

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 1 / 22 Feb**

**Connect to Christ**

**John 13:1**

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end.

As human beings we always make connections. We connect so much with lot of people and the world has various technological means to connect us globally. We meet people virtually through Facebook, instagram, snap chat, face time, WhatsApp, telegram and so on. We share our ideas, our thoughts, our displeasure, our likes and dislikes and what not. However, some of us have failed to connect with Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith. He is eagerly waiting for us. It is ironic that we connect with anybody who wouldn't know or care for us but we find it hard to connect with Christ who cares for us and knows us inside out.

Jesus willingly connected with simpletons and called them His disciples. His connection was based on love. He loved them so much that He related with them in very personal ways. Jesus' love is the reflection of the love of the Father in His life. Jesus left all authority with God the Father and His equality to rescue mankind. Father loved the world so much that He was willing to give away His only son as a compensating sacrifice. Son Jesus loved the Father so much that it was expressed in His obedience to stoop down to die on the cross. The simple reason is 'love.' Jesus loved the disciples to the very end.

During this season of Lent let us Connect to Christ. For some it is a new connection but for others it is a reconnection. Whatever be it, we need to connect to Christ.

**How do I connect to Jesus?** Consciously set aside time to be alone with Jesus. Read His word, spend time thanking Him for all what you have and behold.

**What do I do?** Read and Reread John 13:1.

Remember! Jesus knew that His time was short and He had to leave this world. You know you too are bound by time. Jesus loved His disciples and He decided to serve them and set an example for them to follow. You do have people whom you love. Pray for them and set an example for them to follow. Paul said – follow my example as I follow the example of Jesus.

Happy Lent! Celebrate Jesus!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 2 / Feb 23**

**Stay Strong in your Connection to Christ**

**John 13:2**

It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

Any connections get distorted easily. If you have telephone or internet connections your line might have disturbances if the cable is snapped or with incremental weather. You identify the problem and try your best to rectify it, if it is beyond your control then you take professional help. Somehow you will ensure to get it working. The same happens with our connections to the Lord Jesus. We can easily get side-tracked and could possibly snap away.

Judas Iscariot was a choice of Jesus to be His disciple. However, Judas did not stay strong in his relationship with Jesus his Master. He had other things in mind that took the focus off from Jesus. He let the devil in his heart to work. He succumbed to the devil's scheme and lost his Godly purpose. Though he was with Jesus he did not have the heart of Jesus. He gave room for the devil. He didn't even realize that he was caught deeply. His desire for the thirty silver coins reigned supreme. He probably thought of it as easy money for helping the authorities identify Jesus. It was no hard work or brain work. When Judas realized he was wrong it was too late. He was the loser and none.

**How do I stay strong in Jesus?** Remember anything that keeps you off from Jesus is a devil's bait. It could be your loved one, your career, your status, your business, your position, your possession and what not.

**What do I do?** Make sure you are conscious of Jesus all the time in all of what you do. If you feel you are overdoing something that pushes you away from Jesus, stop what you are doing and set aside time to connect with God. If you don't find peace in what you are doing, quit. Remember to hold on strong to Jesus – His purposes for your life is way better than what you have thought for yourself.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 3 / Feb 24**

### **Connection to Christ has Privileges**

#### **John 13:3**

Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God.

It is interesting to note that when you get hold of new network connection either to your mobile or your home internet services, they all come with certain privileges. They are based on the scheme that you select. Sometimes these privileges are limited for a time. However, the best part is they all come with conditions. Your connections to the worldly things are conditional.

It is not so with your connection to Jesus the Lord. You are entitled to privileges which Jesus enjoyed from His Father. Jesus willingly offers it to you. Father God had given all authority to Jesus over everything that was created. Jesus was well aware that He came from God and He was returning to God. His origin and destiny was God. It is the same for us. We have come from the mind of God, He knew us even before we were formed in our mother's womb the number of days we would live are written in His book until we return to the tomb. In the interim time He has given us the authority to bring hope, joy, healing, deliverance in Jesus name to the others who do not know Him.

**How do I enjoy the privilege?** I first need to know that I am from God and I will return to God. With that as a foundation I need to become stewards of what is entrusted to me and I should not lord it over others but in humility serve people with divine authority.

**What do I do?** I must serve willingly. The authority in Jesus enables us to see miracles, healings and deliverance. I must initiate and not wait until someone tells me to do it. I need to volunteer. I must make it a mandate not to miss any opportunity to serve God in any capacity. It should begin at your home helping your family do household chores or your church serving in as needed.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 4 / Feb 25**

**Christ Connection leads to Humble Serving**

**John 13:4**

So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist,

We are going to shift gears. Once the connections are established we can do what we desire. Probably we can download contents relevant for us or upload some original information we think might benefit the larger community. Whatever be it connection enables us to achieve the desired end. So it is, when we have our connections intact with Jesus our Lord.

Jesus, master of the banquet got up from the head position of the table took off His robe, and wrapped a towel around His waist. Masters do not remove the robe since it is the symbol for power and authority. Jesus removed it and draped Himself with the towel signifying a servant at disposal of his master. Jesus switched places. He got down to serving His students. Unusual for a master teacher. Probably the disciples froze in shock. Something unexpected had happened. The disciples may have wondered what it could lead to however, they never had the courage to question Jesus.

Connecting to Christ should make us humble like our master. We are called to serve others if we love Jesus.

**How do I serve humbly?** We need to give up our personal self and our sense of achievements. We need to disrobe ourselves of the many potentials and be willing to stay low. We need to take the place of an ignorant learner. Literally be like a servant at the disposal of an inconsiderate master.

**What do I do?** Be like John the Baptist who declared that – Jesus must increase and that he should decrease. A simple proposition for humility. Such humbleness is likely only when we have right connections with Jesus. An intimate link with Him.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 5 / Feb 27**

**True Serving is Trying**

**John 13:5**

and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

Establishing connections involves a price to be paid. If you have a network it doesn't work free for you, you need to be paying for it monthly, quarterly or even annually. So, also was Jesus' connections to His disciples. He wanted to let them know that relationships are trying and it is a personal choice to sustain and that it is a costly affair.

After disrobing His seamless garment and wrapping Himself with the towel Jesus took a basin of water and began washing the feet of the disciples. Washing, I feel is not a difficult task, but to wipe the feet with the towel that was around His waist was quite a thing. He had to wash and wipe the feet of 12 men. Every time He washed and wiped the feet, the towel was sure to get wet. It definitely took away the dirt of the feet but got stuck to the towel. Jesus was tying it around His waist. By the time He was finished with the 12<sup>th</sup> man, the towel would have become completely wet and the dirt was on Jesus' body. He kind of got Himself into a mess. This was the mark of true serving.

**How can I truly serve?** Jesus symbolically represented what true serving was. I don't know if the disciples understood it then but I am sure we can understand it better now after reading this particular text. Your connection to Christ can cost you dearly. If you have a strong connection with Christ you will have a solid conviction to serve Him.

**What do I do?** Serve like Christ Jesus served. He got messed up with the dirty wet towel. When you serve people it is likely that you get hurt, you will be misunderstood, you will be mocked, you will be belittled, you will be betrayed and what not. You will go through some ordeals unimagined. Don't give up serving since even when you are hurt you have brought healing to somebody. Your conscious action reveals Jesus in you.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 6 / Feb 28**

**Right Serving Rocks a Few**

**John 13:6**

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Our network connections gets us to a world beyond our demographic limitations and sometimes about life perspectives that is not even thought or dreamt of. If a simple network could unfold a global world then imagine our connections to Christ, it can unravel His mysteries for our great living.

I don't really know which of the disciples got his feet washed first. I can't even imagine what it would have been to that person then. Nevertheless, Jesus' turn to wash the feet of Simon Peter neared and when He had come to him; Peter questioned Jesus if he was going to wash his feet as well. The real intention of the question cannot be inferred but he must have reacted that way probably because he didn't want his master to do a slave's job. He knew he was not worth and he doesn't deserve. He seemed a bit upset about it. He was in a state of shock. Often such rare reactions are likely as we start serving Jesus in some capacity.

**How can I serve right?** Our genuine connection to Christ compels us to serve. This serving results because of our love for Jesus. It is the one best way to reciprocate our love for Jesus. As we begin serving, some people are worked up knowing who we are and what our profile is. It might send them shock waves. Our sincere serving allows them to see our passion for Jesus.

**What do I do?** Find ways and means to serve people. Everyone needs Jesus who gives them hope in a hopeless world. Watch for ways to serve. Initiate it and don't wait until someone prompts you or asks you. You have people all around who need to be served. Ask God to show you. What you can possibly do cannot be done by someone. Begin your serving with your people before going to the unknown. You are special and that's how God made you and prefers to use you.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 7 / March 1**

**Serving in Christ is a Celebration**

**John 13:7**

Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

It is surprising to note that some of our connections on social media have brought people and families that were lost. I was stunned when I found that my great great grand dad was a Methodist minister when the British ruled India. If the social network has the power to bring around lost people you can imagine our connection to the resurrected savior. It can bring the whole wide world of lost souls to God.

Jesus didn't ignore the question of Peter. He took time to tell him that the implication of His action was meant for the future. Peter being an impulsive person it was probably difficult for him to have comprehended Jesus' response. But one thing was sure, he was unhappy about Jesus' action. On the contrast Jesus seemed to enjoy what He did. He wasn't grumpy or His action was forced upon Him by anyone. It was His choice of celebration. A new way to celebrate the Passover. Jesus was modeling something that was very strange.

**How can I celebrate serving?** A joyous serving opens up a new world for people to see Jesus. A simple act of kindness fills us with so much happiness. As we continue serving it becomes a celebration.

**What do I do?** Serve without any expectation. Expectations ruin the world for us. Don't expect to see results as you serve. Your only job is to find ways to serve Jesus. If you are convinced about what you want to do to reflect Jesus, go on with your strength. God honors it at the right time.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 8 / March 2**

**Sensible Serving involve Sensations**

**John 13:8**

"No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

The reason for social media to have become impending is because of its influence on human senses. It is treat for the desperate eyes, a sweet sense for the ears, and a challenge for the thought process. It triggers the person who is associated to it. It even becomes addictive sometimes. An active indulgence in social media platform drives a person to evoke his senses.

Jesus connection to His disciples aroused their senses. Peter was against the idea of Jesus stooping low to serve Him. He literally protested, if he had a chance he would have walked away from Jesus. But he could not. He refused. He felt embarrassed about his own worthlessness. Jesus refuted his refusal and declared to him that if he did not go through this serving of Jesus he would no more belong to Him. Jesus meant what He said and He wanted Peter to be aware of the implication of His noble action.

**How do I serve sensibly?** People around us have enormous needs. Our service to them at their point of need turns the world upside down for them. Sensible serving at an unexpected time arouses mixed emotions and people could possibly be overwhelmed with gratitude.

**What do I do?** Our love to Christ is expressed in our service to the needy around. Be diligent to look for needs of people. Live out the good news of Jesus our Lord than being loud mouthed and nothing in action. When something is done to lift up people, let us be watchful not to brag about. Some people might be expressive while the others may not. Sensations vary with people. Remember to be sensible in your service, it will draw them to connect to Jesus.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 9 / March 3**

**Christ-like Serving is Exciting**

**John 13:9**

Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

Some people live in excitement with the virtual world. The many likes and shares for their posts tickles them and gets them elated in their spirits. Whoever had liked their post or commented on it may not have known them personally neither do they too. Nevertheless, they seem excited. My concern is why hasn't that happened with our connection to Jesus? He knows us well. If only we get closer to Him, it would bring in a whole new world to us.

Jesus plainly said to Peter he would have nothing to do with Him if he had not washed his feet. It troubled him so much. Immediately Peter in excitement said not only to wash his feet but also his hands and head as well. He was caught up with too much of an emotion that he did not know what he was responding back to Jesus. Peter did not understand the implication of Jesus' action. He was going to do the same and something similar later during his ministry days. Serving satisfies, Christ-like serving is both satisfying and exciting.

**How can serving be exciting?** We live a world full of self-serving people. They love to be served and they never want to serve anyone that includes even their own family members. If that is the case how can I become exciting in my service?

**What do I do?** Connect to Jesus. Read the Bible to know all about Him. Examine everything you read, if you do not understand ask someone who can help you. Remember, He loved you even when you did not know Him. He thought of you even before you were born. He is willing to serve you until you are grown enough to serve Him. When you have insights about Jesus and His excellent plans for your life, you will begin serving and your serving Him and His people will become exciting.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 10 / March 4**

**Scheming yet Served**

**John 13:10**

Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you."

Any connection to the worldly perspective has its own implication. It could be both good and bad. It depends on how well you have known it and associated with it. Some have had indiscriminate connections that have ruined their life. It is not so when you connect with Jesus. His connection lets you live an abundant life. However, you can mess yourself up if you have poor connections and does not let His value system into your life.

Peter's little impulsive behavior of him wanting Jesus to wash his hands and head opened up an opportunity for Jesus to share how one can connect to Jesus and still be lost. It is like a cable connected to power socket but had not fit in well. Such a connection cannot carry the power to the device attached to it. The very purpose of the cable is lost. It is just there fixed up wasting the space. Jesus had to declare that all the 12 men were not good. Someone who was found by Jesus was still lost. It was because of their personal choice.

**How do I serve even when I am schemed?** True serving is not trouble-free. Even if it is serving it can cause worries that cannot even be imagined. Schemers are all around but if we are convinced to serve we must carry on despite all odds.

**What do I do?** Don't be too cautious when serving, when you are prompted to serve because of the compelling love of Jesus. Just go ahead with it. It doesn't matter if you are schemed. Serving pleases the Lord Jesus. It opens up as a way to reflect Jesus to others. The schemers will be caught by their own scheme someday. Do not rejoice about it. Be sure that your connection to Christ becomes stronger with all these scheming.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 11 / March 6**

**Christ Cares even for the Careless**

**John 13:11**

For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

One needs to be watchful about the connections on social media. Your wrong connections can sometimes derail you. It can destroy your passion and ethos for life and drag you into a rut of frustrated surviving. The meaning and scope of life can be lost.

Jesus was well aware of the 12 men He chose. He did not make a mistake of selecting the wrong person. He was right in His choices. Nevertheless, Jesus did not force these men into anything. He knew them all well and all of them had passion for the messiah and to be in His service, but He let them make personal choices. One of them got wrecked and Jesus was well aware but didn't deny him being served. He made it a point that he was attended to without any discrimination. Jesus was so magnanimous that He did not reveal who it was. This is my opinion probably Jesus said one of them was unclean so it could at least evoke a response that would snap him off the wrong connection.

**How can I care for the careless?** You need to focus on serving because you made a choice of doing so, you wanted to reciprocate your love for Jesus by being in His service. If that is so, then you should be driven by love and nothing else.

**What do I do?** You continue caring even if they care less that you serving them. Some think they deserve being served. Often they assume too much about themselves, than they ought to. If we love Jesus truly we do not have to be deterred. We serve not to see results, though it is part of the process. We serve because we were served by Jesus. We are who we are now because of His atoning sacrifice. We owe Him our service for His people.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 12 / March 7**

### **Understanding Serving!**

#### **John 13:12**

After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing?"

One of the key aspects is to have insight into why we are connected to what we are connected. Some connect to the social network for entertainment, some for educational purpose, few for professional reasons and lot many to make a big business out of it. It is their source of livelihood. What has that got to do with our connection to Jesus?

Jesus switched to His rightful role. He put on His robe after removing the dirty towel from His waist. He sat with them and questioned them again. This time He wanted to check on them if they understood what He did for them. I am pretty sure that none of the disciples understood what Jesus did. It was something uncommon, never heard of or even witnessed ever before. Slaves washed the feet of the masters – master washing the feet of the slaves was strange. That was too weird, incomprehensible. But they knew they were treated in style, they knew they were unworthy of such an honorable service for them. Jesus did it since He obeyed His Father and wanted to show them the Father's love. Our connection to Jesus mandates us to follow Him literally.

**How can I understand serving?** Time and again it is a question that we need to ask ourselves. Do I serve because I will be appreciated or will I gain a name and road to fame? If these questions are answered in the light of Jesus our Lord, it will make sense of our serving.

**What do I do?** I serve because it is my bound duty. Undeserved yet I was served when Jesus hung for my sake on the cross. He took my shame and pain. Whatever service I do, it can never equal what the Lord did for me. I need to get myself to serve if I prefer to be grateful to God.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 13 / March 8**

**Serving Affirms Identity!**

**John 13:13**

You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am.

Having heard about serving for about 12 days now, I am sure you must have an idea of what it possibly is and how the connection to Christ makes a whole lot of sense. Serving like Christ affirms our identity with Him. One of the key aspect of life is establishing our identity. Human beings struggle their way out at all ages to establish themselves and those who are unable to make it end up depressed and feel that they have failed in life.

The disciples fondly called Jesus to be their teacher and Jesus affirmed it. The goal of the teacher is to transcend their values in their student and inspire them to be one. Jesus wanted His disciples to imitate Him as He consciously imitated His Father in every aspect of life. Jesus portrayed love, justice and right living which were virtues of the Father. The disciples were raw since they were unschooled men except for Matthew and Judas Iscariot who happened to better off than the others. Since one was a tax collector the other an aristocrat, that is what his name Iscariot meant. Jesus wanted them to be identified as servants of God and not anything else.

**How do I affirm my identity?** You are not identified by your family name or by your profession though they initially gave you who and what you represent. However, you need to establish your identity in Jesus.

**What do I do?** You need to be aware that your identity comes from the truth the God made you in His image and likeness, therefore whatever you do represents God. Once you become aware of that truth. Nothing bothers you and your serving Christ becomes the pivotal work of your life. Examine if you are happy to represent Jesus who is eternal or you prefer representing your profession which is temporal. The day your retire none bother you. Nobody even recognizes or recalls your good work or even remember them. Your serving makes sense when you identify in Jesus.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 14 / March 9**

### Identified Imitates

#### John 13:14

And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet.

We live at a time with enormous media influence. Especially when someone who seems to be on the niche of popularity, we buy into their ideas without even contesting to it. We assume whatever they proclaim could probably be the truth. But sad to say these so-called celebrities do everything for their monetary benefit and nothing they do concerns them. They are least bothered about any devastating effect on people or the society.

Taking a look at Jesus. He wanted the disciples to emulate and follow His footsteps. He declared to them that they have to wash each other's feet. It wasn't going to be an easy task. The disciples grew up with the fact that they were better than the gentiles or the pagan worshippers. They have been taught that they were special people far better than others. Their religious leaders portrayed and practiced it. Jesus was diametrically opposite of what they have seen and heard. There was a sharp contrast and now Jesus wanted them to do the same.

**How do I imitate Christ?** We have not seen Him as the disciples did. But we have His written word given to us, therefore we need to practice what we read in the scriptures. It is not difficult. Our practice can begin only when we begin reading the scriptures. Let us become serious about spending time reading the Bible.

**What do I do?** Read and reread the Bible and take efforts to do what it says. It suits any generation any circumstance or any issues of life. To identify ourselves with Jesus we need to know Him very personally than knowing about Him. Many in the world know about Him but they do not know Him. Our imitating begins when we know Him well. It is possible when we consciously do what His teachings tell us to.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 15 / March 10**

**Being gets you to Doing!**

**John 13:15**

I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.

Under the influence, you can try to deny it and call it a lie, we are under the influence, under the influence of somebody all of the time. A famous lyric penned by Cliff Richards. Whether we like it or not we are under the influence of somebody. The question to examine is – who is that somebody? Chris Brown penned a song under the influence in 2019 without using the words in the title of the song, it was a popular sensual song. Watch out! Your connections can influence you.

Jesus taught His disciples about the Kingdom of God and whenever needed He showed them what to do and how to do. He role-modeled for them. He did not teach them anything that He did not practice. Jesus was influenced by His Father and He in turn influenced the disciples. You cannot do anything without being observed into it. You need to be convinced about something before doing. You become who you associate yourself with. Who is your companion and what is your source of influence? Disciples did not have anyone to whom they could boldly ask, however Jesus found these 12 men and they were happy to watch and learn.

**How can I do like Jesus did?** You can never do anything without being passionate about. Whatever you intend on doing you need to be excited and be all out to do it. If not nothing can be done.

**What do I do?** What have I imbibed myself with? If I need to be a doctor, then I need to have the desire to learn all about diseases and every aspect associated to it. Over and above that I need to have love for patients than love for money. Love for money could possibly make me wealthy but love for patients can change lives to become healthy. So is serving Jesus before doing anything for Jesus we need to be like Jesus willing to love people, stoop low and be prepared to get messed up despite our personal agendas. It would mean pleasing Jesus and nothing else.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 16 / March 11**

**Serving is a Calling**

**John 13:16**

I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message.

It is interesting to note that the internet connections we have at our end is resourced from a different center which has plenty to provide for everyone connected to the same network. So is our connection to Christ since He represents the Father who is the source of all life. Jesus wanted His disciples to be well aware of this fact.

When Jesus declared – I tell you the truth, He meant what He intended. He wanted the disciples to be mindful that He was not greater than the Father though He had equality with Him. Jesus was with them on a mission given to Him by the Father. His only work was to accomplish what the Father had deputed Him. The disciples' connection to Jesus does not make them superior in any sense but it does give them the privilege to utilize the authority to set people free. It was meant for them to serve people and not for bossing over them. It was a calling – a higher calling to reflect the Godhead through their life and service.

**How do I know I am called to serve?** It is rather simple, if you take the first step to do something for Jesus and you find so much joy and satisfaction despite appreciations, there you are! However, the first step is pivotal.

**What do I do?** Don't deny an opportunity to do something for Jesus. Be it trivial or complex find ways to do something for Jesus. Remember when you do what is entrusted for you to do – do your best nothing less. Do it with joy. Don't compromise on the quality. Don't look for people's recognition. If your serving is genuine you will never give up on serving nor will you look for credit. You will enjoy serving people and honor God through it.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 17 / March 13**

**Right Knowing Right Leading**

**John 13:17**

Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

Right connections gets you on the right direction. Maps in the mobile devices aid in locating unknown places, such an act is possible because of the network connection. It is so true with our connection to Jesus, if we are connected to Him the directions of our life though unknown will be known and His guidance can help us reach the destiny.

Jesus after completing the task of washing the disciples' feet and responding to their questions declared that they would be blessed if they do as He did for them. Is Jesus asking them to wash the feet of the people to whom they would share the good news? No! Not at all. I don't know what it meant for the disciples then. Since they only had one occasion of going out and sharing about the Kingdom of GOD. They haven't become full-fledged in serving Jesus. They are yet to get started. But before that Jesus wanted them to be aware that they were called to be servants and not masters. He wanted them to realize their calling. It was a blessing for them. Jesus wanted them to know right so they can lead right.

**How do I lead right?** It is fascinating to note that though Jesus called us to be servants He wanted us to lead. Doesn't it look oxymoronic? Of course! Yes! He wants us to be servant-leaders.

**What do I do?** Check! Often to see if your connection is right with Christ. I am sure you would certainly be aware. When you know it is not right – stop leading and set your connection right with Jesus by being alone with Him, fasting and praying. This season of Lent is a nice occasion to do so. God has called you to be a blessing and sure enough to bless you too. Therefore, to lead right be right with Christ the Lord.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 18 / March 14**

**GOD Knows Your Unknown!**

**John 13:18**

"I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.'"

Human connection or technological connection all of it needs to exercise some amount of caution. These connections can either destroy or devalue or drain our energy and make us vulnerable.

Jesus declared to the disciples if they did what Jesus did they would be blessed. However, He moved on from there with His thoughts and began to openly confess that one of them was going to betray Him. He even said He knew them all since He chose them. Nevertheless, scripture should be fulfilled and Jesus quoted Psalms 41:9 "Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely, the one who shared my food, has turned against me." From His statement one can understand the intense agony of betrayal. Truth is that the human heart is so badly deceiving that it doesn't hesitate to do anything against anyone failing to think before it could get to destructive work. Thoughtless and badly corrupted.

**How does God know?** It is so sad that when we get to any destructive work, we think none can understand our hidden intentions – maybe that is partly true, people may not understand since they have not had the slightest doubt about our sly behavior but the news is God knows even before we could think anything in our heart. He reminds us about our thoughts and actions but we silence the inner voice. Beware that God knows our unknown.

**What do I do?** I need to force myself consciously to get rid of anything and everything that could possibly displease God. The best is to THINK before acting. We need to remind ourselves about our intentions – why do I get to do what I intend to do? Is it beneficial to the person intended? Will God be honored with my action? Check out! You will be safe.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 19 / March 15**

**Revelation enhances Belief!**

**John 13:19**

I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I AM the Messiah.

Network connections can reveal a whole lot of things, but what is worth and not worth has to be gauged by the user. However, it is not so with the connection that we have with Jesus. It reveals a whole new truth about Him and the more we get closer to Him we begin to enjoy the new revelations through Him and from Him.

For the 12 men whatever Jesus did and spoke I guess did not make full sense to them. It looked as if they knew something but it also looked as if everything was rather strange as Jesus kept talking to them about the revelation that He was the Messiah. Jesus pointed to them about the betrayer but it was not known to any of the disciples. Jesus told them plainly when they knew who it was they would truly acknowledge without doubt that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus foretold what was to happen to Him shortly. The disciples weren't fully convinced that Jesus was the Messiah but they knew He was way different from any of the respected religious leaders of their time. Jesus literally was with them. He lived among them and taught them with authority. He told them to do what He did.

**How do I have revelation?** It is not about God appearing in your hall way or your room with big bright lights that can mesmerize you. It is all about God giving His insight in your everyday Bible reading and your everyday life event. All you need to do is watch for God to reveal.

**What do I do?** Read and study the Bible with expectations for a revelation about God and His nature not about new ideologies or theologies. Think about that one word which stuck out while you read the Bible. It can reveal who God is for your life. Keep looking for God's wonder and His power in every little thing you encounter. His revelation can build your belief!

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 20 / March 16**

**Serving must be Welcoming!**

**John 13:20**

I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me."

It is amusing to note that with just one network connection we can connect as many people as we want when they come to our home, if they ask for the connection. So also is our connection with the Lord Jesus, our whole duty is to consciously connect people to Jesus whoever encounters us.

Jesus brightened the disciples when He said that it was truthful that when people welcome them they would welcome Jesus into their homes. In simple terms the disciples were personification of Jesus. It was a little too much for them. They may not have not thought about it that way. But Jesus affirmed it. He also confirmed to them that they were welcoming the Father – the God of the universe. I wonder if the disciples ever understood their power and privilege. Even now it is a little hard for us to understand when we have read the written word of God and known who we are. Then we can imagine the plight of the disciples then, I am sure they must have been both excited and shocked at the same time. Jesus was honoring them with the truth that they were representations of the triune God.

**How do I become welcoming in my service?** If I am excited about who I represent then I can very well become welcoming. It is a realization about who we reflect. Often we enjoy sharing about our lineage and honor that our family invokes in the society. Our identity helps us to become welcoming which in turn helps us to be welcomed well.

**What do I do?** Remember whether you like it or not you are representing your GOD. The way you portray yourself and the way you treat people gives a reflection of your God. If you are loving and kind your God is loving and kind too. There is a saying that goes – we are the only Jesus that some people get to see! Are we aware of the implication that we can make on others?

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 21 / March 17**

**Serving can Single-out!**

**John 13:21**

Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!"

Connecting to the wrong web page can ruin our device, sometimes it can even destroy our life. Since the content of the pages can alter your patterns of thinking and can possibly lead you away from the truth. Wrong people connected to Jesus got themselves right because of His influence in their life but it was a stark contrast in Judas' life.

During the supper Jesus was talking to the disciples about serving and the reasons for Him to model it for them. While doing so Jesus was so disturbed since He was likely to be betrayed shortly after supper. He openly shared about it to His disciples. However, He did not tell them who it would be. He was with profound sadness. Jesus loved the betrayer too and He had an emotional attachment to him. He loved him and that was why He even washed His feet. But for the betrayer it was money over love. His focus blinded him totally to the point that he was unable to cherish Jesus' service to him. Jesus was singled-out in spite of His genuine love and service.

**Is it likely that when I serve I could be singled-out?** In all possibilities genuine serving can lead to burnout, frustration, pain, sorrow and emotional trauma. However, if we have committed to serve; there should be no turning back.

**What do I do?** As shared earlier serving is a calling. Stay strong in your calling. Human freewill and the deceptive heart can lead them to be ruthless, heartless, fearless and careless and even Godless. You will be singled-out, mocked, betrayed and blamed. Nevertheless, do not give up on your calling. You are only walking in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. Continue walking!

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 22 / March 18**

**Serving is Susceptible!**

**John 13:22**

The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean.

When there is no firm perspective concerning networking sites, we become vulnerable to its contents. We even lose hold on value systems. Disciples who connected to Jesus felt miserable since He was likely to be singled-out by one of their own friends.

The disciples were going through shock after shock. The first thing that made them speechless was Jesus washing their feet to indicate His serving to them. Secondly, they were shocked to know that one of their own folks was going to betray. When they heard it they looked at each other and wondered who that could be. Everyone was just the same as the other none was either good or bad, smart or dumb, neither were they superior in any sense. They knew how Jesus was taken for a task by the religious leaders for all the good He ever did. They knew as Jesus served every single person be it a Jew or a Gentile He was susceptible for charges. The Pharisees did not spare Him they somehow wanted to take Him for a task.

**How do I tackle susceptibility as I serve?** The passion to follow Jesus and the desire to serve can surely be a reminder to us that we are vulnerable. The world trains people to be assertive, vulnerability is not a virtue worth from the worldly perspective. However, the Lord Jesus was vulnerable and He wants us to be vulnerable in our serving too.

**What do I do?** I am not called to exercise caution in serving people. By all means I need to serve if I follow Jesus since He came to serve and not to be served. Serving people with genuine heart puts me to stake nevertheless, I should not turn back from serving. I need to know that serving is divine as it originated from God. He served us and continues to serve us with the help of the Holy Spirit God. If that is an outright truth what stops us from serving in susceptibility?

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 23 / March 20**

**Serving Preferences!**

**John 13:23**

The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table.

Well! There are so many number of network connections available for use nevertheless, we have our own preferences of a particular network for various reasons. This text read here kind of shows Jesus preferences. Does it mean that Jesus was partial or was He showing favoritism? Is it a sense of discrimination? We might have questions of concern about this connection.

The disciples were sitting together at the dinner table but this text describes that John the disciple Jesus loved was sitting beside Him. Does it indicate some special preference for John? Was he in anyway better than the rest of the men? Would that mean Jesus did not love the others? No way. Then why such a special place? This is indicative of the human nature of Jesus though He was God. He had special preference for John like many of us have preferences ourselves in the choice of various things in life. Probably this John reminded Jesus of His cousin John the Baptist who was beheaded for being outright against Herod for an illicit affair. There were no specific reason shared but He loved him. This did not diminish the love for other disciples, since Jesus declared that He loved them to the very end.

**How do I handle preferences in serving?** I am sure while we serve; we too have preferences. We love some better over the other. There could be several reasons for such inclination and that cannot and should be compared with the others.

**What do I do?** Be aware that your liking for someone do not become a hindrance to your serving. Be conscious to serve everyone equally without any discrimination. When questioned, share the reason for your preference. Do not make your fondness too obvious to raise concerns. Be watchful of your behavior.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 24 / March 21**

**Inquisitive while Serving!**

**John 13:24**

Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, “Who’s he talking about?”

Why some networks are much preferred over the others? It could probably be the service and the cost-effective nature of the service provider. Jesus preference was not contested since all of the men were His personal choice. However, Peter was so inquisitive about who was the betrayer?

We do not know in what order these men were seated during the dinner, from the text we knew John sat next to Jesus. Probably Peter sat next to John, not too sure though. He signaled at John and asked him who Jesus was referring to among the twelve. This is indicative of the mixed emotions that prevailed among the men and also with Jesus. Everyone was tensed since the news wasn’t a good one. They were so unsure of their own thoughts. Everything seemed bleak.

**How do I deal my inquisitiveness?** Human beings are so specialized in being inquisitive about everything around them. Curiosity kills.

**What do I do?** When curious about something and unsure of it, make it a point to check the right resource for the right response. Never assume. It can lead to great disaster. Often while serving people, preferences make people around prying, they will never be open about it but will end up doing everything that is never right leading to all sorts of confusion. Therefore, it is better to exercise caution while serving and not leave room for being intrusive.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 25 / March 22**

**Making the Best out of Our Connections!**

**John 13:25**

So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?"

If we have been on a network connection for a long time, as an esteemed customer we might sometimes be eligible for special privileges. Our connections serve us better. A long-lasting connection is a privilege.

John the disciple of Jesus budged into Peter's question of curiosity. Peter was hesitant to ask Jesus, whereas he knew John could do the job and probably Jesus might not be upset if he asked Him. I think that was a good proposition since the familiarity of John can have its way. John was bold enough to ask Jesus who possibly was the betrayer. John made use of His closeness with Jesus to ask something of so much importance to Him. Jesus was not upset. It can be inferred from the following verse. Jesus honored John's thought of his closeness to Him.

**How can I make the best of my connections?** Our connection with Jesus makes all the difference. The more we get closer with the Lord we become aware of His goodness that surpasses His greatness which at times seem intimidating for mortal beings like us. His goodness allows us to approach Him without any fear.

**What do I do?** Check! How well you are close to Jesus. Some of us enjoy God all the time whether we are awake or asleep. It doesn't mean that we are too spiritual as in a hypocritical manner. We are conscious of God and are bold to ask anything to Jesus as a child would do to the dad. Our closeness determines our boldness, our openness and our willingness to go through what God allows us to be through.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 26 / March 23**

**Serving the Unthinkable!**

**John 13:26**

Jesus responded, "It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot.

Network connections can land us to anything unthinkable in the World Wide Web. It is rightly called so; if you are caught you are trapped for sure. Judas got himself caught to the wrong web of life and invoked destruction upon himself.

To the most personal question asked upon instigation of Peter; John got him an answer. Jesus showed to the rest of the men the betrayer. Jesus made a symbolic response by dipping the bread in the bowl and handed it over to Judas Iscariot. He was seated alongside with his buddies and even his feet was washed. Jesus did not have trouble with John's question. He did not think it to be a nosy one. Jesus promptly answered with his actions but how well did the curious disciples understood it – is still a question of concern.

**How can I serve unthinkably?** Serving should be spontaneous. It should not be induced or forced upon. It should be voluntary and the beneficiaries cannot be chosen based on our biases and opinions.

**What do I do?** Be like Jesus. He knew who was going to betray Him, which did not stop Him from serving Him. To be precise Judas for no reason behaved like an enemy while Jesus considered him a friend of His choice. We need to ask ourselves can we serve genuinely and selflessly even if our ego is crushed. We need to reinforce ourselves that we serve because Jesus served and expected us to serve. We are only doing our duty that is entrusted to us.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 27 / March 24**

**So close but still gone far...**

**John 13:27**

When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do."

One of the worst with the network connection is that it becomes the window to a world of unwanted mess if caution is not exercised. It can suck you into the evil indulgence and burning passions which can destroy your life in its entirety. In a way similar our connection with the wrong people will result in total wrongness beyond the ability to even consider anything as wrong.

Jesus after dipping the bread in the bowl gave it to Judas and after he had had the bread, satan entered into him. What? Can satan be in the presence of Jesus? Is it possible at all? It seems alarming isn't it? But we need to know that our willingness to consciously do the wrong thing can let the devil in so easily. The truth is satan is present even in the presence of God, he has his mission to destroy people from devotedly following Jesus. The devil stops us committing to Christ but letting us postpone decisions for the Lord. Judas did not even realize that he had gone too far from Jesus in heart and commitment though he was physically seated in proximity to Him. How sad?

**How do I know if I am so close to God?** You need a constant introspection of where you are at with regards to Jesus the savior. When a demon possessed person is liberated it is easy to identify because of the physical manifestation of the demon leaving but you can never understand when the Holy Spirit leaves you. He is a gentle Spirit and anything that grieves Him will chase Him off our life and He leaves us silently.

**What do I do?** Be aware of what you are doing. None of us are so stupid that we do not know what we are doing is right or wrong. We consciously do wrong. We assume we can handle it and we know God is forgiving and so some of us even get back to God on regular basis to set right. Nevertheless, the little poison can spoil the whole food so is a little evil and wrong doing can take us completely away from the Lord Jesus. Watch out! If you are so close but still gone far...

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 28 / March 25**

**Secret Serving Sucks!**

**John 13:28**

None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant.

Your connections to the internet and the sites that you browse may not be known to others, it often might remain a secret. However, you are aware of what exactly you are up to. Sometimes others do know whom you are connected to and why you prefer such a connection. You know it all.

Judas knew why he was connected to the Chief Priests and the Pharisees. He was aware of what he has agreed upon. He played it safe and smart that the rest of his pals do not know what he was doing. He was involved in a secret service while Jesus called him to serve openly. The other disciples were they dumb? Certainly not! They were all with Jesus for one purpose and they assumed Judas was with them for the same reason too. Probably Judas began with the right intention but he did have heart for monetary comfort. A complete surrender wasn't found in him. He was able to hide his intentions and even his emotions; not one of his actions led the others to suspicion. He had his way out. Maintained the secret.

**How can secret serving be sucking?** A person who is not open enough can become a cause of serious concern. In a team none will be aware of what they might be up to. Are they for us or against us? It would always create unrest and disrupt peace and harmony. It could be terrorizing to the others and the sense of freeness would truly be lost.

**What do I do?** Be transparent with everyone around you. Confidentiality is different from secrecy, have it in mind and understand the need to be simple and be easy to move around. Don't shock the trustworthy people with your secret agendas. It will surely inhibit the others with their output. Be an open book for people to read you. Choose who you will serve Jesus or someone else, you won't be able to serve two bosses. Jesus was so open and there was no secret with Him. His openness let Him associate with anyone without any reservations. Beware secret services are no good!

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 29 / March 27**

### **Ignorant Serving**

#### **John 13:29**

Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor.

We need to use caution while using internet, sometimes we ignorantly hit some content and end up having them as a regular feed in the page we use often. It is the algorithm that works with the system and if we enjoy the content we can eventually be baited to it. So is our mind once when it begins to work the negative it can get stuck to it for the rest of our life. We need to watch out on what gets into our mind. It matters the most.

None of the disciples were suspicious of Judas though Jesus made it plain that it was he who was going to betray Jesus. Why were they so ignorant? Probably, for two reasons – one Judas was the treasure of this small group and was a non-Galilean who was an Iscariot which meant that he belonged to the community of zealots. A dagger man from a town called Kerioth. Two he seemed to be smart because of his connections with the political arenas as a zealot. The disciples were a bit intimidated since everything they encountered with Jesus was totally strange. To them Judas was way better apparently I think they had inferiority since they were all unschooled fishermen from Galilee.

**How do I cope with ignorance in serving?** Jesus emphasized so much on serving while doing so He did even tell the disciples to be shrewd as the serpent because they were going to deal with people who would sometimes be cut-throats. It was fine for them to be naïve but they also need to be aware of people all the time.

**What do I do?** Be sensible and not too sensitive. People we serve are widely varied. Some cherish what they receive while few grumble about the service. Some are served yet they can be too obnoxious about our services. All what matters is – we need to use the wisdom of God while serving. Nothing wrong being innocent but not ignorant, there is a difference.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 30 / March 28**

**Undaunted Focus!**

**John 13:30**

So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

Once you are glued to some of the web sites it can turn out to be addictive, therefore we need to seriously be aware of what we are getting ourselves into. Our connections to the heartless, money-minded people can drive us mad and we can become addicted to more money, not being aware of why we need so much even when our needs are sufficiently met.

This particular text as I read drives me nuts. Judas didn't bother about anything or anybody. Whatever Jesus told about him to the disciples didn't even get to his head. It maybe because satan entered him and so he lost the consciousness of God possibly. To Judas his thirty silver coins mattered most than everything else. He was so focused on his mission of making the money. As long as he was with Jesus I don't think he and his friends lacked anything but somehow he wanted more for his personal gain. It is more of a compulsion to have more when money comes in easy ways. Identifying a person is not a big job. It was easy money for Judas.

**How do I identify my undaunted focus?** We need to be conscious of what our focus is. Often our attention is not on Jesus but on all other things of life. Our shift in priorities can ruin us completely.

**What do I do?** A routine self-check is pivotal. We need to examine our focus time and again. If Jesus is my all, I will have my all. I don't need to panic. He not only meets my needs He even grants my want. The reason is simple – the Lord is my shepherd and I shall not be in want. Need is necessity whereas want is luxury. Therefore we need not run after the things of the world it will come behind us as we go after Jesus our Lord in full swing.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lent Devotions 2023

**Day – 31 / March 29**

**Serving Ends too!**

**John 13:31**

As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, "The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him.

It is likely that all network connections can get terminated for some reason or the other. Some years ago there were few social networking sites like orkut and ning etc. which ceased to exist and new ones came in replacement with much upgraded tools. So is our connections – they too will end and we are time bound.

Judas left the last supper table with Jesus and went out to carry on his business. It was indeed the last supper for him. Jesus declared to the rest of the disciples that His time has come and that He should enter into His glory. What is this glory that Jesus was talking about? I wonder if the disciples ever understood it then. We know it now since we have the complete scripture otherwise it would have been a mystery to us too. Is death an aspect of glory? Yes! It is. The kind of death that Jesus would die will bring God's glory on earth since Jesus became the connecting link to the Father for people who had strained the relationship with God. Jesus bridged the gap. God would be glorified. People are connected to GOD the Father through Jesus His son. The sacrifice of Jesus made it possible for the restored connection.

**How do I foresee my end?** We need to be aware that every good thing comes to an end, even if it is serving. Death becomes the reason for the cessation of service. Our serving should eventually honor God. Therefore serve as long as possible.

**What do I do?** Remind yourself that you are time bound. You need to give your best of the service while you can. There will come a time when you will not be able to serve because of various limitations, it can possibly be ailment, age, retirement or even death. It is a hard reality. Missing any opportunity to serve is madness. Though there were many discouraging factors Jesus never gave up serving until His death. He served even while dying. He restored the thief on the cross when he made a choice to live in Jesus. Don't give up serving!

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 32 / March 30**

**Serving reflects Obedience**

**John 13:32**

And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once.

Our network connections have limited privileges. Often they are not much of worth whereas our connections to Christ brings us privileges beyond our imagination and beyond limitations. Jesus as a human being on the earth earnestly obeyed the heavenly Father. This obedience was evident when He obeyed His earthly father Joseph. Jesus grew in the favor of God and men. Favor results as we please people with our simple obedience.

God received glory to Himself because of what Jesus did. Jesus did the impossible. It is surely not to do with any miracles. It is to do with His living. He loved the betrayer and served him without reservation. He broke the barriers of prejudice and discrimination. He ate with the tax collectors and associated with the Gentiles. He didn't consider touching the corpse that could make Him ceremonially unclean. He was all out to people to reflect a loving God through His genuine service. Therefore, God the Father was willing to give glory to Jesus at once. Jesus would enjoy the honor and glory that the Father cherished.

**How does my serving reflect obedience?** We serve because we love Jesus which is a mark of obedience. We need to ensure we serve everyone without discrimination. We have our own reasons why not to serve someone but we need to break the barriers if we truly obey Jesus.

**What do I do?** I need to know that my serving reflects God's glory. I serve even if I feel like not doing so because this serving is the only way to reveal my love to Jesus. I also need to know that I reflect the glory of God when people who receive my service feel blessed. I become the point of reference for God's unimaginable glory.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 33 / March 31**

**Jesus' Revelation!**

**John 13:33**

Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can't come where I am going.

As the supper got over and Judas left them to do what he desired to, Jesus began to have a heart talk to the disciples. He shared with them that He would be gone and they could not go where He was going. However, Jesus had established a powerful connection with them and He wanted them to do what He taught them.

Jesus often told the Jewish leaders that He would be gone and they could not go to His place, they would search for Him and He would never be found. The Jewish leaders did not prefer to connect with Jesus since they thought He was an enticer and not the Messiah. He did not fit into their criteria for the Messiah. He was too simple and did not follow after their traditions. Jesus was going to be with the disciples for a short time and He wanted them to know it and probably He wanted them to make the best use of the time when He was around. It was overwhelming for the disciples but they knew they were getting themselves into something that was larger than themselves.

**How have I understood Jesus' revelation?** Time and again Jesus emphasized on time. He wanted us to be well aware that we are bound by time and we need to make wise use of it. If we lose it we may never get it again.

**What do I do?** Have I understood that I am time bound? Have I been conscious of the time God has entrusted to me? The Bible talks about 70 years of life span and out of good health about 80. What do I do during these days of my life? I need to establish a strong connection with Jesus and must be sure to share His love and grace to everyone God allows into my life. I have to connect people to Jesus. I must do it tirelessly with the uninterrupted connection I have with Jesus.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 34 / April 1**

**Love – a Commandment!**

**John 13:34**

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.

Our network connections are not binding. They can be terminated when not needed. Whereas the connections to Jesus is binding. The love of Jesus was true to the disciples and He promised to love them to the very end. He did not lay down any conditions for them to be loved. They were loved just the way they were.

Jesus gave the disciples a new commandment. What was it? To love each other. Why was it new? Because it has always been easy to love the one who loves us but Jesus has told them to love everyone. What He meant precisely was that they have to love the Gentiles and serve them too. The disciples were certainly not used to loving these people since they considered them to be the scum of the earth because of their religious opinions. The Jews always thought they were superior to the others. The disciples of Jesus were no exceptions to such an idea. Therefore, Jesus clearly mentioned to them that whatever He had told wasn't a suggestion it was a commandment – in simple terms, an order to obey. A mandate!

**How do I follow the commandment?** Will it be fair enough for me to love everyone? It is often a difficult task since we have our own likes and dislikes for people. We choose to love some better over the other and decide to hate others for no reason. It is a human predicament.

**What do I do?** If I love the Lord Jesus truly, I better learn to love everyone. I need to look at people beyond their limitations and their virtues. I need to look through the eyes of Jesus. If love language becomes part of my life, I will surely have peace in all circumstances. Since, "love one another" is an order from Jesus I need to obey it even if I don't like it. Like a soldier who obeys orders and does not question the commander.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 35 / April 3**

**Love reflects GOD!**

**John 13:35**

Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Social media platform is designed in such a way that your network feeds you with what you have been looking at. The algorithm brings forth what you just browsed once and would begin to send more content related to what you saw. You would slowly get stuck without your own consciousness. Then you can imagine the power of your connection with Jesus, you would begin to be more like Him, if that doesn't happen then you need to be aware that something is not right with your connection to Jesus.

Jesus declared to the disciples that if they love everyone despite differences they would be reflecting Jesus in their lives. But the task is – to love everyone is not so easy. The disciples haven't done that before. Jesus modeled it through His life. He loved them even when they had doubts about it. They were all the time with Jesus but had trouble believing Him. They were amused when they went two by two to different villages and shared about Jesus and His kingdom. They were thrilled when the demons obeyed them. Jesus reiterated that they would be able to do more than He did. It was out of love that Jesus entrusted all authority to these 12 men. He wanted them to show forth to the world to whomever they would come across.

**How do I reflect God?** It is not about the gifts of God and its manifestation, but it is our love for God expressed in our love for other people.

**What do I do?** I have to love all people. Not an easy task though. I need to accept people for whoever they are and with whatever tantrums they throw around. We find it hard to love people since we have expectations of them and if they do not match up to it, we begin to dislike them. But the love God expects us to have is an unconditional love for others like He had for us. Let us try our best to be mindful of loving people if we truly love Jesus.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 36 / April 4**

### Questioning Moments

#### John 13:36

Simon Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?" And Jesus replied, "You can't go with me now, but you will follow me later."

Some network connections are so questionable. They can take away your personal details and trap you beyond imagination. Simon Peter had some questionable moments with Jesus. I guess he wasn't too well connected with Jesus and had many questions of curiosity. Nevertheless, his word and works were a contrast.

When Jesus finished His heart talk about going away to the Father. Simon Peter the undeclared leader of the 12 did not want to stay around without Jesus. The reason for such a desire is unknown. It could probably be fear of the Jews, or might be that being around Jesus would make life easier. When they run into difficulties Jesus was always there to tackle it. Without Jesus they may find it hard especially Peter though looked up to wasn't a confident man but had always been impulsive. So his question to Jesus at that point was legitimate.

**How do I handle my questioning moments?** I am sure as we become disciples of Jesus from simple following after Him, we will certainly have moments of questioning. It is good to ask questions and get answers instead of assuming.

**What do I do?** When in doubt clarify it with questioning. You might get answers but at times you may not but still it is fine to trust God and move on. We need to know our limitations but with God's grace we should be able to handle unsettled questions. Such moments can enhance our faith and build us stronger in Jesus.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 37 / April 5**

**Quick Decision Lets You Quit!**

**John 13:37**

"But why can't I come now, Lord?" he asked. "I'm ready to die for you."

Too many devices connected to one particular network can drastically reduce the speed of your internet. So is our mind with too many thoughts and lack of clarity can lead us into impulsive decisions that can become detrimental.

Simon Peter as always wanted to have a say during this important occasion. He could not handle the shock that Jesus was going away and that they would be left behind to battle for life. He was also upset that he could not go where Jesus was going. His thoughts were too clouded and he declared he was ready to die for Jesus. He didn't realize what he blurted out. He was quite quick. Did Jesus spent time that night to let him die for nothing? Jesus wanted them to reach out to people and connect them to God. He didn't prepare the disciples to die which eventually would happen. Jesus spent His time and energy to let them live for God as free men and bring people to God.

**How do I avoid quick decisions?** Serving Jesus invokes decisions in life. Decisions are part of life and we make them every day from the time we get up from bed to the time we head back. They can make a huge impact. Right decisions at the right time is a great sense of divine wisdom.

**What do I do?** When I follow Jesus so earnestly I need to be careful about the decisions I make. Anything I say and do can displease my God for whom I am passionate about. I have to tune myself to grasp what God expects of me. He does not want me to die. Dying is easy whereas living for Him is difficult. What do I choose – dying or living? God wants us to live well so people could see our lives and find God.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 38 / April 6**

**Truth is Unbelievable!**

**John 13:38**

Jesus answered, "Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.

Some information on the network sites are fake but it can draw your attention and get you trapped to it. By the time you realize you are almost done. Our connection with Jesus though good but consistently needs to be examined since we can get side tracked without being aware of it and miss out our valuable connection with Christ.

Peter was kind of side-tracked. He thought he was going to do a favor to Jesus by telling Him that he was willing to die for Him. It was certainly not on behalf of Him. There is a world of difference to die for someone and die on their behalf. Die on their behalf would mean taking their place. Peter was uncertain about the events and surely not dying on Christ's behalf. Peter's declaration was challenged when Jesus shared the truth about his disposition about the happenings that were yet to occur. He told Simon Peter plainly that he would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed in the morning. The denial would be nothing simple, Peter would blatantly affirm that he didn't even know who Jesus was. Such a gesture would be devastating.

**How do I know the truth?** Reality and facts keep changing but truth does not. We should be aware of our hard realities, often we estimate beyond our capabilities. We should self-check our belief as often as possible.

**What do I do?** Have I got the truth about myself and my relationship with Jesus? How well have I established it with Jesus? I must make sure that I am consistent with my relating to Jesus and my complete dependence is on Him. If I have a feeling that I am not doing too well with my connection, I need to find ways to strengthen it. Maybe I need to spend time reading His word, praying and probably fasting and being alone with Jesus.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 39 / April 7**

**Truth Frees!**

**John 14:1**

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.

Staying strong in the right connection is resourceful. Our connections to Jesus can become a revelation of our shortcomings but the good news is knowing the truth and trusting God can set us right.

After Jesus declared about Peter's denial, He continued to encourage the disciples not be troubled in their heart. But to trust God and also trust in Him who is the transcendence of the loving Father. The feet washing was unbelievable, a sense of worth was established and the supper conversations sent them shock waves nevertheless they were pretty much confused about everything that prevailed. Probably they were puzzled about what might happen after. However, Jesus did not want them to be worried about anything, but they had to have trust in Jesus since that would be the only resolve. It was just that they had to trust Jesus more in His absence than in His presence. It wasn't a task for them to have believed when they were with Jesus.

**How can I know I be free?** As human beings we become captive to our haunting thoughts, but we can be freed if we trust God for the best that He has than what we have thought about. Often good becomes the enemy of the best. We try our best to settle with the good.

**What do I do?** All I need to do is rely on God when in trouble. Troubles test our strength and our trust in Jesus. When we know God has the best and nothing less, we can be trouble free. If there is fear, faith cannot exist. We need to watch out for truth! Cause Jesus is the truth and the truth does not change and embracing it frees us.

Happy Lent. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!

## Lenten Devotions 2023

**Day – 40 / April 8**

**Connected to GOD Connect Others to GOD!**

**John 14:2**

There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

Our network connection connects us to a lot of people whom we have lost touch with. The social media platform helps us find them and stay connected. In the same note our connection to Jesus must help us connect our friends and family to Jesus since this connection with Jesus is the best we can ever offer people whom we love.

The Lord wanted to ensure that the disciples know the truth and become free from fear. He was going to the Father and they would not be left alone. Jesus reinforced that their connection with Jesus would not be cut even when Jesus would be taken to the Father in heaven. The connection would remain uninterrupted and Jesus wanted the disciples to connect the rest of the people to Him, so they could enjoy the privilege that these men enjoy. The Lord Jesus said He has more than enough room in His Father's house and that He was going to prepare a place for them too. For all the serving the disciples would be involved, Jesus wanted to honor them by providing a place for them with Him. A place of endless rest and joy. The goal of the disciples is to bring the love of Jesus to the rest of the human beings so they can enjoy endless living with Jesus.

**How do I connect others to God?** It is both easy and hard at the same time. It begins with how well we have been connected to Jesus, and that determines our ability to connect others to Jesus.

**What do I do?** I must ensure my connection with Christ Jesus all the time and that it is never snapped for any reason. If my connection is stable I might be able to connect as many people as possible to Jesus. My connection with Jesus will surely help me understand God's heart and that will enable me to serve Him for His glory. Stay connect to GOD to connect the community, God let you to live in.

Happy Easter. Celebrate Jesus! Amen!