

WEST SIDE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH



LENT DEVOTIONAL 2026

Shift

A Devotional for Lent 2026

by

West Side Missionary Baptist Church

Edited by Rev. Dr. Roshaunda D. Cade

Letter from the Senior Pastor

February 2026

City Reachers,

Grace and peace to each of you as we enter this sacred season of Lent. Every year, God invites us into a deeper place — a place of reflection, renewal, and realignment. This year, our theme **Shift** calls us to move with God in ways that stretch us, grow us, and ultimately transform us.

A shift is never accidental. It is an intentional movement. It is the holy courage to leave what is familiar so we can step into what is fruitful. It is the willingness to let God adjust our posture, priorities, and pace so that our lives better reflect the heart of Christ.

As you journey through this devotional — written by the hands and hearts of our own church family — I pray you feel the gentle nudge of the Spirit. Some pages may comfort you. Others may challenge you. All of them, I believe, will invite you to shift: in your thinking, in your praying, in your serving, and in your believing.

Remember this truth: **God never calls us to shift without also giving us the strength to move.** Whatever you are facing, whatever you are releasing, whatever you are stepping toward — you are not shifting alone. God goes before you, walks beside you, and strengthens you from within.

May this Lent be a season where you sense the presence of God more clearly, hear His voice more distinctly, and boldly trust Him like never before. I am grateful for each of you and excited to see how God will move in our church as we shift together.

With love and expectation,

Rev. Dr. Charles H.N. Bobo, Sr.

DAY 1

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

More Than Showing Up

Sis. Anin Williams

Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

For many of us, growing up in the church begins without a choice. We sit in pews because our parents tell us to, recite prayers we don't fully understand, and follow routines that feel more habitual than heartfelt. Church becomes familiar, predictable—sometimes even something we rush through rather than lean into. At that stage, faith can feel inherited rather than owned. But somewhere along the way, a quiet shift begins. What once felt routine starts to carry meaning. Faces become family. Conversations become connections. Worship becomes personal. We begin to see the church not as a perfect institution, but as a living community—made up of flawed, growing people learning how to walk with God together.

The shift in our hearts—and within the church—often begins with a simple willingness to show up, even when it feels routine or familiar. When we choose faithfulness over feelings, we create space for God to work. In His hands, ordinary moments become extraordinary opportunities for growth, healing, and purpose. As we open ourselves to His movement, God begins transforming us from the inside out. And as our lives are changed, we become part of the greater shift He is creating within the church—strengthening the body, deepening our faith, and drawing others closer to Him.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for walking with me through every season of my life—even the ones I didn't understand at the time. Thank You for using my joys, my struggles, and my waiting moments to shape my heart and draw me closer to You. Help me to grow deeper in Your love and to recognize Your gentle movement in my life and in the lives of others. Keep my heart soft and open to the shifts You are bringing, and use me as a willing vessel in Your transformative work within the church. I trust you with every part of me. In Jesus Name Amen.

DAY 2

Thursday, February 19, 2026

I See Dead People

Rev. Burton Barr, Jr.

Ezekiel 37: 1-4 (NIV)

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign LORD, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!'"

There was a movie that came out a while back called *The Sixth Sense*. Bruce Willis played the part of a child psychologist, named Dr. Malcolm Crowe.

One night, while he and his wife were celebrating an award that he had won, he was shot by one of his former patients. In the next scene, six months have gone by, and Dr. Crowe had another patient. He was a very strange eight year old boy, named Cole, who had a secret.

When Cole couldn't keep it to himself any longer, he said, "Dr. Crowe. I'm ready to tell you my secret now." He looked at the doctor, and in a voice that was just above a whisper, he said, "I see dead people." Dr. Crowe asked, "How often do you see them?" Cole said, "All the time. They are everywhere. They don't know they are dead." Before the movie was over, Dr. Crowe realized that he was one of the dead people that Cole was able to see.

I have a secret too. I see dead people. I see people who are dead in their sins. I see people who are lost and on their way to hell. I see people who are separated from The Almighty God. I see dead people.

When I'm driving down the street. When I'm walking through the mall. When I'm in the grocery store. When I'm in the jails and in the prisons. Everywhere I go, I see dead people. They don't know they are dead.

God put Ezekiel in the middle of a valley that was full of dead, dry bones. Then he asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" God is asking us that same question. He put us in the middle of a community that is full of people who are spiritually dead. Can they live? We have to shift and tell them to hear the word of the LORD. Just as God brought life to those dead bones, he will bring life to the spiritually dead.

Are you willing to shift?

DAY 3

Friday, February 20, 2026

God's Gear Shift

Rev. Dr. J. Marshall Shamell

Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

I was assigned to a Naval submarine, the USS Kentucky. The boat was commissioned in 1991 and would relocate to its home base, Kings Bay, Georgia. One of the ship officers posted information that he was willing to pay someone to drive his car from Groton, CT to Kings Bay, Georgia. I offered my service to drive the car. During our conversation the officer shared he owned a manual car. My mouth dropped and immediately informed him that I've never driven a manual car before. The officer trained me for one week on how to shift the gears. I was filled with high anxiety, and I prayed for safe travels. I prayed to shift gears with ease and comfort. I delivered the car to the officer without any problems.

In the text of Isaiah 40:31, the writer Isaiah is sharing a word of encouragement to the children of Israel by saying if you wait on the Lord, your life will begin a shift like a manual car. When you shift to first gear, you will soar on wings like eagles. When you shift to second gear, you will run and not grow weary. When you shift to third and final gear, you will walk and not faint. Once you are in third gear, you will glide to your divine destiny. However, the only way this shift will take place is that you must wait on God to instruct you when to make the shift. In a manual car, you will know when to shift because of the movement of the engine. A shift can take place in your life, only when you follow the movement of God.

Prayer

God in your spirit, I position myself to be shifted in the direction you desire for me. God, I will only move when you instruct me to move. O Lamb of God, I am waiting patiently on you. Here, am I, let the shift begin. Amen.

DAY 4

Saturday, February 21, 2026

Tear It Down

Bro. Armand Buford

Scripture – Judges 6:11-12, 25-26 (NIV)

¹¹ The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹² When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”

²⁵ That same night the Lord said to him, “Take the second bull from your father’s herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father’s altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. ²⁶ Then build a proper kind of altar to the Lord your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering.”

Shifting Identity

We find Gideon in this scripture, hiding food. Hiding food from the Midianites and other hostile enemies who are tormenting him and his people. The children of Israel are in a cycle of apostasy. They honor God, fall into sin, suffer because of their sin, cry out to God, who would then forgive and restore them, and the cycle would start over again. Sound familiar? We can often find ourselves in the same pattern in some aspects of our lives. Perhaps something we said we would stop doing or a promise we made to God that we continue to struggle to keep, or a fear we can’t seem to overcome that seems to overpower us each time we decide to take a stand.

But the angel of the Lord calls Gideon a mighty warrior, despite his current situation. The Lord saw Gideon’s true identity, not the current one he was accustomed to living within. God was calling Gideon to a mighty work that called for a mighty warrior. But before Gideon could take on the challenge, the angel instructed Gideon to do something that seemingly had nothing to do with the mission. He instructed Gideon to go and destroy his father’s altars he had constructed to honor the false gods of Baal and Asherah. There were some idols that had to be destroyed before Gideon could take on his mission. In my opinion there could not be a shift until some family strongholds were broken and God was put in his proper place, as the one true God, the true source of our strength, and the One who truly fights our battles.

What idols, bad habits or destructive mindsets do you need to tear down? What is God calling you to do? Is there anything God needs you to deal with before making your shift? Take some time to ask God to reveal anything in your life that has become a dependency more than the Lord. And then ask God to tear it down, so you can shift to a closer walk with the Lord and more confidence in who He has called you to be.

REFLECTION DAY

Sunday, February 22, 2026

How is God calling you to shift this week?

DAY 5

Monday, February 23, 2026

Shift the Way You Obey

Sis. Shantana T. Stewart

Hebrews 6:10 (KJV)

For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

When our children were small, a Christian babysitter taught them a saying that we came to appreciate.

"Obey right away, all the way, in a happy way," Ms. Carolyn Boles chirped in response to pudgy fingers that reached for electric socket guards that the kids knew were off limits, food from a friend's plate and other offenses.

Ms. Boles was known for her loving ways and firm correction. We appreciated the balance, and quickly found ourselves as young parents in school learning lessons from the sage. Through the years, no matter the children's ages, from elementary school until they matriculated to college and eventually became young adults, we found ourselves parroting the adage at home.

But we knew better than to just talk. We took the Habakkuk 2:2 scripture—write the vision, and make it plain—literally. More than once, when it was obvious relearning a lesson was needed, both Samuel and Sydney were assigned with writing the saying twice their age as a form of "creative reinforcement."

The wisdom of the saying held weight with us adults as well. Life was much when we took our own advice and obeyed our Heavenly Father right away, all the way, in a happy way.

Just like we were not impressed when Samuel or Sydney took on a task out of performance or obligation with a huff of frustration or anger, we shifted our thinking about lockstep obedience to God. Instead, we came to consider the benefit of obedience and service to God and others inspired by love and devotion.

We "get to" serve God by serving others. That shift from "have to" to "get to" can make obedience sweet. I get to serve my church and the marketplace with my spiritual gifts. I get to go grocery shopping for my family. I get to participate in activities to support my children.

The next time you are faced with an opportunity to obey and/or serve, challenge yourself to picture the smile your Heavenly Father will flash as He looks on your efforts.

DAY 6

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Shifting Your Mindset

Sis. Shay Davenport

Joshua 1: 2-3 (NIV)

Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

I may not know a lot about cars, but the one thing I am fascinated by is their ability to get us from point A to B to C to D by shifting gears. Whether you are driving an automatic transmission vehicle or a manual transmission vehicle, the gears must be able to shift for you to arrive at your desired destination. Otherwise, if the gears don't shift as expected, you become stuck. And being stuck becomes an issue, especially as things around you keep moving and arriving at their next desired location.

In Joshua 1:2-3, God commands Joshua to get himself and His people ready to cross the Jordan River into the land He has promised them. Joshua and the people had to get ready for the shift that was about to happen. The people had been wandering in the wilderness (parked), their leader, Moses, had died and they were mourning (neutral), and now God was ready to give them their promise (drive). God wanted them to shift forward to reach their promised destination.

While an automatic transmission may not need any assistance when shifted to the drive gear, a manual transmission does require assistance. The pressing of the clutch prepares the car to drive forward based on the desire to accelerate the speed. The clutch, which is our mindset, controls the ability to: remain in park, be shifted to neutral, drive, or reverse. While these gears are there for you to arrive at your desired location, you must shift to drive. You must intentionally shift your mindset to reach your promised destination.

Prayer

Lord God, you have prepared a promised destination for us. In your sovereignty, you know what it will take for us to move forward as your people. We ask that as we come from one prepared destination and go into the next prepared destination, that you ready our hearts, minds, and actions to reflect that of a people willing and positioned to move forward into the promise you have for us.

DAY 7

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Psalms 23, An All Purpose Scripture

Sis. Sharon V. Jacobs

Psalm 23:1 (NKJV)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want

My favorite scripture, and one of the scriptures most people have memorized, is Psalm 23. I find comfort in the words of this scripture; it is the scripture I turn to in turbulent times and say it each day. Also, when someone comes to me in the midst of their trials and tribulations, I quote Psalm 23 to them stating how it says that you may go through the valley of the shadow of death, emphasizing that we go through but we also come out. Because this scripture is so inspiring to me, I wanted to know why David wrote this scripture. I found that David wrote Psalm 23 to express deep trust and thankfulness to God. He used his experience as a shepherd and the familiar imagery of God as a guiding, protecting Shepherd and a generous Host who provides for all needs, even through life's darkest valleys. It was a song of comfort for David reflecting on God's consistent provision and care during both good times and times of peril, from his youth as a shepherd to his reign as king.

As we embrace the shift, know that it will be transformative in direction, mindset and relationship with God moving from the old self to a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says a new creation is a believer in Jesus who experiences radical spiritual rebirth, a transformed identity, a new nature empowered by the Holy Spirit and a life of reconciliation with God, leaving the old sinful life behind for a fresh start and new purpose (i.e., a shift). As we go through this shift things won't be perfect and there will be challenges. Having Psalm 23 to turn to makes it easy to make the shift because it assures us that no matter what we go through, the Lord is with us.

Do you have the mindset to make the shift? What will it take for you to embrace a shift?

DAY 8

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Quiet Shift

Rev. Dr. Roshaunda D. Cade

Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)

The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

I don't know who needs to hear this, but God is with you. He delights in you. He rejoices over you. I'll say it again. God is with you. He delights in you. He rejoices over you.

This is such a simple yet powerful message. In the midst of all that is going on in the world, the Creator of the world is thinking about you. He is with you. He delights in you. He rejoices over you.

I keep repeating it because repetition helps move God's truths from just being words on a page to words in your mind. And the more you repeat His word to yourself, His truth moves from head knowledge to heart knowledge. Once God's word is hidden in your heart, it empowers you to live a life that doesn't sin against Him, because your life is rooted in His truth.

And the truth is that He is with you. He delights in you. He rejoices over you.

Moving from head knowledge to heart knowledge of God's truth is a quiet shift. This shift doesn't announce itself to the world. Rather, it finds its home in the secret places of your heart and shifts you from the inside out.

Once you believe in your heart that God is with you, that He delights in you, and that He rejoices over you, your life will shift. Maybe you'll shift from complacency to contentment, from fear to faith, from haughtiness to humility, or from greed to grace. However God is shifting you in this season, remember to also seek the quiet shift that moves His word from head knowledge to heart knowledge.

Application

Ask God which scriptures He wants to move from head knowledge to heart knowledge in you. Then meditate on those scriptures and ask Him to make a quiet shift in your life.

DAY 9

Friday, February 27, 2026

Seeing God in the Middle of the Noise

Rev. Marlon Rhodeman

Scripture: Isaiah 43:18–19 (NLT)

But forget all that— it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

If you want a real life definition of the word shift, come spend a weekday at my house. Seven kids moving in every direction. Two golden doodles convinced they are guard dogs and therapy dogs at the same time. Two birds offering background commentary. Five guinea pigs who apparently live on a strict schedule they never shared with us. And right in the middle of it all is my amazing wife and me, both in grad school, trying to remember what day it is. Somehow, we are also juggling papers, deadlines, late night reading, and early morning alarms. I am a realtor. A media director at church. A director of marketing and communications at my other job. My wife is carrying her own full load with grace and grit. Life is full. Beautiful. Loud. And very busy.

Lent meets us right there. Not asking us to quit everything or escape responsibility but inviting a shift in how we live inside it all. Because busy can quietly become a spiritual blind spot. We start mistaking constant movement for purpose and exhaustion for faithfulness.

Isaiah reminds us that God is already doing something new. The problem is not that God is absent. The problem is that we are often too rushed to notice. The shift is learning to see God in the middle of the noise. In shared glances across the kitchen. In prayers whispered between meetings. In choosing presence over productivity.

God is not waiting for life to slow down before showing up. God makes rivers in dry places. Even crowded ones. Even chaotic ones. Lent invites us to release the pressure to be everywhere and do everything and instead trust that God is already here.

Reflection and Application

Where has busyness begun to replace awareness of God in your daily life?

What would shifting from constant doing to intentional presence look like for you and your family?

This week choose one daily moment to slow down together, breathe, pray, and thank God for meeting you in the middle of your full life.

DAY 10

Saturday, February 28, 2026

It's Time to Lock In

Sis. Candice Farrell

John 14:16-17 (NIV)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

Consider a professional football player during a game. The stadium is loud—fans screaming to prevent a First Down, music and announcers blaring over the loudspeaker, opponents taunting each other; yet, when the quarterback calls or signals the play, the players are trained to lock in on that one voice. They don't pause and debate the play called, nor do they check with the opposing team to confirm their routes. They block out all other external noise so they can follow the right voice. So, the question becomes how do they do this? It's because they've practiced it and they trust that the quarterback will deliver the ball to the designated spot on the route because their success depends on obedience.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit speaks to us as believers. The world may not recognize his voice but we as God's children have the Holy Spirit who is with us always. But how do we know it's the Holy Spirit? Learning to hear Him means we must be in relationship with God, intentionally blocking out the competing voices and responding to Him with the same trust as a football player depending on his quarterback to feed him a touchdown reception. We must be so locked in and obedient that even when situations become uncomfortable, we are steadfast in recognizing the voice of the Lord.

Jesus promised that he would never leave us or forsake us, and, in this passage, he told us that he left us with "another advocate, the Holy Spirit." This means that he is with us always, but we must focus on maintaining a relationship with God to hear him and being so confident in the voice of the Lord.

In this next season, we are being called to Shift, but how can you shift when you are easily succumbed to your negative thoughts, fears, and the opinions of others? It's time to strengthen your relationship with God and lock into the only voice that will never lead you astray.

REFLECTION DAY

Sunday, March 1, 2026

How is God calling you to shift this week?

DAY 11

Monday, March 2, 2026

A Shift in Heart Posture

Sis. Idalis Williams

Scripture: Psalm 139:24 (NLT)

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

There are seasons when our outward faith looks healthy, but our inward posture tells a different story. I know this all too well, attending church regularly, participating in Bible study, reading Scripture, and praying daily, yet my heart and mind couldn't have been further from God. Faith became a checklist, doing what I believe a "good Christian" was supposed to do. Somewhere along the way I convinced myself that showing up and performing the outward expressions of faith would cover the stench of my rotting heart.

That's not how it works. And during this season, I felt incredibly far from God.

I knew what He had done for me in the past, but this was a new chapter. I was walking in blessings I had once prayed for, yet pride quietly settled into my heart. I began to believe my hard work was what got me here. And while effort played a role, it was God who blessed me. Still, no matter how much I achieved or how much I poured into others, there was a pit inside me I couldn't fill.

Resentment crept in slowly. Hurt, envy, and anger became familiar companions. I carried disappointment like a badge of honor, all while convincing myself that if I kept God just within arm's reach, I could stay in control and pretend I was including Him while never fully surrendering.

It was in this place that Psalm 139 met me. David invites God to do more than bless him, he asks God to *search* him. "Search me, O God, and know my heart." It's a dangerous prayer when you've learned to hide behind spiritual activity, yet it's also deeply comforting. Psalm 139 reminds us that there is nowhere we can go, no pride, resentment, or self deception where God is absent. He knows us fully and stays anyway. Even when our faith is performative and our hearts feel unclean, He is never too far. All He asks is that we call out to Him honestly.

Application and Reflection

Where has resentment (towards others or yourself) hardened your heart? During this Lenten season, ask God to reveal one place where He wants to soften, heal, restore, and shift your heart posture.

DAY 12

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Shift!

Deac. Philippe B. Cade

Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Growing up, my favorite arcade/video game was Pole Position, and I wasn't alone. It was the most popular and highest grossing video game in the US, and internationally, in 1983 and 1984. It's been quite a while since I last played, but I still remember how it works. The player assumes the role of a Formula One race car driver who is attempting to compete in a race at the Fuji Speedway. As the starting lights count down to green (3... 2 ... 1), you'll be in low gear. However, as you accelerate away from the starting line, you need to shift into high gear at around 100 mph. The goal is to get through the course as fast as possible so that you can make it to the next level or course ... but ... you're never going to qualify for the next level if you don't shift into high gear.

This concept applies to us in a spiritual sense, too. For us to get to that next level in our spiritual walk and growth, we need to “shift” into high gear as we accelerate through life. With that said, what does “shifting into high gear” involve? It involves the following:

- **Embracing change** – a change in what you say, where you go, what you think, how you talk and walk.
- **Pursuing transformation** – transformation and renewal of your heart and mind.
- **Radically reordering of your priorities** – changing over from pleasing self to pleasing God.

Lastly, the key to the shift is consistency – consistently doing those things noted above, which will “shift” us closer to God.

3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Are you ready to shift into high gear – for the Lord?

DAY 13

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

The Abundant Life

Rev. Burton Barr, Jr.

John 10:10 (NKJV)

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

My friend, Deacon Delester Jefferson, told a story about the time his organization took a group of children to Six Flags. One of the little boys got separated from the group and was lost. Deacon Jefferson found a security officer and told him that one of the children was lost.

The officer asked, “Does the boy know he is lost?” Deacon Jefferson was confused by the question. The officer explained that until the boy realizes that he is lost, he will just blend in with the rest of the children that were in the park.

Sure enough, when the little boy ran out of tokens, he looked around for his group. When he didn’t see any of them he became frightened and started crying. Then someone took the frightened little boy to one of the security officers and he was reunited with his group. But none of that happened until the little boy realized that he was lost.

A lot of people are lost but they don’t know it. They think the stuff that they are doing is just a part of life. They think lying is just a part of life. They think cheating is just a part of life. They think doing whatever it takes to “get that money” is just a part of life.

But none of that is a part of the life that God desires for us. That is how Satan wants us to live and think. He came to steal our hope, kill our dreams and destroy our lives. But Jesus shifted everything when he went to Calvary one Friday evening. And he sealed it when he got up on that third day morning. Now we can live the abundant life that he told us about.

But we can’t stop there. Let’s shift and be like the security officer. Let’s lead some lost soul to Jesus so that he or she can live the abundant life as well.

DAY 14

Thursday, March 5, 2026

God is Shifting You to Your Breakthrough

Sis. Lolita Buford

Daniel 10:12-14 (NIV)

Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”

In Daniel 10, Daniel is living amid geopolitical unrest, transition and instability. Nothing around him feels secure. God downloads revelation about these circumstances into Daniel’s human frame, and its weight troubles him deeply. In response, Daniel commits to fasting and praying for 21 days to gain clarity. When a heavenly messenger finally appears with God’s response, the messenger explains that Daniel’s prayers were heard immediately, but the response was delayed due to spiritual opposition.

For a shift to take place, we must recognize that spiritual forces oppose breakthrough. When the messenger reached Daniel, he assured him that God’s response had already been established in heaven but was temporarily delayed by opposing spiritual forces. Daniel’s delay wasn’t denial. God sent reinforcements, and the answer was released at the appointed time.

When we align ourselves with God, we begin to operate from His perspective rather than our own. We gain strength by remembering that Jesus makes intercession for us, we are seated with Christ in heavenly places, and that Jesus Himself is our reinforcement in the spiritual realm. From that place of faith alignment, He delivers breakthrough in every area we are willing to lay at His feet.

Reflection Questions

1. Where in your life do you sense God calling you to shift your focus upward rather than remaining fixed on visible circumstances?
2. What area have you been tempted to interpret as defeat, when God may already be working behind the scenes to release His answer?

DAY 15

Friday, March 6, 2026

A Shift in Control

Sis. Idalis Williams

Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV)

Forget the former things, do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Control often disguises itself as responsibility, preparation, or wisdom. For me, it showed up as overthinking, overplanning, and trying to manage outcomes not just for myself but others as well. I wanted certainty about the future and peace in the present, but instead I found myself anxious the moment things slipped out of my hands. Waiting on God felt unbearable, especially when I couldn't understand what He was doing.

Then came the unraveling. One area of life after another began to feel uprooted. Just when I thought I was making progress, something else would hit, leaving me feeling further behind than where I started. In those moments, I realized God wasn't punishing me but rather inviting me to surrender. And surrender is rarely gentle on our self control.

Isaiah 43 speaks directly into this tension. God says, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" I realized that part of my struggle wasn't just fear, it was familiarity. I was clinging to what I knew, even when God was calling me forward. I wanted Him to move, but only in ways I could predict or manage.

Lent is a season that exposes what we've been gripping too tightly. God does not ask us to understand everything. He asks us to trust Him fully. A shift in control is not passive; it's active dependence. It's choosing obedience when the path feels unclear and believing that God's timing is not slow, but intentional.

When we release control, we don't fall apart, we are held together by a God who is already making a way. Even when we can't see it yet.

Reflection and Application

What is one area of your life you've been trying to control instead of surrender? This week, practice releasing it through prayer and intentional trust, asking God to help you shift and obey even without full understanding.

DAY 16

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Shifting Your Mindset on Suffering

Sis. Jessica Hurn

Romans 5:3–4 (NIV)

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

If you listen to most gospel playlists, you will hear songs about joy, peace, healing, protection, mercy, and God's goodness. For many of us, we hear the music long before we ever read the Bible. So when we finally open Scripture, it can feel daunting—because so much of what we read talks about suffering.

Jesus suffered. The early church was persecuted. Scripture talks about dying to self, endurance, and trials. And it can feel confusing. How does all this suffering fit with the joy we sing about? Part of the tension is how we understand suffering. We already accept discomfort everywhere else in life. We change how we eat to be healthier. We work out even when it hurts. We deny spending money to steward it better. We follow rules at work and in society that do not always feel good because we believe they lead somewhere. Discomfort is not strange—we endure it all the time for things we value. But when discomfort shows up in our faith, it suddenly feels negative, self-deprecating, or unnecessary.

When Scripture talks about suffering, it is important to be clear about what it is not. Biblical suffering is not harm, abuse, injustice, or oppression. Those are products of a broken world, not things God causes or asks us to accept. Biblical suffering is chosen discomfort—allowing God to form us when obedience costs us comfort or control.

That is why Scripture tells us we can glory in our sufferings and why we are told to count it all joy. Not because discomfort feels good, but because God uses it to build endurance, mature us, and anchor us in hope.

This matters, especially in the Western church. Most of us are not being persecuted, but we are constantly being disciplined by a culture that prioritizes comfort, ease, and self-rule. Living as kingdom citizens means allowing God to form us—even when it is uncomfortable—so we can love well, live faithfully, and reflect His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Suffering is still hard. The benefit is often clearer on the other side. But when we shift our mindset, suffering stops looking like punishment and starts looking like formation.

Reflection

How is God inviting you to see suffering as formation rather than fear?

REFLECTION DAY

Sunday, March 8, 2026

How is God calling you to shift this week?

DAY 17

Monday, March 9, 2026

Go Up Higher

Deac. Christopher L. Cade

Luke 14:10a (NKJV)

So that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, Friend, go up higher.

Have you ever visited a place at a high elevation? Maybe you've gone mountain climbing or even skydiving. When you're high above sea level, the atmosphere changes – and your body feels those changes. You simply have to operate differently at higher altitudes.

At elevated heights, the air is thinner, UV rays are stronger, temperatures drop, and the air becomes much drier. Because of this, breathing becomes more difficult, dehydration sets in faster, sunburn happens quicker, and your heart works harder. To function well at higher altitudes, you must take precautions and make intentional adjustments. There are many ways to help your body acclimate, but the most essential is staying hydrated. Proper hydration prevents many of the challenges that come with high elevation.

Just as there are physical challenges at high altitudes, there are spiritual challenges at higher spiritual elevations. You may feel isolated from friends or family who prefer to stay grounded. Spiritual attacks will likely intensify—when you rise higher, you become a greater threat to the enemy. There's also a risk of spiritual burnout if you don't take care of yourself.

The higher you go physically, the more water you need. The higher you rise spiritually, the more you need the Living Water, Jesus. He is the source of our strength, nourishment, and renewal. When we stay rooted in Him, we are able to thrive, rise, and soar at higher levels. God is calling you to go up higher in 2026. Are you ready to shift into a new spiritual elevation? I encourage you to embrace this higher calling and watch how powerfully God moves in and through you—and in our church!

DAY 18

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Be Encouraged During the Shift

Rev. Joyce A. Goosby

James 1:2-4 (NIV)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

This year we know our theme for West Side is “Shift.” Biblically speaking, “Shift” signifies a sovereign, often supernatural, transition or transformation ordained by God in an individual’s life, moving them from one place to another to fulfill divine purpose. When we “Shift” in 2026 there will be spiritual change and realignment of our assignment that will require us to have faith and accept God’s will.

As we transition and transform in God, we will face some trials, but be encouraged because the testing of our faith will produce perseverance. Consider it pure joy in the “Shift” when the enemy comes up against us. When the enemy attacks your finances, consider it pure joy! When he attacks your health, consider it pure joy! When he attacks your family, consider it pure joy! My brothers and sisters, it's moments like these we have to persevere and trust God for the outcome.

Know that we lack nothing and that we are blessed (James 1:12). So during the “Shift” don’t be discouraged; be encouraged. 1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV) lets us know we can be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord our labor is not in vain.

Prayer

Father God, in the name of Jesus, let us be encouraged as we shift in 2026. When trials come our way to test our faith, help us to know we don’t have to succumb to the tricks of the enemy. Thank you, Lord, we can persevere, count it all joy and claim the victory. Father, we love and adore you. It is in Jesus’ Mighty Name we pray. Amen.

DAY 19

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Faith That Leads to Joy: God Is Shifting Us This Season

Cortney Strayhorn

Romans 5:1–5 (NIV)

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

If you are struggling with your flesh—whether through grief, job loss, broken relationships, loneliness, discouragement, or uncertainty—remember this truth: **while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**. He did not wait for us to get it together. While we were helpless, Jesus laid down His life. Because of His sacrifice, our relationship with God has been restored, and now we can live with confidence, joy, and hope, knowing we are deeply loved.

This is a daily struggle, because our flesh and our minds often pull us away from God. Without Christ, we lack true self-control. But Paul reminds us in Romans that it is Christ who gives us faith and joy—even in seasons of pressure, pain, and pruning. God uses these seasons not to break us, but to build us.

God is transforming us. He is moving us from surviving to standing, from fear to faith, from flesh-led living to Spirit-led obedience. Faith leads to a joy that comes only from God—and in this season, **God is shifting us**. He is shifting our mindset, our priorities, and where we place our trust.

So today, put your restored faith back in Christ. Rejoice. Be glad. Trust the shift. Jesus put His life on the line so that we could truly live—not to be stuck in the past, but transformed for the future.

Application

Take two minutes right now to praise and worship the Lord Jesus Christ for saving your life.

DAY 20

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Trust the One Who is in the Shift

Rev. Joy Rhodeman

Exodus 13:21-22 (NLT)

The Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to lead them on their way during the day and in a pillar of fire to give them light at night, so that they could travel day or night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never left its place in front of the people.

Shifting rarely feels like part of God’s great plan for our lives when we are living through it. More often, it feels disorienting, like life is moving faster than we can adjust, or like the ground beneath us is no longer steady. Yet, when we look at the book of Exodus, we discover that shifting is often one of the primary ways God has always moved His people forward.

Exodus tells the account of a people whose circumstances change again and again. At first, the Israelites are free and valued in Egypt, welcomed because of Joseph and all he had done to preserve the nation during famine. Over time, that history is forgotten. A new Pharaoh rises, one who does not know their story or honor their presence. What once felt secure slowly becomes dangerous. The Israelites shift from neighbors to threats, from threats to slaves.

Even when God’s promise begins to unfold, the shifting continues. When Moses demands freedom, life grows harder before it gets better. Work becomes heavier. Hope feels risky. Yet God does not abandon His people. In the midst of the plagues, God protects them. In the chaos of leaving Egypt, God leads them. And in the long stretch of wilderness wandering, God remains with them, guiding by cloud in the day and fire at night.

What keeps changing in Exodus is the setting. What stays the same is God. Through freedom and fear, through deliverance and delay, God continues to move with His people toward the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey.

During this season of Lent, we are invited to reflect on our own shifting seasons. When life feels uncertain or uncomfortable, we can remember that the shift itself may be part of God’s faithful leading, shaping us for what comes next.

Reflection

Where are we being asked to trust God in the middle of a shift, and what might it look like to follow Him one step at a time? This week, let’s ask the Lord to show us our need for certainty and spend a few quiet minutes each day praying, “God, help me to notice where You are leading me in this season of shift and to trust You through those uncertain times.”

DAY 21

Friday, March 13, 2026

Shift is Key

Rev. Jennifer Strayhorn

Mark 7:18-19 (ERV)

He said, "Do you still have trouble understanding? Surely you know that nothing that enters the mouth from the outside can make people unacceptable to God. Food does not go into a person's mind. It goes into the stomach. Then it goes out of the body." (When Jesus said this, he meant there is no food that is wrong for people to eat.)

Jesus challenges deeply rooted assumptions when He says that nothing entering a person from the outside can defile them; rather, what comes from the heart is what matters. This teaching required a major *shift* for His listeners. Dietary laws had shaped Jewish identity for generations, yet Jesus pointed them toward a deeper, heart-centered holiness. The Jewish allegiance to the laws had left them void of their relationship with God and others - especially the new Gentile converts—because they weren't kosher (pun intended).

The early church wrestled intensely with this change. Through prayer, Scripture, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit—seen in Peter's vision and the Jerusalem Council—they learned to place obedience to God above long-standing *tradition*, allowing unity and mission to take priority over ritual (Acts 10; Acts 15).

Think about the **Shift** key on a computer keyboard. By itself, it seems minor. But when pressed, everything changes—letters become capitalized, new symbols appear, and meaning expands. Without it, communication is limited. In the same way, allowing God to "press" a *shift* in our lives opens us to deeper clarity, greater impact, and spiritual growth.

The ability to *shift* still matters today. In the modern church, we often hold tightly to familiar structures, methods, or worship styles. While tradition can be a gift, it can also become a barrier if we resist the Spirit's movement. God's truth remains constant, but our understanding and application of it must *shift* as He leads us into new seasons. We can capitalize on the immensity of God as he appears to us and expands our Reach.

Reflection Questions

- What belief, habit, or comfort might God be inviting you to shift so your faith can grow deeper?
- How could embracing change become an opportunity for God to reveal something new about His purpose in your life?

DAY 22

Saturday, March 14, 2026

No More Spectators

Sis. Nia Hodges

Ephesians 4:11-13 (CSB)

And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.

I find that every time I read this passage, I focus on the different roles and titles listed. West Side has produced many of these—pastors, teachers, and leaders who faithfully pour into the body of Christ. As a member, you have access to strong teaching and spiritual guidance. But what happens after the equipping of the saints (you) is complete? Do you step into the work of ministry? If not, this devotional invites us to shift our mindset from student to servant—and even to teacher, regardless of title.

Ephesians 4 reminds us that leadership in the church is not the finish line. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers exist to equip believers for ministry, not to replace them in it. When we only receive instruction without putting it into action, we risk “playing church.” Attendance and knowledge alone do not produce maturity—obedience does.

Ministry was never meant to stop at the church doors. There are people in our neighborhoods, workplaces, and families who need to encounter Christ through us. When we assume “someone else will do it,” we quietly opt out of the mission God has given to all believers. The body of Christ functions best when every part is active. No one is unnecessary, and no gift is insignificant.

This requires a shift—from passivity to responsibility. Not responsibility rooted in pressure or guilt, but in gratitude. God gives us life, salvation, and purpose, and our response is participation. We grow into maturity when we stop asking, “Is this my role?” and start asking, “How can I serve?”

Reflection Question and Challenge

Where have I been receiving spiritual instruction without taking steps to apply it in the work of ministry? This week, intentionally serve outside of your normal routine—share your faith, encourage someone, volunteer, or meet a need. Take one concrete step from learning to doing, trusting that God can use your obedience to build up His body.

REFLECTION DAY

Sunday, March 15, 2026

How is God calling you to shift this week?

DAY 23

Monday, March 16, 2026

Shifting Perspective

Rev. Korey Davis

Psalms 139:17-18 (NIV)

How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.

God's thoughts towards you and me are invaluable and expansive. In Psalm 39, David marvels that he is never outside God's mind, finding comfort in waking up to His enduring presence. These verses assure us that God loves, knows, and cares for us and nothing can separate us from His love.

Because we know this about God and his thoughts toward us, we must push aside pessimism. The pessimistic outlook undermines faith. It only focuses on flaws, inadequacies, failures and despair. We must refute the inclination to see only the worst aspects of things or only believe that the worst will happen. When you need to counter pessimism look to the following scriptures: Philippians 4:8, Romans 15:13, Jeremiah 29:11, and Proverbs 15:15.

Question

How does knowing how God thinks about you change your perspective of yourself and others?

Assignment

Daily fill your mind with at least one scripture and a positive affirmation. Replace worrying with prayer.

Prayer

God arrest my intrusive thoughts, and in exchange give me a renewed mind.

Knowing that God—the Creator of the universe—thinks highly of you, loves you, and is always with you is spectacular. Our response should be awe-inspiring worship!

DAY 24

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Have Thine Own Way, Lord—Shift My Mindset

Rev. Dr. Gwendolyn Packnett

Isaiah 55:8 (NIV)

For my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways declares the Lord.

I'm always blessed whenever I read or hear a sermon about two of the many people in the scriptures. David and Peter come to mind as those who shifted in profound ways. Each on their individual journey, yet both destined for spiritual reliance on God.

David and Peter show how a major shift in mindset—moving from "I've got this" to "God's got this"—defines total reliance on God. Although David was a skilled shepherd, elevated to a king, and Peter was a pro fisherman, their real success only started when they decided to shift away from their own expert logic and "try God." Theirs was a journey of teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

For Peter, this shift meant letting down his nets in empty waters because God told him to do so. For David, it meant a daring shift from hiding his sin to total public repentance. Both men had to shift past "I've got this" to "God's got this," letting their own egos take a backseat so their trust in God could take the lead. In doing so, they became mighty men of God. By shifting their confidence from their own work experience to spiritual obedience, they changed from everyday workers into world-changing leaders. Their lives prove that a complete shift toward honoring God demonstrates complete reliance on Him and that spells a victory in Jesus!

Ultimately, both men achieved greatness not because of their own expertise, but through a steady shift in who they relied on. They had a shift in mindset from "I've got this" to "God's got this!" "Not my way" to "Your will be done."

Does your shift involve complete reliance on God's way?

DAY 25

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

God Prepares Us for the Journey (The Shift)

Rev. Dr. Darlene Davis

Numbers 2:34 (KJV)

And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.

Numbers is one of the books being studied in my Howard Thurman class, and I have been hearing God speak to me differently from this book. Listen to God speak to us about obedience, not just a factual account of the Israelites' encampment and upcoming departure from Mt. Sinai. The children of Israel—fallen, struggling, but redeemed—had been brought out of slavery in Egypt and were now being led by God through the desert toward the Promised Land. Just like us, their survival, their unity, and their very identity as a people were rooted in their readiness to obey the directives given to Moses, God's appointed leader.

Obedience requires surrender, trust, and sometimes a deep sense of discomfort. For the Israelites, pitching their tents by the standards and setting forward according to their family units wasn't merely a matter of organizational structure; it was an act showing submission to divine authority. They understood that their journey was dictated not by their own desires but by the leading of God, facilitated through His servant, Moses.

Wow!! Doesn't this sound like our story? Isn't God calling us to the same kind of obedience and fellowship? God still has a plan for our lives, individually and collectively, a direction in which He desires us to move. And just as the Israelites had standards to guide their journey, we have guiding principles in the Scriptures. Following God often means taking a step away from our comfort zones and trusting that He has a purpose for our steps, one that is far greater and more intricate than our limited understanding.

Dear Father, Help us to seek guidance from your Word and your set leaders and to respond with obedience. Help us God, to *shift*, trusting that You will guide us toward what you have already prepared for us. Bless us, help us God, so that our lives will be living testimonies of strong faith that reflects your glory.

"We did according to all that the LORD commanded" Amen.

DAY 26

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Shift in Attitude

Sis. Patricia Allen

1 Samuel 16:7b (NIV)

The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Reece was content with her family's accomplishments: a lovely home, successful careers, and three happy children. Yet she struggled with her mother-in-law's criticisms: she frowned often, found fault in her efforts and suggested nothing she did met her standards.

The children were well mannered, but then again, one of them yanked the screen door off its hinges. It was the door she told them not to open. One time, according to her mother-in-law, her daughter moved too slowly when she told her to wear a "decent" blouse. Although her mother-in-law ate dinner with them regularly, she subtly hinted, this was overcooked, and that was undercooked. It was always something!

One day Reece stopped by her mother-in-law's house to drop off tax papers. She noticed something was different about her mother-in-law. She observed a subtle drag in her mother-in-law's left foot. She approached her and made direct eye contact. "Mother, are you feeling, okay?" she asked. Her mother-in-law answered slowly, and when she did, Reece noticed a slight droop in her lip. It hit her! Between dinner last night, and this afternoon, her mother-in-law had a stroke!

Reece kept her composure and asked, "Could you come to the ER with me?" She drove quickly but carefully, making sure not to raise concern. Upon arrival, she informed the nurse, within the past twenty-four hours, she suspected her mother-in-law had suffered a stroke. This was later confirmed.

Reece and her mother-in-law grew closer after that day. They were kind and more accepting towards each other. Reece realized the constant disapproval was predicated on her mother-in-law's loneliness, fear of abandonment, and feelings of uselessness. When we only see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, we miss the heart connection. God wants us to love each other from the heart.

Which relationships or situations require you to "shift" your attitude?

DAY 27

Friday, March 20, 2026

Main Character Energy

Sis. Tenecia Strayhorn

Matthew 16:24 (NIV)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

“It’s not about you.” Those are the famous first words from Rick Warren’s book, *The Purpose Driven Life*. We live in a culture that constantly tells us to be the main character in our story. Everything from social media trends to self-help books encourages us to put ourselves first. But Jesus calls us to something radically different: *deny yourself*.

Recently, I had a moment that tested this truth. I was rushing to get to church for sound check when an ambulance and fire truck blocked my driveway. My first thought was to knock on my neighbor’s door and ask the first responders to move the ambulance so I could leave. (*Shame on me, I know.*) In that moment, I was the main character in my own script. I was focused only on what I needed to do and completely disregarded the fact that my neighbor was experiencing a health emergency. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit nudged me to shift my focus. Instead of stewing in my frustration, I prayed for my neighbor. Within minutes, the emergency vehicles left, and I still made it to church, just a little late. That small shift changed everything.

When we stop centering life around ourselves and make Jesus the main character, our perspective changes. Our inconveniences become opportunities to reflect His love. Our plans become secondary to His purpose. This isn’t easy, but it’s the way of a disciple.

Reflection Question

Where do you need to shift from being the main character in your life and let Jesus take center stage?

Challenge

This week, when things don’t go your way, pause and ask: *How can I glorify Jesus in this moment?* Then act on it.

DAY 28

Saturday, March 21, 2026

A Time to *Shift*

Sis. Yaya Buford

Ecclesiastes 3:10-11 (NKJV)

I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

The book of Ecclesiastes chapter three paints the picture of *times* and *seasons*, and in my belief, times and seasons are strongly anchored in our varying God-given tasks. In one season you plant, the next you steward, and finally, you reap. When you are planting you need soil, and when you are stewarding you need tools. You have to *shift* the way you tend to the plant based on what it needs at that moment. If God has already planted purpose in the soil of your heart and you refuse to steward it, how will you grow? You *can't*. You will simply grow frustrated with your circumstances and refuse to take accountability for your growth. *But this is not the end..*

You may have heard of the famous saying, “success doesn’t happen overnight,” but transformation does. Your ability to shift the way you steward your purpose will make a difference, and ultimately lead to life that is much more abundant in Christ. Transformation requires change, and change requires effort, not perfection.

For some people, that means moving to a new city, joining a new church, exercising and eating more wisely, prioritizing your relationship with God, His Word, and community. Whatever it may be, God has planted purpose inside of you, the tools you need—God has provided for you, but that which God has given you, needs to be stewarded by you.

Don’t be afraid of the shift that is taking place in your life, and be not *afraid* of trials we are collectively experiencing in this world, be the change you want to see, advocate for those in *need*, and don’t let complacency be the epitome of your defeat. God is enough, so shift with Him.

May the LORD God bless you and keep you.

REFLECTION DAY

Sunday, March 22, 2026

How is God calling you to shift this week?

DAY 29

Monday, March 23, 2026

A Change 'Gon Come

Rev. Mary Adou Gbo

Matthew 6:6a (KJV)

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet

One of my favorite places to pray is in my bedroom closet. This was a daily habit and practice of mine while preparing my son, Noah, for college. I needed a quiet place where I could have intimacy with God, believing Him to meet Noah's every need. For months, Noah had been applying for scholarships but, instead, had come across an application for a zero interest loan offered by a local foundation. His advisor encouraged him to apply, saying, "It'll be there if needed."

We hesitated to apply, because throughout his senior year of high school, I had been declaring that student loans, especially federal ones, would not bind him. But something about this particular application felt different. Noah applied all while holding on to God's promises, and it wasn't long before he received notice of approval, but instead of a loan, the foundation awarded him a \$10,000 grant!

The notice stated they "had extra funds on reserve and decided to gift you a grant instead."

God be praised! He did an exceedingly-abundantly-above-all-that-we-could-ask-or-think kind of thing. God turned a loan into a grant, like He changed water into wine. What do you need God to do for you? And when was the last time you declared it? Go find yourself a closet knowing you have entered into the secret place, believing a change 'gon come.

DAY 30

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Shifting Gears

Sis. Gwendolyn J. Wesley

Isaiah 30:21 (NIV)

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

When I was 16 years old, I wanted a driver's license. My dad allowed me to drive to church on most Sundays to get some experience. Our car had an **automatic transmission**, so I did not have to worry about shifting gears. The car was equipped to do that based on the amount of pressure applied to the gas pedal. Dad would warn: "Slow down...you're going too fast...watch that parked car when you turn...stay in your lane." From his coaching I was prepared to take the driver's test.

Unfortunately, my dad worked during the hours that the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) was open. I shared my dilemma with a friend who offered to take me. One problem: my friend's car had a **manual, 4-speed transmission!** I had to take full responsibility for shifting gears by engaging the ever-critical **clutch**, which allowed the engine to disengage and re-engage to change gears. That had to be done at the right time to prevent stalling or lurching forward or rolling backwards. To accelerate or decelerate, shifting gears had to be done in proper order before moving into the 4th and final cruising gear. Sometimes it was necessary to shift down to adjust to traffic flow.

Life can feel like we are constantly shifting gears to manage whatever situations we encounter. While my dad and my friend were my driving coaches--I can still hear their voices, God is my **forever life coach**. He guides me daily, helps me understand when I need to shift gears, when and how to engage the **clutch** to release things and people in my life, allowing me to get to a "faith cruising speed" with fewer stalls or lurches or backslides. It is my responsibility, however, to seek God, to know Him better, to listen for His instruction and adjust my actions as He leads.

Question

What gear shifting do you need to make using God's word and His wisdom as your clutch?

DAY 31

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

I Didn't See That Coming
Rev. Dr. Rosalind P. Denson

Acts 9:3-6 (NLT)

As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" "Who are you, lord?" Saul asked. And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

What do you do when the unexpected occurs? You didn't see it coming, but "the thing" was so devastating that life would never be the same again. In moments like these, we have choices. We can ignore it and move forward, as if nothing has changed (not recommended). We can sit paralyzed in disbelief, complaining that God has let us down. Or we can embrace our *now*—make peace with our current reality—and allow God to meet us there.

Saul found himself in such a moment. A young, well-educated Jewish man of privilege, he was zealous in following the Torah and respected by religious leaders. He had a lot to say about a new group called *The Way*—followers of Jesus Christ who worshiped God in ways that challenged tradition. They proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah and lived by a Law of Love rooted in a personal relationship with God. Saul was so zealous, he threatened their lives and pursued them as far as Damascus. But God had a different plan.

On the road to Damascus, Saul encountered the risen Christ. A bright light shone from heaven, and Saul fell as Jesus asked, "Why are you persecuting me?" In that moment, Saul's world shifted—his understanding of God, of himself, and of his purpose. Struck blind, he was led into the city, forced to depend on others, and wait on God.

Paul, as he later became known, responded in three ways that guide us when life shakes us:

1. **Retreat:** He made space to spend time with God and reorient himself.
2. **Receive Help:** He accepted guidance from Ananias with humility.
3. **Go Forth Boldly:** Once restored, he embraced his new calling.

This is still a viable approach to unexpected change. Look for God in the midst of the disruption. Accept the new reality with God-sent help. And when the time comes, move forward—changed, clearer, and courageous—trusting that God is at work.

Reflection Questions

Think of a time when the unexpected caused you to "shift." How did you respond? Where did you see God at work?

DAY 32

Thursday, March 26, 2026

Focus on the Living

Sis. Nia Hodges

Luke 24:5-6 (CSB)

So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground. “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” asked the men. “He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee,”

During my 21-day Daniel Fast, I kept hearing the phrase, “focus on the living.” At first, I wondered if it was sparked by the nature of the fast itself—being called away from foods that died before consumption. But as the days went on, it became clear this phrase was Holy Spirit-inspired.

My focus scripture takes place on the morning of Jesus’ resurrection, when the women arrive at the tomb looking for Him. Instead of finding death, they are met with a question that demands a shift: “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” (Luke 24:5 CSB). Like these women, I realized I also needed encouragement to move from focusing on what has ended to embracing what is alive.

To focus on the living requires a shift—from finality to forward movement, from thinking “this is over” to believing “God is still doing something.” I can think of several areas in my own life where I lingered in dead places: expired relationships, closed doors, and seasons God had already completed. I’m sure you can too.

The women went to the tomb because that’s where Jesus *had* been. How often do we do the same? We revisit old spaces out of habit or fear of the unknown. Jesus was in that friendship. He was in that opportunity. He was in that season—but He has moved on. Why do we stay behind? Do we doubt that God can provide better, or do we settle because resurrection feels risky? Focusing on the living means recognizing that Jesus cannot be found in spaces He has already moved past. The angels’ question was not condemnation—it was redirection. It was an invitation to lift their eyes and step into resurrection reality.

Reflection Question

Where in your life are you still looking for the living among the dead?

Challenge

Ask God to reveal one area where He is inviting you to shift. Then take one intentional step this week—release, obey, or trust—to align your focus with where He is bringing life now.

DAY 33

Friday, March 27, 2026

Shift in Perspective

Sis. Patricia Allen

Isaiah 55:8 (NIV)

For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, ' declares the Lord

Several years ago, I commuted to work by taking the EXPRESS bus downtown. After getting off at my stop, I still had six blocks to walk to get to my office building. Almost every morning, a homeless man—dirty, disheveled, weary looking—would approach me and ask if I had any money to spare. The first time this happened, I hesitated briefly before deciding to give him two dollars. As our encounters became more regular, I kept a few dollars on hand for him.

On another day, I noticed a man, who appeared to be Rastafarian, walking barefoot on the cold, icy streets. Wanting to help, I went to the nearest Goodwill Store and bought him a pair of shoes. I found him and offered him the shoes. He looked at them, frowned, and rejected my offer. He said they weren't new or the right size and asked why I was giving them to him when I wouldn't want them for myself.

After three months or so, I no longer saw the homeless man when getting off the bus. I assumed he was panhandling somewhere else. Then one morning, I spotted a well-groomed man in a sharp three-piece suit carrying an attaché case heading my way. As we exchanged greetings, our eyes met briefly, and suddenly it struck me—he was the same homeless man that had been asking me for money!

When I saw that the well-dressed man was the same person who had panhandled me for months, I felt deceived, hustled. What a fool I had been for trying to help. The Rastafarian hurt my feelings. He rejected my gift and accused me of buying something for him that I would not buy for myself. I thought, this is the thanks I get.

Conclusion

A shift in my perspective in regard to these two encounters, showed me God's hand at work: God let me see the homeless man restored. God used the Rastafarian to show me my heart. What has a shift in your perspective shown you about God? What has a shift in your perspective shown you about yourself?

DAY 34

Saturday, March 28, 2026

True Discipleship
Deac. Reggie Harris

Matthew 16:24 (ESV)

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

What is the cost of true discipleship? What does it mean to truly follow Christ?

Jesus told his disciples that he was going to be killed, buried, and raised on the third day. Peter, however, didn't agree with that plan. Jesus had to rebuke Peter who was trying to keep the Lord from dying, as though he could. Isn't this why the Lord Jesus came in the first place?

Peter wanted Jesus to follow his plan. Clearly, he did not hear Jesus' comment that he would be raised on the third day. Therefore, Peter had not shifted his attitude from the present to a future hope.

Change is not always easy. As followers of Jesus Christ, sometimes we get comfortable the way things are, and we allow complacency to set in. If things are going well with us, why change? Even still, sometimes we have our own agenda concerning God, and we attempt to guide him.

Jesus said that if anyone wanted to follow him, they must first deny themselves. In other words, we must first shift our attitudes from one that focuses on ourselves and our wants. We have to do away with our own selfish attitudes and sometimes the status quo. We cannot expect the Sovereign Lord to follow our plans, as Peter wanted Jesus to do. We must focus on the future hope that Christ brings.

Some believers are comfortable with following Christ at a distance and are not willing to risk much. However, true discipleship comes with a cost. We must deny ourselves, pick up our cross and follow Christ. This is a daily endeavor, and we must be ready to shift wherever Christ leads us.

Are you ready to make this shift?

REFLECTION DAY

Sunday, March 29, 2026

How is God calling you to shift this week?

DAY 35

Monday, March 30, 2026

Shifting Away from Shame

Rev. Dawn Jones

Romans 8:1 (NIV)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The Lenten season invites us into repentance and closer relationship with God. Many times we repent out of shame and condemnation rather than the conviction of the Holy Spirit and our love for Him. Shame tells us lies that will try to keep us from truly experiencing the fullness of God's forgiveness.

Many of us confess our sins, ask God for forgiveness, and yet continue to punish ourselves long after God has released us. We replay the mistake. We rehearse the failure. We rehearse the way we wish things would've happened. We lower our heads in spiritual self-disqualification and despair. The enemy declares war in our minds and shame takes over our thoughts, reminding us of the filth of our sins. It's important that we fight to remember that this is NOT from God. The voice that is telling you how bad you are or that you're stupid is NOT from God. That voice is not holy, it's accusatory. God loves us, God forgives us, God does not keep a record of wrong, and God restores us back to right relationship with him.

Conviction leads us toward God. Shame drives us away from Him. Shame says, *"I am what I did."* Grace says, *"I am who God says I am."*

During this season of Lent and this year of shifting, allow repentance to produce transformation in your life and not torment. Jesus did not go to the cross so you could be forgiven but still feel unworthy to be loved. He wants you to experience the depths of freedom and forgiveness in Him.

So, as we are in a season of intentional reflection and remembrance of what Jesus did on the cross. Ask yourself honestly:

- Am I agreeing more with God's forgiveness or with my own self-judgment?
- Do I believe God's grace is enough for *others* more than it is for me?
- What would it look like to trust God's mercy instead of my guilt?

DAY 36

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

An Unexpected Shift

Sis. Sharon V. Jacobs

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

The forecast for a major winter storm came out and due to that forecast, church leadership decided to shift our Sunday church service to Friday night so the parishioners would not have to try to go to church in the snowstorm on Sunday. The notice of the change was communicated and the service was held. The service was videotaped to be streamed on all of their media platforms on Sunday so the parishioners that were unable to attend the service on Friday night were able to view it Sunday morning. This shift that leadership made ensured that we wouldn't miss the Sunday morning worship service. In-person service on Sunday was cancelled but everyone who wanted to have service had a way to do it. This was a shift from the norm but making that shift allowed flexibility in how we were able to attend our Sunday service.

The ability to shift is an essential component of spiritual growth. It means being open to God's guidance even when it means changing direction in life. Sometimes we might want to shift slowly but other times we might need to shift quickly. As we go through this shift, we must be flexible and ready to move slowly or quickly and be willing to let God move us from one level to another as he shifts us to a new dimension of spiritual reality. We will have a greater sense of awareness and a new wider perspective on life and a deep sense of purpose. Jeremiah 29:11 says that God promises His people good plans for a future with hope.

Are you open to God's guidance even if it means changing direction in life? Will you embrace the ability to shift for spiritual growth?

DAY 37

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Shift Your Priorities

Rev. Helen R. Bryant

Luke 10:38-42 (NKJV)

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Service and/or Worship

We are familiar with the story of Mary and Martha in the referenced passage of scripture. They are true followers of Jesus, and both are dedicated to worshiping Him, each in her own way. While Jesus is visiting, Martha chooses to cook and clean, making sure that everything is perfect for her Lord, while Mary chooses to sit at Jesus' feet, listening and learning as He speaks. Martha is sincere in preparing and serving, but she becomes overwhelmed, frustrated and distracted. So much so that she complained to Jesus that her sister was not helping her. Jesus politely tells Martha that while she is worried with busyness, Mary has chosen not to bother with the busy work but to sit and listen attentively to His teachings, which is "the good part."

The Shift

There is absolutely nothing wrong with being a good servant and displaying hospitality, but we must first know how to become one. What better way to learn than to sit at the feet of Jesus, listening attentively as He speaks. To do this, we must shift our focus from busy work to studying God's Word and pursuing a personal relationship with Him. If we have a deep desire to learn from Jesus, we understand that spending time with Him is more crucial than preparations.

Point to Ponder

Mary cherished the time with Jesus and focused entirely on his presence. Martha showed wonderful hospitality welcoming Jesus into her home, but she got lost in the distractions.

If Jesus came to visit, what would your first thought be, to make everything perfect or to spend time in His presence?

Make your shift accordingly!

DAY 38

Thursday, April 2, 2026

Shifted Thinking

Rev. Ronald L. Bobo, Jr.

Romans 12:6-8 (NLT)

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Times have really changed. There used to be a time when if you wanted to see a new movie, you had to go to a movie theater. I really enjoyed the experience of going to the movies and being lost in the story for those two hours, really locked in. Depending on the movie, I would replay it in my head for the next two days after I saw it on the big screen. The movies that motivated me the most were the stories of an underdog that had to overcome a life challenge.

The main character would find they are faced with a pivotal moment in their life and needed to make a decision to either face the challenge head on or run away. Many times when the main character is deciding what to do, they discover something amazing about themselves. They discover they already had the means and gifts to tackle their obstacles when the odds were stacked against them. As the main character explores their gifts, they realize that a responsibility comes with owning a gift.

I remember watching the movie *Spiderman*. Spiderman came to the conclusion that the gifts he possessed were not just for his own benefit, but there was a greater calling and purpose he needed to fulfill. Spiderman remembered the quote from his Uncle Ben, “with great power comes great responsibility.” There was a shift in the superhero's thinking when he thought about those words.

God has given all of us at least one gift! We must shift our thinking from “getting” and “having” to “using and doing.” We are all underdogs in this life sometimes, but God has made us more than conquerors. I want to encourage you to think about where you can use your gifts in the upcoming days.

How can I shift from just “having” a gift to “using” a gift and being used by God?

DAY 39

Friday, April 3, 2026

Keep it Moving

Rev. Moné Jones

Exodus 14: 13-15 (NIV)

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." Then the Lord said to Moses, Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.

Shift – move or cause to move from one place to another

The book of Exodus tells of the instructions that God gave to Moses for the children of Israel to relocate to a better place. In Egypt the children of Israel were slaves. They were making the life of Pharaoh and his people very good, while their life was difficult. So God decided to shift them.

God was moving them to a land of good and plenty. Whatever they needed was already provided for them. God prepared their way, provided shelter, food, and protection. All they had to do was "Keep it Moving" to the Promised Land.

Sound familiar? How many times has God told you to "Keep it Moving?" How about that toxic work environment? That abusive relationship, friendship, or stunt in your spiritual growth?

Trust and have faith in God when you move. Don't lose hope. Keep your eyes on God. God knows it all!

1. Be ready for the move – Exodus 12: 31
2. Trust the process and the provision – Exodus 13:21
3. Keep it Moving – Exodus 14:15

Dear God thank you for another chance, get rid of the distractions in my life so I will be able to hear your voice.

DAY 40

Saturday, April 4, 2026

He Never Changes

Associate Pastor, Rev. Angela Tate

Hebrews 13:8 (AMP)

Jesus Christ is [eternally changeless, always] the same yesterday and today and forever.

You have likely heard it said that the only constant is change. While there is some debate of exactly what Greek philosopher Heraclitus, to whom the saying is attributed, actually said or meant, I think that we can agree that life is really in a constant state of flux.

Many of our life's pursuits are aimed at stability, security, consistency and constancy. All things that are the opposite of change. As a result, I believe it is safe to say no one likes change. In this season of SHIFT, some may be thinking that shift is just being used as a fancy, maybe even deceptive euphemism for change. The change we don't like. The change we avoid. The change we rail against. Despite all of this, change really can be for our good. After all, all things work together for our good (Rom 8:28). Even change. Even shift.

Instead of fighting against change, when we embrace it, it can lead to our personal growth by helping us move out of our comfort zones and building resilience. Sometimes this means suffering through tribulation, but the word tells us that tribulation builds perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope (Rom 5:3-4).

Though it seems counterintuitive, accepting that change is constant can bring about that feeling of stability we so often pursue. When things around us feel chaotic, just the acknowledgement that change is just an expected part of our journey can bring about peace instead of anxiety (Phil 4:6-7).

Finally, shifting our perspective on change can help us see it as a tool for innovation, learning, and growth instead of being viewed as a threat. God did not give us a spirit of fear (2 Tim 1:7).

Heraclitus was wrong about the only constant being change. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. When everything around me is in flux and I'm just trying to find some stability, security, consistency, and constancy, all I have to do is lean on Jesus, the One who is eternally changeless, always! In this season of shift, take comfort in Christ – the same today, yesterday, and forevermore.

In this season of shift, what are the changes that are hardest for you to accept? Present this list to God and let Him give you peace in the stability available to you through belief in Him.

