信服上帝，便宣告禁食，從最大的到至小的都穿麻衣。⁶ 這信息傳到尼尼微王的耳中，他就下了寶座，脫下朝服，披上麻布，坐在灰中。⁷ 他又使人遍告尼尼微通城，說：「王和大臣有令，人不可嘗甚麼，牲畜、牛羊不可吃草，也不可喝水。⁸ 人與牲畜都當披上麻布；人要切切求告上帝。各人回頭離開所行的惡道，丟棄手中的強暴。⁹ 或者上帝轉意後悔，不發烈怒，使我們不致滅亡，也未可知。」¹⁰ 於是上帝察看他們的行為，見他們離開惡道，他就後悔，不把所說的災禍降與他們了。

默想：

尼尼微城裡的人是亞述人，是以色列的敵人。因此當約拿受呼召要傳信息給尼尼微城的人時，約拿反對。約拿逃走，約拿往反方向行走，坐船，遇海難，被船上的人推下海裡；被魚吞掉，約拿也不願意向尼尼微城人分享神的信息。但神沒有放過約拿，神看見約拿在魚肚中三天，感謝上帝給予拯救。上帝再一次把使命交給約拿，仍要約拿去把審判的信息傳給尼尼微人。

約拿剛從魚肚出來，只講了一句話：「再等四十日，尼尼微必傾覆了！」這是他心裡想要發生的事，是這個最不憐憫尼尼微人的先知所宣告的唯一的一句話。雖然這是上帝要先知所講的話，但因為尼尼微人悔改了，所以是一

句沒有成就的話；似乎是上帝在對約拿開玩笑。當時人們察驗一個人是不是先知的方式之一是看那個先知所講的話有沒有成就。結果，約拿所講的唯一一句話就沒有成就。但他所傳的福音卻有最大的果效。尼尼微人從平民百姓到皇室，從小到大，從人到牲畜都披上麻布，禁食，禁喝水悔改，歸向上帝。上帝也回心轉意，不把所說的災禍降與他們。

我們是否像尼尼微人，願意徹底地悔改我們的惡行。我們是否將人的事奉和他跟神的關係掛鉤？

約拿書告訴我們，只要是神的工作，神就會親自讓它成就。看見這項事實，是否會讓你得著安慰？

禱告：

主呀，求祢幫助我們，讓我們甘心奉祢差遣做祢要我們做的工作。也讓我們相信祢會成就祢的事工。求主幫助我們看見我們必須轉離的惡行。求主將恩惠賜給我們。奉主名禱告。阿門！

實踐：

請尋求主今日實踐一件順服的舉動，例如今日去向一位你不願意傳福音的朋友傳福音。祝福我們都順服主轉向祂，願我們都好像約拿一樣經歷神的愛。

羅洪凱明傳道
衛理公會羅省華人美以美會

On the day I called, you answered me

我呼求的日子，你應允我

February 22 – Thursday of the First Week in Lent

Psalms 詩篇 138:1-8

¹I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; ²I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything. ³On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul. ⁴All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth. ⁵They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord. ⁶For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly; but the haughty he perceives from far away. ⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me. ⁸The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

Meditation:

“*Missed Call.*” That message appears too often on the screen of my cell phone; I wonder, in reverse, how many times others have missed my calls to them. One of the more frustrating things in life can be waiting for someone to call. I wait—and then I step away but for a few minutes, or forget that my phone is on “silent” and then another call passes me by. Playing “phone tag” is not a gratifying sport; be assured that the heart will sink with the flashing words, “Missed Call.”

To take it one level further, I hesitate to think about how many calls I have missed from God—I am indeed grateful that the Lord does not miss mine, for my heart’s desire is to be like that of David the Psalmist: “*On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul*” (Psalm 138:3). It’s all too apparent that when there is something important to be shared between both parties of a phone call, the inability to connect causes great annoyance. But the failure to connect with the Lord Himself can cause equal frustration, if not despair.

Here in this psalm, we see that David, with the whole force of his life, even with his whole heart, praises the Lord's devoted and constant love and goodness for answering his prayers—his *calls*. He declares his desire that all—including the false “gods” of the culture, the “kings” of the nations, and the “haughty” and arrogant people—understand and acknowledge the Lord's compassion to the lowly. David then expressed his own confidence that the Lord would also deliver him from his enemies by His steadfast and faithful love.

It is the distinctive mark of God that he hears the pleadings of his people and answers them. We do not know what David's prayer was about; he may have been weak, wounded, worried, or his heart wearied—it is no different for us when we are disconnected from life, love, and the Lord. With every earnest prayer, however, God is able to receive and interpret our cries because there is never a “missed call” with God. And as he answers our calls, he strengthens our souls in such a way as to give us an inner sense of peace, courage, fortitude, and assurance.

When God strengthens, none can weaken. Then is our soul strong indeed when the Lord infuses might into us.

Prayer:

Because of my confidence in your steadfast love and trustworthiness, O Lord, let me admit my own weaknesses, sins, and limits so that I may accept your gracious mercy. Strengthen my soul so that I may be a sacred influence on others to see and believe in you. And do not let me forget the work of your hands as a constant reminder that I cannot and need not do it all on my own. Amen.

Practice:

Let go of the need to be in control and make yourself available and vulnerable to God. And then give thanks by telling others what God has done for you, thereby letting the world know of God's gracious actions by your praise.

Rev. Gerald Owyang
First United Methodist Church of Orange

Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked?

惡人死亡，豈是我所喜悅的呢？

2月23日•大齋期第一周•禮拜五

Ezekiel 以西結書 18：21-28

²¹ 惡人若回頭離開所作的一切罪惡，謹守我一切的律例，行正直與合理的事，他必定存活，不致死亡。²² 他所犯的一切罪過都不被紀念，因所行的義，他必存活。²³ 主耶和華說，惡人死亡，豈是我喜悅的嗎？不是喜悅他回頭離開所行的道存活嗎？²⁴ 義人若轉離義行而作罪孽，照著惡人所行一切可憎的事而行，他豈能存活嗎？他所行的一切義都不被紀念。他必因所犯的罪，所行的惡死亡。²⁵ 你們還說，主的道不公平。以色列家阿，你們當聽，我的道豈不公平嗎？你們的道豈不是不公平嗎？²⁶ 義人若轉離義行而作罪孽死亡，他是因所作的罪孽死亡。²⁷ 再者，惡人若回頭離開所行的惡，行正直與合理的事，他必將性命救活了。²⁸ 因為他思量，回頭離開所犯的一切罪過，必定存活，不致死亡。

默想：

經驗告訴我們世上有好人(義人)也有壞人(惡人)，而且有些人似乎生下來時就是好人，有人則相反。然而，上帝借著先知教導我們，義人與惡人並非一成不變。事實上，義人與惡人都是人，都是上帝按照自己的形象所造，並且愛他們，如同父母愛自己的兒女一樣。因此，以西結說，惡人死亡並非上帝所喜悅的，而是期盼惡人離開所做的一切惡，謹守上帝的律例，行正直與合理的事。人當感恩，因我們本該滅亡，但上帝有愛，只要悔改認罪，便脫離死亡。不過，先知也警告“義人”，不要靠之前的義行而驕傲，去仿效惡人所行的。如果這樣，不單是義不被紀念，反而要因他的惡定罪。大家當儆醒，時常考慮上帝的聖潔，遠離惡事，遵守主的道，行合理之事，才能得上帝之賞賜。

禱告：

慈悲仁愛的聖天父，我們感謝祢，祢以祢的形象和樣式創造人類，在萬物中得到何等榮耀。雖然人背叛祢行了可憎惡之事，但是祢應允我們，只要離棄罪惡，信靠耶穌，就可以使罪得赦免，得到永生。我們感謝先知的警戒，讓我們不敢自以為義，仿效惡人的作為，行可憎惡之事。求主幫助我們遠離惡事，靠主得勝。阿門！

實踐：

人乃上帝按祂的形象和樣式被造，並賦予人崇高的價值和使命，人卻因魔鬼的誘惑而墮落。然而無論如何，上帝願萬人得救，不願一人沉淪 (彼得後書 3：9)，因此，對待“惡人”我們當存信心，祈禱他悔改認罪，得救重生；我們也當自我省察，除去驕傲，靠主恩典，過豐盛的人生。

楊東龍牧師
紐約法拉盛衛理公會

Flesh Crucified; Set free in Christ **肉體被釘十字架；在基督裡得自由**

February 24 – Saturday of the First Week in Lent

Galatians 加拉太書 5:1-24

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law. You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love. You were running well; who prevented you from obeying the truth? Such persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. I am confident about you in the Lord that you will not think otherwise. But whoever it is that is confusing you will pay the penalty. But my friends, why am I still being persecuted if I am still preaching circumcision? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would castrate themselves! For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Meditation:

"For freedom Christ has set us free" (v 1a). Lucretia Mott (1793-1880) was one of the leading voices of the abolitionist and feminist movements of her time. A Quaker and social reformer, she wrote, "Liberty is not less a blessing, because oppression has so long darkened the mind that it can not appreciate it" (Discourse on Women, 1850).

Sometimes people grow accustomed to the absence of freedom. Having lived her whole life in an abusive home, a child may not know that there are families where people don't hit each other and scream and throw plates at each other in a drunken rage. Living under slavery a person may forget, after a generation or two, what it was like to breathe the fresh air of freedom. Not knowing any other life, a people may feel gratitude towards an oppressive

government that feeds, clothes, shelters and protects them, provided the regime has a generally benevolent dictator.

“A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough” (v.9). Jesus tells a story about a woman who uses a bit of yeast to leaven a huge measure of flour (Mt. 13:33). Of course, Paul’s concern here in this letter to the Galatian church is that yeast can leaven the dough towards freedom or towards confusion and further bondage. Are you on the side of Jesus and God’s kingdom? Or are you leaven for the cause of the world – dictators, abusers and enslavers?

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Liu Xiaobo, Bishop Oscar Romero – these and thousands of others could be named as saints and martyrs who have fought and died for freedom. There are also many who cannot be named – millions who have disappeared or been “cleansed” or massacred, wiped out and silenced.

At my church this Lent one of our parishioners, Jane Mok, is presenting a 4-part sermon series about how, “God saved my life and set me free from the dictators in China.” It is my belief that by telling her story, Jane leavens the flour of our society: she opens up space for others to speak out and, perhaps more importantly, she gives voice to those who cannot speak for themselves.

“For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (v. 14). Loving our neighbor involves remembering the question, “Who is my neighbor?” We know the answer (Lk. 10:25-37). The stranger is my neighbor. The poor are my neighbors. The refugee is my neighbor. The sick, the elderly, the rejected, the oppressed, the forgotten, the imprisoned, the blind, the different, the other....

In this holy season of Lent, may you be free in Christ, truly free.

Prayer:

God of love, grow the seeds of your love in our hearts like yeast in bread dough during this season of Lent. Free us from our rigid, rule-oriented tendencies that stifle your Spirit and crush the hearts of those among us who, at times, may feel weak and doubting or fearful and uncertain about their place in your kingdom. Remind us, through your Spirit of Love, that it is for freedom Christ has set us free. May our love for you and for one another be evidence that we are walking in your path of love and freedom. We pray these things in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Practice:

Select one word, image or phrase from the passage. Repeat it: when you take a break from work; when you drive your car, or ride the bus, or take the subway; just before you fall asleep at bedtime; when you first awaken from sleep; when you go for a walk or a jog, a swim or a bike ride. Whatever word(s) or image(s) speak to your heart, live with them today.

Rev. Sharon Snapp-Kolas
San Gabriel First United Methodist Church

What cross will I take up for God?

我願為上帝背起怎樣的十架？

2月25日・大齋期第二主日

Mark 馬可福音 8:31-38

³¹ 從此他教訓他們說、人子必須受許多的苦、被長老祭司長和文士棄絕、並且被殺、過三天復活。³² 耶穌明明的說這話、彼得就拉著他、勸他。³³ 耶穌轉過來、看著門徒、就責備彼得說、撒但、退我後邊去罷。因為你不體貼神的意思、只體貼人的意思。³⁴ 於是叫眾人和門徒來、對他們說、若有人要跟從我、就當捨己、背起他的十字架來跟從我。³⁵ 因為凡要救自己生命的、必喪掉生命。凡為我和福音喪掉生命的、必救了生命。³⁶ 人就是賺得全世界、賠上自己的生命、有甚麼益處呢。³⁷ 人還能拿甚麼換生命呢。³⁸ 凡在這淫亂罪惡的世代、把我和我的道當作可恥的、人子在他父的榮耀裏、同聖天使降臨的時候、也要把那人當作可恥的。

默想：

主耶穌因著祂的世代是一個「淫亂罪惡的世代」而挑戰祂的門徒要天天背十架跟隨祂。現今，我們的世代又如何？比當時的有改進嗎？還是更差呢？

現今的世代，科學技術都進步很多，只是人心的詭詐仍然是如此可怕。現今由於「文化進步」，由人治社會成為法治社會；由君權世襲變為選舉制度。可是，問題往往出現在選舉制度的流弊。「黑金政權」就是看準了人的弱點衍生而來。「政治正確」更是嘩眾取寵的最有效的工具！同性婚姻、男女平權、種族平等、宗教平等…等等。有誰可以抗拒？然而，在這些美麗的包裝下，是否真的如此可愛呢？當今天大家都嚮往天然食物(natural food)時，保護大自然時，婚姻的關係卻違反自然的結合！過去的男女關係已經落伍時，婚姻是否會「進步」成父女結婚、母子結婚的地步？可是有誰會為聖經

的真理說話呢？誰敢說真心話，就會在政治上，經濟上，被釘十字架了。「順我者生、逆我者亡」。

「人就是賺得全世界、賠上自己的生命、有甚麼益處呢。」但徧徧世人就嚮往「賺得全世界」。因為在世上，人的成功與否，就是看人的成就、家財、社會地位。在教會中也會見到這些例子。「背十架」實在不簡單，因為必須甘心樂意。不曉得作主信徒是否有選擇權？可以選擇一些較輕的、較容易的、或較好看的十字架嗎？這時、我又想起當主耶穌設立聖餐時所用的杯，是金杯？銀杯？還是苦杯呢？

禱告：

「主啊，我在這裏，請差遣我。」阿門！

實踐：

「願我一生聽主命，放棄己見隨主行。我心成為主寶座，願你作王我心中，願你作王我心中。」(世紀頌讚 354 副歌)

簡棋輝牧師
三藩市循道衛理美以美會

Daniel's Confession on behalf of his people

但以理為同胞認罪

February 26 – Monday of the Second Week in Lent

Daniel 但以理書 9:4-10

I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, "Ah, Lord, great Lord, and awesome God, keeping covenant and steadfast love with those who love you and keep your commandments, we have sinned and done wrong, acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and ordinance. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. "Righteousness is on your side, O Lord, but open shame, as at this day, falls on us, the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. Open shame, O Lord, falls on us, our kings, our officials, and our ancestors, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by following his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets."

Meditation:

Daniel was moved to pray after reading the prophecy in Jeremiah concerning his nation and the seventy years of captivity. Daniel believes that "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land," 2 Chronicles 7:14. Let's see how Daniel's prayer might apply to us and our nation.

Throughout this prayer you will see the repetitious use of "Ah, Lord", "O Lord", or "O God." These are moans or groans that represent cries of desperation. It shows Daniel's great anguish over his people's rebellion, and his anticipation to suffer the consequences for it. Daniel first acknowledges that God is great and awesome and that He is keeping covenant and steadfast love with those who love him. Daniel does not blame God or accuse God of being unjust. When God punishes us, we need to recognize that God's discipline is always right and just.

I think Daniel is quite humble to include himself in the guilt. He is a righteous man, but he includes himself in the disobedience and rebellion. “We have sinned, we have done wrong.” He doesn’t only blame his people, he also blames himself. We need to have this level of humility when we’re praying for the church or our nation, what have I done or not done? How have I fallen short of God’s expectations? We need to see our sin in its fullness. We need to see it as wicked, rebellious, shameful and disobedient. We need to realize that when it comes to the state of the union that we have not listened, we have been unfaithful, we have done wrong. We need to take ownership of all the ways in which we have transgressed against the Lord’s commands.

Contrast the way Daniel describes how his people have been verses how God is great and awesome, keeping his covenant, righteous, merciful and forgiving. That’s what we need to do when we pray for our nation. We can easily blame the government or society or evil people for the way our country is but really, we need to point the finger at ourselves. I believe Christians are largely responsible for the decline of America’s morality. We have become desensitized, we have become apathetic. We have compromised on our convictions and values.

Prayer:

Now, O Lord our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. Give ears, O God, and hear, open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your name.

We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy O Lord, listens, O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act. For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your name. (Daniel 9:17-19)

Practice:

We need to seek the Lord’s mercy and forgiveness. Daniel asks God to turn away his anger and wrath from Jerusalem, hear his prayers and petitions, and we need to do the same.

Rev. Ann Cheng
Faith UMC of Temple City

Perform your vows to the Most High 向至高者還你的願

2月27日・大齋期第二周・禮拜二

Psalms 詩篇 50: 8, 12-23

我並不因你的祭物責備你，你的燔祭常在我面前。
我若是飢餓，我不用告訴你，因為世界和其中所充滿的，
都是我的。我豈喫公牛的肉呢，我豈喝山羊的血呢。你們
要以感謝為祭獻與神，又要向至高者還你的願，並要在患
難之日求告我，我必搭救你，你也要榮耀我。但神對惡人
說：你怎敢傳說我的律例，口中提到我的約呢？其實你恨
惡管教，將我的言語丟在背後。你見了盜賊，就樂意與他
同夥，又與行姦淫的人，一同有分。你口任說惡言，你舌
編造詭詐。你坐著毀謗你的兄弟，讒毀你親母的兒子。你
行了這些事，我還閉口不言，你想我恰和你一樣，其實我
要責備你，將這些事擺在你眼前。你們忘記神的要思想這
事，免得我把你們撕碎，無人搭救。凡以感謝獻上為祭
的，便是榮耀我，那按正路而行的，我必使他得著我的救
恩。

默想：

人向神許願，是因為有所求。許願的原因：遇見困難而
求恩，同時附帶感謝神的心願。如雅各（創世記 28:20-22），
為要勝過仇敵而許願，求神格外的幫助。如耶弗他（士師
記 11:30-31），求一心所愛的而許願。如哈拿（撒母耳記上
1:10-11），求得一子，應許將子分別為聖歸給神。
聖經沒有命令人要許願，都是人自己甘心向神許的（申命
記 23:23，傳道書 5:4）。神看重每個所許的願，並要向
人追討（申命記 23:21）。神要人作個誠實的人，要為自
己所說的話負責任。

有個人應徵一份高薪工作，向神禱告求幫助，並立下心願，若得到這份工作必定要好好事奉主及實行十一奉獻。

後來工作得到了，卻忘記了向神還願。這是今天許多人的光景，許願而不向神還願，或遲延還願，或否認所許的願，說是錯許了，這都是神不喜悅的。神要我們還願不是因為祂缺乏而需要我們的東西，祂乃是在乎我們對祂能不能守信及守約。神是誠實無偽的，又公義，又正直。(申命記 32:4) 人背誓，就是一種欺騙，對神說謊及背叛。

哈拿是我們學習的榜樣。哈拿不能生育，向神祈求許願。神垂聽她的禱告，賜給她撒母耳。撒母耳斷奶後，哈拿就還願把撒母耳送到聖殿去終生事奉神。還願後，哈拿反而得了神更多的祝福。耶和華眷顧哈拿，她又懷孕生了三個兒子、兩個女兒。(撒母耳記上 2:21)

禱告：

主啊，祢是全能，信實可靠的。祢誠然垂聽我們向你所許的願。求祢幫助我們也能守信，還願，使我們更經歷你豐盛的慈愛和憐憫。奉主耶穌基督名求。阿們！

實踐：

讓我們在許願的事上謹慎，不要亂許；許了願就要還願。還願不會使我們失去什麼，反而得着更多神的祝福。今天讓我們在神面反省，過去所許的願，我們還了沒有？你計劃什麼時候要還願？

劉本恩牧師
愛的門聯合衛理公會
Edmund Chinese Int'l UMC

How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation

我們若忽略這麼大的救恩，怎能逃避呢？

2月28日・大齋期第二周・禮拜三

Hebrews 希伯來書 2:1-9

¹ 所以，我們當越發鄭重所聽見的道理，恐怕我們隨流失去。² 那藉著天使所傳的話既是確定的；凡干犯悖逆的都受了該受的報應。³ 我們若忽略這麼大的救恩，怎能逃罪呢？這救恩起先是主親自講的，後來是聽見的人給我們證實了。⁴ 上帝又按自己的旨意，用神蹟、奇事和百般的異能，並聖靈的恩賜，同他們作見證。⁵ 我們所說將來的世界，上帝原沒有交給天使管轄。⁶ 但有人在經上某處證明說：人算甚麼，你竟顧念他？世人算甚麼，你竟眷顧他？⁷ 你叫他比天使微小一點，賜他榮耀尊貴為冠冕，並將你手所造的都派他管理，⁸ 叫萬物都服在他的腳下。既叫萬物都服他，就沒有剩下一樣不服他的。只是如今我們還不見萬物都服他。⁹ 惟獨見那成為比天使小一點的耶穌；因為受死的苦，就得了尊貴榮耀為冠冕，叫他因著上帝的恩，為人人嘗了死味。

默想：

希伯來書告訴我們，耶穌比我們以前所認識的一切更美好。祂比以前的先知更大，因為耶穌不僅是先知，更是神自己降世為人，為讓我們得著神賜給我們的救恩。

因此，今天的經文告訴我們，我們要珍惜認識耶穌的機會，因為如果沒有好好把握救恩，我們就有禍了。

在耶穌基督的教會中，我們可以與主內的弟兄姐妹同在、促成我們信仰生命的成長，我們有沒有把握機會去「慎重」地聽神的道理呢？還是，我們聽道的時候，心裡却擔憂世上別人的想法而『隨波逐流』？「慎重」是留心的意思，我們是否看重上帝給我們的機會，盡心服侍，把

握機會長進，還是我們跟隨身邊的人的行為，而忘記了自己的責任？當身邊的人讓我們失望的時候，我們會不會仍記得主是值得我們追求的主，幫助我們不致「隨流失去」，返回到擇善而行、來積極地服事那位配得一切榮耀的主？

禱告：

主呀，求你幫助我們，讓我們看見祢是配得我們盡心、盡性、盡意、盡力事奉的主。讓我們能有堅定的心志跟隨你，學習成長，成為眾人的榜樣。求主將恩惠賜給我們。奉主名禱告。阿門！

實踐：

請尋求主今日實踐一件順服的舉動，例如去鼓勵一位灰心的弟兄姊妹。

祝福我們能夠行在神的心意中，不隨著自己的意思或受到別人行為的影響，堅定心意跟隨耶穌，留心祂給我們這個重大的救恩。

Living the Life of God

活出上帝的生命

3月1日・大齋期第二周・禮拜四

Luke 路加福音 16：19-31

¹⁹ 有一個財主穿著紫色袍和細麻布衣服，天天奢華宴樂。²⁰ 又有一個討飯的，名叫拉撒路，渾身生瘡，被人放在財主門口，²¹ 要得財主桌子上掉下來的零碎充飢；並且狗來舐他的瘡。²² 後來那討飯的死了，被天使帶去放在亞伯拉罕的懷裡。財主也死了，並且埋葬了。²³ 他在陰間受痛苦，舉目遠遠的望見亞伯拉罕，又望見拉撒路在他懷裡，²⁴ 就喊著說：我祖亞伯拉罕哪，可憐我罷！打發拉撒路來，用指頭尖蘸點水，涼涼我的舌頭；因為我在這火燄裡，極其痛苦。²⁵ 亞伯拉罕說：兒阿，你該回想你生前享過福，拉撒路也受過苦；如今他在這裡得安慰，你倒受痛苦。²⁶ 不但這樣，並且在你我之間，有深淵限定，以致人要從這邊過到你們那邊是不能的；要從那邊過到我們這邊也是不能的。²⁷ 財主說：我祖阿！既是這樣，求你打發拉撒路到我父家去；²⁸ 因為我還有五個弟兄，他可以對他們作見證，免得他們也來到這痛苦的地方。²⁹ 亞伯拉罕說：他們有摩西和先知的話可以聽從。³⁰ 他說：我祖亞伯拉罕哪，不是的，若有一個從死裡復活的，到他們那裡去的，他們必要悔改。³¹ 亞伯拉罕說：若不聽從摩西和先知的話，就是有一個從死裡復活的，他們也是不聽勸。

默想：

財主與拉撒路，是耶穌比喻中的兩個人物，一個是披著紫色袍和細麻布衣服，天天奢華宴樂的財主；另一個，

則是身披膿瘡，被人放在財主的門口，以財主餐桌掉下零碎食物充飢的乞丐。他們曾經同在上，只一門之隔，然後同樣地又離開了。這段經文並無交待他倆的信仰狀況，也沒指出任何人有著犯罪的細節。那麼？為何他倆離世後的遭遇存在著天地之遙的差距呢？難道在世上富有，享受榮華是罪麼？

禱告：

親愛的天父，求祢憐憫，使我們能夠更愛別人，能更加像祢。奉主名求，阿們。

實踐：

許多時候，或有缺乏的人在我們的身旁、家門前、教會裡、社區中，他們可以是在物質上缺乏，在身體上、心靈中軟弱，在人際關係中被疏離的、被遺棄遺忘的。我們可以努力顯出上帝憐憫的心腸，顧及這些缺乏者的存在和實際的需用而予以幫忙，與他們同行生命的崎嶇道路。

麥瑋恩傳道
聖蓋博第一衛理公會

Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened to the hope in Christ 你們心中的眼睛照亮在基督裡的盼望

3月2日•大齋期第二周•禮拜五

Ephesians 以弗所書 1:3-23

³ 願頌讚歸於我們主耶穌基督的父神！他在基督裡曾賜給我們天上各樣屬靈的福氣，⁴ 就如神從創立世界以前在基督裡揀選了我們，使我們在他面前成為聖潔，無有瑕疵；⁵ 又因愛我們，就按著自己意旨所喜悅的，預定我們藉著耶穌基督得兒子的名分，⁶ 使他榮耀的恩典得著稱讚。這恩典是他在愛子裡所賜給我們的。⁷ 我們藉這愛子的血得蒙救贖，過犯得以赦免，乃是照他豐富的恩典。⁸ 這恩典是神用諸般智慧聰明，充充足足賞給我們的，⁹ 都是照他自己所預定的美意，叫我們知道他旨意的奧秘，¹⁰ 要照所安排的，在日期滿足的時候，使天上、地上一切所有的，都在基督裡面同歸於一。¹¹ 我們也在他裡面得了基業，這原是那位隨己意行做萬事的，照著他旨意所預定的，¹² 叫他的榮耀從我們這首先在基督裡有盼望的人，可以得著稱讚。¹³ 你們既聽見真理的道，就是那叫你們得救的福音，也信了基督，既然信他，就受了所應許的聖靈為印記。¹⁴ 這聖靈是我們得基業的憑據，直等到神之民被贖，使他的榮耀得著稱讚。¹⁵ 因此，我既聽見你們信從主耶穌，親愛眾聖徒，¹⁶ 就為你們不住地感謝神，禱告的時候常提到你們，¹⁷ 求我們主耶穌基督的神、榮耀的父，將那賜人智慧和啟示的靈賞給你們，使你們真知道他。¹⁸ 並且照明你們心中的眼睛，使你們知道他的恩召有何等指望，他在聖徒中得的基業有何等豐盛的榮耀；¹⁹ 並知道他向我們這信的人所顯的能力是何等浩大，²⁰ 就是照他在基督身上所運行的大能大力，使他從死裡復活，叫他在天上坐在自己的右邊，²¹ 遠超過一切執政的、掌權的、有能的、主治的和一切有名的，不但是今世的，連來世的也都超過了；²² 又將萬有服在他的腳下，使他為教會做萬有之首。²³ 教會是他的身體，是那充滿萬有者所充滿的。

默想：

這段經文是保羅在監獄寫的書信。他在極度艱難的歲月裡，還能頌讚神，還能為人代求，真是“上帝照明他的眼睛”（18）。

他頌讚什麼呢？他頌讚神賜的福份：

1. 在基督裡揀選了我們、2. 得神兒子名份、3. 叫我們知道神旨意的

奧秘、4. 基督裡同歸與一、5. 得神基業、6. 得聖靈為印記。

他祈求什麼呢？（1:15-23）

保羅求智慧和啟示之靈，好讓聖徒真正知道神。再求主照明他們心中的眼睛，使他們知道恩召的指望、基業豐盛榮耀、神權能的浩大。又知道神叫耶穌死裡復活，坐神右邊、遠超一切執政者和有名者，是教會的頭，教會的元首。

總而言之，神不僅賜給天上各樣的福分；還給我們兒子的名分和使命：我們有榮耀神、稱讚神的責任。

當年，當我要開設教會時，首先要為教會起個名字。想來想去，終於想到我喜歡的經文之一，即以弗所第一章的一節：“天上各樣屬靈的福氣”。這裡有“天”，有“福”，“天福”就此誕生了。因為屬於衛理公會教派，所以全名是：“基督衛理公會天福堂”。起這個名稱，祈待神對教會的祝福。事實證明，這些年來，我們是蒙福的教會，從無到有，從小到大，從貧乏到富足，從不信到確信，從淺信到深信，樣樣來自上天的祝福，真是“天福”啊！榮耀歸神！

禱告：

親愛的天父：感謝祢光照我們心中之眼，我們才知道：祢的恩召有何等指望、祢的基業何等豐盛和榮耀、祢的能力何等浩大。

感謝耶穌，祢從死裡復活，坐神右邊、遠超一切世上的人。因為這樣，我們凡事靠你得勝有餘。祢是教會的元首，我們要順從祢旨意，榮耀祢聖名。

感謝聖靈，祢是我們信者的印記，也是我們得屬靈基業的憑據。奉主的聖名禱告，阿門！

實踐：

盼望各位信徒能多多讀經、祈禱、默想、懺悔、甚至禁食，默想主的大恩。請羅列已得屬靈的福份，與人分享。更求主光照我們，開啟我們心中的眼睛，更清晰地走前面的屬天道路。

余奇碧牧師
基督衛理公會天福堂

You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea

祢必將我們一切的罪投于深海

3月3日•大齋期第二周•禮拜六

Micah 彌迦書 7：14-15、18-20

¹⁴ 求耶和華在迦密山的樹林中，用你的杖牧放你獨居的民，就是你產業的羊群。求你容他們在巴珊和基列得食物，像古時一樣。¹⁵ 耶和華說：我要把奇事顯給他們看，好像出埃及地的時候一樣。¹⁸ 神啊，有何神像你，赦免罪孽，饒恕你產業之餘民的罪過，不永遠懷怒，喜愛施恩？

¹⁹ 必再憐憫我們，將我們的罪孽踏在腳下，又將我們的一切罪投於深海。²⁰ 你必按古時起誓應許我們列祖的話，向雅各發誠實，向亞伯拉罕施慈愛。

默想：

耶和華神啊！歷代的史實證明你是對我守約施慈愛的阿爸天父，縱然我不斷地頑梗叛逆，只要我願意被聖靈光照，你就施恩典，給我看見自己的不是。只要我願意向你認錯，你就饒恕。雖然你知道我仍軟弱，認了錯卻不一定能不再犯，你就以你那無限的，從意志裡發出來的愛，來接納我的不完全。你就像那浪子的父親，朝朝暮暮地，翹首遠望浪蕩子的醒悟歸來。不論等了多久，你永不放棄！一旦父子相見，你又是如何地欣喜，迫不及待地與許久未見的兒子親嘴連連！哦，主啊！我閉口不認罪，不願與你相親時，你是如何地傷心呀！求主每天提醒，提醒我，別讓我在罪裡拖延，不來見你的面，讓你翹首擔憂等待。提醒我你永不改變的約，就是以馬內利，與我們同在，作我們永遠的神！是我的罪教我與你隔離。所以，我要常常離棄罪惡，投向你的懷抱，讓你喜樂。我相信：因你的憐憫與信實，你將我的罪投於深海！

禱告：

親愛的天父，求祢的靈每天施恩來光照，教我看見自己的過犯。引導我，誠心地悔改。祢的話，祢的靈來潔淨我，教我速速回到祢面前，與祢相親。我深信祢的恩典憐憫，所以我一點都不害怕地投向祢！我也深信，我的罪，已被祢投入深海。我可恢復我那王子尊貴的身份。謝謝主的約，主的愛！奉主耶穌基督的名禱告。阿門！

實踐：

每天來到主面前作以上的禱告，然後靜候主的光照。認真悔改，認真與主享受自由的快樂。

程耀曾牧師
Rev. May Yeh
Poland United Methodist

Provoke one another to love and good deeds

彼此相顧，激發愛心，勉勵行善

March 4 – Third Sunday in Lent

Hebrews 希伯來書 10:19-31, 36-39

¹⁹Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. ²⁶For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸Anyone who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy “on the testimony of two or three witnesses.” ²⁹How much worse punishments do you think will be deserved by those who have spurned the Son of God, profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know the one who said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. ³⁶For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. ³⁷For yet “in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; ³⁸but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back.” ³⁹But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

Meditation:

Chinese Community UMC is currently organizing its 3rd Volunteers in Missions trip to Kumi, Uganda. At a recent informational meeting, a member of the 2nd trip came to share their

experience. Even though that trip was now 4 years in the past, Connie was still brimming with enthusiasm and excitement. It was as if she had just returned and couldn't quite help herself from urging and inspiring others to go. In particular, when she found out that one young person's parent had a few hesitations, her zeal increased. Her encouragement doubled down.

I think of Connie now as I hear the writer of Hebrews urge the reader to, "provoke one another to love and good deeds" (vs. 24). Provoke is an interesting word choice as we usually hear it in a negative context. We do not like to be provoked and we try hard not to provoke others. Yet what might it look like for us to provoke one another not to anger or violence, but to love and good deeds? What would it take for us to cause sparks to fly in another, not from jealousy or ire, but from inspiration and excitement? What Connie was doing on this recent Sunday afternoon was "provoking" us all to consider deeply a meaningful and transformative opportunity to practice love and good deeds. It strikes me as a wonderful way to persevere in this season of faith and to keep our hope in God.

Prayer:

Fill our hearts and spirits, Gracious God, with such a deep sense of hope and joy, that we cannot help but to provoke others to love and good deeds. May we do so not just with the words of our mouths, but with the example of our lives. Amen.

Practice:

Invite a friend, a coworker, a family member, or a brother/sister from church to volunteer with you during the season of Lent.

Rev. Emily Lin
Chinese Community UMC Oakland, CA

My steps have held fast to your paths

我的腳緊緊跟隨祢的腳踪

3月5日・大齋期第三周・禮拜一

Psalms 詩篇 17:1-15

¹耶和華啊，求你聽聞公義，側耳聽我的呼籲！求你留心聽我這不出於詭詐嘴唇的祈禱！²願我的判語從你面前發出；願你的眼睛觀看公正。³你已經試驗我的心；你在夜間鑒察我；你熬煉我，卻找不著甚麼；我立志叫我口中沒有過失。⁴論到人的行為，我藉著你嘴唇的言語自己謹守，不行強暴人的道路。⁵我的腳踏定了你的路徑；我的兩腳未曾滑跌。⁶神啊，我曾求告你，因為你必應允我；求你向我側耳，聽我的言語。⁷求你顯出你奇妙的慈愛來；你是那用右手拯救投靠你的脫離起來攻擊他們的人。⁸求你保護我，如同保護眼中的瞳人；將我隱藏在你翅膀的蔭下，⁹使我脫離那欺壓我的惡人，就是圍困我要害我命的仇敵。¹⁰他們的心被脂油包裹；他們用口說驕傲的話。¹¹他們圍困了我們的腳步；他們瞪著眼，要把我們推倒在地。¹²他像獅子急要抓食，又像少壯獅子蹲伏在暗處。¹³耶和華啊，求你起來，前去迎敵，將他打倒！用你的刀救護我命脫離惡人。¹⁴耶和華啊，求你用手救我脫離世人，脫離那只在今生有福分的世人！你把你的財寶充滿他們的肚腹；他們因有兒女就心滿意足，將其餘的財物留給他們的嬰孩。¹⁵至於我，我必在義中見你的面；我醒來的時候，得見你的形像就心滿意足了。

默想：

路是人走出來的。但不是每一條路都通羅馬，通到我們所望的目的地。聖經告訴我們說，世人都偏行己路，都犯

了罪，虧欠了神的榮耀。因此大衛王教導我們的腳要緊緊的跟隨主的腳蹤。為什麼呢？因為主的腳是；

- 奔跑天路，遵行神旨，完成救恩唯主是從的腳。這是始終如一，永不改變的路徑；是鞠躬盡瘁，死而後已的抉擇。無怨無悔！
- 不怕艱難，痛苦，永不退後的腳；就是進入死蔭幽谷，經歷暴風急雨，在祂愛裡一切都變為祝福。祂的慈繩愛索必牽引着我們，而在祂裡面也必無差錯。
- 宣告救恩喜訊，傳揚福音的腳。這正如羅馬書第十章所記，“報福音傳喜信的人，他們的腳蹤何等佳美”。

禱告：

主阿，懇求祢帶領我們的腳步脫離，黑暗進入光明；不求祢指引遙遠的路程，只求慈光引領一步一步的跟隨。奉主的名而求。阿們！

實踐：

我們當記的“腳印”一篇所告訴我們主同在的確據：沙土上有二行腳印時是我們有能力跟主同行之時，當只有一行腳印時是我們的主背負我們而行的時候。那我們更有何畏縮，懼怕呢？因此我們應當努力依靠主，緊緊地跟隨祂；定睛仰望開創信心的耶穌，向前邁進，永不後顧。這意味着我們每天與主同行時，當進入隱秘處與祂在靈裡有親切的交往；在靈修禱告中遵從主的話，聽主的聲音；在信仰和生活見證上求一致。

請思考一下我們如何努力去分享上主的救恩，稱揚耶和華的名，在祂眾民面前還我們的願。(詩篇 116：12-14)

陳則發牧師
南培城聯合衛理教會

Israel put Ephraim before Manasseh

以色列立以法蓮在瑪拿西之上

March 6 – Tuesday of the Third Week in Lent

Genesis 創世記 48:1-20

After this Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.² When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," he summoned his strength and sat up in bed.³ And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and he blessed me,⁴ and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers; I will make of you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your offspring after you for a perpetual holding.'⁵ Therefore your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are now mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are.⁶ As for the offspring born to you after them, they shall be yours. They shall be recorded under the names of their brothers with regard to their inheritance.⁷ For when I came from Paddan, Rachel, alas, died in the land of Canaan on the way, while there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).⁸ When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?"⁹ Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them."¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, and he could not see well. So Joseph brought them near him; and he kissed them and embraced them.¹¹ Israel said to Joseph, "I did not expect to see your face; and here God has let me see your children also."¹² Then Joseph removed them from his father's knees,^[c] and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.¹³ Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them near him.¹⁴ But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands, for Manasseh was the firstborn.¹⁵ He blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,¹⁶ the angel who has redeemed me from all harm, bless the boys; and in them let my name be perpetuated, and the name of my ancestors Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude on the earth."¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.¹⁸ Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father! Since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head."¹⁹ But his father refused, and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations."²⁰ So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will invoke blessings, saying, 'God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh.'" So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

Mediation:

God blessed Jacob by giving him a new name, Israel. When he was old and ill, Israel was further blessed to see Joseph, as well as Joseph's two sons. Israel adopted them as his own sons and gave them affection and

love. He blessed them by giving them his own name, prayed for spiritual blessings upon them and gave them earthly possessions.

Manasseh the first born was expected to receive more blessings, but Israel blessed Ephraim more than Manasseh. By placing his right hand on Ephraim's head and left hand on Manasseh, Israel meant to set Ephraim before Manasseh in all things. It was determined from that day forward that Ephraim and his descendants would precede Manasseh and his descendants in all matters.

These blessings were given by Israel as an act of faith. Israel believed God would faithfully deliver His promises to Joseph's sons when he placed his hands on the boys. His prophetic benediction was also guided by the Lord's grace to bestow spiritual and material possessions for Joseph's future generations. (Hebrews 11:21)

This story also demonstrated Joseph's remarkable faith. He gave his sons to his father because he believed in God's promises. He trusted that God was building a great people through them and that his descendants would one day return to the promised land.

For five generations, God chose to bless Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Ephraim before their first-born brothers. Our Almighty God is absolutely free to choose who to give his mercy and grace to. Because of their faith and obedience, God multiplied Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Ephraim's descendants and possessions. His promises to them were fulfilled according to His will. God set them before others and His name was glorified through them. We are encouraged to learn that God sees our hearts. He exalts those who honor Him. He loves us the same regardless of our background, skin color, gender or birth order.

Prayer:

Our Father, with faith in Jesus Christ, we are all your children. May Your Holy Spirit help us to be faithful to Your calling. Bless us with discernment and obedient hearts to do Your will. May we also have strength and courage to accept your commands. May Your name be glorified. In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.

Practice:

Have faith that God knows what is best for us and that His ways are the best. For parents, during Lent, discuss with your children what will be their practice to honor God as their trust in God.

Rev. Leh Chuo Ting
Retired pastor worshipping at Surf City UMC
Huntington Beach, CA

I always do the things that are pleasing to him **因為我一直行祂所喜悅的事**

March 7 – Wednesday of the Third Week in Lent

John 約翰福音 8:12-30

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” ¹³ Then the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.” ¹⁴ Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. ¹⁸ I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.” ¹⁹ Then they said to him, “Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰ He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. ²¹ Again he said to them, “I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.” ²² Then the Jews said, “Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?” ²³ He said to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.” ²⁵ They said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Why do I speak to you at all? ²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.” ²⁷ They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸ So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. ²⁹ And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.” ³⁰ As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

Meditation:

In John 8:12, Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” We travel with Jesus on a journey following his light during the Lenten Season. Not far from where I was born in Formosa there is a wonderful trail for hikers. It begins on one hill, goes down for miles into a valley, and winds its way up a mountain where the morning sunlight shines on the window of my house. I have always wanted to walk that trail, and finally one spring day I got up the courage to begin it early in the morning before the sun came up.

Although the trail was long and sometimes I wondered if maybe I should stop and go back, I did not. I kept going. I'm glad I did, for I saw some of the most wondrous and beautiful sites nature has to show. Nothing was more beautiful, however, than when I finally ascended the mountain and looked out in the bright sunlight over the next valley with its rolling hills and trees budding back to life. In the middle of it I saw a stream making its way down to join a river. The whole scene was a great garden that God had planted. Its beauty just about took my breath away. I am glad I made that journey.

In a way, Lent is like such a journey. During the Season of Lent, we travel with Jesus following His light on a journey. We start in the wilderness away from the things that normally comfort and sustain us and continue in the steps of Jesus' ministry and through to the last days of his life. We can see where the trail goes as we stand on one mountaintop, the Mount of Transfiguration, where the glory of Jesus with dazzling light and who he truly is was first revealed (Matthew 17:1-13). But Jesus does not let his disciples stay there. He calls us to follow him down the mountain, down the long Lenten trail that leads to Jerusalem and up another mountain, this time Golgotha, where the Son of God is lifted high on a cross. But that is not the end of the journey. From the mountain top, we look down to a wondrous garden, the glorious Easter garden. Its shining beauty is beyond description.

You know the trail is there, don't you? You have heard about it from others who have traveled it and continue to travel it each year. Or, you have made the journey yourself following His light. Each spring the call goes out to journey with Jesus again during those last weeks of his life as he made his way from the Mount of Transfiguration, to Calvary, and on and over to the most glorious place of all, the shining garden of Easter.

Well, it is decision time again. The trail awaits you. Please join us on this journey with Jesus, the One who is the light of the world and is risen to redeem.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, let us journey with you and follow your light during this Lenten season. Help us to feel your presence wherever we go and do the things that are pleasing to you, and to find our true home in your love with your people. In Christ's Holy Name we pray. Amen.

Practice:

Volunteer to serve in a nursing home or community senior center near where you live to share the Light of Christ.

Rev. Dr. John Wen-Pin Wang
Friendly Valley Community UMC Newhall, CA.

To Melchizedek, Abraham apportioned a tenth

麥基洗德，亞伯拉罕也取十分之一給他

March 8 – Thursday of the Third Week in Lent

Hebrews 希伯來書 7:1-10

This “King Melchizedek of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham as he was returning from defeating the kings and blessed him”; and to him Abraham apportioned “one-tenth of everything.” His name, in the first place, means “king of righteousness”; next he is also king of Salem, that is, “king of peace.” Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. See how great he is! Even Abraham the patriarch gave him a tenth of the spoils. And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to collect tithes from the people, that is, from their kindred, though these also are descended from Abraham. 6 But this man, who does not belong to their ancestry, collected tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had received the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. In the one case, tithes are received by those who are mortal; in the other, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

Mediation:

It is important to think about the way we tithe—that is, how we pledge our finances to God. Tithing has a lot to say to our spiritual life. While Scripture may have much to say and teach us about our generosity, it is actually not a teaching lesson. Rather, it is a learning experience which will affect our whole life.

Many of the lessons we have with Jesus are not just spoken words—they are to be practices in our lives to live out as a Christian. We can talk all we want about giving, but it is only a concept until we find its place in our daily lives. Several years ago, Hugo, a young person in my church, went into a popular fast food restaurant. Even though he would not normally frequent this place, on this particular day he was feeling hungry enough to go to this

hamburger eatery. As Hugo was standing in line, the Spirit of the Lord said to him: "Buy two." The young man said, "I could not even finish one, why should I purchase two?" But the thought was so real that he decided to just do that. It was on the way out the door of the restaurant that Hugo realized what the Lord had prepared for him to do, for just outside the door there was a handicapped person, sitting there waiting for someone to give him some food. Hugo now understood that the extra sandwich he bought was for this man. Generosity comes to us when we learn to give.

The Scripture tells us that Abraham gave to this stranger, Melchizedek and his order "one-tenth of everything." Melchizedek did not belong to Abraham's tribe; and yet, Abraham thought that this King of Salem, "King of Peace," should receive such a gift from him.

Friends, until we give, we will not understand what it truly means. Unless we love enough to give, we will continue to think that tithing is too much to give to the Lord and the church. It was in Abraham's mind to think about generosity such that he showed generosity to the priests. It is important to God that we learn to give just as Abraham gave his tithe.

Think about the way God gives to you. Encourage yourself to go beyond your imagination and ability. You will see result greater than your thought!

Prayer:

God, let me learn to give as Abraham gives. Help me to see the greatness of your gift, Jesus Christ. Move us to act and not just to listen.

Practice:

Give a tithe this coming Sunday as your commitment to the Lord.

Rev. Mamie Ko
Shepherd of the Hills UMC Monterey Park

Take with you words and return to the LORD

當歸向耶和華，用言語向祂

3月9日・大齋期第三周・禮拜五

Hosea 何西阿書 14:1-9

¹ 以色列啊，你要歸向耶和華你的神！你是因自己的罪孽跌倒了。² 當歸向耶和華，用言語禱告他說：「求你除淨罪孽，悅納善行，這樣，我們就把嘴唇的祭代替牛犢獻上。³ 我們不向亞述求救，不騎埃及的馬，也不再對我們手所造的說『你是我們的神』，因為孤兒在你耶和華那裡得蒙憐憫。」⁴ 「我必醫治他們背道的病，甘心愛他們，因為我的怒氣向他們轉消。⁵ 我必向以色列如甘露，他必如百合花開放，如黎巴嫩的樹木扎根。⁶ 他的枝條必延長，他的榮華如橄欖樹，他的香氣如黎巴嫩的香柏樹。⁷ 曾住在他蔭下的必歸回，發旺如五穀，開花如葡萄樹，他的香氣如黎巴嫩的酒。⁸ 以法蓮必說：『我與偶像還有什麼關涉呢？』我耶和華回答他，也必顧念他。我如青翠的松樹，你的果子從我而得。」⁹ 誰是智慧人，可以明白這些事；誰是通達人，可以知道這一切。因為耶和華的道是正直的，義人必在其中行走，罪人卻在其上跌倒。

默想：

何西阿是十二小先知書的第一本。他是在耶羅波安第二世時在北國以色列為先知，而以賽亞在南國猶大為先知，服事神。當時宗教和社會的領袖與權勢們都持強凌弱、驕奢淫逸、敬拜偶像，並在列強亞述，埃及覬覦之下，國勢危岌。神的先知們便大聲急呼，要他們“歸回，禱告神”；離棄偶像，專心依靠那賜五穀，新酒和油，眷顧天地萬物之耶和華。因為除神以外，別無拯救，天上人間沒有賜下別的名，世人可以靠着得救。惟獨祂是我們的道路，真理和生命。

先知以賽亞和何西阿在其書中 (以賽亞書 30：15；何西阿書 14：2) 彼此呼應宣告說，“主耶和華以色列的聖者曾如此說，你們得救在乎歸回安息，你們得力在乎平靜安穩”。何西阿更不惜現身說法，以自己婚姻之關係，生動地傳達要忠於神的信息，專心依靠仰賴祂。我們當記住，“萬軍之耶和華說；不是依靠勢力，不是依靠才能，乃是依靠我的靈，方能成事” --撒迦利亞 4：6。

主的愛對我們永遠不離不棄。耶穌沒有任何不能擔當和背負的憂傷和痛苦。祂是我們隨時的幫助和力量，在任何的境遇之中，祂的恩典都夠用；福杯滿溢。

禱告：

求主使我們聽從聖靈的感動；賜給我們一顆新的心，正直的靈；且時常同心合意，恆切的禱告；把一切頌讚榮耀都歸於神。奉主名求。阿們！

實踐：

讓我們不要倔強，偏行己路。是的，我們“當歸回，禱告主”；這要成為我們日常生活的座右銘和實踐，去體會祂豐盛的恩愛並要與祂同行。

陳則發牧師
加州南培城聯合衛理教會

Take Up the Whole Armour of God

穿戴上帝所賜的全副軍裝

March 10 – Saturday of the Third Week in Lent

Ephesians 以弗所書 6:10-20

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For our* struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. ¹⁵ As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ With all of these,* take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,* ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

Meditation:

In life there are many kinds of strengths. Physical strength that can be measured by how well our body functions. Emotional strengths that can be measured by our mental stability. We rely on our strengths in life. While physical and emotional strength are important, the greatest strength that we will ever possess is our spiritual strength!

Our spiritual strength is measured by our trust and faith in the Lord. When we trust in the Lord, we recognize the Lord's power and presence in our lives. When we have faith in the Lord, we know that He is arming us for the struggles we will face.

The Apostle Paul addressed the people of Ephesus as their faith was threatened by government rulers and corrupt religious leaders. He reminded them that the armor of God would help them withstand the forces against them. In your own life, you will face challenges. Work and family duties will distract you. Friends may tempt you to spend more time with them than with God. Financial obligations will cause anxiety. Illness and loss

will bring you pain. When you feel that these diversions in your life are overwhelming, do not lose faith. Remember your spiritual strength in the Lord and put on the armor of God.

Tie the belt of truth around your waist as you are comforted by the Word of God as revealed through the Scriptures. Place the breastplate of righteousness on you as it is a mark that you are a child of God and have received His favor. Walk with shoes on your feet that will make you ready to proclaim the Gospel. Place the shield of faith in front of you as it is steeped in the traditions and rituals of the church. Put the helmet of salvation upon your head to remind you of the crown of thorns that were placed on Jesus' head as he died for our sins so that we receive forgiveness of our sins. And keep the sword of the Spirit by your side as it is the Word of God that will teach and guide you.

The season of Lent is a time for reflection and recommitment to God. Use this time to put on the armor of God of God and build up your spiritual strength. So that you will be able to face the struggles in your life. With spiritual strength, you will always be ready to pray in the Spirit and boldly proclaim the Gospel to the world!

Prayer:

Loving Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. We are thankful for the gifts of righteousness and salvation that you have armed us with. May we use these gifts as we face the many struggles and obstacles in our lives. For we know we are commanded to love you with all our hearts, minds, and souls; and to love one another as Christ loves us. Give us the spiritual strength to obey these commandments. And receive our eternal gratitude for the life everlasting made possible through your son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Practice:

“Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.” (Ephesians 6:18) Pray three times daily. First in the morning to lift up your struggles to the Lord. Then in the afternoon, to seek out a family member or friend and pray boldly with them about how the gospel of Christ has transformed you. Lastly, pray before you go to sleep, to thank the Lord for your day and for the strength you will receive the next day.

Rev. Eva Chi Than Thai-Erwin
Chinese United Methodist Church
Los Angeles Chinatown

But the LORD God helps me

主耶和華必幫助我

March 11 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 以賽亞書 50:4-11

The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens - wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up. Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant, who walks in darkness and has no light, yet trusts in the name of the LORD and relies upon his God? But all of you are kindlers of fire, lighters of firebrands. Walk in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled! This is what you shall have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.

Meditation

Isaiah was called by God to prophesy and teach the Israelites to return to God. To be a prophet, one must speak the truth for God. It is a tough and harsh task. People like to hear words that please their feelings and senses. But to speak the truth is not always pleasant or welcomed. The truth can be challenging, make people feel discomfort and awaken their guilt conscience. Isiah experienced both bitterness and humiliation in his prophetic career. Yet in this passage, Isaiah spoke of a gentle endurance and sacrificial servanthood. It is the character of our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to become one of us, to put himself in our shoes and

understand our condition and weakness. A mighty savior become a vulnerable servant and even give up his life for showing us the way to life renewal.

Riding on a NYC subway every day, I meet all kinds of people on the train. Many times, I see homeless people or a mom holding a baby to beg money; a handicap singer singing for a dollar; or a drunker asleep on the corner. Some may throw in their cup a few quarters or a dollar bill. But few want to have anything to do with them or ask their situation. Some even immediately take a few steps away from them.

When I talked with them and asked them simple questions and care about their situation, hearing them telling me their broken lives, they seem to awaken to the real life. A sincere and caring conversation may bring hope to a hopeless person and challenge them to seek outcome and change. We are living in a world that is full of brokenness, violence and lost souls. God is the help. He uses us to be his hands and feet to bring comfort and healing to the broken world, to the people who need to find help and comfort.

Prayer:

Loving God, may your Son, Jesus Christ, be the inspiration and example for us to take the humble servanthood, act kind, compassionate toward the broken people, so they will find comfort, hope and healing in your redeeming grace. Amen.

Practice:

Share the love and grace of Christ to the homeless and hopeless in our gentleness and people is taking part in God's mission to transform this world.

Rev. Huibing He
Chinese UMC Manhattan, New York

The man believed the word that Jesus spoke

那人信耶穌所說的話

3月12日・大齋期第四周・禮拜一

John 約翰福音 4：43-54

⁴³ 過了那兩天，耶穌離了那地方，往加利利去。⁴⁴ 因為耶穌自己作過見證說，先知在本地是沒有人尊敬的。⁴⁵ 到了加利利，加利利人既然看見他在耶路撒冷過節所行的一切事，就接待他，因為他們也是上去過節。⁴⁶ 耶穌又到了加利利的迦拿，就是他從前變水為酒的地方。有一個大臣，他的兒子在迦百農患病。⁴⁷ 他聽見耶穌從猶太到了加利利，就來見他，求他下去醫治他的兒子，因為他兒子快要死了。⁴⁸ 耶穌就對他說：「若不看見神蹟奇事，你們總是不信！」⁴⁹ 那大臣說：「先生，求你趁著我的孩子還沒有死就下去。」⁵⁰ 耶穌對他說：「回去吧，你的兒子活了！」那人信耶穌所說的話就回去了。⁵¹ 正下去的時候，他的僕人迎見他，說他的兒子活了。⁵² 他就問什麼時候見好的，他們說：「昨日未時熱就退了。」⁵³ 他便知道這正是耶穌對他說「你兒子活了」的時候，他自己和全家就都信了。⁵⁴ 這是耶穌在加利利行的第二件神蹟，是他從猶太回去以後行的。

默想：

我們傳福音的對象，有人聽了有力的見證仍不信；而有人一聽就信。今天來看看耶穌如何面對信心的挑戰。

有一大臣求耶穌救治他的兒子。耶穌回答『你們這些人，若不看見神蹟奇事，總是不相信。』大臣沒有被冷言冷語打退，再求祂救治。耶穌讓他回去，說『你的兒子活了』。這件奇事是當時看不見，事後大臣得知兒子好了，推算時間才知道耶穌說話時兒子就好了。於是全家都信了。

這裡信心的挑戰是什麼呢？首先，信是神的恩典，別人不能左右，也不能努力得到。

我們如果有一絲信心，必須向神獻上感恩。以弗所書 2:8，『你們得救是本乎恩，也因著信。這並不是出於自己，乃是神所賜的。』

第二，很多人需要見證才能看見神做的工。那些沒有看見就信的人有福了。(約翰福音 24:29)。但那見着才信的人也有福。傳福音時，如果有一聽就接受的人，要感謝神；而碰見需要聽見證的人，就見證。信不是播種人的功勞，是神所賜；不信也不是播種人的錯，只是信心還沒發芽。別灰心，也不要強求：你播的種，可能未來讓別人收割。

第三，當耶穌面對救孩子的要求時，祂說的重話是給看熱鬧的人聽，要他們反省求神蹟、把恩典當作娛樂的行為。祂沒讓生病的孩子受苦；而是給了一個看不見的神蹟。

禱告：

無所不能的主，感謝祢賜我信心，讓我能認識祢、親近祢。求祢開我的眼睛與心靈，讓我想起我最需要時祢曾在我生命中做的工。也求祢賜我力量與勇氣，將祢在我身上成就的事為主作見證。阿們！

實踐：

請回想你生命的轉捩點神是否在你身上做工。請將你自己生命的神蹟整理寫出來，為主作見證。

孔李立德傳道
聯合衛理公會愛鄰堂

Help us, O God for the glory of your name

求祢因祢名的榮耀幫助我們

March 13 – Tuesday of the Fourth Week in Lent

Psalms 詩篇 79:1-13

¹ O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins. ² They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the air for food, the flesh of your faithful to the wild animals of the earth. ³ They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them. ⁴ We have become a taunt to our neighbors, mocked and derided by those around us. ⁵ How long, O Lord? Will you be angry forever? Will your jealous wrath burn like fire? ⁶ Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call on your name. ⁷ For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation. ⁸ Do not remember against us the iniquities of our ancestors; let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low. ⁹ Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and forgive our sins, for your name's sake. ¹⁰ Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" Let the avenging of the outpoured blood of your servants be known among the nations before our eyes. ¹¹ Let the groans of the prisoners come before you; according to your great power preserve those doomed to die. ¹² Return sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbors the taunts with which they taunted you, O Lord! ¹³ Then we your people, the flock of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise.

Meditation:

When adversity is upon us, who does not cry out to something or to someone—outside ourselves or to some higher power—to come and balance the scales of justice, of morality, of good versus evil? It is the tacit agreement we have made with ourselves that we, alone, are helpless to affect the change we desire to see. This is when the power of God is able to descend on our lives, when there is nothing left to do but to cry out in despair, in fear, in agony. Yet there is more.

The plea to make right what has been wronged is a natural urge, followed by still another: the plea for retribution. How often have our pleas begun with a simple need to have returned what was lost, only to be transformed by feelings of fear, rage and powerless into a desire to exact revenge? Eye for an eye. Ear for an ear. To do anything to avoid feeling power-less, anything but nothing. Yet there is still more.

The war begins as we call upon God, but to what end? The destruction we desire that only He can provide? Or the love that we need that only He can provide? We often teeter on the edge of God's love as if we were on a knife, seeking holiness through darkness. Knowing what is natural, we must do what is unnatural: to let go of our darkness so that we may claim His holiness. In this season of sacrifice, may we set aside our need for personal satisfaction and that God's justice and love will be seen through our actions.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to sacrifice my natural desires that lead me to ignore the work of the Cross. They deceive me into believing that my desire alone is an adequate substitute for Your mercy, grace and love. Allow me to see beyond, and when my sight fails, when my heart aches, when my body stumbles, grow in me a faith that surpasses all understanding, to allow You to do the work of your kingdom in me. Amen.

Practice:

Let us carry the burdens of others, that we might experience the saving work of the Cross, the burdens that Jesus carried for all of us.

Elbert Traister
Youth Director
First United Methodist Church of San Gabriel

Sanctified through Jesus once for all 僅只一次獻上祂的身體就得以成聖

3月14日・大齋期第四周・禮拜三

Hebrews 希伯來書 10:1-18

¹ 律法既是將來美事的影兒，不是本物的真像，總不能藉著每年常獻一樣的祭物，叫那近前來的人得以完全。² 若不然，獻祭的事豈不早已止住了嗎？因為禮拜的人，良心既被潔淨，就不再覺得有罪了。³ 但這些祭物是叫人每年想起罪來，⁴ 因為公牛和山羊的血斷不能除罪。⁵ 所以，基督到世上來的時候就說：「神啊，祭物和禮物是你不願意的，你曾給我預備了身體。⁶ 燔祭和贖罪祭是你不喜歡的。⁷ 那時我說：『神啊，我來了，為要照你的旨意行，我的事在經卷上已經記載了。』」⁸ 以上說：「祭物和禮物，燔祭和贖罪祭，是你不願意的，也是你不喜歡的。」這都是按著律法獻的。⁹ 後又說：「我來了為要照你的旨意行。」可見他是除去在先的，為要立定在後的。¹⁰ 我們憑這旨意，靠耶穌基督只一次獻上他的身體，就得以成聖。¹¹ 凡祭司天天站著侍奉神，屢次獻上一樣的祭物，這祭物永不能除罪。¹² 但基督獻了一次永遠的贖罪祭，就在神的右邊坐下了，¹³ 從此等候他仇敵成了他的腳凳。¹⁴ 因為他一次獻祭，便叫那得以成聖的人永遠完全。¹⁵ 聖靈也對我們作見證，因為他既已說過：¹⁶ 「主說：『那些日子以後，我與他們所立的約乃是這樣：我要將我的律法寫在他們心上，又要放在他們的裡面』」，¹⁷ 以後就說：「我不再記念他們的罪愆和他們的過犯。」¹⁸ 這些罪過既已赦免，就不用再為罪獻祭了。

默想：

不論從聖經啟示，或今日世界各地所發生的事，或我們的良心，都令我們深深感受罪的現實。

罪使人產生內咎、恐懼、死亡。那麼，人的盼望在那裏呢？今日經文中，作者比較靠舊約中訂定的贖罪祭與新約中耶穌基督的救贖：

(一) 基督的死成就了人，使罪得以永遠赦免。

- (1) 舊約獻祭是 “每年常獻一樣的祭物，”就是說要每年不斷的獻祭。但基督是” 獻了一次永遠的贖罪祭 “。
- (2) 舊約律法， “公牛和山羊的血斷不能除罪”， 他只使人看到上帝的公義和聖潔。但基督” 只一次獻上他的身體” (希伯來書 10:10) ， 使我們的罪得以完全赦免。

今日，你對於得到赦罪有把握嗎？還是仍因罪而內咎和恐懼呢？

(二)舊約律法是以人為中心,但人的功德善行斷不能使人的罪得免除，我們“靠基督只一次獻上他的身體，就得以成聖。”

成聖可從兩方面看：

- (1) 藉接受耶穌基督的救贖，我們的罪得以赦免，並得稱為上帝的兒女。這是我們在身份和地位上成聖的開端。
- (2) 成聖是人一生漫長的過程。我們靠聖靈的引導，更接近上帝的性情，更似基督的樣式。我們靠基督的救贖登上成聖的道路，向完全(成聖)靠近。

今日你在成聖路上的光景怎樣？是否只信主得救，卻沒有成聖的生活表現？

(三) 基督的死成就了新約，就是聖靈指引我們永遠成聖的印證。新的約不是外表的律法儀文，而是內心想法的更新。我們的罪得以完全赦免。你今天有聖靈的印證在心中，走上了完全成聖的路嗎？

禱告：

天父，感謝你藉基督的死賜我赦罪的平安，感謝聖靈給我永遠成聖的印證。祈求主幫助我在每日生活中，活出成聖的樣式，榮耀主名。藉基督聖名祈求。阿們！

實踐：

在每日生活中活出罪得赦免、邁向完全成聖的樣式。

周子森牧師
美國聯合衛理公會退休牧師

Confidence to enter by the blood of Jesus

靠着耶穌的血得以坦然進入

3月15日・大齋期第四周・禮拜四

Hebrews 希伯來書 10:19-25

¹⁹ 弟兄們，我們既因耶穌的血得以坦然進入至聖所，²⁰ 是藉著他給我們開了一條又新又活的路，從幔子經過，這幔子就是他的身體；²¹ 又有一位大祭司治理神的家，²² 並我們心中天良的虧欠已經灑去，身體用清水洗淨了，就當存著誠心和充足的信心來到神面前。²³ 也要堅守我們所承認的指望，不致搖動，因為那應許我們的是信實的。²⁴ 又要彼此相顧，激發愛心，勉勵行善。²⁵ 你們不可停止聚會，好像那些停止慣了的人，倒要彼此勸勉；既知道那日子臨近，就更當如此。

默想：

作為基督徒，我們跟隨耶穌、做祂的好門徒，這是我們一生努力的方向；因此，希伯來書十章 19 到 25 節經文是一個很好的提醒；要我們儆醒在神面前、努力不懈：

首先、明白耶穌的獻祭：基督釘上十字架上、如同會幕裏的幔子被撕開；為我們開了一條又新又活的路，使我們可以直接與神接觸，坦然無懼地到神的面前；耶穌的死、是個有效的祭。

其次、我們要充滿信心：耶穌洗淨了我們外在的污穢、也使我們內在成為聖潔；把我們心中的虧欠洗去，賦與我們堅定的信心、來與神建立更深層的關係。因為，那應許我們的是信實的，使我們不至搖動。

第三、我們要互相勉勵：作為基督徒要彼此相愛、憐憫、扶持、照顧；激發愛心、勉勵行善。因為，耶穌命令我們：要愛神、愛人。「愛」是我們順服上帝的行動，榮神益人者有福了！

第四、我們要參與聚會：如果我們想要得著美滿的基督徒生活，就要積極參與教會的主日崇拜；因為，崇拜中有敬拜、讚美、讀經、講道...等各種活動與學習讓我們有機會在神的面前、得到的安息與奉獻；不但是美好的時光、也是我們的責任。

最後、特別地叮嚀、別忘了！『那日子』將到、就是基督將要再度來臨。我們應該隨時注意，儆醒等候、因為祂必快來！

禱告：

我們在天上的父！讚美祢！感謝祢將耶穌基督賜給我們，使我們藉著他在十字架上的犧牲，得以坦然無懼的來到神施恩寶座前，得憐恤、蒙恩惠，有隨時的幫助。感謝神！因祢的應許是信實的，幫助我們能夠堅守祢所賜的盼望，甘心跟隨祢，彼此互相照顧、激發愛心、勉勵行善。奉耶穌基督的名禱告，阿們！

實踐：

請嘗試以下操練，靠着耶穌的血得以坦然進入：

- 1) 請你以真誠、信心、得救、成聖四個項目來檢驗自己的行為與思想。
- 2) 請你督促自己在 2018 年中的主日崇拜，從不缺席；做一位盡責的基督徒。

曾慶華牧師
阿罕布拉市第一聯合衛理公會

I have set the LORD always before me

我讓耶和華常在我面前

3月16日・大齋期第四周・禮拜五

Psalms 詩篇 16:1-11

¹神啊，求你保佑我，因為我投靠你。²我的心哪，你曾對耶和華說：你是我的主；我的好處不在你以外。³論到世上的聖民，他們又美又善，是我最喜悅的。⁴以別神代替耶和華的，他們的愁苦必加增；他們所澆奠的血我不獻上；我嘴唇也不提別神的名號。⁵耶和華是我的產業，是我杯中的分；我所得的，你為我持守。⁶用繩量給我的地界，坐落在佳美之處；我的產業實在美好。⁷我必稱頌那指教我的耶和華；我的心腸在夜間也警戒我。⁸我將耶和華常擺在我面前，因他在我右邊，我便不致搖動。⁹因此，我的心歡喜，我的靈快樂；我的肉身也要安然居住。¹⁰因為你必不將我的靈魂撇在陰間，也不叫你的聖者見朽壞。¹¹你必將生命的道路指示我。在你面前有滿足的喜樂；在你右手中有永遠的福樂。

默想：

我們生活在一個日新月異、充滿動蕩的時代，人們在日光下忙碌追求幸福和滿足，一旦發現短暫的興奮和愉悅消失的時候，我們又開始了新的追逐；循環往復。聖經告訴我們“這世界和其上的情慾都要過去，唯獨遵行神旨意的，是永遠長存。”詩篇作者大衛教導我們應當轉眼仰望神，以神為樂，他就將你心裡所求的賜給你。在一節二節中，大衛用了神的三個名字：大衛宣告他所信的神是創造宇宙萬物的全能的神 Eloheim；是守約的耶和華神 LORD；

是作王到永遠的神 Adonai ！儘管大衛的人生充滿了動盪，試煉和考驗：掃羅的追殺使他離鄉背井，遭遇親友的背叛，喪子之痛，但他依然渴慕信靠順服神，被稱為合神心意的人。我們看到神對投靠他的人提供：神的保守（1 節），神的供應（5 節），神預備的佳美之處（6 節），我們因信耶穌，可以得著不會朽壞，不能衰殘，為我們存留在天上的基業。因信耶穌，滿有榮光的大喜樂。

禱告：

主耶穌，祢來了是使人得生命，並且得的更豐盛，引導我們重新將我們的眼光轉向祢，找到生命的目的和意義，幫助我們高舉祢在我們的生活中居上首位，掌王權；因為唯獨祢才是賜豐盛生命的主，我們的好處不在祢以外。唯有祢是我們患難中隨時的幫助；讓我們時時依靠祢，因為在祢的同在中滿足的喜樂和永遠的福樂。阿門！

實踐：

你是否感到你的生活中缺少了滿足的喜樂？你可曾邀請主耶穌的同在進入你的生命中？如果你還沒有話，今天就是蒙拯救的時刻。你可以向主耶穌禱告：“求主的恩典和喜樂進入到我的生命中，不論我處在什麼樣的外在環境，我知道在主的同在中我能得享安息，主是我的避難所，並賜給我滿足的喜樂和永遠的福樂。”

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me

人若渴了，到我這裡來喝！

March 17 – Saturday of the Fourth Week in Lent

John 約翰福音 7:37-52

³⁷ *On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me,³⁸ and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’”³⁹ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.⁴⁰ When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, “This is really the prophet.”⁴¹ Others said, “This is the Messiah.” But some asked, “Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he?”⁴² Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?”⁴³ So there was a division in the crowd because of him.⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.⁴⁵ Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why did you not arrest him?”⁴⁶ The police answered, “Never has anyone spoken like this!”⁴⁷ Then the Pharisees replied, “Surely you have not been deceived too, have you?⁴⁸ Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him?⁴⁹ But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed.”⁵⁰ Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked,⁵¹ “Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?”⁵² They replied, “Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.”*

Meditation:

Jesus promises to permanently satisfy our thirst by giving us the Holy Spirit who brings streams of living water flowing within us.

We all thirst physically. That’s why the medical professionals urge us to drink water. Dehydration could be detrimental to our health and dangerous to our life. That’s why thirst produces in us an intense longing for a quencher.

We all thirst spiritually too. We all have some deep longing which propels us to search for a quencher, for something that will satisfy. Some people long for wealth. Some people long for fame. Some people long for power, prestige, exciting experiences, peace of mind or avoidance of pain.

They can never find true satisfaction and quench their thirst because they are drinking from the wrong wells.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35). Our hunger is satisfied when we "come" to Jesus. Our thirst is satisfied when we "believe" in Him. This is spiritual sustenance of the highest order.

But, as the popular saying goes, "You can lead a horse to the water, but you cannot make it drink." It's possible that our soul can be as dry as the Sahara Desert even in the middle of an ocean. The only way to a lasting satisfaction is to be thirsty for Jesus. As the Psalmist wrote, "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water." (Psalm 63:1, see also Psalm 42:1)

There is a very illuminating story in 2 Kings 2. It was known that the Lord was going to take Elijah. His disciple, Elisha, was travelling with him. Elijah tried to dismiss Elisha so God could take him, but Elisha the disciple refused to go and leave Elijah alone. Each time Elijah told him to stay in one place, Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." After several attempts, Elijah finally asked, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" Elisha answered, "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit" (2 Kings 2:9).

This is the focus of our Lenten discipline—that we will come to Jesus and never depart from him, so that we can receive the Holy Spirit and have a stream of living water flowing within us.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for your invitation to come to you. Thank you for your promise of the Holy Spirit, who will quench my thirst and bring everlasting satisfaction to my life. Please open my eyes to let me see how dry I am and how I need you. And let me long for you, day and night, until my soul find rest and peace in you. I pray in your precious name. Amen.

Practice:

1. Am I thirsty?
2. What am I thirsty for in life?
3. How can I inherit the Spirit this Lenten season?

Rev. Paul J. Jaw (Retired)
Crystal Springs UMC San Mateo, CA

He learned obedience through what he suffered

祂因所受的苦學了順從

3月18日・大齋期第五主日

Hebrews 希伯來書 5:5-10

⁵ 如此，基督也不是自取榮耀做大祭司，乃是在乎向他說「你是我的兒子，我今日生你」的那一位，⁶ 就如經上又有一處說：「你是照著麥基洗德的等次永遠為祭司。」⁷ 基督在肉體的時候既大聲哀哭，流淚禱告，懇求那能救他免死的主，就因他的虔誠蒙了應允。⁸ 他雖然為兒子，還是因所受的苦難學了順從。⁹ 他既得以完全，就為凡順從他的人成了永遠得救的根源，¹⁰ 並蒙神照著麥基洗德的等次稱他為大祭司。

默想：

這段經文有兩個問題。第一個問題是耶穌在第七節祈求什麼。第二個問題是在第八節的“祂因所受的苦學了順從”是什麼意思？

這段經文沒有明確地說耶穌祈求的是什麼，但卻有兩種可能。

1) 耶穌求神的旨意成就。正如路加福音 22：42 耶穌禱告：“父阿！不要成就我的意思，只要成就你的意思”。

2) 耶穌求得解救脫離死亡。這也不可能，耶穌如果求自己免死，那祂的禱告並沒有如第七節蒙應允；耶穌還得走上十字架苦路。所以耶穌祈求接受苦難為祂順從上帝旨意之路。

順從是不容易的；那是一生要實踐的屬靈操練。我們都知道受苦對我們有益。受過苦長大的孩子比較經得起生活的煎熬考驗。父母不該凡事為孩子找捷徑；因為那些寧願自己受苦，不要孩子承擔苦頭的父母，他們的孩子在重

要關頭不會找活路。如果有選擇我們都不會選擇受苦、犧牲，但那才是我們成長及成功之路。

耶穌因祂所受的苦學了順從，不是說祂曾經不順服過，而是在面對苦難和死亡上，耶穌對上帝的忠心和順服達到了考驗的高峰：順從使祂完全成就上帝救贖世人的旨意；順從使祂成了“得救的根源”；順從使祂成為人與神之間的大祭司。順從使祂不看苦難為羞辱而是愛的舉動。

我們若要紀念耶穌的受難和順從，應該抗議現今社會把受苦難者遺忘。耶穌通過為世人承擔罪的苦難，宣揚了神愛世人的信實。

禱告：

憐憫我們的天父，求賜我們耶穌順從的心志；讓我們願意為愛受苦，使耶穌成為痛苦人的盼望，阿門！

實踐：

今天，請選擇一屬靈操練叫你以受苦來順從上帝的旨意。

余清杰牧師
聖蓋博第一衛理公會

If indeed you continue in the faith **只要你們持守信仰**

3月19日・大齋期第五周・禮拜一

Colossians 歌羅西書 1:13-23

¹³ 他救了我們脫離黑暗的權勢，把我們遷到他愛子的國裡；¹⁴ 我們在愛子裡得蒙救贖，罪過得以赦免。¹⁵ 愛子是那不能看見之神的像，是首生的，在一切被造的以先。¹⁶ 因為萬有都是靠他造的，無論是天上的、地上的，能看見的、不能看見的，或是有位的、主治的、執政的、掌權的，一概都是藉著他造的，又是為他造的。¹⁷ 他在萬有之先，萬有也靠他而立。¹⁸ 他也是教會全體之首。他是元始，是從死裡首先復生的，使他可以在凡事上居首位，¹⁹ 因為父喜歡叫一切的豐盛在他裡面居住。²⁰ 既然藉著他在十字架上所流的血成就了和平，便藉著他叫萬有，無論是地上的、天上的，都與自己和好了。²¹ 你們從前與神隔絕，因著惡行，心裡與他為敵；²² 但如今他藉著基督的肉身受死，叫你們與自己和好，都成了聖潔，沒有瑕疵，無可責備，把你們引到自己面前。²³ 只要你們在所信的道上恆心，根基穩固，堅定不移，不致被引動失去福音的盼望。這福音就是你們所聽過的，也是傳於普天下萬人聽的。我保羅也做了這福音的執事。

默想：

首先，我們要知道保羅寫此書的目的是要重建被異端影響的歌羅西教會。同時，歌羅西書也警示那些世俗化、福音本質漸漸退色如當今教會。當然，這也是提醒我們檢視自身信仰並且反思：我們的信仰是否在任何處境下仍能保持純潔的本色？但願我們能象歌羅西書 1:13 所說：“他救了我們脫離黑暗的權勢，把我們遷到他愛子的國裡。”可

以盡情享受光明和自由，享受神的一切豐富預備；“因為父喜歡叫一切的豐盛，在他裡面居住。”

再之，我們若持守信仰，必要恢復與神和好的關係。因我們從前與神隔絕，現今借著耶穌基督與神和好，只要憑信心持守，必要得著永恆的基業。就如同商場入口的感應門，只有靠近，門才會為你打開。我們和神的關係亦是如此！當你靠近神時，祂就為你打開天上祝福的門，因為雅4:8說：“你們親近神，神就必親近你們……”

禱告：

感謝天父，使我們借著對祂話語的默想，來親近祂，讓我們憑著信心進入祂愛子的國度裡，恢復與祂和好的關係，享受祂一切豐富的預備，使我們能更加地持守信仰，願祂的名在我們的生命中得榮耀且得極大的榮耀，禱告奉耶穌基督的聖名。阿們！

實踐：

1. 接下來一周內至少做一件事讓你的家人或朋友感受到主的愛。
2. 背誦本段鑰節，歌羅西書 1:14

張清嶽牧師
紐約長島喜來科華人聯合衛理教會

Look at the bronze serpent and live

一望這銅蛇就活了

3月20日・大齋期第五周・禮拜二

Numbers 民數記 21:4-9

⁴ 他們從何珥山起行，往紅海那條路走，要繞過以東地。百姓因這路難行，心中甚是煩躁，⁵ 就怨讎神和摩西說：「你們為什麼把我們從埃及領出來，使我們死在曠野呢？這裡沒有糧，沒有水，我們的心厭惡這淡薄的食物！」⁶ 於是耶和華使火蛇進入百姓中間，蛇就咬他們，以色列人中死了許多。⁷ 百姓到摩西那裡，說：「我們怨讎耶和華和你，有罪了。求你禱告耶和華，叫這些蛇離開我們。」於是摩西為百姓禱告。⁸ 耶和華對摩西說：「你製造一條火蛇，掛在杆子上。凡被咬的，一望這蛇，就必得活。」⁹ 摩西便製造一條銅蛇，掛在杆子上。凡被蛇咬的，一望這銅蛇就活了。

默想：

當年當天，以色列人從何珥山起行往紅海那條路上出發，將近繞過以東地。可是，百姓卻因為這艱辛路難行，心裡盡是煩躁，就出言埋怨上帝和摩西。因為以色列人的埋怨，上帝的怒氣使火蛇進入民眾當中，咬死許多人。這被蛇咬的經歷，讓以色列百姓重新醒悟自己埋怨上帝的行為是罪，於是他們就往摩西那裡認罪，求摩西禱告上帝叫蛇離開他們那裡。

上帝因著人的認罪，就聽了祈求，吩咐摩西造一條銅蛇掛在杆上，「凡被蛇咬的，一望這銅蛇就活了。」（9節）的確，這是上帝的命令，也是上帝予人的憐愛與拯救。

約翰福音 3 章 14 節記錄著使徒約翰這樣的形容：「摩西在曠野怎樣舉蛇，人子也必照樣被舉起來。」「怎樣」、「照樣」，成為了一組關鍵詞彙的提醒，當天的預表怎樣，

人子也將照樣如此，就是今天，當人心生悔悟，仰望上帝的時候，才能盛載上帝拯救的標誌。

禱告：

親愛的天父，讓我們在祢的面前真誠地覺醒與悔悟，仰望耶穌基督的十字架這個祢所訂所設憐恤與拯救的標記。今天，在祢跟前，我為過往曾經有過的埋怨聲音，曾有使人受傷跌倒的話語認罪，求主寬恕。禱告奉主名求，阿們！

實踐：

許多時候，你我在營營役役的生活中過得安穩，沒有苦難，又自我感覺良好時，也許也會忘卻仰望十字架上那份上帝施恩惠、赦罪行的恩典，今天，無論人生之中際遇如何，藉着銅蛇的史事，讓我們閉上埋怨的嘴，在上帝跟前悔過尋求憐憫，仰賴上帝拯救的應許。

If you abide in my word you are truly my disciples **你們若繼續遵守我的道，就真是我的門徒了**

March 21 – Wednesday of the Fifth Week in Lent

John 約翰福音 8:31-42

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free’?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. I declare what I have seen in the Father’s presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father.” They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are indeed doing what your father does.” They said to him, “We are not illegitimate children; we have one father, God himself.” Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me.

Meditation:

Back in the 1930s, ice cream manufacturers in the United States began to promote their products through campaigns that highlighted a specific flavor of the month. The idea caught on, and by the middle of the twentieth century the phrase “flavor of the month” began to describe all sorts of things, not all of them edible. Celebrities, fad diets, and fashions that were popular for a short time and then began to fade from the public’s interest were all likely candidates to be called the flavor of the month, especially by their critics. The phrase’s continued use in the English language reflects the basic human tendency to embrace new things but then abandon them once the novelty wears off.

Sometimes people treat Jesus and his teachings in the same way. They are quick to respond to the Good News and seem eager to follow Christ’s word, but after a time their enthusiasm wanes. Old habits, once laid down on the altar, begin to be picked back up and embraced. Former attitudes and behaviors that had seemingly vanished at conversion suddenly emerge.

What has happened? Is Jesus no longer powerful? Are the truths he has revealed no longer relevant? No, the issue is not with the Lord but with the disciple. The life that Christ offers is one of freedom from sin's shackles, but the sad reality is that we often prefer the chains.

In today's Bible passage we read of Jews "who had believed in him." These were people who had heard Jesus speak and accepted, at least intellectually, both him and what he had to say. But then Jesus points out what could be a potential problem. He says that to truly be his disciples they must "continue in his word." In other words, it was not enough to hear the truth he shared and perhaps follow him for a season; they had to commit to both it and him continually to really be his disciples. Treating him as just the flavor of the month wouldn't be enough.

To rise to this level of commitment means completely renouncing one's old ways and choosing to let Jesus be Lord over all. Just as this was often difficult for the people of Christ's day, so, too, it can be hard for us now. Thankfully, we don't have to do it alone, but like the Apostle Paul, we "can do all things through Christ who strengthens" us (Philippians 4:13). We are in the season of Lent, a time of letting go of things that keep us from following Christ fully. Let us not see this as merely a few weeks of dedication before sliding back into our old ways. Instead, let's view this as the start of a continuing process of growing closer to our Lord and following him completely.

Prayer:

Lord, you know how fickle we can be with our attention and our affection. Forgive us for the times we offer you periodic rather than continual service. Help us to draw ever closer to you and to continue in your word and ways always, both in this life and the one to come. In the precious of name of Jesus, we pray this. Amen.

Practice:

Another translation for the word "continue" in this passage is "abide." Meditate today on the meaning of this word and what it indicates about what our life should look in Christ.

Rev. John Roper
Edmond Chinese International UMC

I have spoken of your faithful and of your salvation

我已陳明祿的信實和祿的救恩

March 22 – Thursday of the Fifth Week in Lent

Psalm 詩篇 40:1-7

¹*I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.*
²*He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.* ³*He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.* ⁴*Happy are those who make the LORD their trust, who do not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after false gods.*
⁵*You have multiplied, O LORD my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you. Were I to proclaim and tell of them, they would be more than can be counted. Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.* ⁷*Then I said, “Here I am; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.*

Meditation:

God does wonders and great work in His time; but for the Christian, it seems life is all about waiting. Waiting for God’s time is always challenging and without faith our waiting can be very frustrating. King David had been in trouble many times but he didn’t wait passively—he cried out to God. Praying is a very powerful action and God heard his prayers. David patiently sought God’s deliverance; he didn’t seek help from human scheming.

David trusted the Lord because he remembered God’s great work. God had delivered His people from trouble; protected them in the wilderness; enabled them to conquer the powerful Canaanites in the Promised Land; and saved them from enemies who threatened and tried to destroy them. David personally experienced God delivering him from the bear and lion, from Goliath, and from Saul’s repeated attempts to kill him.

Knowing that God looks at the heart and not the outward appearance, David was delighted in His will and His way. He kept God’s words in his heart and obeyed him. He wasn’t quiet about this good news of God’s deliverance, faithfulness, salvation and steadfast love.

But David falls again into a deep pit due to his iniquity. He admits his sin and failure to resist temptation. When enemies attack him

through shame, guilt, confusion and accusation, David remembers who God is—his help and deliverer. He also remembers how poor and needy he is. In agony, David cries out to God again trusting His power and greatness.

We, too, fall into deep pits. Driven by our own selfish desire, thoughts and understanding, we tend to rely on our own strength and wisdom, and leave God out. Driven by the busyness of the world and a desire to please people, we go faster than God and don't wait for God's guidance. We feel God is too slow so we take matters into our own hands. Then we get lost, lose joy, get anxious and frustrated, and become insecure. Focusing on what we see and what we hear, we get discouraged. Enemies don't miss their opportunity to harass us and make us doubt who God is and who we are. They deceive us and accuse us.

The bottom line is this: always return to God's steadfast love and faithfulness. We receive salvation by His grace, not by our own work. We all fall short countlessly, but God forgives us limitlessly and delivers us from troubles. So, cry out to God and proclaim God's faithfulness and salvation while we are waiting. We are saved because of what Jesus did for us, not because what we did for God. We are saved if we believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead for our sins.

Are you waiting on the Lord? Think about God's many wonders and how He has worked to deliver you. Wait with expectant hope in Him. During your waiting, think about who God is and what He has done. Speak His faithfulness and salvation.

Prayer:

Loving and gracious Father, thank you for delivering us from our sins and the consequences of these sins through Jesus Christ. Help us speak boldly of your faithfulness and salvation. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Practice:

1. Think about how God delivered you from troubles. Give thanks to God and share that with somebody.
2. Make a list of people who need to hear the gospel, pray for them, meet them and share the love of Jesus.
3. Write a journal about what God is doing in your daily life.

Pastor SonHye Kim
Cornerstone UMC

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies

一粒麥子不落在地裡死了

3月23日・大齋期第五周・禮拜五

John 約翰福音 12:20-36

那時，上來過節禮拜的人中，有幾個希利尼人。他們來見加利利伯賽大的腓力，求他說：先生，我們願意見耶穌。腓力去告訴安得烈，安得烈同腓力去告訴耶穌。耶穌說：人子得榮耀的時候到了。我實實在在的告訴你們，一粒麥子不落在地裡死了，仍舊是一粒，若是死了，就結出許多子粒來。愛惜自己生命的，就喪失生命；在這世上恨惡自己生命的，就要保守生命到永生。若有人服事我，就當跟從我；我在哪裡，服事我的人也要在那裡；若有人服事我，我父必尊重他。我現在心裡憂愁，我說什麼才好呢？父啊，救我脫離這時候；但我原是為這時候來的。父啊，願你榮耀你的名！當時就有聲音從天上來，說：我已經榮耀了我的名，還要再榮耀。站在旁邊的眾人聽見，就說：打雷了。還有人說：有天使對他說話。耶穌說：這聲音不是為我，是為你們來的。現在這世界受審判，這世界的王要被趕出去。我若從地上被舉起來，就要吸引萬人來歸我。耶穌這話原是指著自己將要怎樣死說的。眾人回答說：我們聽見律法上有話說，基督是永存的，你怎麼說人子必須被舉起來呢？這人子是誰呢？耶穌對他們說：光在你們中間還有不多的時候，應當趁著有光行走，免得黑暗臨到你們；那在黑暗裡行走的，不知道往何處去。你們應當趁著有光，信從這光，使你們成為光明之子。耶穌說了這話，就離開他們隱藏了。

默想：

耶穌使拉撒路復活，造成大轟動，猶太眾人都聚集要來看耶穌和復活的拉撒路。其中有幾個希臘人想見耶穌，

費盡心思，輾轉透過幾個門徒傳話才如願以償。耶穌對著這些希臘人，說了充滿哲思、深奧難懂又似非而是的話，例如：一粒麥子不死，仍舊是一粒；若是死了，就結出許多子粒來。愛惜性命的，就喪失性命；那恨惡自己在這世上的性命的，要保全永生的生命。耶穌用「一粒麥子在地裡死了」意指自己將要在十字架上犧牲受死，而祂的死將要完成上帝救贖人類的大功，到那時候，祂要吸引萬人來皈依祂，相信祂。

一粒麥子的「死」是指身體貯藏的能量釋放出來，成為養分幫助胚芽長成一棵新生的麥子，最後結出麥穗，充滿子粒；從人的角度來說，這個「死」就是向自己死，不再為自己的益處去拿取、累積，而是付出自己，去幫助別人的生命有好的改變與發展。耶穌的生命，在外表上看來，似乎是死去，已經結束了，不能再有所作為。但是祂的生命卻因為「從地上被舉起來、被釘死、被結束」才開始釋放出無窮的影響力，祂的愛改變人心，不斷擴展，直到今天仍在繼續，全世界基督徒已經超過三分之一的人口，有 24 億之多。這樣的大能的影響力是透過死亡才得到的榮耀。這就是「為生而死」這段話的真義。

禱告：

主耶穌，求祢幫助我們學習祢，用生命影響生命，生生不息，直到永生。阿們！

實踐：

你若是一粒麥子，你願意落地而死？你可以付出什麼來幫助別人？

葛美娜牧師
屋崙華人聯合衛理教會副牧師

He has made me a byword of the peoples

上帝使我成為人群中的笑談

March 24 – Saturday of the Fifth Week in Lent

Job 約伯記 17:6-16

“He has made me a byword of the peoples, and I am one before whom people spit. My eye has grown dim from grief, and all my members are like a shadow. The upright are appalled at this, and the innocent stir themselves up against the godless. Yet the righteous hold to their way, and they that have clean hands grow stronger and stronger. But you, come back now, all of you, and I shall not find a sensible person among you. My days are past, my plans are broken off, the desires of my heart. They make night into day; ‘The light,’ they say, ‘is near to the darkness.’ If I look for Sheol as my house, if I spread my couch in darkness, if I say to the Pit, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘My mother,’ or ‘My sister,’ where then is my hope? Who will see my hope? Will it go down to the bars of Sheol? Shall we descend together into the dust?”

Meditation:

When Job was desperate for help from the Lord, he knew there was nothing he could do to make things better. His spirit was down and his body was worn. His world was upside down. There are days in our lives when we are in the same shoe as Job. Life seems chaotic and unbearable. At this time, we want relief. We are not able to handle any more. It is too much for us. We cry out to the Lord. At a time like this, what can we do?

Oh, this is how Jesus felt at the time he was going to go to the cross. Agony is part of living. Pain and disappointment can crush us, or they can make us stronger.

Which way it goes depend on you. Will you cry out to the Lord? Will you hold to be righteous with clean hands so as to grow stronger? Hear the Lord calling you!

Prayer:

Lord, make me strong so that I can go through my weak moments. It is your grace which I want more of. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen

Practice:

Write down those hard moments you have had in the past 2 weeks. Offer them to the Lord, and release them into the Lord's hands. When someone hurts you, release the situation to the care of the Lord.

Rev. Mamie Ko
Shepherd of the Hills UMC
Monterey Park, CA

Your king is coming to you; humble and mounted on a donkey
你的王來到你這裡；謙和地騎着驢

March 25 – Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday)

Zechariah 撒迦利亞書 9:9-12

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter erusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Meditation:

How many times have you misplaced your keys or cell phone expecting it to be in one place but you missed it because your assumption of its location was wrong? You may have even been staring right at it and still missed it because in your mind you “knew” (incorrectly) exactly where to find your expected item. Zechariah’s prophecy told exactly how the Messiah would come—and yet, people missed him because they thought they “knew” (incorrectly, again) exactly what to expect as a Savior.

The people in Jesus’ day missed him as their Messiah and King because they were expecting a different kind of Savior. They thought that he would be a powerful political deliverer who would lead Israel to military victory over Rome. They were not looking for a lowly Savior, riding on the back of a donkey. Who could envisage a suffering Savior who offered Himself as the sacrifice for sinners? And so, tragically, they missed the coming of their King.

And, tragically, that is the same story of today: people still miss Jesus because of wrong expectations. They’re looking for a Savior to bail them out of difficult financial, relational, or health situations. Or, they expect a church to accept every social justice issue, regardless of God’s truth and grace. Many will say, “A king is acceptable so long as I am still in control and have the final say.”

Today is Palm Sunday when the church celebrates Jesus' triumphal entry not only into Jerusalem, but into our hearts. In many churches, today is also known as Passion Sunday that reflects Jesus' sufferings leading to his death and resurrection. And so, because of that chaotic time, this is precisely the kind of King that the world needs—Jesus as Lord of all people and life itself! Zechariah exhorts, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you." Some translate this verse as "Behold, your king is coming for you." If we understand who this King is and what His coming will mean for all the earth, we will rejoice greatly at the news of His coming.

A story is told of a small kingdom where a wise and good king ruled the land. He loved his people and wanted to know how they lived. He wanted to know about their hardships and often he dressed as a common working man or beggar, and went to the homes of the less fortunate. No one recognized that he was their king.

Once he visited a very poor man who lived in a cave. He ate the simple food the man shared with him and spoke encouraging words to him as he listened to the man's dreams. Days later, he visited the poor man again and revealed his true identity as the king. The king was sure that the man would now ask for a favor, but he didn't. Instead, he said, "You left your palace and your glory to visit me in this dark, damp cave. You ate the food I ate, and you brought gladness to my heart. To me, you have given yourself!"

God is willing to make any accommodation to have fellowship with us. Even becoming human. Is Jesus the King *your* King? Do you recognize him?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I choose you as Savior now—*my Savior*. Help me not to look elsewhere especially since you are standing right before me. Let my expectations be about who you are, not what I want.

Practice:

Imagine what it would be like to "rejoice greatly" and to "shout aloud" because of an amazing discovery or revelation. Now, embrace those same feelings in knowing that "your king is coming *for* you"—humbly, in triumph and victory to redeem you.

Rev. Gerald Owyang
First United Methodist Church of Orange

Behold my servant...my chosen

我的僕人……我所揀選的

3月26日・聖周一

Isaiah 以賽亞書 42：1-9

¹看哪，我的僕人我所扶持所揀選、心裡所喜悅的！我已將我的靈賜給他；他必將公理傳給外邦。²他不喧嚷，不揚聲，也不使街上聽見他的聲音。³壓傷的蘆葦，他不折斷；將殘的燈火，他不吹滅。他憑真實將公理傳開。⁴他不灰心，也不喪膽，直到他在地上設立公理；海島都等候他的訓誨。⁵創造諸天，鋪張穹蒼，將地和地所出的一併鋪開，賜氣息給地上的眾人，又賜靈性給行在其上之人的神耶和華，他如此說：⁶我耶和華憑公義召你，必攙扶你的手，保守你，使你作眾民的中保，作外邦人的光，⁷開瞎子的眼，領被囚的出牢獄，領坐黑暗的出監牢。⁸我是耶和華，這是我的名；我必不將我的榮耀歸給假神，也不將我的稱讚歸給雕刻的偶像。⁹看哪，先前的事已經成就，現在我將新事說明，這事未發以先，我就說給你們聽。

默想：

這裡所說的僕人，正是預言未來「道成肉身」的耶穌說的，因為在馬太福音第12章18-21節，作者馬太在那裡論到耶穌在地上的事工時，受聖靈的感動引用了這一段經文說：這是要應驗先知以賽亞的話。這段經文介紹耶穌身為神的僕人，在地上生活所作的一切，都不是為著滿足自己的私慾，乃是為我們作了一個好榜樣，為天父而活著，不斷的順服神的旨意，討神的喜悅。

禱告：

主耶穌我們感謝祢！祢道成肉身降世為人，甘心順服天父的旨意，為背負我們的罪而被釘死在十字架上，成就了奇妙救贖的恩典。我們感謝主，祢不單要作我們的救主，祢更是要作我們人生的主宰。我願意將自己奉獻給祢，懇求聖靈更多的光照我、塑造我、引導我、使用我，讓我成為討神喜悅的兒女，榮耀主的聖名。奉耶穌基督的名禱告，阿門！

實踐：

我們可以從中學習到：

- (1). 我們是神的僕人，神不單拯救我們作我們的救主，神更是我們生命的主宰。所以我們不要再為自己活著，乃是要為主活著。(哥林多後書 5：14-15、羅馬書 6：22、彼得前書 2:16)
- (2). 在我們的生活及服事當中，我們需要不斷的被聖靈充滿，讓聖靈時刻光照我們、塑造我們、引導我們、膏抹我們、使用我們。(使徒行傳 1：8、10：38、以弗所書 5：18、加拉太書 5：25)
- (3). 我們所作的一切，不是要顯揚自己的名聲和滿足自己的私意，乃是要遵行天父的旨意、榮耀主名、傳揚福音，成為眾人的祝福。(使徒行傳 20:24、20:33-35、哥林多前書 9:19-23、10:23-24、10:31-33、羅馬書 12:1-2)
- (4). 我們在傳福音、服事神、學習遵行主的旨意的過程中，會遇到各樣的艱難、挫折，但是我們既不灰心也不喪膽，依靠主的恩典繼續的與主同行、與主同工。(馬太福音 11:28-30、使徒行傳 9：15-16、14：22、提摩太後書 2：11-12、4：7-8)

宋秉鐳牧師
蘭卡斯特華人衛理堂

Boast...in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ

誇口……我們主耶穌基督的十字架

3月27日•聖周二

Galatians 加拉太書 6:11-18

請看我親手寫給你們的字、是何等的大呢。凡希圖外貌體面的人、都勉強你們受割禮、無非是怕自己為基督的十字架受逼迫。他們那些受割禮的、連自己也不守律法、他們願意你們受割禮、不過要藉著你們的肉體誇口。但我斷不以別的誇口、只誇我們主耶穌基督的十字架、因這十字架、就我而論、世界已經釘在十字架上、就世界而論、我已經釘在十字架上。受割禮不受割禮、都無關緊要、要緊的就是作新造的人。凡照此理而行的、願平安憐憫加給他們、和 神的以色列民。從今以後、人都不要攪擾我、因為我身上帶著耶穌的印記。弟兄們、願我主耶穌基督的恩常在你們心裡。

默想：

當父母看見自己的兒女有傑出表現時，就會樂於別人分享，分享中甚至帶著幾分對兒女的誇獎。這是很自然的一件事。

然而，使徒保羅在加六：14 說到，他斷不以別的誇口，只誇我們主耶穌的十字架。從加拉太書六：13 我們可以看出，加拉太教會裡有人想要藉著受割禮來誇口，也就是誇自己的好行為。那麼保羅為什麼只誇主的十字架呢？主的十字架有什麼獨特呢？

保羅深知主在十字架上所成就的是關乎人的今生和永恆的事。簡單的來說，主的十字架成就了兩件非凡的事；直向的木頭代表了人與神的關係得以恢復（永恆），橫向的木頭代表了人與人的關係得以修復（今生）。保羅親身經歷這十字架的大能，帶給他生命澈底的改變。他也深知

我們每一個人生命中最大的需要就是主的十字架，所以他盡心全力，忠心傳揚這福音，直到離世。

禱告：

慈悲愛我們的父，我們為了祢愛子耶穌基督在十字架所成就的一切向祢獻上感恩。願祢來幫助我們，使我們不斷思念和經歷主的大愛，樂意常常與人分享主的大愛。奉主耶穌基督的名，阿們！

實踐：

我們也同樣親身經歷了這十字架的大能，我們是否常以主耶穌的十字架誇口呢？是否樂於別人分享主的十字架呢？

陳聯明師母
愛的門聯合衛理教會
Edmond Chinese Int'l UMC

Fixed Your Eyes On Jesus 專一注目耶穌

3月28日•聖周三

Hebrews 希伯來書 12:1-3

我們既有這許多的見證人，如同雲彩圍著我們，就當放下各樣的重擔，脫去容易纏累我們的罪，存心忍耐，奔那擺在我們前頭的路程，仰望為我們信心創始成終的耶穌。他因那擺在前面的喜樂，就輕看羞辱，忍受了十字架的苦難，便坐在神寶座的右邊。那忍受罪人這樣頂撞的，你們要思想，免得疲倦灰心。

默想：

基督徒的人生是奔跑天路的人生。“那美好的仗我已經打過了，當跑的路我已經跑盡了，所信的道我已經守住了。從此以後，有公義的冠冕為我存留，就是按著公義審判的主到了那日要賜給我的；不但賜給我，也賜給凡愛慕他顯現的人”（提摩太後書 4：7-8）

希伯來書的作者告訴我們，我們需要放下重擔，靠著耶穌基督脫離纏累我們的罪。主耶穌基督為我們立下了最好的榜樣，他之所以能忍受了十字架的苦難和罪人對他的頂撞，乃是因為他有喜樂的盼望；保羅也鼓勵我們說；我們所受的不過是最輕微的苦楚，神藉此要為我們成就永遠的榮耀，因信靠耶和華而得的喜樂是我們的力量。

判斷靈性的成長不僅僅要看你信了多長時間，不僅要數算你聽了上帝多少道，也不僅在乎你知道多少；靈性的成長要從你生活上實踐上帝的話有多少來判斷。“你們必須忍耐，使你們行完了神的旨意，就可以得著所應許的。”（希伯來書 10: 36）

“忍耐生老練，老練生盼望，盼望不至於羞恥；因為所賜給我們的聖靈將神的愛澆灌在我們心裡。”（羅馬書 5：4-5）

祈禱：

主耶穌，求祢幫助我們專心信賴祢，不看自己，不看環境，單單註目耶穌，我深信那在我們心裡動了善工的必成全這工，直到耶穌基督的日子。阿們！

實踐：

為要奔跑天路，你有什麼重擔需要放下？應當如何行才能使你專心注目耶穌？在你的生活中你是否常常禱告尋求神的引導和幫助？你是否相信神能成就一切，超乎你的所求所想？

王福霞牧師
OU Wesley Chinese Fellowship

If we are faithless, he remains faithful

我們縱然失信，祂仍是可信的

3月29日・聖周四・濯足日

2 Timothy 提摩太後書 2：8-13

⁸ 你要記念耶穌基督乃是大衛的後裔，他從死裡復活，正合乎我所傳的福音。⁹ 我為這福音受苦難，甚至被捆綁，像犯人一樣。然而神的道卻不被捆綁。¹⁰ 所以我為選民凡事忍耐，叫他們也可以得著那在基督耶穌裡的救恩和永遠的榮耀。¹¹ 有可信的話說：我們若與基督同死，也必與他同活；¹² 我們若能忍耐，也必和他一同作王；我們若不認他，他也必不認我們；¹³ 我們縱然失信，他仍是可信的，因為他不能背乎自己。”

默想：

使徒保羅勸勉他屬靈的兒子提摩太，在面對逼迫和艱難的傳道工作，要在基督耶穌的恩典上剛強，又要能忍受苦難，有以下原因：

(1) 首先，因我們的信仰是在耶穌基督：

- 他是大衛的後裔 (提摩太後書 2：8) 他一方面是王，有王的權柄和主權，另一方面由於他是人，能體恤人的軟弱
- 他從死裏復活，證明他是上帝的兒子 (提摩太後書 2：8)
- 他是信實而守信的，不會違背自己 (提摩太後書 13) 我們所信仰的主是如此地寶貴，這對我們每一個在事奉主時感到沮喪的人，是很大的鼓舞！

(2) 保羅還勸勉提摩太，上帝話語是有能力的 (提摩太後書 9)。人縱使受迫害捆綁，上帝的道卻不會被捆綁，仍然被傳開 (提摩太後書 9)。上帝的話是活潑的，是有功效的 (希伯來書四：12)，能感動最頑固的

心，也能顯露人心底的罪。對上帝話語能力的信念，是我們事奉主的人一大動力!

- (3) 保羅更勸勉提摩太，我們事奉的動力，是因知道上帝救恩計劃的奇妙，以及他帶給忠心事奉的人的祝福。到那日，我們可得著永遠的榮耀 (提摩太後書 10) 這樣的信念令事奉主的人更忠心事奉!

禱告：

天父啊，感謝祢賜下祢的獨生子、我們的奇妙救主耶穌基督，以及祢不改變的話語。求祢使我們無論在什麼環境，都忠心事奉祢，不會灰心或退卻。求使我們因忠心事奉而得著榮耀的賞賜，因為祢是信實守約的上帝。奉主耶穌名求。阿們!

實踐：

願我們更努力讀主的話，更深認識耶穌基督，使我們更忠心事奉主，永不放棄!

周子森牧師
美國聯合衛理公會退休牧師

Because you have obeyed my voice

因為你聽從了我的話

3月30日・聖週五・受難節

Genesis 創世記 22:1-18

¹ 這些事以後，神要試驗亞伯拉罕，就呼叫他說：「亞伯拉罕！」他說：「我在這裡。」² 神說：「你帶著你的兒子，就是你獨生的兒子，你所愛的以撒，往摩利亞地去，在我所要指示你的山上，把他獻為燔祭。」³ 亞伯拉罕清早起來，備上驢，帶著兩個僕人和他兒子以撒，也劈好了燔祭的柴，就起身往神所指示他的地方去了。⁴ 到了第三日，亞伯拉罕舉目遠遠地看見那地方。⁵ 亞伯拉罕對他的僕人說：「你們和驢在此等候，我與童子往那裡去拜一拜，就回到你們這裡來。」⁶ 亞伯拉罕把燔祭的柴放在他兒子以撒身上，自己手裡拿著火與刀，於是二人同行。⁷ 以撒對他父親亞伯拉罕說：「父親哪！」亞伯拉罕說：「我兒，我在這裡。」以撒說：「請看，火與柴都有了，但燔祭的羊羔在哪裡呢？」⁸ 亞伯拉罕說：「我兒，神必自己預備做燔祭的羊羔。」於是二人同行。⁹ 他們到了神所指示的地方，亞伯拉罕在那裡築壇，把柴擺好，捆綁他的兒子以撒，放在壇的柴上。¹⁰ 亞伯拉罕就伸手拿刀，要殺他的兒子。¹¹ 耶和華的使者從天上呼叫他說：「亞伯拉罕！亞伯拉罕！」他說：「我在這裡。」¹² 天使說：「你不可在這童子身上下手，一點不可害他。現在我知道你是敬畏神的了，因為你沒有將你的兒子，就是你獨生的兒子，留下不給我。」¹³ 亞伯拉罕舉目觀看，不料，有一隻公羊，兩角扣在稠密的小樹中。亞伯拉罕就取了那隻公羊來，獻為燔祭，代替他的兒子。¹⁴ 亞伯拉罕給那地方起名叫耶和華以勒，直到今日人還說：「在耶和華的山上必有預備。」¹⁵ 耶和華的使者第二次從天上呼叫亞伯拉罕說：¹⁶ 「耶和華說：『你既行了這事，不留下你的兒子，就是你獨生的兒子，我便指著自己起誓說：¹⁷ 論福，我必賜大福給你；論子孫，我必叫你的子孫多起來，如同天上的星，海邊的沙；你子孫必得著仇敵的城門；¹⁸ 並且地上萬國都必因你的後裔得福，因為你聽從了我的話。』」

默想：

弟兄姊妹，亞伯拉罕被尊稱為“信心之父”，是因為他聽從上帝的話，回應祂的呼召而離開自己的家鄉，雖然不知道要到哪裡去；他被上帝稱為朋友，那是他聽從上帝的話，體貼上帝的心意。因此，上帝說，沒有什麼事需要隱瞞他的；亞伯拉罕得到外邦王亞比米勒的敬重，並與他立約，是因為他聽主的話，成為了別人的祝福；亞伯拉罕聽從上帝的話，願意把自己年老所得的獨生愛子獻給上帝，使他對上帝的信達到了巔峰。當然，上帝回應了他的信心，以羔羊代替了他的兒子，顯明上帝的慈愛與權能；亞伯拉罕被尊稱為多國之父，萬族都因他而得福，都是因為他聽從主的話，行上帝所喜悅的事，成為上帝愛世人的見證。

今天我們紀念耶穌受難的日子，我們知道是主耶穌聽從了上帝的話，順服了上帝的旨意，走上了各各他，死在十字架上，成全了上帝為人類預備的救恩，讓世人因信耶穌便罪得赦免，重獲上帝兒女的身份。歷代屬靈偉人聽從了上帝的話，用生命見證了他們的信，成就了上帝的救恩，而今天，我們呢？

撒母耳說，“...聽命勝於獻祭。順從勝於公羊的脂油。”（撒母耳記上 15：22）但願我們每個人都能聽從上帝的話。

禱告：

崇高、尊貴和榮耀的上帝，我們感謝祢，讓我們看見亞伯拉罕的因著信，聽從祢的話，遵行祢的旨意，成了祢祝福世人的管道；也看見主耶穌順服祢的旨意，降世為人，卑微地活在我們中間，祢聽從祢的話，背負了世人的罪孽，為我們被釘死在十字架上.....，主啊，如今我們也願意聽從祢的話，遵行祢的旨意，以我們的生命來榮耀祢。奉主耶穌基督的名祈禱，阿們！

實踐：

求主的靈感動我們，借著我們的祈禱，我們能夠明白聖經-神的話語，並在生活中遵從上帝的教導，聽從祂的話，行祂喜悅的事，以此榮耀神並成為眾人的祝福。

楊東龍 牧師
紐約法拉盛華人聯合衛理公會

Order the tomb to be made secure until the third day

吩咐人將坟墓把守妥當，直到第三天

March 31 – Holy Saturday

Matthew 馬太福音 27:57-66

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. ⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, ‘Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, “After three days I will rise again.” ⁶⁴ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, “He has been raised from the dead”, and the last deception would be worse than the first.’ ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.’ ⁶⁶ So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

Meditation:

Today’s passage is one that is often overlooked in the Holy Week narrative. We experience the injustice Jesus’ trial. We imagine the pain he felt as he was crucified with nails and a crown of thorns upon his head. We quickly turn our focus to the discovery of the empty tomb. We joyfully celebrate his resurrection.

But let us not forget those few days between his death and the empty tomb. This short time is important because it reminds us of God’s providence in the world. God’s providence is His divine hand that directs everything that happens. God cooperates with both good and evil deeds as they guide His creation towards His will.

Jesus often spoke to his disciples about his death and resurrection. For example: Matthew 16:21 (Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised) and Matthew 17:22-23a (Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised”).

We see that Jesus foretold of his death and resurrection, but at the time of his death, the disciples’ pain numbed them so greatly that they did not prepare his body for burial. Instead, it was another disciple of Jesus named Joseph who

acted. Joseph wanted to show his devotion and respect. So he received permission to place the body in his own tomb.

We know that the chief priests and Pharisees were still fearful of Jesus' words of his resurrection so they ordered the tomb to be sealed and placed guards before it. The paralyzed actions of the 11 disciples, the good actions of Joseph, and evil actions of the church leaders are important because it makes the resurrection story so much more powerful. Everyone knew the exact tomb Jesus was placed in; that it was sealed by a large stone, and was guarded by soldiers. God's providence was at hand as He let all involved act as faithful believers or evil sinners. All took part in the preparation for the miracle of Jesus' resurrection.

As we prepare to celebrate Easter Sunday, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Think about how God's providence has worked in your life. There have been joyful times, times when you have been numb with doubt, and even times when you have done wrong. Know that these are all a part of God's divine presence in your life. He is always directing your life to His will. Be thankful to Him for your blessings, ask Him for forgiveness of your sins, and remain faithful to Him always.

Prayer:

Loving God. We are so thankful for your divine providence in the world. Just as your hand was guiding the days between Jesus' death and resurrection, we are comforted to know that your hand still directs our own lives. We humbly submit to your will. Use us as instruments of your peace so that we may bring the good news to the world and share your love and mercy made possible through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Practice

Pray three times daily.

-In the morning- lift up your joys to the Lord- be thankful for the breath of life He has given you and the blessings He has surrounded you with.

-In the afternoon- be honest about the times that you have done wrong and failed. Be honest about these times and offer them all up to God as you seek His forgiveness.

-Pray before you go to sleep. Take time to share with the Lord how you will pass on your blessings to others; how you will be more faithful because of His forgiveness; and how your life is complete because of His divine providence.

Rev. Eva Chi Than Thai-Erwin
Chinese United Methodist Church
Los Angeles Chinatown

You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has risen 你們尋找那釘十字架的拿撒勒人耶穌，祂已經復活了

4月1日・復活節・主日

Mark 馬可福音 16：1-8

¹過了安息日，抹大拉的馬利亞和雅各的母親馬利亞並撒羅米，買了香膏要去膏耶穌的身體。
²七日的第一日清早，出太陽的時候，他們來到墳墓那裡，³彼此說：誰給我們把石頭從墓門輾開呢？⁴那石頭原來很大，他們抬頭一看，卻見石頭已經輾開了。⁵他們進了墳墓，看見一個少年人坐在右邊，穿著白袍，就甚驚恐。⁶那少年人對他們說：不要驚恐！你們尋找那釘十字架的拿撒勒人耶穌，他已經復活了，不在這裡。請看安放他的地方。⁷你們可以去告訴他的門徒和彼得，說：他在你們以先往加利利去。在那裡你們要見他，正如他從前所告訴你們的。⁸他們就出來，從墳墓那裡逃跑，又發抖又驚奇甚麼也不告訴人，因為他們害怕。

默想：

她們來到墳墓那裡就說：『誰給我們把石頭從墓門輾開呢？』這是壓在他們心中的一個大問題。好像是沒答案的問題。當『他們抬頭一看，卻見石頭已經輾開了』只要抬頭一看問題就解決了，石頭就輾開了。

解經家一般都認為『少年人』是天使。對他們說：不要驚恐！為什麼？因為『他已經復活了』，如果你我聽到這天使的宣告將會有何種反應？聖經說他們『從墳墓那裡逃跑，又發抖又驚奇甚麼不告訴人，因為他們害怕』。怎麼會有這消極負面的回應？他們應該大聲頌讚神之聖名和高唱哈利路亞才對。但聖經說他們『逃跑』、『驚恐』、『發

抖』和『害怕』，請問你我在這主復活之佳節是否也落在負面的反應嗎？只是慶祝一個教會節日。

『祂已經復活了』該是失望中的盼望，無助中的幫助，迷失中的方向，無能中的力量，病痛中的醫治，死亡中的生命才對呀！

『去告訴他的門徒和彼得』在主耶穌受難時刻彼得三次否認主，傷心哭泣，後悔不及。在這句經文提到彼得名字其意非常之重要。神伸出雙手重新建造彼得的心志使他成為最偉大的使徒。是的，多少次我們在人群中，在家中，在辦公室裡，甚至在教會裡也曾多次否認主。復活主絕絕對對不因我們過失及軟弱放棄我們。『在那裡你們要見祂』。要見到從死裡復活的祂。當我們最無助時，能看見復活的主所帶來給我們的是何等大的祝福與動力。

禱告：

親愛的主耶穌，我感謝，祢常與我同在，並活在我心中使我能在軟弱中得勝，在黑暗中得祢的光照，在痛苦中得祢的安慰。求主復活的大能繼續與我同在，使我能活出更豐盛的生活。阿門！

實踐：

反省今天的復活節。是否帶給來「活」的新希望，「活」的事奉動力，「活」的豐盛生命。如果你真正享受到了復活節的祝福請向你的家人和朋友分享。如果沒有，請禱告神幫助你更盡力追求更豐盛活潑的生命。

張舉輝牧師
美國衛理公會退休牧師

