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2020
MY GREAT LENT
SCRIPTURE READINGS &
MEDITATIONS

WEEK 4
MARCH 15 - 21, 2020

Orthodox Outreach Ministry

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FOREWORD

Dear friend in Christ,

The ‘2020 My Great Lent Scripture Readings and Meditations’ is a convenient booklet containing the scripture readings during the Lenten season according to the lectionary tradition of the Syriac Orthodox Church.

As Orthodox Christians, along with the continuous participation in the Holy Eucharist, spiritual nourishment through prayers, scripture reading, and personal meditation are essential for our growth towards Christ our God.

This booklet is set with two readings per day, and a brief introduction to the special days and Sundays of lent, along with a few prompts for meditation. This may also be used as supplementary material for the “My Great Lent Calendar 2020”.

We pray that this booklet will help in your Lenten journey and prepares you for a great transformation to partake in the joyous feast of the resurrection of our Lord. We also hope that you will open your heart to the Word of God and allow Him to guide, strengthen, and assist you in all things you do.

May the almighty God make us all worthy to praise His Holy Name, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, one true God, all through the days of our life, and forever. Amen!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Renjan Mathew
St. Ignatious English Chapel
Dallas, TX

Aneede Sunday
(Sunday of the commemoration of the departed faithful)
February 16, 2020

Sunday, March 15, 2020

CNANAITHO SUNDAY

(HEALING THE DAUGHTER OF THE CANAANITE WOMAN)

Thought for the day!

A Canaanite woman asking Jesus to heal her daughter, but Jesus kept silent at her prayer. She kept on asking and Jesus said, His first mission is to preach to Israel “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She responded saying, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Jesus was touched and amazed by the faith of the Canaanite woman and her daughter was instantly healed.

We must keep on asking and trusting God despite everything is against us. Jesus came for not just for us but for the salvation, healing, and liberation of the whole creation.

The physical and practical nature of Jesus’ ministry is remarkable. Not only does he teach deep truths, but he also heals people who are sick or disabled and take time to feed a crowd of hungry people.

In what ways can we minister to the people in need: caring for the “whole person”, as Jesus did?

To whom might we reach out today, this week?

Sunday, March 15, 2020

Morning: Matthew 15:21-31

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” ²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶ He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.²⁹ After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. ³⁰ Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, ³¹ so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

When you deal with the needy people or “outsiders”, are you more like the disciples or Jesus? Why?

What attitude change you need to have to share the love and healing of God to the whole creation?

God’s love has no limits, is this story contradicts with this understanding?

Jesus came and died for all or only for those who believe in Him, what do you think?

Monday, March 16, 2020

Morning: Mark 12: 35– 44

While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Messiah[a] is the son of David? 36 David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.’”

37 David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?” And the large crowd was listening to him with delight. 38 As he taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39 and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! 40 They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

41 He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. 43 Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44 For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Read vs 38-40: if you were a religious leader at the time of Jesus, how would you have felt?

What qualities today’s religious leaders need?

What kind of faith the widow had so that she gave away all she had to God?

How does the way you give (your financial offerings, the money you share with the needy, share to the ministers of Lord etc.) reflect your faith?

Monday, March 16, 2020

Evening: Matthew 20: 1-16

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

If you were one of the first workers hired, how would you have reacted to the landlord?

What does this parable say to you about the Kingdom of God (KOG)?

What attitude change might help you to understand the KOG?

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Morning: Matthew 11:25-12:8

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸ “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ² When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath.” ³ He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests. ⁵ Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? ⁶ I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸ For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”

Vs. 28, Come to me...I will give you rest; who all are being invited by the Lord?

Is this invitation for us or for the underprivileged, marginalized, refugees, poor, and oppressed?

In what way Jesus comforts us? In what way Jesus comforts the poor and oppressed?

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Evening: Matthew 17:22-27

22 As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, 23 and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised.” And they were greatly distressed.

24 When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?” 25 He said, “Yes, he does.” And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?” 26 When Peter said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the children are free. 27 However, so that we do not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me.”

What lesson was Jesus teaching Peter by paying the tax?
Which freedoms do you enjoy most as a Christian?

Wednesday, March 18, 2020

MID-LENT

Morning/ Evening: John 7:14-15, 3:13-21

¹⁴ About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. ¹⁵ The Jews were astonished at it, saying, “How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?”

¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life: what does this verse mean to you?

What do you mean by eternal life?

Are you a lover of light or darkness? Why?

Do you have the light of God?

Thursday, March 19, 2020

Morning: Matthew 19:16-26

¹⁶ Then someone came to him and said, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” ¹⁷ And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸ He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁰ The young man said to him, “I have kept all these; what do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” ²² When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”

What appears to be this young man’s view on how to obtain one obtain eternal life?

What all differences you could see in this young man’s concern (eternal life) and Jesus’ concern (life)?

Which commandment Jesus added to the original ten?

Why is it so difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom?

On what basis is it possible for the rich or poor, to enter the kingdom (vs. 26-30)

Thursday, March 19, 2020

Evening: Luke 15:11-32

Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and

asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ ³¹ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

How is the parable of the lost son important in the observation of Great lent?

Of the two brothers, which one reminds of you? Why?

Spiritually which brother reminds of your spiritual journey?

If you had to go to one of the two brothers, what a deep personal problem, who would you choose? Why?

Friday, March 20, 2020

Morning: Luke 17: 1 -10

Jesus said to his disciples, “Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! ² It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble. ³ Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. ⁴ And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive.”

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ⁶ The Lord replied, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

⁷ “Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, ‘Come here at once and take your place at the table’? ⁸ Would you not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink’? ⁹ Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’”

Faith like the size of mustard seed: what does it mean to you?
Read verse 3 again, how will you be able to practice this?
“Increase the faith!” in what all ways you can increase your faith?

Friday, March 20, 2020

Evening: Mark 3:31-35

³¹ Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters[a] are outside, asking for you.” ³³ And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴ And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

In what all ways you can be the mother and brother and sister to Jesus?

Doing the will of God, what does that mean to you?

How can you do God’s will in your daily life? In what all ways?

Saturday, March 21, 2020

Morning: Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” ²⁷ He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” ³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

What may be some reasons the priest and Levite didn't stop to help the hurt man?

How does this parable answer the question, “who is my neighbor”?

How can you be the Good Samaritan to someone in need?

What all are in your way that blocks the virtue of being the Good Samaritan to people in need? How can you overcome the blocks?

Saturday, March 20, 2020

Evening: Luke 7:11-17

¹¹ Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. ¹² As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴ Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶ Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favorably on his people!" ¹⁷ This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

Why did Jesus perform this sign in Nain?

What did he reveal about himself?

What impact did Jesus have on others?

Don't cry" have you ever felt like Jesus telling you this?

What situations in your life you felt the need of God telling you "don't cry"?

Source of References

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2. Lectionary of the Syrian Orthodox Church (1995), Syrian Orthodox Bible Society of India
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