

SUNDAY March 1, 2026 “Losing Life to Find it”

Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22 Part 3 746 on screen Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38, Matthew 10:39

Our world seems to thrive on people just running- to someplace from somewhere without uncertainty of where to go and what to do when you get there. This is not just signs of aging, but a reality people of various ages are enduring day in and out. These last few days I could not do much- but sit, sleep and reflect on what is important. And looking at this theme chosen over a month ago- grounded and growing, it seems to me that I am one who needs to review what is important. What does it mean to be grounded today? With many people experiencing mental health concerns and vocalizing these concerns, it is important to define what it is. Staying grounded involves cultivating a balance between physical, mental, and emotional well-being through intentional habits. Key practices include regular exercise, mindfulness techniques, connecting with nature, maintaining routines, and practicing gratitude. But may also include reading the Bible for daily insight and praying on what is read. These actions help regulate emotions. And as we travel through Lent it is important to figure out for oneself what it is that you as an individual needed to be grounded.

This Lenten journey calls us into a deeper understanding of God's promises to us and the cost of trusting God fully. Last time we spoke briefly of the Noah Covenant- rainbow and no more flooding; but with our reading from Genesis it is the renewal covenant between God and Abram. Here Abram's life will begin anew with a new name and a future yet to be seen. God's covenant reaches past what is possible but asks Abraham to be faithful, to trust and then let things unfold in God's time. Maybe this is what we need to do. Trust God to lead the way- there is no map but if God is fully in charge of your life- you don't need one! We will continue to look at these covenants of long ago and yet how relevant they are for us today because when it comes to God- by faith we know He will ground us to be where we need to be right in this moment.

Jesus speaks plainly with those who are listening. He knows what the path ahead is about and he knows he has to suffer not for his sake- but ours. The road ahead leads him through the suffering. He shares that the kingdom to come is built on self-giving love and on a cross that is not clean but blood stained. Peter hates this- because it just isn't right. This is not what the Messiah was to do- there wasn't to be wounds, losses or such. The Messiah was just to come in a sweep away the problems- not suffer! Peter like many of us just want to skip to Easter- glory of God without the grief of death.

But we are reminded that there is time to prepare for that day of glory. We're called into a deeper trust. WE are called to deny what we want and take up His cross. That is consider what Jesus was going to do- yet he still was teaching, telling others of God's love and wanting to tell more about God's love. But Passover was coming....As followers, we are to see his way of life and learn that life is shaped by both sacrifice and hope. It is also a call to let go the dead weight of the past and let God prune away what is needed in order to allow growing to take place. This is so that in time we will grow even stronger in faith.

As we continue in this Lenten journey we will continue to learn that God's promises are not always comfortable, or easy, or even acceptable at first. Yet when we stop and consider what is happening to our self- what is the better choice?

Just consider your life-- are you at an ultimate 10- consider everything? Maybe a 7-8? What could help you in this grounding path of Lent? First of all pray. Figure out with God's guidance what he is calling you to do. Lent invites us to loosen our grip on self-protection, to release our control attachment to many things and to entrust our lives to God in new ways.

As we walk in Lent Jesus, will bring life out of loss- but we must be vulnerable before Him and let God see us in order to renew our covenant of faith with him.

A part of this learning and being grounded is connected with the elements that Jesus said to Eat/ Drink and remember. This is what we will do today. Grounding ourselves in who Jesus is makes a difference in our spiritual knowledge of who he is. Let us be mindful of this as we share one with another with Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

God of grace we pray that you will call us to be grounded and renewed in faith. Hear now the concerns of our hearts as we share our thoughts with you. SILENCE. In faith and with hope we pray. Amen.