

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL



LENTEN PROGRAM

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World Mission Initiative

Zeitah Excavations

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LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 30, 2018

SCRIPTURE

1 PETER 1:10-20

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, 11 inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look! 13 Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. 14 Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. 15 Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” 17 If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. 18 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. 20 He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake.

DEVOTIONAL

Written by Dr. Tucker Ferda, PTS Visiting Assistant Professor of New Testament

When you consider that 1 Peter was written to Gentiles who had little to no former contact with Judaism, the claims of this text are remarkable. The passage seeks to graft these Gentiles into God’s covenant with Israel and challenges them to live within the mantra of the Holiness Code in Leviticus: “Be Holy, as I am Holy.” Moreover, it offers a new perspective of time and value for persons seemingly marginalized and persecuted by their contemporaries. They are to see that they actually live at the dawn of the end of the age and that, as Christ “ransomed” them with his very life, they have unsurpassable worth in the eyes of God.

In short, to consider what God had done in Jesus Christ meant that this community had to tell itself a new story about its past, its present, and its future. Today, Good Friday, we are called to a similar reorientation. The Christian claim is that the cross, far from being the failure of Jesus’ message, is actually the moment in which we see most clearly the heart of God. How does that change the stories we tell ourselves? Are we open to see the cross as our *axis mundi*—the center around which time, value, and purpose rotate and depend? To re-center around the cross will look different for different people, and we trust the action of the Holy Spirit among us for this good work. For those our world labels outsiders, or for those who feel uncertain of their worth, the cross may tell a story of true belonging, while for those who stand at the center of what our society adores and privileges may be invited to “lose their life” so that they may truly “find it.”

In verse 13 we find a marvelous image for this process. “Therefore”—in the light of what God has done—“gird up the loins of your understanding.” In other words, prepare for your understanding to move to a new place. Expect to travel. Our prayer today should be that, as we ponder the cross, we may find that our typical, status-quo “understanding” of priority, value, worth, and the purpose of life may be moved closer to the self-emptying love of God in Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

Lord, our text reminds us that we have been “ransomed” from a former way of life. Our text reminds us that we live at the dawn of the new age declared by the prophets. But we too often live in the old age. Forgive our tardiness. Create in us that love you showed us on the cross. Break our hearts of stone with this love, and write it on new hearts of flesh that ache with the pains of our world. Move us to actions that mirror and embody the character of Christ. Amen.

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
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