



Pray for the PERSECUTED CHURCH



Lenten Prayer Calendar for March

	<p>5 IRAN Praise God for the Bibles that have been smuggled into Iran. Pray for the success of ongoing Bible distributions.</p>	<p>6 INDIA Pray for Pastor Santosh. His church has been harassed and pressured by Hindu radicals.</p>	<p>7 SIERRA LEONE Pray that the gospel will reach the 50% of Sierra Leoneans who are Muslims and 37% who practice ethnic religions.</p>	<p>8 ERITREA Pray for the hundreds of believers who have been imprisoned for their faith, often without trial.</p>
<p>9 MYANMAR (BURMA) Pray that many among Myanmar's Burman ethnic majority will come to faith in Christ.</p>	<p>12 KAZAKHSTAN Pray that Christians like Ali and Ismail, who lost their jobs because of their faith, will experience God's provision.</p>	<p>13 LEBANON More than a million Syrian refugees have entered Lebanon since 2012. Pray that many will come to know Christ.</p>	<p>14 TOGO Many Togolese follow traditional religions. Pray that they will be set free from spiritual bondage.</p>	<p>15 CUBA Pray that Christian children will remain firm in faith while being taught atheistic ideologies at school.</p>
<p>10 TURKIYE (TURKEY) Pray for Pastor Nurettin, who leads a small church of Kurdish Christians.</p>	<p>19 NIGERIA Pray for the boldness of front-line workers in areas where Islamist violence is common.</p>	<p>20 BHUTAN Pray for Christians like Karma, Deki and Ratno, who have lost jobs and citizenship because of their faith.</p>	<p>21 PHILIPPINES Praise God that many Christians have remained in Muslim-dominated Mindanao as bold witnesses for Christ.</p>	<p>22 COLOMBIA Pray for the protection of Christian children, who are often forced to join guerrilla groups.</p>
<p>11 KUWAIT Praise God for openness to the gospel among younger Kuwaitis and for the courageous front-line workers reaching them.</p>	<p>25 LIBYA Pray that now Christians persecuted by their families, communities and radical Muslims will remain firm in Christ.</p>	<p>27 SRI LANKA Pray that a church will be firmly established in a village where Christmas Care Packs were distributed.</p>	<p>28 AFGHANISTAN Pray for Christians who have remained in the country and face extreme persecution from the ruling Taliban.</p>	<p>29 MAURITANIA Pray that indigenous Christians will experience God's peace; leaving Islam is illegal in Mauritania.</p>
<p>16 DJIBOUTI Pray for the advancement of the gospel despite government efforts to limit Christianity's growth.</p>	<p>26 UZBEKISTAN Pray that unregistered house churches will remain undetected by the government.</p>	<p>28 AFGHANISTAN Pray for Christians who have remained in the country and face extreme persecution from the ruling Taliban.</p>	<p>29 MAURITANIA Pray that indigenous Christians will experience God's peace; leaving Islam is illegal in Mauritania.</p>	
<p>17 MOROCCO Pray for a spirit of unity in Christian communities, and pray that believers will grow in faith.</p>	<p>29 AFGHANISTAN Pray for Christians who have remained in the country and face extreme persecution from the ruling Taliban.</p>	<p>29 MAURITANIA Pray that indigenous Christians will experience God's peace; leaving Islam is illegal in Mauritania.</p>		
<p>18 GUINEA Using Philippians 1:9-11 as a guide, pray that Christians will have opportunities to grow in biblical understanding.</p>	<p>30 SOMALIA More Somalis live outside the country than within its borders. Pray that Somalis everywhere will hear the gospel.</p>			
<p>23 AZERBAIJAN Pray that children who receive children's Bibles will place their faith in Christ.</p>	<p>31 DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO Pray for Divine, who was orphaned and badly burned when rebels set her church on fire.</p>			
<p>24 MEXICO Pray that outreach bases in remote areas will bear spiritual fruit in reaching indigenous groups with the gospel.</p>	<p>31 DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO Pray for Divine, who was orphaned and badly burned when rebels set her church on fire.</p>			

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

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL



ASH
WEDNESDAY
Shared Devotional
March 5 - 9, 2025

God Deceives No One

In the beginning, even before the start of his ministry, Jesus is tempted by the devil. The powers of evil, of falling away from God, approach him and try to bring him down at the very moment when he is assuming his role as Messiah (Luke 4:3–4). Luke reports that Jesus is famished, and then the devil confronts him: If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread. If you have the power of God, then use it for yourself. Perform a miracle: turn the stone into bread, and you will be filled. Why, after all, do you have such power? If you are the Son of God, prove your power... In this voice of apparent intercessory love, Jesus recognizes the voice of the devil. It was an outrageous suggestion, and he rejects the devil: “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Here that means basically: God deceives no one.

“And take up their cross.” That cross is already there, ready, from the very beginning; we need only take it up. But to keep us from believing that we must simply choose any arbitrary cross, or simply pick out our suffering as we will, Jesus emphasizes that each of us has his or her own cross, ready, appointed, and appropriately measured by God.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *God Is on the Cross: Reflections on Lent and Easter* (pp. 2-3). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.

Psalm 51:1-3

To the leader. A Psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

In today’s reading, taken from Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, he states that Jesus’s response to the devil’s first deceitful suggestion simply means that God deceives no one. Satan is trying to entice Jesus to use God’s power, which is his right as the Son of God. Jesus is not deceived and responds with Scripture that allows for no argument.

- When faced with a suggestion that invites us to sidestep our own cross, which Jesus promised, are we sensitive to the deceptive possibilities in the invitation?
- What habits or practices lead us to God’s word for strength and proper response?
- Do we, like David in the Psalm, plead to God for mercy and forgiveness from our sin? Or do we seek comfort from worldly sources?