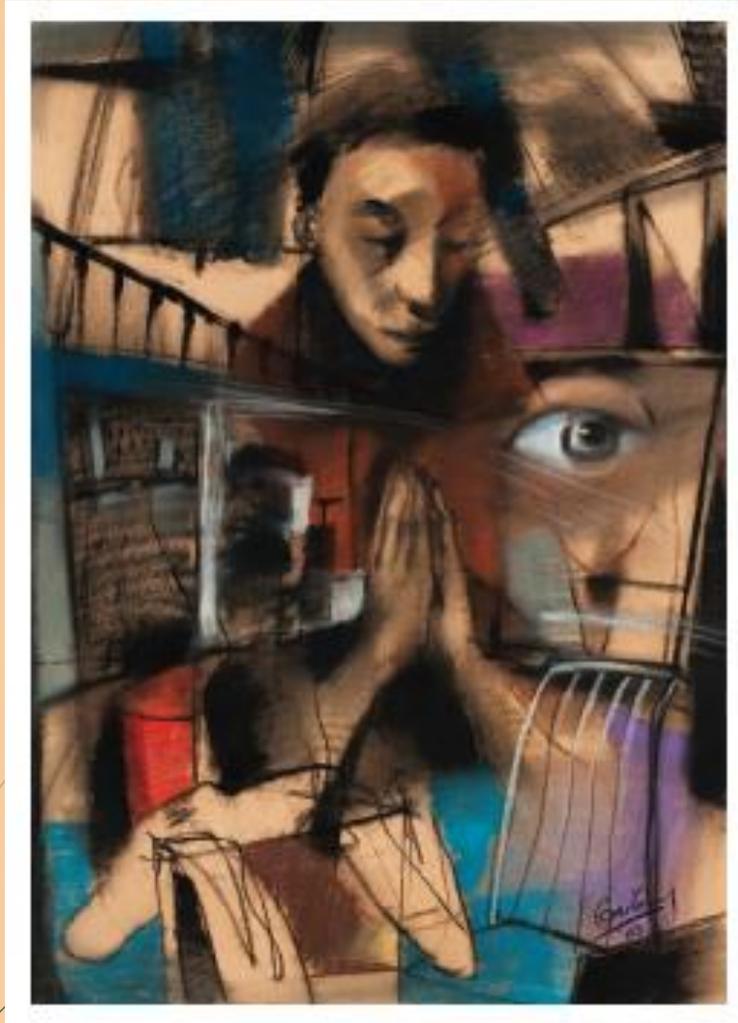


Lenten Prayer Guide



Dalanglin by Emmanuel Gariba

Six weeks of reflective prayers written by pastors, Serve Globally partners and personnel from around the world that encourages and challenges the church to live missionally.

Week 1

Scripture Reflection: 1 Peter 3:18-22

The lack of potable water in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) constitutes a major challenge for the Congolese. Over 60% of the population does not have access to potable water, and children die everyday from diseases that originate with water.

Lord, you are the true potable water. During this season of Lent, we pray that Christ who is the true potable water would visit the DRC. We pray that the true potable water would visit the government, households, and churches to bring a peaceful life to this vulnerable population.

The absence of Christ in our life is similar to a person who drinks non-potable water-the consequences of death. May this period of Lent bring new life to Congo. May the Lord be in each of us. May the thirst for Christ in our lives as we thirst for water each day. Amen.

-- Rev. Etienne Mbewa, Communate Evagelique de l'Ubangi- Mongala- or the Covenant Church in Congo

Week 2

Scripture Reflection: Mark 8:31-38

Raheem aur kareem Khuda (Gracious and Compassionate God),

We enter into your presence seeking forgiveness for choosing easy ways rather than the ways of the cross. Forgive us for our complacency and slackness in not acknowledging your valuable sacrifice on the cross. It is often more difficult for us to think of a Messiah dying on the cross than a victorious Messiah.

We have lived for ourselves, our well-being, and our family instead of denying ourselves and taking up our cross to follow you. Lord, you endured immense agony, pain, suffering, torture and heartbreak on the way to cross, but you decided to drink the cup of misery, grief, sorrow, gloom, and sin on our behalf.

Yeshu Masih (Jesus Christ) we have received eternal life through your sacrifice, but we often try to protect our lives by trusting in our own resources and self. We have often failed to reflect the power of eternal life over death although you have reminded us that you are the resurrection and life. Help us to follow you on life's narrow path by denying ourselves and taking up our cross. Help us not be ashamed of the dying Messiah, who has power over eternal life, which you promised to all those who trust in you. Amen!

--Rev. Shekhar Singh, Hindustani Covenant Church, India

Week 3

Scripture Reflection: John 2:13-22

God of Justice and Peace,

You are an almighty being. You are an invincible being. You are an emotional being. There is nothing that resembles evil that you do not hate. You love those who are so prone to evil, but you will never let us be slaves to it. You have made a way where there was no way and crowned us with dignity as your beloved children. Let us never ever submit to passivity.

Teach us how to feel an innate wrath towards darkness. Gift us with the weapons of light so that we can fight evil with good. As you overturn our capitalistic habits, show us how to stand up for love by disrupting the soul-demolishing intentions that we have disguised under our daily, mundane activities.

Gentleness has its place, but so does rage. You do not sit and watch while your children harm themselves. You are not a subdued being. Your love is so forcefully abundant that the antithesis of it is despair. Help us to see you and to feel the heart that loves so rigorously that it scares us out of our blindness.

You are our only hope. You are our only strength. Through you we can do all things. Let this be a reminder to us as we frequently seek assistance from empty places. Teach us to listen to you as we react confidently in defiance to the corruption of Justice.

--Pastor Sherin Ali, Associate Pastor, Rivercity Community Covenant Church, Chicago

Week 4

Scripture Reflection: Ephesians 2:1-10

Loving God,

We humbly come before you today, recognizing our sinfulness and our need for you. We remember that we were dead in our sins. We listened to everyone but you. We wanted control. We wanted to do “lo que nos daba la gana” (whatever we wanted). But it was a dead end, and in humility we realized how much we need you. Only you can save us from ourselves. Only you can take what is wrong and make it right. Only you can see us in our worst moments and choose to love us and redeem us.

Your love cannot be earned but is a gift that we gladly receive. You invite us to identify with you, to find ourselves in you. We have to be honest; it is not always easy to say “no” to self. And often we fall back into the selfish patterns of putting ourselves before you, before others. We let hate sow seeds of division and forget that we are all in need of your grace. We neglect to care for your creation, polluting rivers and the air we breathe, putting economic gain first.

Oh Lord, in your love and mercy, draw us to yourself. Forgive us of our sins and make us alive in Christ. May our lives be testimonies of life and not death. Remind us of the good kingdom works that you have called us to and help us this day to live humble, grateful lives in service to you. --**Katie and Julio Isaza, Serve Globally personnel serving in Colombia**

Week 5

Scripture Reflection: John 12:20-33

Dear Jesus,

In the Gospel we read stories of how many people came looking for you and wanted to meet you. They came in the middle of the night. They came because they knew someone who knew someone who knew you. It is the same today. People still come looking for you—you who said we have to give everything up and die to ourselves. Jesus, how you challenge us! Is this possible for a human who loves self, who serves self, who does everything in live to care for self? You ask us to do this, because this is what you did, Jesus, Lord of the Harvest.

When there is a harvest of souls, there has to be a dying to self. Even as your soul was troubled, and you cried out to the Father to save you, you became the kernel of wheat that died so that others might live. Hallelujah! May we give up our lives in sacrifice to you, because we have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Thank you for not denying the very reason for which you came, Jesus. May we follow that same example. -- **Barbara Swanson, Serve Globally personnel serving in Sweden**

Week 6

Scripture Reflection: Matthew 21:1-11

Okay, Lord, we are beginning now to see you for who you are.

Centuries ago in Palestine you used a colt, a donkey never ridden before. You instructed your followers to say, “the Lord needs it.” They needed to see the truth of who you are. They needed to see you with a clarity that builds toward wonder and worship—not palm-branch-waving celebration but I-surrender-all worship.

Although it is centuries later, we need to see that same stunning parade. We need to see you for who you are. We need to see you there, the righteous victor on a humble route past mobs of misunderstanding celebrants warming up to shout, “crucify him,” days later.

We need to see kingly, self-sacrificial, death-inviting compassion. We need it because we have become distracted by our choices during this Lenten season. We have hoped that some might see or hear what we have given up this Lenten season. We are embarrassed to admit it, but we have hoped for a little Lenten credit for my Lenten denials.

Permit us, Lord, to see the reality of who you are and whose we are.

--Mark Seversen, Director of Missional Congregations, Serve Globally

Throughout the season of lent:

Lent is a time to continue preparing and transforming ourselves for God’s Kingdom, which is now but not yet. Mission disciplines us through mutual transformation. It requires us to undergo transformation as we seek to partner in transformation of the world and all that is in it to pursue God’s shalom.

Consider how you, both as an individual and as a community, can intentionally ACT, PRAY, LEARN and GIVE in ways that pursue God’s whole mission across cultures and around the world.