

# A Good Enough Lent

A 40-Day Companion to  
Read, Reflect, and Pray

## WHAT IS LENT?

Lent marks the forty days leading up to Easter, mirroring the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. It is a practice that began during the 4th century as a way to prepare Christians for the holiest days of the year.

During Lent, we ask God to show us the world as it is. We begin with the reality of our finitude rubbed on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday—from dust we were made, to dust we shall return. Then, we walk through that reality in a kind of dress rehearsal. It's the downward slope of God—the Great Descent, where the whole Church walks toward the cross.

Frankly, Lent is my favorite part of the church calendar because it is a time when the whole church is on the losing team. A time when we all get a minute to tell the truth: Life is so beautiful and life is so hard. For everyone.

Of course, the cross isn't the end of the story, but this season of grief is carved out to acknowledge the reality of Christ's sacrifice. And the reality of suffering that so many of our circumstances reflect too—our own pain and grief and despair. Easter is coming, yes. But for now, we sit in the ashes of our broken dreams and broken hearts, knowing that God sits here with us.

Many people practice Lent by giving something up—alcohol, meat, chocolate, social media. Some take up something new—a new prayer practice or swearing profusely like I did one year (you probably remember reading about this in *Everything Happens for a Reason (and Other Lies I've Loved)*).

This year, I'm inviting our Everything Happens Community to give up on the idea that life is always getting better and settle in for a life and a faith that is good enough. Together, we're going to take ourselves off the hook for perfection. Perfect lives. Perfect bodies. Perfect relationships. And realize that this is the beautiful work of being human... again today. Thank God we get to do it together.

So what do you say? Do you want to commit to a "Good Enough" Lent?



Kate

# HOW TO USE THIS COMPANION GUIDE

Each of the following forty entries is meant to be read alongside our new book of spiritual reflections, *Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection*. Of course, you can just use this free guide or just read *Good Enough* on its own, but you might find the most richness and depth when used together.

## EACH DAY INCLUDES:

- An entry to read from *Good Enough*
- A scripture to read and reflect on, based on that day's theme
- Little checkboxes to indicate what you've read
- Reflection questions that are meant to be all-play—accessible whether you are practicing Lent solo or using this book with your church, in a book club, or around the dinner table with your family.
- A prayer to close your time
- Feel free to print this booklet out and write your answers on these pages, in a journal, or simply meditate on your responses.

## A NOTE ON SUNDAYS

Lent lasts for a full 40 days, but Sundays don't count. They are a day off from whatever you are abstaining from during Lent, a day to remind us that we are made for both—grief and joy, sorrow and delight. Strangely, this might feel like a hard thing to do—to make yourself stop working or worrying or checking off your day's reading—and really rest.

But over the next six weeks, you're invited to press against that part of your wiring that tells you that you must always be accomplishing, producing, processing—that everything must be *for* something. And take a day off from the Lent-y feelings to practice the discipline of Sabbath. Rest! Feast! Enjoy!

Before we begin, we wholeheartedly believe in blessing the crap out of each other. So here is a blessing for you, my dear.

## A BLESSING FOR A MEDIUM-SAD JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

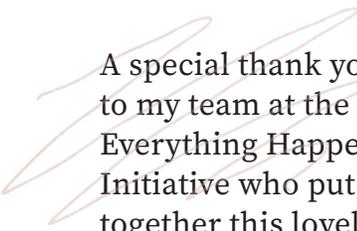
Blessed are you  
who have found yourself—yet again—  
among the fellowship of the afflicted.  
Making the long, long walk toward the cross.

Blessed are you,  
who are tired of pretending  
that raw effort is the secret to perfection.  
That that which breaks your heart  
is overcomeable.  
It's not. And you know that now.

Blessed are you  
who need a gentle reminder that  
even now, even today,  
God is here,  
walking with us,  
meeting us in our places  
of sorrow and despair,  
desperation and grief.  
Slowing lifting our chin toward hope.  
Not promising to erase the pain.  
But to carry it with us.

Blessed are we who realize  
we are never—were never—alone.  
And somehow,  
That is good enough.

To learn more about the work of the Everything Happens Initiative, listen to podcast episodes, or download additional resources, visit [katebowler.com](http://katebowler.com).



A special thank you to my team at the Everything Happens Initiative who put together this lovely companion.

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# Regula

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2 | ASH WEDNESDAY

*Good Enough*, 3-8    Psalm 119:103-106

01

Like many things done with regularity, spiritual practices risk becoming rote or worse—burdensome. But, on the other hand, you might be someone who takes great delight in routine. Where do you fall on the spectrum?



Don't make me do the same thing everyday.

I thrive off regularity/routine.

02

Spiritual practices are not a guarantee of spiritual growth, but somehow and sometimes, God shows up. That mystery is what we open ourselves toward and embrace as we practice the disciplines laid out in scripture and found in centuries of Church tradition. What new spiritual practice (perhaps the practice of Lent!) is rising in you that longs for a beginning? Here are a list of some spiritual disciplines to consider:

PRAYER	FASTING	SOLITUDE	JOY	ATTENDING CHURCH REGULARLY
MEDITATION	BIBLE STUDY	SERVICE	GIVING	CONFESSION

03

Nothing harsh or burdensome, that's what St. Benedict sought for his spiritual rules. What shape can your new spiritual practice take, so that it becomes a gentle and loving part of each day?

God, I want to be the kind of person who turns to You regularly, resting in the comfort of your unchanging presence. Meet me in this gentle way. And allow me self-forgiveness when I forget. And the courage to start again.

*Amen.*

# Buoyed by the Absurd

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

*Good Enough*, 9-14  John 2:1-11, Matthew 14:13-21, Luke 24:36-43

01

Think of a moment you experienced unexpected joy in the midst of sorrow.

02

Joy might come unexpectedly, or it can be a discipline. "Joy is the oxygen for doing hard things," said Gary Haugen. Describe a time the practice of doing something joyful has buoyed you.

03

Try something absurd today, even if you don't feel very joyful. How did it feel?

God, somehow joy and sorrow can coexist. During these long, bleak days of Lent, surprise me with a capacity for delight. Remind me that every moment can contain a wide range of experience. Thank you for the capacity to hold both at the same time.

*Amen.*

# Mourning a Future Self

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

*Good Enough*, 15-20  Psalm 42

01

Grief can take on many forms. Some losses are easy to name. The people and relationships and pets we love. Some losses are more difficult to name. Like the loss of imagined futures. Name what you are grieving today.

02

Write a prayer of lament to God. You can use Psalm 42 or Psalm 130 as a template. God can take it all, even the angry and most honest parts.

Read your lament out loud as a prayer. Sit in silence. Allow yourself a few minutes to grieve what you've lost.

*Amen.* \_\_\_\_\_

# Shiny Things

**SATURDAY, MARCH 5**

*Good Enough*, 21-27    Exodus 32

01

What do your major life choices—your closest relationships, your family, your career, your hobbies—point toward?

02

What about how you spend your time, your money, your resources? What do those say about who you are?

03

“What is idolatry except beautiful things that do not transform us?” (*Good Enough*, 25). Given that definition of idolatry, what is something you might have to reconsider or redirect?

Dear God, I want to be the kind of person whose life reflects my deepest held values—Your deepest held values. Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-control. Justice. Truth. Teach me how to better integrate my life into Your ways.

*Amen.*

**We mourn not in  
general, but in  
particular. After  
all, love is in the  
details.**

*Good Enough, p. 15*

# Building a Good Day

MONDAY, MARCH 7

*Good Enough*, 28-33  Psalm 37:1-9

01

Imagine that you have a completely free day. No clutter, no pressure. *I know, that's hard to picture.* But just rest in that thought for a moment and breathe.

02

Now imagine that you could choose to do what is truly life-giving, joyful, and meaningful, including something that brings you closer to God, if you'd like. You in particular, not anyone else. What might those things be? What memories, thoughts, hopes, or awarenesses are surfacing, about what makes you feel most spiritually alive?

03

How might you make these life-giving things more a part of your everyday life and less of a someday or when-I-get-less-busy?

Dear God, thank you for the inbreath of hope that my life could become a richer and truer expression, an outbreath of Your Spirit in me, and through me. Help me build this beauty, this goodness into my life, one gentle day at a time.

*Amen.*

# Small Things, Great Love

**TUESDAY, MARCH 8**

*Good Enough*, 34 - 38    Galatians 5:6

01

Like Little Thérèse or Kate's beloved music teacher Adeline Muller, who comes to mind when you think of quiet faithfulness?

02

Love isn't just in the grand gestures, it is—perhaps even more so—the small moments. What small act of great love is yours to do in this season of life? How will you act on it today?

Dear God of Love,

I know I was created by You, in love, for love. As Little Thérèse says, "love proves itself by its deeds." There are great things I long to do, loving things, yet there are limitations in this ordinary life that I live. Reveal to me the little way that is possible and sustainable, so I can show up faithfully, doing small things with great love and delight.

*Amen.*

# Asleep on the Job

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

*Good Enough*, 39-44  Luke 7:1-10

01

Today, do you resonate more with the centurion who trusted Jesus' authority over life and death, even from afar? Or are you feeling more like the disciples with Him in the storm-tossed boat, asking Jesus if He has noticed that they are all about to drown?

02

"Jesus is the one who dies and who is resurrected. And the one whose presence remains but whose absence is always before us in this broken world" (*Good Enough*, 41). Near or far, in the calm or in the storm, in faith or in doubt, tell God about life as it is for you. Let it flow.

03

Notice in the past where love has entered into even the most difficult of days. How does love speak into your faith, and transform it?

God, I don't have answers to the chaos or the pain. But I do know what love feels like. You invented it, and I feel its depth, urgency, pre-eminence and power, even in the midst of fear and doubt. God, help me trust that You are as close as the air. And that with You, I am truly seen, known, and loved.

*Amen.*

# When Good Things Become Burdens

THURSDAY, MARCH 10

*Good Enough*, 45-50    Matthew 11:28-30

01

Let's check in again with the idea of a regular practice, and the continuum that can exist between these two extremes.



Don't make me do the same thing everyday.

I thrive off regularity/routine.

Where would you place yourself now on this spectrum? Can you sense that a slight shift in either direction would be more life-giving for you?

02

Perfection in the abstract is unattainable and chafes against the call of Jesus to take on the kind yoke that is gentle and humble of heart, one that fits our own particular nature, means, and circumstances. Consider: What practices feel harsh and burdensome? Which ones awaken in you a greater inner vitality and freedom of spirit that gives life and meaning?

03

How might these life-giving practices become more part of a regular rhythm that is gently possible in this season of your life?

Dear God, You know me, and You know those things I do that dampen Your life in me. Grant me freedom to come out from under what is not mine to carry. Let me sit awhile in Your presence, and begin to sense how You are shaping for me a pattern of life that builds strength and peace. And may it be for me such an inner joy, that it might overflow to others.

*Amen.*

# The Foundation

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

*Good Enough*, 51-55    Romans 12:4-5

01

“We are standing on a foundation. It should come as an incredible relief. Our only job is to build on what we’ve been given, and, even then, our gifts we can trace back to the creativity, generosity, and foresight of others. Thank God we are a group project” (*Good Enough*, 53). What are the gifts, skills, characteristics, passions, and interests that make you who you are?

02

Whose help, instruction, or influence has been especially foundational for you?

03

Are there threads of connection where you see that your gifts are building into the lives of others?

Dear God, thank you for reminding me that I am not a solo act. I am a group project. Strengthen in me the gifts that are mine to give and give me the eyes to see the foundation set by others in me.

*Amen.*

# When You Are Exhausted

**SATURDAY, MARCH 12**

*Good Enough*, 56-60  Psalm 62:5-8, 11

01

There is a strange logic about exhaustion. It seems that the more tired we are, the harder it is to slow down. But, like it or not, sometimes our body or attitude give us clues we are nearing burnout. We are short-tempered or brittle or lack the creativity we usually have. We get sick easily or lack the joy that normally comes with hobbies or friends. What are the signals or symptoms that indicate that you need to take a break?

02

Rest sounds lovely—except when the whole world rests on our shoulders, and we can't easily slow down, let alone stop. Take a second to remember: "Not everything has to be done. And not everything has to be done by you" (*Good Enough*, 58). What permission does that offer you today?

03

Rest does not have to mean taking a nap in the middle of the day (because really... who can do that?!). It can be anything that fills up your tank for love, creativity, and generosity. Calling an old friend. Gardening. Organizing the junk drawer. Going to bed 15 minutes earlier. Reading a book and not expecting to learn anything. What does rest look like for you? How will you integrate that into this week?

God, I am nearing burnout. The things that once were life-giving now feel depleting. I'm resentful and irritable and don't like who I am very much. Come and fill my heart with Your peace. I am desperate for your life-giving, spirit-filling rest. You hold the world, not me. And thank God for that.

*Amen.*

**Blessed are we who  
discover we are  
loved and held in  
arms that are strong  
enough to hold that  
which we cannot.**

*Good Enough, p. 59*

# Happy Enough

**MONDAY, MARCH 14**

*Good Enough*, 61-67    Philippians 4:10-13

01

Sometimes hunger looks like ambition or goal-setting or bucket lists. It can help us visioncast or create futures for ourselves we might not reach for otherwise. When was the last time you felt that endless hunger that strives for more, more, more? What gift does that kind of hope offer you?

02

On the flipside, when so few of us are living our BEST LIFE NOW, the narrative of endless progress can make us feel like we missed the mark—that we'll never be good enough or smart enough or successful enough. What downsides have you recognized in the "everything is possible" worldview?

03

Being content in our present moment can be a tricky discipline. Look around. What feels like contentment right now? If nothing comes to mind, compress your attention even smaller.

Dear God, You know me, and You know those things I do that dampen Your life in me. Grant me freedom to come out from under what is not mine to carry. Let me sit awhile in Your presence, and begin to sense how You are shaping for me a pattern of life that builds strength and peace. And may it be for me such an inner joy, that it might overflow to others.

*Amen.*

# Right After It's Over

**TUESDAY, MARCH 15**

*Good Enough*, 68-73  Psalm 61:1-4

01

God's Great Magic Act, as Kate describes, is the mystery of God's presence and love in the midst of suffering. Reflect on a time when you glimpsed this truth in your own life.

02

Grief is a long story. There is no 5-step formula to moving on, but some practices can help to nurture your tender self in the thick of it. Make a list of small, practical things to try when you are in deep grief. Perhaps what's worked for you in the past will work again.

03

Think of someone you know who is in the midst of grief right now. Spend time in prayer for them and their circumstances. Ask that God surround them with the awareness of love. Then, reach out, saying something like: "No need to reply, but you are on my mind. I wish I could take this pain away. You are so, so loved. You are not alone."

## Pray a wordless prayer.

Set the timer for 10 minutes (or 20 if you're feeling extra-spiritual). Settle into a comfortable position, perhaps in a chair with hands open in your lap. Connect with the ground somehow, the soles of both feet resting comfortably. Center your thoughts on the desire to pay attention to God, and to yourself as God's very own. When your thoughts wander and you realize it, thank God turn your mind back to prayer that is utterly open, receptive, and soaked in the awareness that God is God.

# Needing Rules At All

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

*Good Enough*, 74-78    Psalm 25:4-7

01

Are you a rule-oriented person, or do you chafe a little against such strictures? Is there a balance for you that works best?



I am a rule breaker.

I am a rule follower.

02

Think of the rules that go along with the practice of something you have mastered, be it a hobby or artistic expression or job-related skill. How do these rules provide the structure for creativity to be possible?

03

What spiritual habit would you like to be reminded to do each day? Pick a physical reminder (a pebble in your pocket, an alarm clock, a paper chain) that can provide the daily cue to make it possible.

Dear God, be with me as I build new habits into my day that are fruitful and life-giving. Grant me freedom and grace to trust this process, so that I might continue to grow toward that You, look more like You, and be better used for Your divine purposes.

*Amen.*

# For the Exiles

THURSDAY, MARCH 17

*Good Enough*, 79-85  Matthew 25:35-40

01

To love those who have been devalued and demeaned, is to do what Jesus did—to restore their human dignity. Who is someone you know who does this well? Or perhaps a time you received that kind of kindness?

02

Are there any people in your sphere of influence who seem invisible, shunned, or forgotten? How might you extend kindness to them this week?

03

Is there a little part of you too painful to look at, that is hidden under a shadow of shame? Perhaps parts that feel left out, forgotten, last-picked? Allow yourself to see through the eyes of God for a minute. Speak kindly to yourself. If it's too hard, imagine what you might say to a friend who feels the same way. Say it to yourself instead.

God, thank you for moving the center of Your kingdom to be with those who are rejected, just so they could belong. Encircle me in those very arms of Your love, that my restoration might be so complete, so pure, and genuine that it radiates love to others in a way that gives them the same standing—the right to receive and give love and care, simply by virtue of their humanity.

*Amen.*

# The Tragedy Olympics

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

*Good Enough*, 86-91  Galatians 6:2

01

“The Tragedy Olympics”—where someone one-ups a set of horrific circumstances with their own—is often done out of a desire to relate or perhaps get a bit of attention for their situation. What’s the funniest incident of this that you have seen played out?

02

Look around. Is there evidence that “struggle is everyone’s normal”? How does social media support or undermine that idea?

03

Think of a time when someone knew how to support you in your pain. What did they do that felt like love?

God, show me how to be a support to others in their pain. May my reaction never be to judge or compare or compete. Teach me, when I don’t know the right thing to do or say. But when I feel afraid or inept, empower me to follow through, to show up again and again with love and compassion and faithfulness.

*Amen.*

# The Bad Thing

**SATURDAY, MARCH 19**

*Good Enough*, 92-97    Psalm 139:13-18

01

Have you experienced the moment when someone sees you only as your diagnosis, tragedy, or misfortune? Or maybe it's the reverse, and what comes to mind are the moments when you felt awkward and afraid in the presence of pain. Why does being in the presence of pain make people—or, if you are being extra honest—you, uncomfortable?

02

Describe a time you experienced what Rudolf Otto calls “the numinous”—that moment when we catch a glimpse at the great mystery of the world, where holiness, fear, and humility are all wrapped in one.

03

Think of someone in your life who is enduring a difficult circumstance. How can you practically remind them that they are not the bad thing?

Fearfully and wonderfully made, the Psalmist says. Pray the psalm to God for yourself or for someone else in pain. As you read, what feels true? Then pray it again. Let the truth of the words wash over you.

*Amen.*

**It's like seeing a garment turned inside out and all the rough seams are showing. You see someone's absolute humanity shine through all the pain, and that vulnerability makes them more—not less—beloved.**

**The great mystery of the world is peeking through, and we get just a glimpse... We understand holiness and mystery and fear and humility all in the same moment.**

**And it is beautiful.**

*Good Enough, p. 94*

# Hopping Off The Treadmill

**MONDAY, MARCH 21**

*Good Enough*, 98-102    Isaiah 55:1-3

01

Where do you fall on this busyness spectrum?



My days have lots of margin.

My days are always too full.

02

Think back to something you did recently that shimmered with meaning. What does that say about what's important to you?

03

As the great theologian and reformer Martin Luther said to Philip Melanchthon, "Philip, let's go fishing. Today we can leave the governance of the universe to God." How would it feel to get off of the treadmill (or at least slow down) today, and recognize that you are more than the sum of your tasks, hyper-activity, or accomplishments?

God, Sometimes I am tempted to believe that my worth is linked to all I can do. The person who never says no. Whose plate is filled to the brim. But too often my productivity can leave me feeling empty, exhausted, and unseen. Ground me in Your love. Remind me that I am not merely the sum of my tasks, and infuse my work, my relationships, my life with a deeper meaning—one grounded in Your purposes.

*Amen.*

# Hello, Goodbye

TUESDAY, MARCH 22

*Good Enough*, 103-109    Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

01

Think about a change you have made recently. Perhaps you moved careers or had a child or lost someone you loved or had to give up playing your favorite sport. What are the goodbyes and hellos embedded in that change (no matter how small)?

02

“Not every change is going to be a transformation. But every change can be an opportunity for grace” (*Good Enough*, 105). The change you thought of in the previous question: has it made you better? Worse? Holier? Crustier? Softer? Quicker on the draw? What other words would you use to describe yourself in the wake of that change?

03

The Good Enough Step for today says, “I did what I knew to do, with what I knew then.” How does that phrase sit with you as you think back on past decisions or mistakes?

God, Show me what I need for right now, and grant me the courage and wisdom and grace to receive it.

*Amen.*

# No Reason Whatsoever

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

*Good Enough*, 110-116    Luke 12:22-28

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01

Why do people even try to offer comfort by telling us, “DON’T WORRY!”? The trick to not worrying is... well if I knew that I’d be rich. What’s your usual approach to life when it gets overwhelming?

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02

One of Kate’s tricks for combating feeling overwhelmed is to do something for no reason whatsoever. Just for fun, give yourself a short time limit, and race to see how many ridiculously absurdly fun things you can think of to do for no reason! Pick one and try it today. How does it make you feel?

God, come into those places that are too heavy, that feel truly overwhelming. Lift them away for a while, so that I might turn my gaze to the loveliness of the lily, the feathered texture and color of bird wings. And give me the courage to play once in a while, like the little kid I once was, and who is still in there somewhere.

*Amen.*

# Becoming Real

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

*Good Enough*, 117-121    Isaiah 53:1-5

01

Did you have a comfort item as a child? What do you turn toward for comfort now?

02

Some may actually, physically turn away from the sight of suffering. But there is One who never does, our God. Can you recall a time in your life when God felt especially close?

03

The Isaiah reading for today is about Jesus, who “had nothing in His appearance to attract us... a man of suffering and familiar with pain.” Lent is when we walk with Jesus toward the mysteries of His death and resurrection when He appeared more alive, more real than ever before. God knows human suffering from the inside out, and whatever you bring, God can hear it. You are never too much. Bring God all the reality you know too well—all the hurt and confusion and even the stuff that looks the shabbiest. Talk it out. Honest prayer is where reality grows and comfort begins.

God, I need you to show up in the midst of my most fragile humanity. Make yourself present to me in my pain and loss and fear. Remind me I never walk alone.

*Amen.*

# #Blessed

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

*Good Enough*, 122-128  Matthew 5:1-12

01

How do you think culture defines “blessing” or being “blessed”? How do you define it? Based on this passage in Matthew 5:1-12, how does Jesus define it?

02

“The world looks a bit strange from here, upside down. But maybe it’s how it’s supposed to be; our feet rooted in heaven” (*Good Enough*, 124). In the Matthew reading, how is Jesus calling us to embrace the upside-down kingdom?

03

Write a blessing using your own name and the specifics that you are dealing with.  
*Blessed am I, [Your Name], when....*

God, I can't do this alone. Come into these hard places and be with me, bless me, that I might find a way through, that there might be comfort and even some love and peace in the midst of it. Enough maybe, to be a blessing to others.

*Amen.*

# Loving What Is

**SATURDAY, MARCH 26**

*Good Enough*, 129-133    Philippians 4:4-9

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01

Are you someone who loves to live in the past, the present, or the future? Why?

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02

Which is the hardest for you to live into and why?

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03

In Philippians 4:4-9, Paul connects gentleness with two practices: handing over our worries to God, and loving what is good in the here and now. But it's hard to notice the good things when we are trying to problem-solve. Grab some sticky notes or scraps of paper, and give each of your worries a name. Place them in a basket—into God's hands.

God, I am bringing all these worries to You, for they are too big for me to solve right now. And I am turning my eyes to all that is good, gazing on each one knowing they all come from You: the true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, praiseworthy, and excellent things. Thank You, God.

*Amen.*

**Blessed are you, recognizing  
that the rightsizing of reach  
and possibility is the heart's  
ease of God's good counsel.  
Opening your eyes to all that is  
here. Let its beauty seep into  
your pores and whisper words  
of peace.**

*Good Enough, p. 132*

# Being Honest About Disappointment

MONDAY, MARCH 28

*Good Enough*, 134-139  Psalm 55

01

Psalm 55 pulls no punches and the words tumble out in their searing honesty. You won't often hear this kind of raw anger given voice in the context of spiritual writing. But it's there. Look over the psalm and pull out the words that let us know the writer's complaints. And what does he wish for his enemies?

02

"I cry out in distress, and God hears my voice." What does the psalmist need? The first thing is simply to be heard. What does your heart cry out for? Short or long, tell God all of it. "Cast your cares on God" means to throw these heavy things right off of you. Put your back into it.

God, I am worn out from problem-solving and this never ending spiral of sorrow. I need shelter. Solace. Comfort. This Lent, give me room for more honesty with You. Honesty with my hopes and dreams and fears and disappointments. And help me do the little human things for right now, and trust you with the rest. God, you have sustained me in times past. Come, and do it again.

*Amen.*

# Kindness Boomerangs

TUESDAY, MARCH 29

*Good Enough*, 140-144    Luke 6:27-38

01

“Give, and it will be given to you” (Luke 6:38). Think of a time when the strange math of blessing has had its effect on you as a receiver or a giver.

02

Giving reminds us who we are meant to be: made by God in love, for love. Jesus shows us what God’s self-giving looks like. He calls us to “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). What if we could show up fully to that call today?

Bless me, God, so I can be a blessing. Set me straight where I have gone wrong. Heal me where I hurt. And draw me more and more into Your life of love. For that is my heart’s desire.

*Amen.*

# Give Up Already

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30

*Good Enough*, 145-149    Matthew 6:16-21

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01

What has your experience been with fasting?

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02

Whenever our bodies get involved, we move beyond the cerebral. And that's God's jam – reaching us right where we live. Perhaps a food-related fast will be the doorway for you into the cheerful discipline and freedom that Bonhoeffer speaks of. Or maybe your fast will be turning from bitter thoughts. Or even from the niceness that is a form of avoidance. Pick a fast, and try it out for the next four days. See if it creates more room for the Divine.

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03

So maybe you've found that your fast has created more room. What has come in to take up that space?

God, help me clear out the clutter of ugly thoughts and useless things, so I can store up what is beautiful, useful, and of lasting value. Throughout this Lent, as I keep on exploring what fasting is about, show me what I truly love, that I might love and do what is truly good.

*Amen.*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 31** *Good Enough*, 150-155  Galatians 6:1-5

01

Jeffrey A. Hall, a communication-studies professor at the University of Kansas estimates that it takes 200 hours over six weeks for a new-to-you person to become a friend. Think of a few of your closest friends. How long have you known them? Are you surprised by how long or how short a time it took for you to become one another's people?

02

What qualities in a friend do you value the most? What special qualities do you offer your friendships?

03

Paul says that we should "carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). Is there something you are carrying that is too heavy to bear alone right now?

04

Perhaps there are ways you can be a better friend to the people in your life. Reach out to a friend today, ask them: "How can I be a better friend to you?"

God, I need a friend, one that can weather the bad times and celebrate the good. You know me inside and out. Help me become the kind of person who can take responsibility for what is mine to change, so that I can be a good friend to others. So there's a mutual give and take in each relationship. God, strengthen me. Help me.

*Amen.*

# To My Body

FRIDAY, APRIL 1

*Good Enough*, 156-160    2 Corinthians 4:7-18

01

Today's devotional reading is a letter to a body. What aspects of this love-hate relationship with our flesh and bone do you identify with? How so?

02

Jesus, by His very nature, was incarnate—experienced life with a body. What comfort or, perhaps, confusion does that bring you to know that the God of the universe was embodied, too?

03

Paul says, "We have this treasure in jars of clay," (2 Cor. 4:7) and goes on to talk about an inner renewal that goes on unseen, day by day, even though our bodies break or come undone. What is the treasure you hold within?

Make me content to settle into this imperfect body. In the stillness I look to You. Call me once again into wholeness, that I might draw from You the grace and mercy I need to be content. And live a life of love, from a grateful heart.

*Amen.*

# Mediocrity for the Win

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

*Good Enough*, 161-166  Psalm 19

01

“The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1). The glory of creation is supposedly everywhere, but these days, it may be hard to notice even one lovely created thing. When was the last time beauty stopped you in your tracks? Describe what you experienced.

02

“The perfection that we can never achieve, but that has been lavishly given” (*Good Enough*, 165). Kintsugi is a Japanese art form where broken pottery is repaired with gold, rendering it beautiful in a new way, not in spite of its cracks, but because of them. Are there imperfections, cracked and broken places, that have been for you a source of discouragement or shame? Look long, that God’s restoring love “that reaches to the heavens” might touch you even there.

God, I bring to You my whole self, opening to Your loving eyes all that I am—Your creature, made in love, for love. May Your gaze upon me be the gold that heals me, and infuses all the cracked and broken places with Your beauty and strength. Soften my heart, and mold me into someone who reflects Your glory.

*Amen.*

**“The heavens are  
telling the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim  
the work of his hands.  
Day after day they  
pour forth speech.  
Night after night  
they reveal knowledge.”**

Psalm 19:1-2

# The Burden of Love

MONDAY, APRIL 4

*Good Enough*, 167-172    Psalm 86:1-7

01

“No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear,” said theologian C.S. Lewis. Fill in the blank using your own words:

*No one ever told me that grief felt so like* \_\_\_\_\_.

02

We don't always have the capacity to invite our losses in, to give them space to resonate in our thoughts and feelings. It's costly. In such cases, simply name them and put them outside the door of your heart while you rest. You can invite them in and entertain them later. Be gentle with yourself. Grief is the experience of a loss carved out by love, and the greater the love the deeper the grief. If now is the right time, let your heart speak of what you have loved and lost.

03

“Jesus wept” (John 11:33-35, Luke 19:41). God in human form cries with us, for us. But Jesus didn't just say I feel your pain, He walked right toward it, to a cross of humiliation and apparent defeat. Little did we know He was shouldering death itself, bearing it away through the Easter mysteries that lie ahead on this Lenten path. He knows. Let God come into your pain with the infinite compassion that can reach and touch the depths of it. How does knowing that Jesus too experienced deep grief feel to you?

God, breathe Your compassion upon me, even now. You, Who have walked this path of darkness and death. Turn Your face to me, right where I am, and gather me up into Your arms of love. That I might rest awhile.

*Amen.*

## TUESDAY, APRIL 5

 *Good Enough*, 173-178  Psalm 46

01

The psalmist of Psalm 46 describes God's presence in the midst of a world crumbling around them. Have you ever experienced this?

02

Begin reading Psalm 46 again, this time out loud. If there are any phrases that shimmer or stand out to you in a special way, pause right there. In the stillness, bring your troubles to God.

God, I didn't want to look. I didn't want to drag all this anxiety and fear out into the open. But here it is. Not a pretty sight. But there is relief in finally letting myself feel it. So part of my fear is that there's no help for it. I don't see any. But this is where You come in, God, and be for me the strength I don't have. The stability I don't feel. Come Lord, and shelter me. Right here.

*Amen.*

# Bottling Magic

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6

*Good Enough*, 179-183  Luke 9:28-36

01

What moments in your life do you wish you could have bottled up?

02

Begin to look around inside that memory, and notice the details. What do you see? What do you feel? What made it so special? Pick up a stone and make it your tactile connection to this memory. Your Ebenezer.

03

Read Luke 9:28-36 and see yourself in the story, walking up the mountain with the group. Who are you in the story? What do you see? Do you say anything?

04

As soon as Jesus walked back down the mountain, he started to explain about his coming death and resurrection to his dazed friends. But they didn't understand at the time. Do you have any confusion or questions that go unanswered?

God of quiet enchantment, I've known you. Every awe-inspired deep breath and knot in my throat is a primal hymn of your unpredictable beauty. May I notice the small, glimmering moments, for though they are fleeting, they are enough.

*Amen.*

# Gondola Prayers

**THURSDAY, APRIL 7**

*Good Enough*, 184-188  Psalm 5:1-7

**Lectio Divina:**

Take 5 or 10 minutes to let your body relax, and your mind become receptive and open. Let thoughts come and go.

When you feel settled, read Psalm 5:1-7 slowly, out loud, as if you have never heard it before.

Read the verses again, and notice if one phrase comes alive for you in a special way.

Turn that phrase over in your mind, and see if any memories or images or thoughts arise. Talk to God, and ask what meaning the phrase has for you right now.

Read the passage again, simply taking it in, and resting with God.

God, I don't know what to do with this load I carry. I feel like I am supposed to do something special to get your attention, but my attempts mean nothing to you. I don't want to pitch to you, dream at you, or explain myself to you. I just want to sit in your gentle presence, known and held.

*Amen.*

# The Cost of Caring

FRIDAY, APRIL 8

*Good Enough*, 189-194  Psalm 143

01

How has caring cost you?

02

Writer and nurse Christie Watson described how she knew she was doing her work right: it cost her something. Love, service, kindness, empathy—it all costs us something. Fill in the following blanks:

*Love costs me* \_\_\_\_\_

*Service costs me* \_\_\_\_\_

*Kindness costs me* \_\_\_\_\_

*Empathy costs me* \_\_\_\_\_

03

How have you experienced God showing up even (or perhaps, especially) in the midst of a costly love?

God, I know what it's like to be held up by the strength of love. I long to be this for others but sometimes it feels too heavy. I need you to hold me as I hold space for others, to fill me as I empty out little by little. Guide me gently with your wise Gardener hands, pruning no more or less than what is kind.

*Amen.* \_\_\_\_\_

# The Reality-Show Gospel

**SATURDAY, APRIL 9**

*Good Enough*, 195-199  Psalm 62

01

Where are you grasping for certainty for the sake of others?

02

For yourself?

03

For God?

04

What might you try instead of saying, "Everything Happens for a Reason"? (Feel free to make your answer snarky.)

God of all comfort, You know what it's like. You know what they are feeling, what I am feeling. You see past the grasps for certainty into hearts vulnerably entangled with others. You sit with those who sit with others, still, quiet, lingering. Root me here, in the middle of this, now knowing, yet known.

*Amen.*

**Your presence  
itself is prayer,  
and may the words  
that come be simple:**

*I am so sorry.*

*I love you.*

*You are not alone.*

*Good Enough, p. 198*



# When Words Fail

MONDAY, APRIL 11

*Good Enough*, 200-204  Luke 19:28-42

01

“Many of us are living in a world that groans for change” (*Good Enough*, 200). What is your relationship with the practice of prayer like?

02

When words fail, Marilyn McEntyre says that listening with an open heart is a form of prayer, one that can be done on a nature walk, on a beach, or sitting alone in silence. How will you practice listening as prayer today?

God, in this place of longing, my heart waits. In this place of in-between, come Lord. My trust is in Your justice and mercy though I cannot see how it will unfold. My hope is in Your love though I sense it incompletely. My faith rises to meet You, receive from You, and love You in return. Comfort me, that I might live as one who is at peace.

*Amen.*

# 2:00 A.M./2:00 P.M.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 12**

*Good Enough*, 205-209  Isaiah 40:1-26

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01

How would you describe your 2:00 A.M. self? How about your 2:00 P.M. self?

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02

Which are you more comfortable with? Why?

God, thank you that You see every bit of the reality we must live. You lived it too, and beyond—to hell and back. God, hold what I cannot. Though I cannot see as You see, nor understand as You do, establish me in the truth that You are strong and holy, loving and just, and that one day every valley will be lifted up and the rough places a plain. Come Lord.

*Amen.*

# The In-Between

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

*Good Enough*, 210-214  Luke 9:21-27; Psalm 131:1-3

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01

What liminal space do you occupy? What are your in-betweens?

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02

Psalm 131:1-3 speaks of the in-between of the weaned child, content to rest in a mother's arms. What knowing and not knowing do you experience right now? Is it possible to rest there, in-between?

God, the space I find myself in is uncomfortable, even frustrating. I want to feel momentum forward, but I feel stuck in the unknowing. In the in-between. God, while I wait for what's next, be here with me. Give me a peace that makes no sense while we wait together.

*Amen.*

# Too Few Sparrows

THURSDAY, APRIL 14 | MAUNDY THURSDAY

*Good Enough*, 215-219  Matthew 26:17-29

01

“Blessed are we, the newly wrong, chuckling over how much it hurts to be chastened a little” (*Good Enough*, 218). What ‘newly wrong’ experiences have you had lately?

02

In Matthew 26:17-29, just before betraying Jesus, Judas asks, “Surely, you don’t mean me, Lord?” Have you faced any grave situations where you were in the wrong?

03

At the last supper with his friends, Jesus is showing them how love can reach even those seemingly unforgivable places. Where might you need to give or receive forgiveness, but feel like it’s too late or too much to ask?

**PRAY:**

Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come,  
I come.

From *Just as I am, Without One Plea*, a hymn by Charlotte Elliott (1789–1871)

# Bright Hope

FRIDAY, APRIL 15 | GOOD FRIDAY

*Good Enough*, 220-225  Luke 23:26-49

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01

“The sun stopped shining” (Luke 23:44). What was your darkest hour?

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02

“Can these dry bones live?” The Ezekiel story is about God bringing life out of death. On this Good Friday, stand awhile with those who came to mourn at the cross of Jesus. What do you mourn today?

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03

What does hope look like right here and now, in this dark hour?

God, give me eyes to see what You see, and a heart to love what You love. Give me the gift of hope, that I might take hold of what I have already been given and make something of it. Grant me the gift of faith, that I might look to what is yet unseen or only dimly shining through, and trust that You have come to gather it all up and us with it, in Jesus Christ. And bless me Lord God with the grace to love well what is already here, in the peace and power of Your Holy Spirit.

*Amen.*

# A Good Gardener

SATURDAY, APRIL 16 | HOLY SATURDAY

*Good Enough*, 226-233  John 20:1-18

01

Given what you know about gardening (as little or as much), and if you know that God is a gardener... what do you know about God?

02

A gardener is someone who plants seeds of hope. What seeds have been planted in your life? That you have planted? What are you hoping against hope for?

Good, good gardener, Give us a heart to trust that on this Holy Saturday, You are not yet finished. Give us that kind of defiant hope to believe even now—in our weariness, in our bleakness, in our overwhelm—that newness is possible.

*Amen.*

**Sink your generosity deep into our lives  
that your muchness may expose our false lack  
that endlessly receiving we may endlessly give**

**so that the world may be made Easter new,  
without greedy lack, but only wonder,  
without coercive need but only love,  
without destructive greed but only praise  
without aggression and invasiveness.**

***all things Easter new  
all around us,  
toward us  
and by us  
all things Easter new.***

– Walter Brueggemann

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