

**MONDAY**  
**15 FEBRUARY**  
 Genesis 4:1-15. 25  
 Psalm 50:1. 8. 16-end  
 Mark 8:11-13

**TUESDAY**  
**16 FEBRUARY**  
 Genesis 6:5-8;  
 7:1-5. 10  
 Psalm 29  
 Mark 8:14-21

**WEDNESDAY**  
**17 FEBRUARY**  
 Ash Wednesday  
 Joel 2:1-2. 12-17 or  
 Isaiah 58:1-12  
 Psalm 51:1-18  
 2 Corinthians  
 5:20b – 6:10  
 Matthew 6:1-6. 16-21  
 or John 8:1-11

**THURSDAY**  
**18 FEBRUARY**  
 Deuteronomy  
 30:15-end  
 Psalm 1  
 Luke 9:22-25

**FRIDAY**  
**19 FEBRUARY**  
 Isaiah 58:1-9a  
 Psalm 51:1-5. 17-18  
 Matthew 9:14-15

**SATURDAY**  
**20 FEBRUARY**  
 Isaiah 58:9b-end  
 Psalm 86:1-7  
 Luke 5:27-32

## REFLECTION

It's hardly surprising that in a week when Lent begins, so many readings mention the word "fast". We do associate Lent with fasting – giving up something we normally enjoy or take for granted. But in a strange quirk of the English language, "fast" can also mean "quickly". With forty days of fasting until Easter (not counting Sundays), we might certainly wish the season would go more quickly.

Perhaps God might wish humanity had learned more quickly how to show, well, humanity. On Ash Wednesday itself (and again on Friday and Saturday) Isaiah's prophecy stresses that ostentatiously parading the outward show of fasting isn't what God asks of us. Rather, we're called to act more humanely towards others, to feed those who are hungry, to help those afflicted, to live in peace with one another. And Jesus reinforces that message this week in his teaching against hypocrisy, in his acceptance and forgiveness of sinners and in his ultimate sacrifice, predicted on Thursday.

We might still want to give up something this Lent. But fast or not, and quickly or not, Lent will give us a chance to ask what God really wants from us.

## PRAYER

Eternal God, you are always there for us.  
 Help us to take our time this Lent to draw closer to you.  
 Help us to give up the habit of rushing through prayer  
 to get on with everyday life,  
 For you long to show us the path to eternal life.



## THE LORD'S PRAYER

### PART III – PETITIONS IN PRAYER, PART II

Continuing our look at the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, as found in Matthew 6:9-13.

5) "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." In the Lord's Prayer from *Common Worship* this is rendered as: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us," while in the traditional-language version "sins" is rendered as "trespasses". The word "debts" (or "dettis") appeared in the first English translation of the Bible by John Wycliffe in the late fourteenth century. In 1526 William Tyndale translated it as "trespasses" ("treaspases"), and this was carried through in the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549.

6) "Do not bring us to the time of trial." You will probably be more familiar with the *Common Worship* version, which reads: "Lead us not into temptation." It's another petition which scholars debate, since this appears to contradict James 1:13: "No one, when tempted, should say, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God... tempts no one." In 2017 Pope Francis suggested an alternative: "do not let us fall into temptation," explaining: "I am the one who falls; it's not him pushing me."

7) "Rescue us from the evil one." This is rendered as "deliver us from evil" in *Common Worship* and this, the final petition of the Lord's Prayer, can be problematic for modern Christians, who do not tend to think of evil personified. Rowan Williams provides a helpful way of looking at it: "... the idea that the principle or the power of evil coming in to make the most of our weakness and our fear, that still makes sense. And we can still quite rightly pray to be delivered from that."

As we've seen in this short series, like so much of scripture, generations of scholars and theologians have debated the detail of the Lord's Prayer. For us, perhaps, the point is not to pin down a "correct" understanding, but to draw on the breadth of scholarship to breathe new life into the words we say so often, allowing it to enrich and deepen our understanding of the words taught by Jesus two thousand years ago.



LIVE  
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU  
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by  
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 and  
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Week next before Lent  
 Monday 15 February to  
 Saturday 20 February  
 2021

WEEK