



# 45

IMAGES  
THAT SPEAK





The logo features a large, bold, dark red number '40'. The '0' is stylized with a thick, rounded shape. Inside the top curve of the '0', the word 'IMAGES' is written in white, uppercase letters. Inside the bottom curve of the '0', the words 'THAT SPEAK' are written in white, uppercase letters. Below the '40' is a dark red horizontal bar with rounded ends, containing the word 'CHALLENGE' in white, uppercase letters.

**40**  
IMAGES  
THAT SPEAK  
**CHALLENGE**

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# 40

During His ministry on earth, Jesus used everyday objects and familiar images to convey important messages to those He taught. Here are 40 *images that speak* – they have their place and meaning in the Bible, and we can still see, touch, feel, or use them today. *Challenge 40* invites us to learn to recognize reminders of eternal values in the ordinary things and moments of our daily lives.

You can find additional materials and a PDF version of this booklet on the website [bczagreb.hr/en/challenge40](http://bczagreb.hr/en/challenge40) ►





## **1. LAMB, John 1:29-34**

In the Gospel of John, John the Baptist provides a striking image: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” By publicly proclaiming Jesus as the Lamb of God, John here identifies Jesus as the one who has come to give his life for our salvation. In Jewish tradition, a lamb was offered as a sacrifice of purification, and it was the Passover lamb that freed the people from slavery. Therefore, John’s statement has a deep meaning: Jesus is the true, final Lamb, the sacrifice of love that frees us from sin, and brings new life.

The message was clear: God fulfills his promises, and has sent a Messiah who saves not by violence, but by surrender and love. That same message tells us today that salvation is not based on our perfection, but on God’s grace. Jesus, as the Lamb of God, calls us to a life of trust, repentance, and humble love.

We can “see, touch, and experience” the Lamb of God: in the Eucharist, where Christ gives himself for us; in the Word of God, which reveals his face; in people who live out the gentleness and sacrifice of Christ; and in moments of our own mercy and forgiveness, when we ourselves become an expression of the Lamb of God in the world.

We are called together to celebrate, listen, and do the works of the Lamb of God who takes away our sins.

**Find a picture of a lamb, gaze at the beauty and tenderness of this beautiful creature, and think about the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.**



## 2. TEMPLE, John 2:19-22

When the Jews asked Jesus to prove his authority in the temple with a miraculous sign, He uttered a mysterious sentence: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” No one understood what he was saying. The conversation took place in a beautiful, imposing complex of white stone with details of gold and bronze.

I think of the magnificent temples found in every world civilization. They have always been places where people have tried to understand the supernatural – to meet God. For the Jews, the temple in Jerusalem was where they offered sacrifices, sought forgiveness of sins, and celebrated their liberation from slavery... Yet, only the High Priest could enter the most holy place in the temple, the Holy of Holies, and only once a year.

Perhaps we could paraphrase Jesus’ words this way: “Destroy the place where man and God meet, and in three days I will raise it up again.” After his resurrection, the disciples understood the message. Jesus was speaking of his body – the true temple. He is the place where God meets his people, and where the true sacrifice is offered. Through his death and resurrection, he has made access possible for each of us.

This is captured in a well-known song: I enter the Holy of Holies, I enter through the blood of the Lamb, I enter to worship You only, I enter to honor “I AM”. Lord I worship You, for Your name is Holy, Holy Lord.

**Find a 3D rendering of Solomon’s Temple online and as you look at it, think about the power of Jesus’ words when he speaks of himself as the temple.**



### **3. WATER, John 4:7-15**

We're all likely familiar with that overwhelming feeling of thirst when our mouths are dry and we're "dying of thirst". In those moments, the only thing we need is water – something we often take for granted.

While physical thirst is easily satisfied – a glass of water quickly solves the problem – what happens when we deeply thirst for things that water cannot reach? For acceptance, success, security, love, wealth or something else? How do we quench that thirst? From what source do we draw, and with what?

In this text, Jesus reminds us that He is the source of living water – a water that not only quenches thirst but wells up within us to eternal life. He invites us to come to his source, which is inexhaustible, always available, and ready to flood the deepest corners of our soul and heart. He doesn't care where we've come from, what burdens we carry, or how spiritually dehydrated we are. What matters to him is that we come.

Let's ask ourselves if we thirst for Jesus the way we thirst for other things in our lives? Do we feel that our souls are dry, and thirsty for his presence? Do we approach the source of living water He offers?

Like the Samaritan woman, let's pray that Jesus will give us water from his source so that we may never thirst again.

**Fill a glass with water, and as you slowly drink it, think about Jesus as the source of living water.**



## 4. BREAD, John 6:35-40

Some say they can't eat a meal without bread, others eat it only with certain dishes, and some even avoid it. When I was a child, my grandmother always told me to "wipe the plate clean with bread, so that the sink doesn't get clogged". No matter what we were eating, the plate had to be wiped clean with bread.

More than physical hunger, we carry a longing within us that ordinary food cannot satisfy. It is a hunger for life in a world of death, love in a world of hatred, and peace in a world of unrest. This hunger can only be satisfied by Jesus Christ, who says: "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger".

Earlier in this chapter we read how Jesus took five loaves of bread, thanked God, gave the food to be distributed, and everyone ate as much as they wanted – with plenty to spare. Jesus Christ is more than the bread we eat for daily sustenance. Just as he fed more than five thousand people, Jesus always responds to our needs in miraculous ways. And like that multitude, let's not forget to gather the pieces that are left. Jesus Christ doesn't want a single crumb of his bread to be wasted in our lives; he wants every piece used for edification – both for ourselves and for those around us.

**Take a piece of fresh bread, touch it, smell it, and as you slowly eat it, thank the Lord for every need fulfilled.**



## 5. LIGHT, John 8:12

*“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

Jesus describes Himself here as the light of the world. Just like a lighthouse, He is a light that can be seen on the darkest nights – even when the storm is raging on. As we navigate our lives that are full of obstacles, He is the constant. He is calling us home, calling us back, and lighting the way so that we can easily find it. Jesus is promising that we will never walk in darkness if we follow Him.

But on the darkest nights, we forget where to look. We focus on our little boat that is about to break apart. The waves seem too big, and the struggle to stay above the water feels like too much. We convince ourselves that we will surely drown – and we will if we don’t direct our attention to the one that gives the light of life. When we look to the light, what a blessing it is knowing that we are not judged by the One who calls. Even if He told us to not leave the safe harbor, and even if He warned us about the upcoming storm, we can always trust in the light leading us back to Him. The Father is calling us home, so that we can be close to Him, not to judge us for our mistakes.

**Today, when it gets dark, turn off the light in your room for a moment and then turn it back on. Experience the darkness, and then the light as you think about Jesus as the light of the world.**



## 6. ROCK, Matthew 7:24-27

In this final passage of the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus gives us one last parable to emphasize to his audience how important it is that they not only hear the words he speaks, but that they must also act on them, and do what he's been teaching them.

Jesus uses the everyday image of a rock in this parable, since rocks have always been very important for us, for example in building or as tools. He wants his listeners to understand that the right foundation is of the utmost importance. The Old Testament speaks of God as the true rock and that there is no true foundation outside of Him, and the New Testament speaks of Jesus Christ as the spiritual rock.

Just as rocks are not always smooth but can be quite rough to the touch, so Jesus' words are not always smooth or pleasant to our ears, but can be hard, rough and challenging to hear, and to obey. Nevertheless, we should follow them.

If we've built our lives on Jesus, then no matter our circumstances, no matter what life may throw at us, even through all the rain and storms, we will not crumble. We'll stand firm, strong, and he WILL be with us always because we've built our house on the strongest possible foundation – on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**Find a large rock, or at least a picture of a rock near you. Look at it carefully, and think about the foundation on which you are building your life.**



## 7. DOOR, John 10:7-10

Throughout human history, people have tried to figure out how to find salvation and live forever. Today is no different. People consider many paths to God, yet sometimes they refuse to believe that salvation is right there in front of them. In John chapter 9, for example, the Jews refused to recognize that Jesus is himself God, even after seeing him heal a man born blind. In today's text (chapter 10), the Jews find themselves in the same position. Using the familiar imagery of a shepherd and his sheep, Jesus makes it clear to his listeners that he is the only door to God (verses 7 and 9). He emphasizes that many who came before him claiming to be the door to salvation were false representatives (verse 8).

Jesus is not only the door to salvation; he is also the door to a fulfilling life. All who enter through his door will be saved, and will receive an abundant life—a life filled with warmth and security (verse 10).

Have you responded to his call? Have you entered through his door? If so, are you pointing others to the only door of salvation so that they too can hear his voice and enter through it? (10:16)

**Every day you open different doors and enter through them, but from now on, let doors become a reminder of the abundant life that Jesus offers you.**



## 8. STAFF, Psalm 23

In my life I have experienced several truly difficult troubles. Everything around me was crumbling, and seemed hopeless; tears welled up in my eyes, though they remained invisible to others. It felt as if there was no way out of the trouble that had befallen me. I felt utterly alone, without anyone's help.

Indeed, that "valley of the shadow of death" mentioned by the Psalmist is, for many of us, a place of anxiety, looming threats, mortal danger...

Psalm 50:15 says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." With God's help, I looked up to my God and Savior and cried out, "You are with me!" and "Your rod and your staff, they comfort me!" In that moment, I experienced unwavering confidence and deep faith. God's closeness transforms our reality!

In biblical times, shepherds used a staff or a rod to protect their sheep from predators. The staff – usually a long pole with a curved tip – was used to guide the sheep or rescue them from danger. God, like a caring shepherd, protects and guides those who worship him.

Even in the darkest seasons of our lives, the shadowy valley ceases to be dangerous and threatening. A child of God can walk peacefully through this earthly life, accompanied by the familiar sound of a staff striking the ground – the soothing rhythm of the Shepherd's presence, restoring our strength and renewing our spirits.

**Today, when you are outside, find something like a staff, hold it in your hand, feel the wood, and think about Psalm 23.**



## 9. WAY, John 14:5-8

I had come to Corinth with reverence, hoping to walk the paths that the apostle Paul had once trod. I entered my destination into Google Maps, followed the route, and arrived — only to feel disappointed. The ruins lay silent and unassuming, barely recognizable, and far less grand than those in Athens. Then I realized my mistake: I wasn't seeking a physical road that Paul once walked. What I truly longed for was the way to a relationship like Paul had with Jesus—the lifelong, remarkable strength of his faith, to become a missionary like Paul. This kind of way cannot be mapped or reached with the help of a GPS.

When Thomas asked Jesus about “the way,” he was thinking of a path to a physical destination. Jesus’ answer— I am the way — reveals that the way is a person. Corinth was not Paul’s true destination, nor should it be mine – Christlikeness was and is the goal. Jesus is still calling us from the physical into the spiritual, showing that the way is like any journey, with a destination, a direction, and path — to Him, through Him, and becoming like Him. This new understanding of the way as a relational “GPS” can guide how we walk in the physical world.

**Today, as you walk or drive, on your way to your destination, reflect on the importance of a relationship with Jesus, who is himself the way.**



## 10. VINE, John 15:1-8

So, we have the vinedresser, the vine, and the branch – and then, if all goes well, the fruit. The outcome depends on the vinedresser’s vision and effort, the vine’s potential and vitality, and the branch’s cooperation and trust. And then we have the Father, the Son, and the proclaimed word.

The meaning and purpose of a branch is fruit. Its purpose isn’t a contribution to a neatly laid-out vineyard, with perfect lines and ideal symmetry. It isn’t there to illustrate the idea of a “green transition”, or to serve as a breathtaking work of art. It isn’t even meant to be a testament to a plant’s endurance in a harsh environment.

The meaning of the branch on the vine is the fruit – a cluster of the biggest, best, tastiest, and juiciest grapes possible. Without grapes, the branch is barren and useless. Despite much effort, there’s little joy; instead of admiration and delight, it evokes only pity.

The Father, the vinedresser, is steadfast. The vine faithfully provides stability, protection and nourishment. Jesus cleanses the branches with his word, calling forth fruit so that the vinedresser does not have to intervene and prune ...

So little is asked of us; simply to abide – to not waver or deviate. Yet, this is often challenging and difficult. We are called to abide in Jesus, keeping his words within us. He will abide – but will I?

*“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”*

**Find a vine or vineyard that you can observe (at least in a photograph) and think of yourself as a young shoot that is gently clinging to Jesus.**

***He calls us to  
repentance – to humbly  
return to him***

These images convey themes that show the value of the season of Lent – repentance, humility, and allowing God to cleanse and renew us. The ordinary things around us can inspire reflection and actions that lead to inner change.



## 11. COINS, John 2:13-25

In John 2, we see an encounter with Jesus. When He enters the temple courts, He finds them filled with merchants selling animals and exchanging money. What was meant to be a place of worship had become a marketplace. In righteous anger, Jesus drives them out, overturning tables and declaring that His Father's house was not meant for trade, but for worship.

The coins were scattered across the temple floor, and today they represent more than money — they symbolize people, things, ideals, or desires that we put in place of God. A coin, in itself, is not evil. It has value and purpose. But when coins (money) begin to rule the heart, they can quietly replace God at the center of our lives. The problem in the temple was not the presence of money, but that the people had made it a priority.

Jesus reminds us that our hearts are now His temple. What do we prioritize there? When we look at a coin today, let's ask ourselves – what do we treasure most? What has weight and value in our lives? Are we investing our time, energy, and love in things that draw us closer to God, or in things that pull us away?

May the coins remind us to examine our hearts, to clear out anything that competes with Christ, and to make room for worshipping Him.

**Take a few coins out of your wallet and play with them a little – feel their coolness, let them jingle. Scatter them and ask yourself what you need to cast out of your life to make room for Christ.**



## **12. TABLE, Luke 7:36-38; 44-50**

When we invite someone into our home, we warmly welcome them with a hug and kind words. Often gathered around a table, we want our guests to feel accepted, relaxed, and welcome.

Hospitality is cherished in all cultures. In Luke 7:36-38 we see the customs of that time in action. Simon invites Jesus to his home for a meal, yet fails to welcome him appropriately. Jesus accepts the situation and doesn't complain. Then, an uninvited woman – a known sinner – enters the scene. She shows Jesus an extraordinary expression of love using the most precious things she has: expensive perfume, tears of repentance, and her own hair to wipe his feet.

Simon is indignant, disapproving of both the woman's gestures, and Jesus' acceptance of them. Knowing his thoughts, Jesus asks him to consider the nature of forgiveness through the story of two debtors. Simon understands the meaning of the message with his mind, but we don't know what was truly happening in his heart. Meanwhile the woman, freed by Jesus from her sinfulness, begins a new chapter of life by faith.

In our house, the table is central – a place where friends and family gather. Along with food and conversation, there is often both indignation and approval, laughter and tears, apologies and forgiveness. All of this teaches us how to better build community and connection. These moments are a sign of God's love and grace in action – the ability to both forgive and be forgiven.

**When you sit at a table with your family or friends, give thanks for the forgiveness you receive, and pray for the willingness to offer forgiveness to others.**



### **13. STONES, John 8:2-11**

We encounter stones throughout our lives – playing with them as children, skipping them across the water, or using them for building. We even use them in common idioms like, “killing two birds with one stone”. In this text, stones are used for accusation and judgement – as tools of pain and death.

The scribes and Pharisees bring a woman caught in adultery before Jesus, and want to hear what he has to say. Although they claim to adhere to the Law, their true goal is to trap Jesus so they can accuse him. Jesus answers them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” Jesus’ words shame those who had just been the woman’s judges, who had slyly wanted to trick Jesus. One by one, they begin to walk away.

I am always amazed by Jesus’ wisdom, and also by his compassion. Although His perfect righteousness gave Him every right to be the first to condemn her, He chooses instead to offer forgiveness.

As humans, we tend to judge, and sometimes even condemn one another, but let’s not forget that Jesus sees us as we truly are. In Him we have value and forgiveness because of the love He showed us on the cross. We can be liberated from the sin and guilt that we – or others – have placed upon ourselves.

**Try to find a slightly larger stone, take it in your hand, and imagine that it is a sin that is tormenting you, and that you want to surrender to the Lord. Slowly throw that stone away because Jesus wants to free you from guilt.**



## 14. MIRROR, James 1:22-25

“Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?!”

How often do we look in a mirror? 8 to 10 times a day? 60 to 70? Plus the reflections in shop windows, car windows, cell phone screens...

Why do we look so often? What are our motives? Are we looking with the intention of fixing something? Or are we deceiving ourselves, simply seeking vain confirmation that we are indeed the “fairest”?

The same principle applies to our spiritual growth. When we reflect on our behavior, do we truly want to improve? Or do we think we’re already good enough and that it’s others who need to change?

The apostle James says that reading or listening to God’s word without applying it in everyday life is like looking at ourselves in a mirror and then forgetting what we look like.

If we hear God’s word but don’t do it, we are deceiving ourselves! But when we look into the light of God’s word and are changed by what we see, He frees us from everything that prevents us from becoming more like Him.

The Bible is a mirror in which we can see ourselves as God sees us.

When we look into the perfect law of freedom – given to us through the gracious sacrifice of Jesus, and illuminated by the Holy Spirit – and decide to listen to his voice, and do what it says in our relationships, we become truly free. We are blessed in our everyday lives, regardless of our circumstances.

**Take a mirror and look carefully into your eyes as you think about what this text is saying to you. Let a mirror be a reminder in the coming days to put the Word you have read into practice.**



## 15. TRUMPET, Matthew 6:1-4

The trumpet is an instrument that at first glance seems modest: only three buttons, a simple shape – almost meager compared to other musical instruments. And yet, it can play countless tones. Its appearance belies the powerful and penetrating sound it can produce. It's impossible not to notice it when you hear it.

That is why Jesus uses its image when he speaks of almsgiving: “When you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you...”.

In the Bible, a trumpet is never just an instrument. From Sinai, where it announces God's presence and speech to the people, to Revelation, where it signifies judgment and the end of the world, the trumpet accompanies numerous key moments in human history. It announces, warns, calls for repentance, and rejoices in victory. But here Jesus strips the trumpet of its noble connotation and uses it as a warning: Do not turn a good deed into a show.

We love praise and recognition for what we do. When we do something good, we want someone to notice it, so sometimes we “sound the trumpet.” But the “reward” – in the form of human recognition – betrays our superficiality.

A truly good deed is born in secret. It neither humiliates the recipient nor elevates the giver; for what we give, we have already received. The Father who sees in secret is the only one whose reward has lasting value.

**Find a picture of a trumpet, and/or play the sound of a trumpet on a speaker. Let it ring in your ears as a reminder that the good deeds you do should not be turned into a show.**



## 16. TASSELS, Matthew 23:1-12

In today's text, Jesus says, among other things, that the teachers and Pharisees "do everything just for people to see...they make the tassels on their garments long." In the Old Testament, we read that these tassels were meant to be a visible reminder of God's commandments (Numbers 15:39). However, these teachers and Pharisees were lengthening their tassels simply to be noticed by other people.

How easy it is to point a finger and condemn them: Oh, you proud religious leaders! Fortunately, I don't have a problem with "tassels." Or do I?

A Sunday morning scene appears before my eyes. I'm sitting in church, or rather I'm sitting in the church hallway with my child – a practical spot for parents with little ones. From here, I watch others – some sing, some play instruments, some teach Sunday school, some collect the offering, some make announcements, some preach, some run sound production, some translate, some... I remember a time when I wasn't "just sitting." I remember feeling diligent, productive, and seen – important. God is still with me and working in my life, but... now I'm in the hallway. What He is doing isn't happening on any stage.

I'm ashamed and humiliated by the questions (and maybe the answers?!) that arise: "Did I serve just to be seen?" "Was I arrogant?" "How often did I lengthen the tassels on my own clothes?"

**Find photos of fringes on the internet like the Pharisees had on their clothes (tzitzit), and while looking at them, ask yourself if you too sometimes feel the need to show off instead of serving.**



## 17. FIRE, James 3:3-6

I love candles. The warmth and scent gently lull me to sleep and bring peace. I can stare into the flames for hours, lost in thought. Yet, as much as I enjoy those flames, the horror of a wildfire would only bring me unease and anxiety. Throughout history people could not have survived without fire, but if not controlled, it brings destruction and death.

Just as I love candle flames, I love my gift of speech. Words and fire are essentially quite similar. We can use them to help, protect, and cleanse, but if we don't control them, they can devastate and destroy. The Bible is full of verses about the importance of our words (“...death and life are in the power of the tongue,” “The lips of the righteous feed many,” “...a soft tongue will break a bone”). They are an extremely powerful weapon, and God clearly cares a lot about what we say.

Why? Because our words reflect who we really are on the inside. As Jesus himself said, “It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a person.”

How do we use our gift of speech? Is it a candle's flame or a wildfire? Do we use it to bless and encourage, or for selfish purposes? May Jesus help us to use it in a way that is worthy of His name.

**If you have the opportunity, light a scented candle and observe its gentle flame, and then find a photo or video of a wildfire. Compare the two flames and think about how you use words in your daily life.**



## 18. NEEDLE, Matthew 19:23-26

Today's text is preceded by an encounter between Jesus and a rich man. The conversation doesn't have a happy ending. Afterward, Jesus declares that it will be difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Using a touch of humor, he compares it to a camel passing through the eye of a needle. We know that this is impossible – whether we interpret the “needle's eye” as a narrow gate of that time, or a literal needle.

A needle is a thin, sharp tool used for joining materials. It is the eye that gives a needle its purpose, allowing it to pull a thread through the fabric. In this way, useful garments are created to protect and comfort us. Yet, these things have a lifespan; needles break, and fabric wears out. Our lives are also fleeting. How we manage what we have – whether little or much – reveals what is in our hearts. Our dependence on possessions becomes “our camel” that hinders us from following where the Lord calls. Jesus is like the eye through which we enter by faith, becoming effective tools – like needles that can be used to pierce and bind things together.

Though we have different statuses, callings, abilities, and personalities, when we are adapted and connected in Him, we serve the Kingdom that is already among us. Most importantly, we gladden the Father's heart for He is YAHWEH ELION—the Most High God, Creator and possessor of heaven and earth.

**Take a regular sewing needle and a piece of thick string, and try to thread the string through the eye of the needle. As you try to accomplish this impossible task, think about what could make it difficult for you to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.**



## 19. BIRDS, Matthew 6:25-34

It's so easy for us to worry about tomorrow: what we will eat, whether our jobs are secure, how we'll pay the bills... We worry about illness, travel, and we even fret over the simplest things: hot water, a roof over our heads, and a blanket to keep us warm.

Yet Jesus reminds us of the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap, and yet our heavenly Father feeds them every day. He asks, "Are you not much more valuable than they?" This is such a powerful reminder for our hearts. God calls us, his beloved children, to seek his kingdom first and to trust in him, knowing that he is the one who sustains us and provides for all our needs.

*Lord, just as you feed and care for the birds, and just as your people once gathered the manna you sent from heaven each day – learning to depend on you and trust in your word – today we choose to trust in you. We choose not to be anxious about tomorrow. You see everything, you know every need, and are with us in every circumstance. We rest in the assurance that you will provide for us out of your love, and give us everything we truly need.*

**Take some time today to observe birds on a branch, or in flight. As you watch how carefree they are, thank the Lord for all the care He shows for you.**



## **20. RING, Luke 15:20-24**

The story of the Prodigal Son – or better yet, the Found Son – is well-known not only because we have heard it so often, but because we have experienced it ourselves. We were dead and are now alive; we were lost and are now found.

True repentance cannot happen without a clear and honest understanding of sin. We must be able to name it, describe it, and understand the gravity of sin, recognizing its causes and consequences. Only then can sincere confession and repentance occur, fueled by a firm desire and decision to change.

A caring father – devoid of the anger and bitterness caused by his son's disrespect, premature demand for his inheritance, and departure – awaits his return. He doesn't wait so he can punish or humiliate his son, nor to say, "I told you so." Instead, he waits to restore the communion and love that were lost when the son walked away.

The father does not receive the prodigal, lost son as a servant; instead, he places a ring on his hand as a sign of his restored relationship and identity. The ring is a symbol of God's faithfulness: God does not take us back as servants, but as sons and daughters.

**You may wear a ring on your hand, or someone you see regularly may wear one, but you certainly have many opportunities to see a ring. May every glance at a ring remind you of God's generous love.**

***He calls us to follow  
him – to teach us how to  
live like him***



## 21. NEST, Matthew 8:18–22

A nest is something built over time. It is carefully shaped, strand by strand, until it becomes a place of shelter and familiarity. It holds what is fragile, and gives a sense of safety.

In this passage, the nest represents what is settled and secure — the life we have arranged so that we know where we belong and what tomorrow will look like. Following Jesus, however, does not always allow us to remain there in that nest. Sometimes His call unsettles what we have made comfortable.

There was a season when my own life felt firmly nested. Work, home, and future plans fit together well. Faith was present, but control quietly remained in my hands. When God invited me to follow Him more closely, it meant loosening my grip on what felt safe and familiar, and stepping into something less certain.

Today, I have a home and a place to rest, but I no longer see it as permanent. My nest is held lightly. It may remain for a time, or it may be taken apart again.

This image invites a simple question: Am I more committed to the nest I have built, or to the One who calls me forward? True following begins when even our safest places are no longer final.

**Find a photo, or better yet, a video of a nest where a family of birds has settled. Imagine that feeling of warmth and security that reminds you of home. Then ask yourself: Do I value the security of the ‘known’ more than what Jesus is calling me to?**



## **22. BOAT, Mark 4:35-41**

After a long day of teaching the crowds from a boat near the shore, a weary Jesus asks his disciples to cross with him to the other side of the lake. At the start of the day, Jesus had used the boat as a platform to connect with the people; but as night fell, the same boat became a place where the disciples had to dramatically confront their own powerlessness.

For these experienced fishermen, the boat was usually a place of control, yet under the force of the waves, it became a trap. While they frantically bailed out water, Jesus slept in the stern. This image reveals a key contrast: the disciples saw death, while Jesus rested in his Father's hands. For the original listeners – and for us today – the message is clear: Jesus' presence does not mean the absence of a storm, but the presence of peace in the midst of it.

A boat is more than just a wooden vessel; it's a symbol of human life and our fragile security. Each of us has our own "boat" that is occasionally battered by waves of fear – whether in marriage, work, or our inner peace. The boat teaches us to focus not on the amount of water rushing into our lives, but on the Person sharing the journey with us. Our daily lives often echo the disciples' cry: "Don't you care?" Yet Jesus' peaceful sleep is a call to trust. Ultimately, security does not come from a calm sea, but from the knowledge that the One who commands the wind sits in our boat.

**Find a photo of a boat or, better yet, bring to mind images of a boat trip you've taken. Think about what it would be like to be in that boat with Jesus.**



## 23. TREE, Luke 19:1-10

A tree can bear fruit, provide firewood, or offer shade and shelter – but for Zacchaeus, its greatest purpose was to help him see Jesus.

Because he was short, he couldn't see over the crowd. It didn't matter.

For a man of his position, hiking up his robes, running ahead, and climbing a tree was deeply undignified. It didn't matter. Seeing Jesus was the only thing that mattered.

The tree was just one of many obstacles. As a tax collector, Zacchaeus was a notorious sinner, condemned by society and destined for ruin. It didn't matter.

People likely told him that God hated him, and they probably pushed him aside as Jesus passed by. It didn't matter.

There were so many barriers, but he climbed over them all just to see – just to hope.

We can learn much from Zacchaeus.

First – What “trees” must you climb to see Jesus more clearly? Are they undignified, difficult, or inconvenient? Isn't it worth it?

Second – Why do we force others to climb trees just to catch a glimpse of Jesus? Why do we push the “Zacchaeuses” of the world away from the Savior's presence and the hearing of His words?

Zacchaeus was failing. He knew his way of life was leading to death. But then he met the Man who could change everything – the God who came down to us so we wouldn't have to climb up!

**While you are out today, find a tree in a crowded place. Imagine yourself climbing it, regardless of what others might think. Whenever you see a tree, think about what you are – or are not – willing to do just to get closer to Jesus.**



## 24. GRAIN, John 12:20-26

In December, I love the Croatian tradition of planting Christmas wheat – the rustling sound as I sift the grains through my fingers – a simple prelude to the miraculous process of a seed dying so that it may be born anew. It's a moment of surrender.

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies ... it does not bear fruit. Life requires death. Facing this paradox, Jesus asks us to reflect on a way of life that transcends reason – Whoever loves his life loses it. It's actually the awareness of the end that gives life its shape, creating something new rather than taking its value away.

Through the image of a wheat grain, Jesus challenges us to look at ourselves honestly. How much do we hold onto out of fear – “just in case” – lest we lose ourselves, our time, dreams, abilities, love, decisions? The dying that Jesus speaks of isn't a one-time event; it's constant inner transformation. Following him means agreeing daily to die to yourself, allowing something new to be born from that surrender: a small act of courage, a kind word, a smile, or an extended hand. What feels like a loss in the moment is actually a pledge for eternity.

Just as a grain of wheat must fall into the earth to bear fruit, we find fulfillment only when we have the courage to lose ourselves. Dare to plant your grain, and watch with trust the miracle of growth.

**Get a few grains of wheat today, or some other seed, and leave them somewhere visible for the next few days. Let these grains remind you that dying to yourself is the path to life in Christ.**



## 25. TOWEL, John 13:1-16

On the eve of Passover, Jesus gathered his disciples around the table, desiring to show them the full extent of his love. During dinner, he took a bowl of water and a towel and began to wash their feet, one by one.

The disciples were stunned; they couldn't imagine their Master washing their feet. They likely felt that they should be washing his feet. However, Jesus wanted to teach them something: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

We may mistakenly assume Jesus' disciples were a harmonious group who would find such service easy. In reality, they were competitive, arguing about who was the greatest among them. Aren't we all like that in our own circles – with friends, at work, or in our neighborhoods?

The disciples would have been honored to wash Jesus' feet as a sign of their devotion, but they struggled to do the same for one another. Similarly, it might be easier for us to please a boss or a parent than it is to serve a colleague, a sibling, or a neighbor.

The feet washing and towel are examples for us of selfless service. Even a simple moment – like a family member or roommate asking us to bring them a dishtowel – can be an opportunity for selfless service rather than an excuse for whining and complaining. Let us serve with joy, remembering Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Isn't that the least we can do?

**The most ordinary towel can become a reminder of the importance of service. As you dry yourself with a towel, ask yourself if you're applying Jesus' teaching about selfless service.**



## 26. LETTER, 2 Corinthians 3:1-3

Writing a letter to a friend is almost a forgotten art today because of modern technology. When you receive one, the fact that someone has taken their time and effort to write a letter to you can take you by surprise. Most importantly, it shows how much you mean to that person. Rather than just getting an email, you've received a handwritten message that is more intimate, more memorable – and that helps build a deeper relationship through its authenticity. In the same way, God wants to send a message to us, and through us. He wants to be more intimate, wants to be unforgettable, and wants a deeper relationship.

We are made in God's image, and we are His letter to the world, showing what He has done for us, and what He is doing through us. Let's live our lives such that people not only see us, but can also read about Jesus' love, grace and glory through us. Let's live humbly, aware that our presence in someone's life could be an important factor in whether they come to know our Saviour.

*"I'm just a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world." – Mother Teresa*

**Write someone a real letter, put it in a real envelope, and send it by real post. Take the opportunity to say why you are doing it - to remind both yourself and the person you are writing to of the greatness of God's love.**



## **27. CUP, Matthew 23:25-26**

Each morning, I get up and make myself a nice cup of tea. Before I pour the tea into my cup I make sure to check if the inside of the cup is clean. Why? Because I know the inside of the cup is what matters most.

In Matthew 23, Jesus compares the Pharisees to cups that look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of sin. Jesus also says in this chapter that the Pharisees do not practice what they preach, that everything they do is done for others to see, so that they appear important. Jesus says: “Listen to what they say, but don’t do what they do.” He calls them hypocrites – pretenders.

As I study this text, I’m asking myself – does the way I live my life match up with what I say I believe? Can my kids or those around me do what I do? Or should I warn them, like Jesus warns us about the Pharisees: “Do what I say, not what I do?” I may look great on the outside, and appear to have it all together in front of people, but Jesus tells us that He looks at the heart. First, we must be right and clean before the Lord, and then the outside will also be clean.

**Dare today to take a glass or cup that looks clean on the outside from the dirty dishes, place it in front of you, and imagine that you are about to drink your favorite beverage from it. Think about how God might feel today if He looked inside you – into your heart.**



## 28. SALT, Matthew 5:13-16

Salt is a small substance, yet with powerful properties. Adding salt enhances flavor, preserves food, and even serves as a disinfectant. Historically, salt was so valuable that it was used to pay taxes or soldiers' wages – which is where the word “salary” (salarium) originates. It was “white gold” – expensive and sought after. However, when salt is mixed with impurities, it loses its potency and becomes useless.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says that WE are the salt of the world. He doesn't say we should become salt; he says we already are! We bring flavor and a unique value to the world. We prevent moral and spiritual decay. We are called to be distinct from the world, not to blend into it. In Jesus, we have received a new heart and identity; we have become the “seasoning” of this world. Jesus doesn't want us to be nominal believers who look the part but have no impact. He doesn't want us to react to hardship the same way as people without Him do. As believers, we're not immune to troubles, but our lives should look different, spicy – full of flavor – regardless of the situation.

Salt is simple and small, but powerful and necessary. The same is true for us. Every kind word, good deed, or prayer adds flavor to the world. Being salt means making a difference, being a blessing to others, changing the environment for good, and remaining faithful to the truth.

**Prepare a simple dish without salt today. Try it, stop for a moment, then add salt and enjoy the dish. As you do this, think about how important your 'salty presence' is to those around you.**



## **29. GOLD MEDAL, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

The image of a gold medal – translated in some versions as a “wreath” – represents victory. It’s something achieved through perseverance, practice, discipline, and sacrifice. In a world where everything depends on individual strength and human abilities and effort, this makes sense. While these qualities have value, the image of the athlete described in First Corinthians is not quite the same as what we see in the world.

To be honest, the level of discipline described in the text seems to me to be arduous and even unattainable. In our busy lives, which are full of challenges even at the best of times, it is difficult to find additional motivation for an athletic spirit, whether physical or spiritual. And yet, God calls us to it.

Yes, we need discipline, and we are called to invest our efforts in the reward that awaits us in eternity, but we do not depend solely on ourselves and our abilities. Our heavenly Father provides the motivation, strength, and wisdom we need. That eternal “gold medal” can sometimes seem so abstract and distant, especially on days when our emotions and thoughts are drowned out by the noise of everyday life. But even those moments are wrapped in God’s grace, for he never expects more from us than what he first gives us.

**On the internet, find a photo of a gold medal, or a laurel wreath such as victors received in ancient times. As you look at it, think about the imperishable reward that awaits those who persevere in the Lord.**



### **30. CLOUD, Hebrews 12:1-3**

Clouds glide slowly across the sky, changing shape and density, sometimes white and light, sometimes gray and heavy. They move silently but constantly, present even when we fail to notice them. In the Bible, clouds often carry special meaning because they remind us that God is always with his people, guiding them.

The writer of Hebrews uses this motif of clouds, describing the heroes of faith in chapter 11 as a “cloud of witnesses.” As we read about their lives, it is difficult to remain discouraged. These were people who tasted the bitterness of life, yet continued to trust God despite trials, uncertainties, and immense challenges. Their testimonies still resonate today.

However, these witnesses are not limited to the names in scripture. They are also all the faithful who surround us now: friends, family, and community members. Together, we form a great cloud, just as the sky is adorned with many clouds. Our testimonies are stories of how faith does not eliminate difficulties, but rather gives strength, courage, perseverance and hope.

Trials, weaknesses and pain have come, and will come again. But when we fix our eyes on Jesus, we find a strength that transcends our suffering. Like clouds, God’s grace comes at different times, and the testimonies of others encourage us to walk with steady confidence.

May this “cloud of witnesses” remind us that as we walk step by step with Christ, we are moving toward the goal He has prepared for us – eternal communion with God.

**Look up to the sky today, and enjoy viewing the clouds – regardless of their size or color. Thank the Lord for every testimony and for every witness of faith around you.**

***He suffered for us – He  
took up the cross for our  
redemption***

These images remind us of the events of Holy Week – betrayal, suffering, sacrifice and love. In the shadow of the cross, every ordinary thing tells a story of extraordinary love.



## **31. OLIVE TREE, Luke 22:39-44**

It is difficult to walk along our Croatian coast without noticing the humble olive groves. Cultivated over generations, they stand firmly rooted, resisting fierce gusts of wind to bear fruit in season. Not only is the fruit delicious; it heals, provides fuel for lamps, and oil for beautiful skin. The olive is a tree of silence and constancy, often telling stories centuries old.

The olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane bore silent witness to one such story – a story of the greatest inner struggle and agony, but also of Christ's ultimate obedience to the Father's will. It was this obedience that healed a broken humanity and ignited a light of hope. Those closest to him, whom he brought, offered no encouragement to him; they didn't understand what he was talking about. Yet, these silent trees stood as a sign of God's presence while angels appeared to strengthen him.

The symbol of Christ's Kingdom is not a sword or other weapon, but an olive branch. Since the days of Noah, it has represented the reconciliation of God and man – a sign that life can begin anew. It invites us to peace, renewal, and obedience to God.

Often, we find ourselves in our own Gethsemanes, faced with the choice between flight and trust. We may feel discouraged, surrounded by people who cannot understand or help. But God remains present both in the silence and the struggle as we learn to wait, trust, and accept the path that leads through obedience.

**Find a picture of an olive tree, or if you are lucky enough to have one near you, look at it closely. Look at that mighty trunk and delicate branches, remember the familiar scent, and cry out to God, because he hears prayers.**



## 32. SWORD, Luke 22:47-53

A sword is the trigger for events when Judas arrives with an armed crowd to betray Jesus. From our perspective today, the sword may seem almost romantic – something we associate with fairytales or a distant, legendary past.

But a sword is no different than a Kalashnikov, a tank, or an atomic bomb; it's an instrument of violence. Jesus' actions here have a sobering effect. The disciples, having just woken up, react to the threat by resorting to violence. Although Jesus had taught them non-violence, forgiveness, and turning the other cheek, they don't wait for his permission. One of them wounds the servant of the high priest with a sword. This is a double betrayal – Judas betrays him with a kiss, but the others betray him with a sword. In a moment filled with screams and blood, the situation is poised to escalate into a massacre.

But Jesus doesn't allow others to suffer for his protection. He stops this spiral of violence with the words, "No more of this!" By doing so, he saves the lives of the high priest, soldiers, elders, and even his own disciples. When the disciples flee, they disappear from the scene because they realize, for the first time, that Jesus was completely serious about nonviolence. For them, it was too much.

What about us? Today, as more and more individuals and nations look to weapons and violence as the solution to every problem, how do we respond to Jesus' rejection of the sword?

**Find a photo of a sword, and as you look at it, think about how Jesus stops violence and offers healing. Ask yourself how you can be the person who will dare to tell those around you that violence isn't the solution.**



### **33. ROOSTER, Luke 22:54-62**

It's just a little lie... until the rooster crows to wake the world. Let's ask ourselves how many small, petty lies we tell. Is it daily, weekly, or only rarely? Maybe we tell ourselves they are harmless and unimportant – that they make no difference and hurt no one. On the other hand, there is the truth, which sometimes encroaches on our peace, our wallet, our status, and our image.

Peter didn't betray Jesus in the way Judas did, nor did he abandon him when he was led to the house of the high priest. Unlike the others, Peter followed – but only from a distance, like a curious observer. He remained passive and indifferent until, under pressure, he denied any connection with Jesus. Would his honesty have changed Jesus' fate? No; it likely would have only led to Peter being condemned alongside him. Peter felt the unease of that dark night: the fire crackling in the cold, the noise from the house, and the realization that for Jesus, the end was truly near.

But the light of the fire exposed Peter. No one could explain what Jesus had done wrong, other than that his very existence undermined the authority of the priests. And Peter did... nothing. He just lied. Then the rooster crowed, waking Peter from his whirlpool of lies. In that moment, the Truth turned to look him in the eye.

At what point do we realize we've crossed the line? When have seemingly harmless little things turned into lies? Will a rooster crow for us?

**Find a video of a rooster crowing; watch it carefully and listen. Allow that sound to reach you and awaken a sense of the importance of truth, even in those moments when it's uncomfortable.**



### **34. WHIP, Matthew 27:20-26**

When I hear the word “whip”, I immediately think of punishment – and those who administer it without any regard for justice. We see this tension in Pilate: he wanted to release Jesus because he found no guilt, yet under pressure from the crowd and fear for his own position, he gave in and passed sentence. It is astonishing how a man with so much power could become so weak in the face of the crowd’s noise.

Pilate hoped that a public whipping would calm the people, but it did not end Jesus’ suffering. At that time, whipping – or scourging – was one of the cruelest punishments imaginable, reserved for slaves and serious offenders. It was used to force a confession or to make a death sentence even more agonizing. The blows would tear the flesh until it bled; many died from the wounds. But Jesus endured. He accepted this suffering because he had to go the distance – not for himself, but for us. God allowed this suffering as satisfaction for our bodily and shameful sins.

Jesus endured shame, pain, and death for me and for every human being. Innocent, he agreed to take my place, where justice demanded I stand. When I remember his sacrifice, it pains me to think that I am wounding him again with my weaknesses and sins.

And yet, I feel a deep sense of gratitude. I thank him for calling me to follow him and for giving me the faith to understand the greatness of his love.

**Find a photo of the whip, or if you have the courage, find a video of the flogging scenes shown in the movie the Passion. In silence, reflect on the reality of the pain that Jesus endured precisely for you.**



## **35. THORNS, Mark 15:16-20**

To satisfy the mob, Pilate reluctantly handed Jesus over to be crucified. The trial had ended, but the cruelty was only beginning. Inside the governor's palace, a battalion of soldiers mocked him, dressing him in a scarlet robe and pressing a crown of thorns on his head. The reeds they used to beat him tore into the skin, adding fresh headwounds to those already on his back. Amidst the spitting and jeering, Jesus remained silent – a model of patient endurance.

In the Book of Isaiah (1:18), we read that our sins are like scarlet. The cloak represents our sins laid upon Christ. In Genesis (3:18), thorns are described as a consequence of the curse caused by our sin. All of this – our sins and our curse – was placed on Him! It is difficult to grasp – unfathomable to us – but I believe we can accept it!

I am a gardener, and thorns follow me everywhere. They poke, prick, and sometimes draw blood. I let them remind me of who I am, where I am, to whom I belong, and where I am going.

Our weaknesses, failures, and sins create pain and sorrow, separating us from God. We should have gone through that suffering; we should have paid for our own sins with our lives. But thank you, Christ, for suffering in our place, shedding your blood, taking the guilt of sin upon yourself, and thus bringing the Kingdom of God to us.

**Try to find some thorns today. If there is no other way, buy a rose. Carefully touch a thorn just enough to feel how dangerous one small thorn is. Think about the crown of thorns on Jesus' head – unimaginable. Thank Him!**



## 36. CROSS, John 19:16-18

The Gospel of John depicts a wounded Jesus bearing his cross to the execution site. The cross was not merely a symbol or an instrument of death; it was a jagged heavy wooden beam that chafed his skin and made every step and breath an agony. Jesus carried his destiny, with no escape or relief. To those watching, this was an image of public shame and defeat. The crucified Messiah was a scandal, yet it's in this very act that God's power is revealed; a sacrificial love that goes to the very end to carry the burdens of others.

A cross is everywhere today: on church walls, in hospitals, around our necks, at street corners, on national flags, and even on traffic signs. We touch it, see it, and wear it as jewelry, yet we rarely stop to consider its weight. Historians estimate that a full cross weighed more than 130 kilograms (285 pounds), though it is more likely that Jesus carried only the crossbar – about 50 kilograms (110 pounds) to Golgotha, where the vertical pole was already fixed in the ground. If we were to lift such a beam, our muscles and joints would feel the strain. But Jesus wasn't only carrying rough timber; he was bearing the weight of human sin, shame, fear and guilt.

If I don't run from the cross, but accept that the weight of my own sin was added to the burden Christ carried, the cross becomes the place of encounter with God, the means of salvation, and the path to freedom.

**Perhaps because it is so familiar, the image of the cross has become ordinary – commonplace. Whenever you see a cross, pause to focus on it, and let it remind you of the possibility of reconciliation with God.**



## 37. SPONGE, John 19:28-30

We use sponges for many things: washing dishes, soaking up spills, or wiping a blackboard. In some hospitals, patients are given a special sponge soaked in disinfectant to wash with before surgery. That sponge is soft and foamy when wet, with a mild, pleasant scent; yet it also brings a sense of anxiety, reminding us of the coming operation and the pain that will inevitably follow.

However, the idea of quenching one's thirst with a sponge – much less one soaked with sour wine – is completely foreign to us. Yet, at Goglotha, everything was already at hand: the sour wine, sponge, and the hyssop branch. They were simply waiting for the moment one of the crucified would speak. With chapped lips, and a struggle for every breath, the One who knew that all had been fulfilled uttered one short statement: “I thirst.” That single sip of sour wine, offered on a sponge at the end of an aromatic hyssop branch, provided the final strength needed to speak those last great words: “It is finished!” Then came peace, a bowed head, and the final breath.

Jesus Christ did not shrink back for a single moment from the work of redemption to which he had voluntarily committed himself.

An ordinary sponge thus becomes a reminder of the finished work on the cross – and of the death that brought eternal life to all who believe.

**Take a sponge and soak it thoroughly with water, then gently wring it out. As the water flows, think of the sponge that touched Jesus' lips in his final moments. Let the sponge remind you of the death that brings life.**



## **38. CURTAIN, Matthew 27:51-54; Hebrews 10:19-20**

Memories from our trip to the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna are still fresh in my mind. Arriving earlier than planned, we surprised our hosts, who were hastily removing the covers from the furniture in their traditional villa. As they pulled back the heavy floor-to-ceiling curtains, the darkness of the beautiful high-ceilinged room was suddenly replaced by the dazzling blue of the sky.

Something similar – though far more dramatic and historically revolutionary – happened on Good Friday at Golgotha. The moment when Jesus breathed his last, the great temple curtain was torn. The Gospel writers emphasize a specific detail: it was torn “from top to bottom.” This tells us that the direction of the rift went “from the top” – above, from the heights of the cross – down to us “below.” It wasn’t torn by accident, but by divine intervention.

The story of the temple curtain illuminates the mystery described in the Letter to the Hebrews, that we now “have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus.” He has opened for us a “new and living way through the curtain, that is, his body.”

Every day, when we open our curtains to let in the light, let us see it as a sign of a greater spiritual reality. Through his Son, God has opened himself to every creature: to me and to you. It’s a reality that can only be seen by faith.

**Today, stop in front of a curtain and observe it from top to bottom. Part the fabric to let the light stream in. As you do, give thanks to Jesus, whose sacrifice opens the way to God.**



## 39. SPEAR, John 19:31-37

Throughout history, certain inventions have marked turning points in our way of life, in warfare, and the development of civilization. The spear, once a revolutionary weapon that granted armies a tactical advantage, has today transitioned from the battlefield to the hands of athletes as sports equipment.

In biblical theology, the spear is a powerful and multifaceted symbol. It was often associated with power, authority, warfare, divine intervention, and in today's text we see it as part of the Passion of Christ. When a Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side, the resulting flow of blood and water confirmed his physical humanity on the cross. This act was the fulfillment of prophecy, and symbolizes the completion of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Blood and water also symbolize the cleansing brought about by Christ's sacrifice, and these two elements remain central to the life of the church through the Lord's Supper and baptism. For the biblical writer who witnessed this event himself, this moment serves as a testament to the truth of the Christian faith, inviting all who read about it to believe.

While a physical spear pierces the flesh with only temporary effect, Jesus Christ's entry into our world has the power of a spear that pierces with an eternal effect. Faith in Jesus Christ brings about a radical turnaround, offering lasting meaning and change.

Does the sight of Jesus' cross pierce your conscience like a spear, awakening faith in the Risen One?

**Find an image of an ancient spear and examine its powerful blade. Let it remind you of the reality of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that brings purification, and lasting change.**



## **40. WRAPPINGS, John 19:38-42; 20:1-5**

A lifeless body lies wrapped in clean, white linen – as if the cloth could preserve its dignity or prevent the humiliation of decay. Is that possible? What is this wrapping and what is its purpose? Is it true or just a fantasy that the binding cloth can stop the cruel bite of death?

I think about the “wrappings” we wear today. We get wound up in the rat race, – the competition. We feel the pressure to be better, to be first, to be powerful, influential, to be rich, learned, to be the holiest, the wisest...

These wrappings are deceptions that bind us in the cold of failure... the grave! But perhaps the wrapping was always meant to fall away. As a nurse, I know that no one wears wrapped bandages forever; they are only a temporary aid while the body heals. Some wounds, however, never heal.

The linen wrappings were cast off from Jesus’ body because life cannot be contained! The power of Christ’s life confronted death, threw off the wrappings, and declared victory in the resurrection! Whatever “wrappings” are binding your life today, throw them off. Seek Jesus, the source of life, and the first to rise, so that we may rise with him! The power of new life in resurrection rejects the temporal, and exclaims in imperishable glory: “O death, where is your victory? O death where is your sting?”

**Find a wrapped bandage or a strip of cloth and slowly wrap your hand. Think about the things you “wrap” yourself in, hoping they will help you. After a while, unwrap the cloth and thank the Lord for the liberation his death and resurrection bring to your life.**



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