



the **attentive** life  
*Lent 2016*

**WEEK SIX:**  
March 13-19

Each week during Lent, we will  
distribute the upcoming week's  
devotional in print at Connect Central.

Sign up to have these devotions  
emailed to you at  
the**attentive**.life



### Week 6: March 13-19

We are then invited into a life of mission: of partnering with our Messiah Jesus in fulfilling the task that God began in Abraham. In Jesus, we have been astonishingly graced with unconditional love, forgiveness, and healing, in order that we may turn around and grace the world around us with love, and forgiveness, and healing. We are sent to take the message - and the reality - of God's great salvation accomplished for us in his Messiah Jesus to every child, woman and man on the earth, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

You'll find three sections to each day: a reading from the Bible, a reflection or two, and then space to remember.

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### In the morning, **receive.**

Read the set passage each day. Read it when you wake up in the morning. Read it slowly and reflectively. Receive the word of God into your mind, into your heart, into your soul.

#### **1 Thessalonians 2:13**

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

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### Throughout the day, **reflect.**

Read the reflections and questions for the section. These are designed to move you along the story line and offer you starting points to guide your meditations through your day.

Is there anything from the reading for the day that you'd like to investigate further? Was there something that connected dots for you? Anything that puzzled you?

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## At night, remember.

Before you go to sleep each night, spend a few minutes thinking over the day that's now coming to an end. Invite Jesus to walk with you through the day, and bring to mind those things that would be helpful to sort out with him in the safety of his love for you.

What were the thoughts and feelings within you when you woke up? How did you spend the first hour of your day?

What was the highlight of your day?

What occupied your attention the most?

Where did you most sense God's presence during your day? What was going on?

Did you sense God's prompting to do something? Or say something? Did you sense him move you to engage with a particular situation you noticed? How did it go?

What were your primary emotions? Was there a fear or anxiety that was constantly present? Was there a hunger or a longing that was a constant itch?

Was there peace? Joy? Gratitude?

Who were the people you interacted with today? How do you think your interactions went? Was there a conversation you wish you could redo? Is there someone you need to make peace with tomorrow?

Is there someone whose forgiveness you need? Is there someone you need to forgive?

End your day in the **Lord's Prayer**.

# Receive

### **Matthew 28:18-20**

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

### **Acts 26:15-18**

[Paul said:] "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'"

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," the Lord replied. "Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

### **1 Peter 2:9-10**

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.



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## Reflect

This is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus: to gladly and resolutely follow Jesus, to enter into the communal life of those on the Jesus way, filled up to overflowing with the Holy Spirit to the joy of the Father... seeking to be a witness of Jesus in any and every circumstance.

The disciple of Jesus is therefore focused on being attentive to God. The disciple of Jesus is focused on being attentive to those in community with her. And the disciple of Jesus is focused on being attentive - together with her community - to those in the world around her. She is particularly attentive to those who haven't yet heard of or experienced the redeeming love of God for them in Jesus.

You might be an attorney, an accountant, an actuary or an activist. It doesn't matter what you do for a living: you are sent out as a disciple of Jesus to make disciples for Jesus.

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

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## Remember

## Receive

### **John 20:19-23**

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

### **Acts 13:38-39**

[Paul said:] "Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin..."



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## Reflect

We are sent to proclaim forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus.

Forgiveness destroys the power of evil. Forgiveness stops evil in its tracks. Where there is a lack of forgiveness, evil multiplies.

As you consider the world around you - your family, your friends, your neighborhood, your colleagues, your context - where do you sense a longing for forgiveness? What can you do to bring this about?

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## Remember

# Receive

### **Acts 3:1-10**

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

### **Acts 4:1-12**

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest’s family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?”



Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

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## Reflect

When the man who was lame from birth was healed, he jumped to his feet and began to walk. And then he followed Peter and John into the temple - walking and jumping, and praising God!

And so the gospel of Jesus our Messiah goes out in power. And the gospel goes out in bold and clear proclamation: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved”.

What is it in the world around you that seems “lame from birth”? Where does it need to experience the healing that the gospel brings? What can you do about it?

“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

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## Remember

# Receive

### **Acts 4:21-31**

After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“ ‘Why do the nations rage  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the Lord  
and against his anointed one.’ ”

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.



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## Reflect

As we engage in our mission of making disciples for Jesus, of bringing forgiveness and healing to the world around us, we will face opposition. That's a given. We are waging war against evil, after all.

And therefore we pray. We pray for boldness and courage. We pray for healing. We pray for signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. We pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And in the power of the Spirit, we continue to bear witness to Jesus with courage and grace.

“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”

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## Remember

# Receive

## **1 Peter 3:13-16**

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience....



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## Reflect

Wouldn't it be wonderful to live your life in a way that provokes those around you to ask you to explain your trust in Jesus?

Do you know anyone like that? What is it about them that makes Jesus intriguing to those around them?

What one thing could you do this week that might create that kind of context for those around you?

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## Remember

# Receive

## **2 Corinthians 5.14-15**

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

## **1 Corinthians 9:12-27**

... we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.

...when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

...

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel...



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## Reflect

Paul was captivated by the love of God revealed in the gospel of Jesus.

And that resulted in a life comprehensively committed to doing everything in his power to win the world around him to Jesus.

That's the normal Christian life, the way Paul saw it.

The reality is that we will bear witness to Jesus to the extent our hearts are enchanted by the gospel. The extent of our witness to Jesus reveals the condition of our heart toward the gospel.

“For Christ’s love compels us...”

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## Remember

## Receive

### **Acts 7:51-8:4**

“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

And Saul approved of their killing him.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.



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## Reflect

There are two primary responses to the gospel: repentance or rejection. Sometimes the rejection is brutal.

Stephen bears witness to Jesus in the power of the Spirit with a convicting clarity that drives his hearers to violent rage. And so they stone him to death.

And with his dying breath, Stephen responds to the evil being done to him with forgiveness. His actions bear witness to Jesus with the same - if not greater - power that his words did.

Great persecution breaks out that day against the followers of Jesus. They are scattered throughout the region. And wherever they go, they can't stop speaking of Jesus... they can't stop bearing witness to Jesus.

When the gospel of Jesus captivates your heart, nothing can stop you from speaking of him. You realize with compassion that the opposition you sometimes face emerges from the very same darkness that the gospel comes to dispel.

And so in the face of opposition, you speak of Jesus with clarity, gentleness and grace, praying that God would illumine the hearts of your hearers and forgive them for any harm they might do to you.

This is what it means to proclaim forgiveness in the name of Jesus. He forgave, at infinite cost to himself. So too must we, trusting God to raise us up.

"Lord, do not hold this against them."

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## Remember





## Matthew 6:5–13

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This, then, is how you should pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our sins,  
as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.**

***For yours is the kingdom,  
the power  
and the glory...***

***From this time forth and forever.***

***Amen.***

*join us for*  
**Easter**  
*at Heritage*

**Saturday, March 26, 5:30pm**

**Sunday, March 27, 9am, 10:30am, & 12pm**

*deaf interpretation at 5:30pm and 12pm services*



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