

This year our devotions during Lent are taken from the resources offered by Tearfund (UK)

Week 3

*'The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.'
(Psalm 118:24)*

This Very Day

This is the day
the Lord has made:
this day; today;
it is the only day we have.
Yesterday and tomorrow
are imaginings of vapour;
today as real as an unfolding smile
or a breaking bone.



Whatever darkness this day brings,
whatever radiance,
whatever quaking or stillness
sorrow or astonishment
anxiety or boredom or delight;
this is the day the Lord has made,
I will rejoice,
and be glad in it.

Gideon Heugh

Week 2

TESHUVA

‘Repent and live!’ (Ezekiel 18:32)

As a young Christian, the word **‘repent’** used to make me wince. I grew up in a church setting where it was often used in the context of: *‘You’re a despicable sinner and you need to change your ways – or else!’*

‘Repent’, therefore, can often have a lot of guilt and shame attached to it.



But now, as an old(er) Christian, it’s a word that inspires me to hope.

In Hebrew, the word translated into English as **‘repent’** is *teshuva*.

Teshuva literally means **‘return’**. But, return to what?

- To the vibrant, abundant life that God has made available to us.
- To the divine image placed since before birth at the centre of our beings.
- To who we’ve been created to be.

Teshuva is about returning to the path of life. It is about turning towards where we know there is light, no matter how surrounded by darkness we may feel.

It is a declaration that human beings have the capacity to change – not to **be** better, because you cannot improve on God’s design, but to **do** better, because that is lining ourselves up with who we truly are.

God of love, we return to you. We return to the divine image you placed within us. We angle ourselves towards the light. In Jesus’ Name! AMEN.

Gideon Heugh (Gideon writes for Tearfund and is a poet and environmentalist.)

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Reflection on the past two weeks since the start of Lent: Ours is a journey with a clearly defined destination!

The most haunting question to us today, is the question Jesus asked His Disciples in the Garden Gethsemane: *Could you not stay awake with me one hour?* (Mt 26:40)

Living with the various dimensions and expressions of COVID this past year, has disoriented us. We **need** to grapple with this one question in order to re-focus our hearts and minds, and re-orient our lives.

Jesus is asking each of us, “*Are you awake?*”, “*Will you splash cold water on your face, and come into my presence?*”, “*Will you commit to staying awake with Me? I want to hear your concerns, and for you to hear My response!*”

We seem to be sleep-walking through the onslaught of COVID, stunned and unaware how to respond to the challenges of life. Some like Capt Sir Tom Moore use sheer will-power to bolster their failing strength towards a final act of tremendous bravado; several others found ways of reaching out to help those in need, but as a people, the human race, COVID presented itself more as a threat than a challenge!

Jesus’ question is not intended to shame us; Jesus wants us to join Him in the most important stage of our journey to the Redemption Party God has planned: to build and strengthen our relationship with the Father, through Jesus His Son and our Saviour.

Prayer, which is first listening to God, and then doing as He bids us, is the **ONLY** way stay awake with Jesus during these final hours (perhaps days, years?) before the gates to eternity will be open again!

Will you not stay awake with Him for one more hour?

Week 1

A prayer of preparation for Lent

Lord God!

This Lent

I surrender this time to you:

Open my eyes and my heart

and

Remind me of who You are

and

who You have created me to be.

Amen.