



BE Still With Jesus

a BEloved series retreat | lent | feb 21

join us to cultivate prACTices of prayer,
belonging & becoming in EVERYday life



A
BEloved
Retreat
Guide
for
You

✨ Choose Your Own Adventure

BE STILL. BE WITH Jesus

This is a *choose-your-own-ADVENTure* moment—an invitation to receive whatever meets your spirit right now and to let Jesus gently guide you deeper into His presence.

You'll receive an **Lenten Retreat Guide** with prayerful nudges, scriptures, and simple practices. Use what draws you. Release the rest.

🌿 Choose What Calls to You

WALK

A gentle, prayerful stroll

→ 4 blocks east to the Montview Pres labyrinth

→ Or wander into City Park—an easy walk to the edge of the lake and back

REST + RECEIVE

Plop right down. Find a cozy spot in front of the fireplace. Journal, read, pray; simply *be*. Be nourished by food and drink in the kitchen (let Sarah know if you need anything).

COMMUNAL CREATING DURING AFTERNOON SESH

Paint in the dining room—guided by our sistah Kat. (Especially if you don't feel creative!)

SOFT CONVERSATION

If you're drawn to gentle, soulful conversation, head to the little secret room in the basement workout space.

🕊️ Gentle Logistics (So You Can Fully Let Go)

- **Bathrooms:** Available on 1st floor, basement
- **Phones:** Optional invitation to text your people now to say you'll be back after 2:00 PM, then place your phone in the basket

Request: *Sacred quiet* during this retreat (no talking; whispers only if needed)

🔔 Returning Together

A bell will gently chime when it's time to begin returning—use those moments to stretch, use the bathroom, grab food, and re-gather **in silence**.

Beloved is Where We Begin

If you would enter
into the wilderness,
do not begin
without a blessing.

Do not leave
without hearing
who you are:
Beloved,
named by the One
who has traveled this path
before you.

Do not go
without letting it echo
in your ears,
and if you find
it is hard
to let it into your heart,
do not despair.
That is what
this journey is for.

I cannot promise
this blessing will free you
from danger,
from fear,
from hunger
or thirst,
from the scorching
of sun
or the fall
of the night.

But I can tell you
that on this path
there will be help.

I can tell you
that on this way
there will be rest.

I can tell you
that you will know
the strange graces
that come to our aid
only on a road
such as this,
that fly to meet us
bearing comfort
and strength,
that come alongside us
for no other cause
than to lean themselves
toward our ear
and with their
curious insistence
whisper our name:

Beloved.

Beloved.

Beloved.

-Jan Richardson
from Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings
for the Seasons

Reflection Questions for PrayerFULL Pondering

Read again Jan's poem, above: *Beloved is Where We Begin*.

When you hear the word "Beloved" spoken over you, what rises up first — resistance, longing, gratitude, doubt, peace? Why? What's this about? Be, and Breathe, and notice.

What "wilderness" are you currently walking into or through in this season of your life?

What would it look like for you to not begin without a blessing in this wilderness?

Whose voice most shapes your identity right now? Is it truly the One who calls you "Beloved"?

*Why do you think it can be hard to let the word *Beloved* move from your ears into your heart?*

Where in your life are you expecting God to remove danger or discomfort — instead of accompany you through it?

Can you recall a time when "strange graces" met you on a hard road — unexpected comfort, provision, strength, or companionship?

What forms of help and rest might already be present around you — right here and now — that you have not yet recognized?

If God were to lean toward your ear today and whisper your name, what might He be wanting you to remember? What do you think He would say?

*How would your posture toward this Lenten journey shift if you began — and returned daily — to the truth: **Beloved is where we begin?***

Would it Feel GOOD to “Relax Your Bow”?

Considered the “Father of All Monks”, one of the most well-known “Desert Fathers” was known as Anthony the Great, or Anthony of the Desert.

His story is very special - you can read more about it in this devotional:

<https://lectio365.com> (February 19)

One day a hunter in the desert was shocked to see the great holy man relaxing and laughing with his fellow monks. Noticing this, Anthony said to the hunter:

“Put an arrow in your bow and shoot it.” So he did. The old man then said, “Shoot another,” and he did so. Then the old man said, “Shoot yet again,” and the hunter replied, “If I bend my bow so much I will break it.” Then the old man said to him, “It is the same with the work of God. If we stretch the brethren beyond measure they will soon break.”

Is there any way in which I – like that hunter’s bow – might be overstretched or even close to breaking right now? Am I exhausted? Do the rigorous prospects of Lent [or LIFE!] seem overly onerous?

Sometimes the hardest word to hear God say is not “repent” but “relax”!

-Excerpt from Lectio 365

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion?” Jesus asks.

‘Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life...

Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.

I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you.

Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

-Matthew 11:28-30

The Holy Work of Letting Go

-Excerpt from Lectio 365 | Ash Wednesday (February 18)

I choose to rejoice in God's extravagant mercy today, joining with the ancient praise of all God's people in the wonderful words of Psalm 103...

*He does not punish us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.*

*For his unfailing love toward those who fear him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.*

*He has removed our sins as far from us
as the east is from the west.*

*The LORD is like a father to his children,
tender and compassionate to those who fear him.*

*For he knows how weak we are;
he remembers we are only dust.* - Psalm 103:10–14 (NLT)

I pause now to examine my heart, using the prayer of David in Psalm 139:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.* - Psalm 139:23–24 (NLT)

I pray slowly through these verses now, starting with just its first few words...

"Search me, O God, and know my heart..." (v.23a)

Holy Spirit, I barely know myself but you understand me completely. I do know that my motives are mostly mixed, my faith is frequently fragile, and my mind is sometimes a mess. Please *"teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name"* (Psalm 86:11, NIVUK).

Continuing with the second line, I pray...

"...test me and know my anxious thoughts." (v.23b)

Lord, it's true that I get *"worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed"* (Luke 10:41). You've told me again and again not to be anxious about anything, but instead to pray, promising that, if I do so, your peace will guard my heart and mind in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7). And so today, I choose again to cast all my anxiety on you, and to trust you Lord, because I know you care for me (1 Peter 5:7).

Moving onto the next line of David's prayer, I ask the Lord to:

"Point out anything in me that offends you..." (v.24a)

Yes, Lord, on this day, remembering your cross, would you point out anything in me that offends you. Spotlight the thoughts, words, or deeds in the shadows of my heart. Holy Spirit, work in me this Lent to make me holy, even as you are holy. (Leviticus 11:44).

And finally I pray -

"... and lead me along the path of everlasting life." (v.24b)

Lord, bestow upon me today *"a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair."* (Isaiah 61:3 NIVUK) Lead me towards the life that lies beyond death, the joy that rises beyond the cross, and the feasting that awaits me on the other side of this season of fasting.

Reflection Prompts

- What do You want me to know as I enter Lent?
- What do You want me to do?
- Is there something You are inviting me to surrender at the very beginning of this season?
- Is there something You are inviting me to repent of — not in shame, but in freedom?
- What feels heavy, hidden, or not fully free that You are asking me to lay down?

If something surfaces...

- Feel free to write it on a Post-it (fold it up if you'd like it to remain private), and take it to the cross in the backyard.
- You are invited to physically pound it into the cross — a simple, embodied way of surrendering it to Jesus.
- What goes on the cross stays on the cross.

Three Ways You Might Journey Through Lent This Year

Lent doesn't have to be overwhelming. It can be intentional and simple. Here are three possible paths — prayerfully consider which one (if any!) might be yours. (Some of these resources are in the Seeds Lent Toolkit, which you'll receive on Monday; see sample.)

{1} The Prayer Path — *Deepening Intimacy*

For those longing to draw closer to Jesus in daily rhythm.

- Commit to daily prayer using Lectio 365 (morning, noon, night).
- Walk through a 40-day devotional (Reflecting Easter, Loved to Life, or another companion).
- Set aside 20–30 minutes of quiet stillness each day.
- Join us weekly for Seeds prayer gatherings.

This path is about slowing down. Listening. Returning to your first love.

{2} The Wilderness Path — *Simplicity & Surrender*

For those sensing an invitation to release, fast, or reorder their lives.

- Fast from something that numbs or distracts (scrolling, convenience, excess spending).
- Practice “holy inconvenience” — choose generosity over accumulation.
- Explore the Desert Fathers & Mothers journey through Lectio's Lent series.
- Journal honestly about what surfaces in the quiet.

This path is about letting go — not to prove anything, but to make space.

{3} The Compassion Path — *Entering the Suffering of Christ*

For those who feel drawn to sit more deeply with the Cross.

- Meditate on Jesus in Gethsemane (N.T. Wright reflection).
- Pray with Henri Nouwen's Holy Week prayers.
- Read stories of costly faith (Extreme Devotion).
- Practice radical generosity — intentionally support a cause or person each week.

This path is about staying near to Jesus — and allowing His Spirit to transform you.

A Nudge: Might you take daily communion this Lenten season?

*You do not need to do all three.
Lent is not about spiritual performance.*

*It is about returning.
About remembering you are Beloved.
About walking WITH Jesus, who is LOVE and who is GOOD.*

Notes of what's stirring ...

Lectio Divina

An ancient practice of Scripture meditation. In Lectio Divina, we read as one reading a love letter. Our intent is not primarily to gain information but to be transformed by an encounter with the God who loves us.

The Word of Scripture should never stop sounding in your ears and working in you all day long, just like the words of someone you love. And just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but accept them as they are said to you, accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did. That is all...Do not ask "How shall I pass this on?" but "What does it say to me?" Then ponder this word long in your heart until it has gone right into you and taken possession of you. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

PREPARE. Find a comfortable position and allow the inner chaos to settle. Be still. Close your eyes. Invite God to speak to you through the Scripture.

- **Reading #1 READ.** What word or phrase strikes you? Sit with this word or idea trusting God has led you to it.
- **Reading #2 REFLECT.** How is your life touched by the word the Lord has given you?
- **Reading #3 RESPOND.** Is there an invitation or a challenge here for you to respond to? Allow this response to flow freely in this time of silence.
- **Reading #4 REST.** Simply rest with God now and enjoy his presence knowing it is God who will enable you to respond to whatever invitation you have heard.

RESOLVE. Resolve to carry this word with you and to live it out in your daily life and activity.

Suggested Passages for Lectio Divina at Lent

1. Repentance and Reflection

Psalm 51:10-12: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Joel 2:12-14: "Come back to me and really mean it! Come fasting and weeping, sorry for your sins!' Change your life, not just your clothes. Come back to God, your God. And here's why: God is kind and merciful. He takes a deep breath, puts up with a lot, this most patient God, extravagant in love, always ready to cancel catastrophe."

2. Fasting and Prayer

Matthew 6:16-18: Instructions on fasting in secret to honor God, rather than for public recognition.

Isaiah 58:6-7: Defines the true fast as letting the oppressed go free, sharing food with the hungry, and providing for the poor.

3. Renewal and Hope

Romans 12:11-12: "Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame ... Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder."

2 Corinthians 12:9: "Now I take limitations in stride, and with good cheer, these limitations that cut me down to size—abuse, accidents, opposition, bad breaks. I just let Christ take over! And so the weaker I get, the stronger I become."

John 15:4: "Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you..."

Hebrews 10:23: "Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word."

Closing Invocation

Lord Jesus, let me know myself and know You,
and desire nothing save only You.
Let me do everything for the sake of You.
Let me humble myself and exalt You.
Let me think of nothing except You.
Let me die to myself and live in You.
Let me accept whatever happens as from You.
Let me banish self and follow You, and ever desire to follow You.
Let me fly from myself and take refuge in You,
Let me be willing to obey for the sake of You.
Let me cling to nothing save only to You,
And let me be poor because of You.
Look upon me, that I may love You.
Call me that I may see You,
and forever enjoy You.
Amen.

-St Augustine of Hippo

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My friend, what a feast, indeed! Head here for MORE rhythms, readings, and rituals that help anchor us in Jesus through April in an ever-unfolding, expanding Lenten Toolkit:

<https://bit.ly/SeedsLent2026-GoogleDoc>

Receive whatever meets your spirit in this moment, and let Jesus guide you deeper into His presence this Lent.

Please email me (sarah@seedsofexchange.org) ANYthing that you'd like to share!



xo. -Sarah DT and the Seeds Fam