



## *Week One*

# *What Are You Looking For?*

Day 1

What Are You Looking For?

Day 2

Who Touched Me?

Day 3

What Can You Give in Return for Your Life?

Day 4

Do You Wish to Go Away?

Day 5

Do You Want to Be Made Well?

Day 6

Whom Are You Looking For?



## Day 1—Ash Wednesday What Are You Looking For?

John 1:35-42

*The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?"*

John 1:35-38a

Lent is a time of spiritual introspection. It's a time to pause in the midst of a very busy life, a challenging world, and a searching faith. Lent is a time to take a few moments regularly to think and reflect on Jesus, his journey to the cross, his death and resurrection, and what all of this means for our lives of faith.

Ash Wednesday is a time to pause, not to look forward to Easter and all the things that lie ahead, but to take things a bit more slowly and reflect on ourselves, our lives of faith, and the decisions we've made. Ash Wednesday is a day of repentance, turning from where we've been going and turning toward God. Ash Wednesday and Lent are the church's way of encouraging us to slow down, look at ourselves, and reflect on our faith and the meaning of our lives.

We begin this transformative journey through Lent with the first words Jesus speaks in the Gospel of John. Interestingly, Jesus' first words are not "Follow me." Nor are they, "I am the bread of life." Jesus' first words in John's Gospel come in the form of a question: "What are you looking for?" This is the same kind of searching question as the first one God asks in Genesis. God knew that Adam and Eve were hiding yet still asked, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9).

What are you looking for? What are you looking for as you begin this journey through Lent? How would you like this Lent to be different or more meaningful than previous Lenten seasons?

The ashes that many people receive on this day remind us that we are dust, and to dust we shall return. They remind us of our own frailty and utter dependence on God for life. Take time to pause this day and consider the cleansing and

renewal you need in areas of your life. As you do this, remember that Jesus is one who is looking for you.

*Biblical Wisdom*

*When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD.*

Jeremiah 29:13-14a

*Transformative Thought*

**We have to keep looking for the spiritual questions if we want spiritual answers.<sup>2</sup>**

*Henri Nouwen*

*Silence for Meditation*

*Psalm Fragment*

*O LORD, you have searched me and known me.*

Psalm 139:1

*Questions to Ponder*

- What are you looking for as you begin this journey through Lent? Where and when will you take time to pause and think about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?
- If you received ashes on your forehead today or in the past, reflect on that experience. What areas of your life are in need of cleansing and renewal?

*Prayer for Today*

Gracious and loving God, be with me as I start this journey through Lent. Guide me into ways of deeper understanding and faith, that I might grow ever closer to you. Help me listen and help me grow. In Jesus' name. Amen.