



A Good Enough Lent

A 40-Day Companion to
Read, Reflect, and Pray

WHAT IS LENT?

Lent marks the forty days leading up to Easter, mirroring the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. It is a practice that began during the 4th century as a way to prepare Christians for the holiest days of the year.

During Lent, we ask God to show us the world as it is. We begin with the reality of our finitude rubbed on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday—from dust we were made, to dust we shall return. Then, we walk through that reality in a kind of dress rehearsal. It's the downward slope of God—the Great Descent, where the whole Church walks toward the cross.

Frankly, Lent is my favorite part of the church calendar because it is a time when the whole church is on the losing team. A time when we all get a minute to tell the truth: Life is so beautiful and life is so hard. For everyone.

Of course, the cross isn't the end of the story, but this season of grief is carved out to acknowledge the reality of Christ's sacrifice. And the reality of suffering that so many of our circumstances reflect too—our own pain and grief and despair. Easter is coming, yes. But for now, we sit in the ashes of our broken dreams and broken hearts, knowing that God sits here with us.

Many people practice Lent by giving something up—alcohol, meat, chocolate, social media. Some take up something new—a new prayer practice or swearing profusely like I did one year (you probably remember reading about this in *Everything Happens for a Reason (and Other Lies I've Loved)*).

This year, I'm inviting our Everything Happens Community to give up on the idea that life is always getting better and settle in for a life and a faith that is good enough. Together, we're going to take ourselves off the hook for perfection. Perfect lives. Perfect bodies. Perfect relationships. And realize that this is the beautiful work of being human... again today. Thank God we get to do it together.

So what do you say? Do you want to commit to a "Good Enough" Lent?



HOW TO USE THIS COMPANION GUIDE

Each of the following forty entries is meant to be read alongside our new book of spiritual reflections, *Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection*. Of course, you can just use this free guide or just read *Good Enough* on its own, but you might find the most richness and depth when used together.

EACH DAY INCLUDES:

- An entry to read from *Good Enough*
- A scripture to read and reflect on, based on that day's theme
- Little checkboxes to indicate what you've read ☐
- Reflection questions that are meant to be all-play—accessible whether you are practicing Lent solo or using this book with your church, in a book club, or around the dinner table with your family.
- A prayer to close your time
- Feel free to print this booklet out and write your answers on these pages, in a journal, or simply meditate on your responses.

A NOTE ON SUNDAYS

Lent lasts for a full 40 days, but Sundays don't count. They are a day off from whatever you are abstaining from during Lent, a day to remind us that we are made for both—grief and joy, sorrow and delight. Strangely, this might feel like a hard thing to do—to make yourself stop working or worrying or checking off your day's reading—and really rest.

But over the next six weeks, you're invited to press against that part of your wiring that tells you that you must always be accomplishing, producing, processing—that everything must be *for* something. And take a day off from the Lent-y feelings to practice the discipline of Sabbath. Rest! Feast! Enjoy!

Before we begin, we wholeheartedly believe in blessing the crap out of each other. So here is a blessing for you, my dear.

A BLESSING FOR A MEDIUM-SAD JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

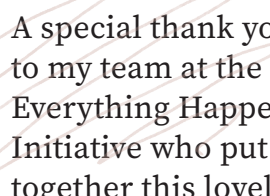
Blessed are you
who have found yourself—yet again—
among the fellowship of the afflicted.
Making the long, long walk toward the cross.

Blessed are you,
who are tired of pretending
that raw effort is the secret to perfection.
That that which breaks your heart
is overcomeable.
It's not. And you know that now.

Blessed are you
who need a gentle reminder that
even now, even today,
God is here,
walking with us,
meeting us in our places
of sorrow and despair,
desperation and grief.
Slowing lifting our chin toward hope.
Not promising to erase the pain.
But to carry it with us.

Blessed are we who realize
we are never—were never—alone.
And somehow,
That is good enough.

To learn more about the work of the Everything Happens Initiative, listen to podcast episodes, or download additional resources, visit katebowler.com.



A special thank you to my team at the Everything Happens Initiative who put together this lovely companion.

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When Words Fail

MONDAY, APRIL 11

☐ *Good Enough*, 200-204 ☐ Luke 19:28-42

01

“Many of us are living in a world that groans for change” (*Good Enough*, 200). What is your relationship with the practice of prayer like?

02

When words fail, Marilyn McEntyre says that listening with an open heart is a form of prayer, one that can be done on a nature walk, on a beach, or sitting alone in silence. How will you practice listening as prayer today?

God, in this place of longing, my heart waits. In this place of in-between, come Lord. My trust is in Your justice and mercy though I cannot see how it will unfold. My hope is in Your love though I sense it incompletely. My faith rises to meet You, receive from You, and love You in return. Comfort me, that I might live as one who is at peace.

Amen.

2:00 A.M./2:00 P.M.

TUESDAY, APRIL 12

☐ *Good Enough*, 205-209 ☐ Isaiah 40:1-26

01

How would you describe your 2:00 A.M. self? How about your 2:00 P.M. self?

02

Which are you more comfortable with? Why?

God, thank you that You see every bit of the reality we must live. You lived it too, and beyond—to hell and back. God, hold what I cannot. Though I cannot see as You see, nor understand as You do, establish me in the truth that You are strong and holy, loving and just, and that one day every valley will be lifted up and the rough places a plain. Come Lord.

Amen.

The In-Between

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

☐ *Good Enough*, 210-214 ☐ Luke 9:21-27; Psalm 131:1-3

01

What liminal space do you occupy? What are your in-betweens?

02

Psalm 131:1-3 speaks of the in-between of the weaned child, content to rest in a mother's arms. What knowing and not knowing do you experience right now? Is it possible to rest there, in-between?

God, the space I find myself in is uncomfortable, even frustrating. I want to feel momentum forward, but I feel stuck in the unknowing. In the in-between. God, while I wait for what's next, be here with me. Give me a peace that makes no sense while we wait together.

Amen.

Too Few Sparrows

THURSDAY, APRIL 14 | MAUNDY THURSDAY

☐ *Good Enough*, 215-219 ☐ Matthew 26:17-29

01

“Blessed are we, the newly wrong, chuckling over how much it hurts to be chastened a little” (*Good Enough*, 218). What ‘newly wrong’ experiences have you had lately?

02

In Matthew 26:17-29, just before betraying Jesus, Judas asks, “Surely, you don’t mean me, Lord?” Have you faced any grave situations where you were in the wrong?

03

At the last supper with his friends, Jesus is showing them how love can reach even those seemingly unforgivable places. Where might you need to give or receive forgiveness, but feel like it’s too late or too much to ask?

PRAY:

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come,
I come.

From *Just as I am, Without One Plea*, a hymn by Charlotte Elliott (1789–1871)

FRIDAY, APRIL 15 | GOOD FRIDAY

☐ *Good Enough*, 220-225 ☐ Luke 23:26-49

01

“The sun stopped shining” (Luke 23:44). What was your darkest hour?

02

“Can these dry bones live?” The Ezekiel story is about God bringing life out of death. On this Good Friday, stand awhile with those who came to mourn at the cross of Jesus. What do you mourn today?

03

What does hope look like right here and now, in this dark hour?

God, give me eyes to see what You see, and a heart to love what You love. Give me the gift of hope, that I might take hold of what I have already been given and make something of it. Grant me the gift of faith, that I might look to what is yet unseen or only dimly shining through, and trust that You have come to gather it all up and us with it, in Jesus Christ. And bless me Lord God with the grace to love well what is already here, in the peace and power of Your Holy Spirit.

Amen.

A Good Gardener

SATURDAY, APRIL 16 | HOLY SATURDAY

☐ *Good Enough*, 226-233 ☐ John 20:1-18

01

Given what you know about gardening (as little or as much), and if you know that God is a gardener... what do you know about God?

02

A gardener is someone who plants seeds of hope. What seeds have been planted in your life? That you have planted? What are you hoping against hope for?

Good, good gardener, Give us a heart to trust that on this Holy Saturday, You are not yet finished. Give us that kind of defiant hope to believe even now—in our weariness, in our bleakness, in our overwhelm—that newness is possible.

Amen.

**Sink your generosity deep into our lives
that your muchness may expose our false lack
that endlessly receiving we may endlessly give**

**so that the world may be made Easter new,
without greedy lack, but only wonder,
without coercive need but only love,
without destructive greed but only praise
without aggression and invasiveness.**

***all things Easter new
all around us,
toward us
and by us
all things Easter new.***

— Walter Brueggemann



EASTER ISN'T JUST A DAY. IT'S A SEASON.

JOIN US AS WE LOOK FOR SIGNS OF HOPE
IN THE MIDST OF THIS EASTER SEASON.

We need each more than ever.

So, for the next seven weeks,
we are going to be looking for a rhythm of hope.

WHEN YOU SIGN UP, YOU'LL RECEIVE FREE ACCESS TO:

- Short video teachings from Kate every week for seven weeks
- Daily journaling pages (available to be printed or filled in digitally) with prompts for prayer, connection, and self-reflection
- Free quote printables and lockscreens

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