



**WEEK 5**  
*Shared Devotional*  
**April 6 - 12, 2025**

## **Jesus' Love Is Love That Takes upon Itself the Cross**

The love of Jesus Christ for us – what is that? To us, is it only a word? Or have we experienced it? Only those who have experienced it can, in turn, love others with this love. Jesus' love – that is love that comes from eternity and leads toward eternity. It does not cling to temporal things but surrounds us, because we are supposed to be eternal. It let nothing stop it, for it is God's eternal faithfulness to us. Jesus' love – that is love that shrinks from no pain, no renunciation, no suffering, if it helps the other person. It is the love with which he loved us solely for our person. It is the love with which he loved us solely for our own sake, with which on earth he took upon himself mockery and hatred and died on the cross. Jesus' love is love that takes upon itself the cross. Jesus' love – that is love that is for us as we are. As a mother loves child as it is – and the greater the need, the greater the love, because she knows that the child requires her love – such is the love of Jesus for us. He accepts us as we are.

Even today I can believe the love of God and forgive my enemies only by going back to the cross of Christ, to the carrying out of the wrath of God. The cross of Jesus is valid for all.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Psalms Commentary*

*"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

John 13.34-35

**Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *God Is on the Cross: Reflections on Lent and Easter* (pp. 70-71). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.**

These topics, suffering and being rejected, are often (always) unwelcome topics for our consideration. Humanity's driving ambition seems to be the absolute elimination of all forms of suffering and rejection.

- Do we often feel that God's love is subjective to our obedience?
- Is the love of God for us ever deserved by us?
- Why is the word 'valid' used in reference to the work of the cross?
- Why is it easier to believe that we can earn God's love instead of accepting the gracious gift?
- Romans reminds us that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. Who do we have trouble believing that God would die for?
- How can we better express the love God has given to us to others?
- Why would we love those we have trouble with? What is God trying to do in the command to love our enemies? Does it bring forth our growth or God's glory.. both?



# Lenten Prayer Calendar for March to April

<b>30</b> <b>SOMALIA</b> More Somalis live outside the country than within its borders. Pray that Somalis everywhere will hear the gospel.	<b>31</b> <b>DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO</b> Pray for Divine, who was orphaned and badly burned when rebels set her church on fire.	<b>1</b> <b>CHINA</b> Pray that children and young people, especially in remote villages, will have access to God's Word.	<b>2</b> <b>MALAYSIA</b> Pray for Christian converts who are tortured in reeducation camps in attempts to force them to return to Islam.	<b>3</b> <b>NORTH KOREA</b> Pray for the bold Christians who are working to bring God's Word to the North Korean people.	<b>4</b> <b>SUDAN</b> Bibles are scarce because of ongoing efforts to Islamize the country. Pray for increased access to God's Word.	<b>5</b> <b>BRUNEI</b> Pray that Bruneians will have more opportunities to hear the gospel.
<b>6</b> <b>TURKMENISTAN</b> Authorities often search believers' homes for Christian literature. Pray for the freedom to study God's Word.	<b>7</b> <b>SYRIA</b> Pray that Christian converts who lose family relationships will find comfort and fellowship in the body of Christ.	<b>8</b> <b>MOZAMBIQUE</b> Pray for the encouragement of pastors working in areas where Islamist groups regularly attack Christians.	<b>9</b> <b>MALI</b> Pray for the boldness of churches in the north as they share the gospel in an Islamic stronghold.	<b>10</b> <b>BENIN</b> Pray that Christians who have been attacked by voodooists will be encouraged and stand firm in their faith.	<b>11</b> <b>NIGER</b> Pray for the safety of front-line workers who use motorcycles to reach people in remote desert areas with the gospel.	<b>12</b> <b>ALGERIA</b> Pray that Christians in Algeria will hold fast to "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3).
<b>13</b> <b>RUSSIA AND AREAS UNDER ITS CONTROL</b> Pray that Christians will have a vision to reach the lost.	<b>14</b> <b>BURKINA FASO</b> Pastor Hamadou was shot to death by Islamists opposed to his bold witness. Pray that God will comfort his family.	<b>15</b> <b>PAKISTAN</b> Pray for the encouragement of the roughly 4 million Pakistani Christians, using Joshua 1:9 as a guide.	<b>16</b> <b>TANZANIA</b> Pray that Tanzanian missionaries will share the gospel with unreached people groups on the Swahili Coast.	<b>17</b> <b>YEMEN</b> Pray that Bibles stolen in an attack on a church will touch the hearts of those who do not yet know Christ.	<b>18</b> <b>INDONESIA</b> Pray that persecuted Christians in rural areas will find ways to fellowship with other Christians.	<b>19</b> <b>CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC</b> Pray that Christians who suffered persecution will heal from their trauma.

Will you partner with MVPC this lenten season and commit to praying for those being persecuted.

**20**  
**SAUDI ARABIA**  
Pray that those who must worship in secret will have opportunities for fellowship with other Christians.