

### **Friday, Mark 8:34-35**

Jesus does not seem to know how to attract people. Deny myself? Take up my cross? What does he mean? The fundamental struggle we face is connected to the necessity of self-denial. Denying myself is about putting God's agenda ahead of my agenda. This is what Jesus did on the cross. He would have gladly chosen another path for his life, but he accepted that the Father called him to give up his life. This is the way of the cross that we are called to follow. Today you will have choices. As you consider what you will do, choose the way of the cross. It's the only way we can follow Jesus.

*Prayer: Merciful God, forgive me for choosing my own way time and time again. Give me the courage and the desire to choose the way of the cross. Your way is the way that leads to life. Amen.*

### **Saturday, Genesis 15:1-5**

When are you most afraid? When trouble shows up, fear often comes along for the ride. In Genesis 12, God called Abram to leave his country, his people and his father's house and go to a land he had never seen before. By Genesis 15, Abram had not yet arrived in the land. Between Genesis 12 and Genesis 15, Abram endured a famine, a jealous king, and kidnappers. In Genesis 15, God comes back to Abram to remind him of the promise and to tell him not to be afraid. God knows that the journey seems long to us. Abram faced many setbacks, but none of them kept him from the promise of God. Just as God told Abram to look up at the stars as confirmation of the promise, maybe you need to lift up your head and look for the signs that God is with you. Do not be afraid.

*Prayer: Faithful God, I confess that sometimes I am afraid. Speak a word to me to remind me that nothing can separate me from your love. I bless your holy name today because your word will not return unfulfilled. Amen.*

Lent 2019: *Being Transformed - Daily Devotions*  
Rev. Prince R. Rivers

### **March 31 – April 6, “Strength for the Struggle”**

#### **Sunday, Psalm 22:1-5**

To whom do you complain? To your friends? To your family? Psalm 22 is a lament, which means it is a complaint to God. David cries out and asks God why God has forsaken him. This may sound absurd, because we always say that God never forsakes us. But this is honestly how David felt. This is even how Jesus felt on the cross, which is why he quoted Psalm 22:1 while being crucified. If you have ever felt like you could not find God, you are not alone. And if you keep reading, you will also notice that trusting God is still the best choice. This psalm is both a complaint and a reminder. “Yet you (God) are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises.” Many people who came before us put their trust in God, and David says they were not put to shame.

*Prayer: Holy One, thank you for accepting my honest emotions when I pray. You are neither angry or offended by my authenticity. Lead me through this day and give me rest for tonight so that I may trust you all the days of my life. Amen.*

#### **Monday, Acts 4:8-20**

When we are in trouble of any kind, we can easily forget who is in charge of our life. This is one of the first faith lessons Peter learned in Acts. After Peter and John healed a man (Acts 3), religious leaders brought the disciples in for questioning. When the debate was over, the leaders told Peter and John to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. Filled with courage (v.13), Peter said he would not be able to comply with their orders because they were not in charge of his life. He took orders from God. The next time you are

tempted to think that someone or something is in charge of your life, remember that you are a child of God. No sickness, setback or suffering has the last word or tells you what to do. God is in charge, so keep listening to God.

*Prayer: Mighty God, Ruler of heaven and earth, give me the courage I need for this season of life. Help me to look only to you for direction and wisdom. Be the strength of my life now and always. Amen.*

### **Tuesday, 2 Timothy 4:9-18**

Relationships are what make life special. Yet, because of our imperfection as human beings, our relationships do not always endure. Friendships we once cherished can become strained. Paul gives Timothy a list of people who are no longer with him. Demas deserted him. Crescens and Titus have gone to other places to do ministry. Only Luke remained with him. Perhaps you have experienced broken friendships and relationships. If someone wronged you, you do not need to seek revenge. Paul was confident that God would take care of the injustices against him. He also had faith that even if no human being came to his aid, God was standing by his side, giving him strength. Cherish every relationship, and then give thanks that when people disappoint us (or we disappoint them), God is always faithful.

*Prayer: Lord, you promised never to leave me, and never to forsake me. Over and over you have kept this promise. Thank you for always being near to me, standing by my side, giving me strength. With you, Lord, I am never alone. Amen.*

### **Wednesday, John 11:17-26**

One of the most challenging questions we ask as human beings is “why”. When my father was diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease, I wanted to know why. When bad things happen to good people it is

only natural to ask why. Even Martha and Mary wanted to ask Jesus the same question when their brother died. Martha told Jesus if he had arrived sooner, Lazarus would not have died. The truth is we do not always know why things happen. Jesus only promises he is the One to bring us through whatever happens. He told Martha, “Your brother will rise again.” When she said she knew Lazarus would live again in the resurrection at the last day, Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and life.” He is the One. Today, see if you can put aside the question of why. Through faith embrace the Living God who is calling you to believe that he is your best hope. *Do you believe this?*

*Prayer: Hear me, God, when I cry out to you. Sometimes all I have are questions. Help me to believe that your presence is greater than any answer I seek. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.*

### **Thursday, Psalm 91**

Travel to different parts of the country and you will see that buildings in one place can look very different from buildings in another place. Architects design structures to withstand the unique natural elements of each environment—heavy snow, earthquakes, hurricanes. In the right building, the occupants of the building will be safe under the worst conditions. This is the message behind Psalm 91. We must choose a dwelling place in life. Whoever dwells in God will be kept safe. To dwell in God means to trust in God, and to stay attentive to God’s direction. Storms will come. Let God be your refuge. Just as a hen covers her chicks with her wings, God will cover you. God will be your shield, to guard you against the arrows. There is no better place to live than in the presence of God.

*Prayer: Loving God, I praise you for the invitation to come into your presence. I need you to be my refuge and my strength. Nothing and no one else is strong enough to keep me. You are my God, and I am your servant. Amen.*