

40 DAYS

**LET GO,
LET GOD**

Lent 2024

A close-up photograph of several white flowers with bright yellow centers, set against a soft, out-of-focus background of light blue and white bokeh. The flowers are in the lower half of the image, partially overlapping the text.

LETTING GO AND LETTING GOD

Rev. Teresa Burton

How many times have you wrestled with a problem and been unable to see a way out? Maybe you tried various solutions, none of which came together. Maybe you ranted about the unfairness of a situation or worried whether what you were going through would ever get better. At those times, after every option was exhausted, the only thing left to do was to let go and let God.

There's such comfort in turning over the concerns of our hearts into the care and keeping of God. It makes our struggles more bearable when we trust there is a power outside ourselves who is recognizing our best efforts and forgiving us for our worst, making sure we have what we deserve and helping us get it.

But as we grow spiritually, a new awareness dawns within us. We come to understand God as the one presence and one power in the universe. We know ourselves as individuations of the Divine, uniquely expressing God's presence and power as only we can. God is principle, the presence that surrounds us but also the power that is within us.

*We come to understand God as the one presence
and one power in the universe.*

With this understanding, the idea of letting go and letting God takes on a new and deeper dimension. Even as we are fully human, we are also fully divine. We can respond to our worldly circumstances from our humanness or from our divinity. Letting go and letting God really means yielding our human efforts—our will and preferences, our struggle and effort—to the Divine within. When we do this, we avail ourselves of a new world of possibilities and potentials because we have aligned our thinking with divine mind and our feelings with divine love.

And what wonderful outcomes can spring from understanding this distinction. Surrendering our human efforts to the care and keeping of the Divine within relieves anger, worry, and anxiety. Once we're relaxed, we can better feel the presence of the Divine and the wisdom of inner guidance and intuition. From there, new opportunities present themselves, synchronicities abound, and that which seemed so difficult or even impossible resolves smoothly.

Lent Is the Perfect Time

There is no better time than the Lenten season to let go of what we're holding onto. This process of release prepares us for the glorious resurrection of Easter. But once the releasing is done, once the Christ in you is resurrected, you will go forth with a precious understanding of the power of letting go and letting God—namely, that this act of spiritual surrender is actually an act of empowerment.

It may have been tempting to think of letting go and letting God as giving up and hoping for the best. Instead, it is a supreme act of faith. It's living the awareness that there is life beyond this one, and the situations of our lives are always changing. Understanding this truth gives us agency and freedom, allowing us to choose how we will meet life.

We can learn about this transformative power from the Easter story. When we can release anything from our small irritations to our very lives, we trust life will always go on. We will survive. Jesus' triumphant overcoming is indeed our own. When Jesus cried out in his final breaths, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46), he was letting go of his earthly life with the certainty that eternal life was his.

That certainty can be yours. Letting go and letting God means giving up the struggle. It means acceptance instead of resistance and peacefulness instead of anxiety. It means God is with and within you, every day of your life.

Rev. Teresa Burton is the editor of Daily Word magazine.

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 14, 2024

I let go of shame.

Shame comes from believing we are not enough and are unworthy of belonging. We make mistakes and then fall into the trap of shame and guilt. The more we do this, the more we believe we are separate from God and unworthy of our divine identity. It also keeps us from fully being vulnerable and connecting with others at deeper levels.

On this first day of Lent, we can seek to heal our self-judgments and grow in our capacity for self-love. It becomes easier to release shame when we remember our own Christ nature. Yes, sometimes we miss the mark, but that does not change the Truth that we are worthy of love and belonging.

Through our spiritual practices, our faith in our wholeness and divine identity is strengthened. We show ourselves self-compassion and remember that nothing we can ever do can separate us from the love God is.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.—Romans 8:1

—Rev. Juan del Hierro

AFFIRM: I embrace my Christ nature and shower myself with compassion and love.

JESUS LET GO OF WORRY

Rev. Ellen Debenport

The Bible implores us to “fear not” some 365 times, and Jesus brought the same message: Don’t worry.

Most familiar is the Sermon on the Mount, where he expounds on this idea at length. (The whole passage is Matthew 6:25-34.) “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?”

Later, in a grim passage, Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the persecution of his disciples. But even then, he urges them to let events unfold. “When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit” (Mark 13:11).

The key to letting go of worry, he taught, is to trust. Speaking as the Christ, which is the divine spirit within us all, Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

As Jesus said goodbye to his disciples after the Last Supper (John chapters 14-17), he repeatedly reassured them:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me” (John 14:1).

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (John 14:27).

“I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!” (John 16:33)

We see Jesus letting go of worry in his final week—riding into Jerusalem knowing the authorities were plotting against him, waiting quietly for his arrest at Gethsemane, letting Pilate and Herod grapple with his fate.

We can’t be sure what was in Jesus’ mind. But we know when we are able to live in Christ consciousness, which Jesus said is available to all of us, we find the peace that passes understanding. We somehow know that all is well even when outer circumstances seem dire, even when we know bad times are coming, even when we have to lay down our lives. Jesus showed us what is possible for human beings when we are fully aligned with God.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2024

I let go of judgment.

Today I release judgment and choose to observe life from a higher point of view. I turn away from conversations or news events that cast blame or criticism. I let go of any judgment I hold toward others who may have been unkind or judgmental toward me.

I choose to be a witness to love and well-being in our beauty-infused world. I practice seeing everyone as God's creation. As I expectantly look for acts of loving-kindness, I also watch for opportunities to be a blessing.

If I've criticized myself, focusing on past errors or goals not met, I now let go of self-judgment and embrace self-love. I make a list of my positive gifts and unique talents, appreciating who I am—a beautiful, divine creation.

Observing life with nonjudgment and compassion, I behold the glorious, incredible experience that life is—and even more joy, love, and delightful experiences spring forth in celebration of being alive.

The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.—Psalm 145:9

—Rev. Bronte Colbert

AFFIRM: I observe my world in the light of love.

PALM SUNDAY

MARCH 24, 2024

JESUS LET GO OF THE OUTCOME

Rev. Ellen Debenport

Palm Sunday is celebrated as Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem when his followers waved palm branches and shouted *hosanna*. But Jesus knew his life was in danger. The Bible says he "set his face" for Jerusalem, knowing it was the right place for him to be, letting go of whatever might happen.