

**Transformation – NOW!
LENT**

Hymn: Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
Sung by St Martin's Voices

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us
for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing,
if our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
all our weakness thou dost know;
thou didst tread this earth before us,
thou didst feel its keenest woe;
self denying, death defying,
thou to Calvary didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy.

James Edmeston (1791-1867)

Introduction

We have chosen to fast
Not with ashes but with actions
Not with sackcloth but in sharing
Not in thoughts but in deeds
We will give up our abundance
To share our food with the hungry
We will give up our comfort
To provide homes for the destitute
We will give up our fashions
To see the naked clothed
We will share where others hoard
We will free where others oppress
We will heal where others harm
Then God's light will break out on us
God's healing will quickly appear
God will guide us always
God's righteousness will go before us
We will find our joy in the Lord
We will be like a well watered garden
We will be called repairers of broken walls
Together we will feast at God's banquet table

written by Christine Sine (2010)

Bible Reading: from James 3

The Message

A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it! It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our

speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell.

Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here's what you do: Live well, live wisely, live humbly. It's the way you live, not the way you talk, that counts. Mean-spirited ambition isn't wisdom. Boasting that you are wise isn't wisdom. Twisting the truth to make yourselves sound wise isn't wisdom. It's the furthest thing from wisdom—it's animal cunning, devilish plotting.

Whenever you're trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others' throats.

Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced. You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honour.

Reflection

by Eddie Askew

Lord, one thing I'm good at —
criticising other people.

Self-taught,

I've had a lot of practice.

Probably true to say,

I've made it into an art form.

There's nothing, no-one
I can't see through.
Probing for weakness,
I can find the hidden flow
that brings the value of anything
crashing down.

And when it comes to labelling
my fellow Christians,
I'm superb.
And quick.
Spilt-second judgement,
based firmly on my prejudice.
And stamina — I've got enough
to run a marathon of criticism.
It only needs a louder voice.
or longer hair.
a liking for hymns that I don't sing,
and I'm away.
Feeding my derision
with the rich compost of cynicism,
my superiority creating
a thick-leaved canopy
beneath which nothing else can grow.
A thick forest of sterility.
Lord, there's something wrong.
That's obvious, even to me.
It's easy to identify,
but hard to fight.
Teach me to rest in you.

To find my joy and satisfaction, not in proving to myself
how much above the rest I am,
but in the realisation
that I'm loved.
That you love me without conditions.
And that gives me
a worth beyond imagining.
Lord, if I'm loved like that,
with all the faults
I hesitate even to list,
prefer to ignore,
then maybe, slowly,
I can start to see the good in others.
Discount the differences.
Perhaps begin to see
the richness that they bring to life.
And slowly, find it possible
to love little.

Reflective music

Lenten Meditation

J Althouse

Liturgy of Penitence

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**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

Lord, have mercy.

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you, Lord ...

all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy and impatience of our lives.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people.

Our anger at our own frustration

and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

Lord, have mercy.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts and our dishonesty in daily life and work.

Our negligence in prayer and worship

and our failure to commend the faith that is in us.

Lord, have mercy.

Accept our repentance, Lord

for the wrongs we have done,

for our blindness to human need and suffering,

and our indifference to injustice and cruelty.

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgements,
for uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbours
and for our prejudice and contempt towards those who
differ from us.

Accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation
and our lack of concern for those who come after us.

Accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

Favourably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
that we may show your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
**bring us with all your saints to the joy of his
resurrection.**

Mary Sumner Prayer

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All this day, O Lord,
let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;
and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken,
whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe,
or the life I live.

Amen

Hymn: Purify my heart

sung by St Martin's Voices

Purify my heart,
let me be as gold
and precious silver.

Purify my heart,
let me be as gold,
pure gold.

*Refiner's fire,
my heart's one desire
is to be holy,
set apart for You Lord.
I choose to be holy,
set apart for You my master,
ready to do Your will.
[Take my life, Lord, and let it be,
consecrated, Lord to thee.]*

Purify my heart,
cleanse me from within
and make me holy.
Purify my heart,
cleanse me from my sin,
deep within.

Chorus

Brian Doerksen (born 1965)

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Blessing

God will guide us always
God's righteousness will go before us
We will find our joy in the Lord
We will be like a well watered garden
We will be called repairers of broken walls
Together we will feast at God's banquet table

And so may the blessing of God Almighty
who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be among you and remain with you
this day, this night and evermore.
Amen

Hymn: I heard the voice of Jesus say

sung by St Martin's Voices

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary and worn and sad,
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink and live.'

I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'I am this dark world's Light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk,
till travelling days are done.

Material: as stated

Theme music: Catherine Hilton

Theme image: Erik Karits on Pixabay.com

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Smith, Ian Butterworth, Barbara Pye, Karen
Owen

CCLI: 5097385

**Thursday Prayers next month will be on
13th April 2023 – Eastertide**