

WEEK

02

BLESSED ARE



THE IMPERFECT

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# For an Unfinishable Day

Read:

“For an unfinishable day” from **page 180**  
of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[1 John](#)  
[3:1-3](#)

## Ask

“In this culture of more, more, more, make me less,” today’s blessing prays. Fill in the blank with your own answers to how you want to move against our culture’s exhausting pressures to be MORE:

In this culture of perfection, make me

\_\_\_\_\_.

In this culture of effortless success, make me

\_\_\_\_\_.

In this culture of judgment, make me

\_\_\_\_\_.

In this culture of \_\_\_\_\_,

make me \_\_\_\_\_.

## Watch

Years ago, Kate took a day trip with her dad to see one of the crown jewels of Portuguese Catholic architecture, the towering Batalha Monastery. But the most striking part was a cathedral that was missing its roof. It was ornately decorated yet unfinished. And isn’t that the story of us all? Beautiful, striving, and never, ever done. Reflect on the ways that this unfinished cathedral shows us something about our imperfections.



WATCH HERE



03

## PRAY:

*God, I am grateful that when you look upon me, you see your very own creation, being made new in Christ. I love your eyes, God, seeing me this way. A work of your love. Amen.*

# For Beginnings and Endings

Read:

“For beginnings and endings” from  
page 182 of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[Isaiah](#)  
[43:16-21](#)

## Ask

What changes (big or small) are you experiencing right now? What does this change feel like in your body (e.g. sweaty, butterflies, bubbly)?

## Do

Make your own ritual to say goodbye to what you’re leaving behind. Throw a party or ceremony to honor for what was (e.g. the end of a relationship, retirement, a changed body). Light a candle, buy a flower and choose the color to represent what you are leaving behind, and throw it in the river. Say a prayer of thanks for the freedom that this change represents. And then open your heart for what is to come next.



## PRAY:

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*Read today's blessing again (page 182 of The Lives We Actually Have), changing the word “we” to “I,” making it personal and specific to your situation. Spend some time asking God for the kind of courage or strength you need in this time of change. Conclude with a prayer of gratitude for what has led you here, and for what you are leaving behind.*

“  
GOD, GIVE US  
*COURAGE* TO TAKE  
THIS NEXT STEP,  
  
AND ENOUGH  
FOR THE ONE  
AFTER THAT, *TOO*.”

from “for beginnings and end-  
ings” on page 183 of *The Lives  
We Actually Have*



# For The Courage to Do Something Difficult

Read:

“For the courage to do something difficult”  
from **page 184** of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[John](#)  
[16:33](#)

## Ask

Take a step back from the difficult thing you know needs to be done, as if observing it from a distance. Ask, what do I know that is true about it? What do I have already to meet the need? What is the next first step to get it done? What’s stopping you from taking it?

## Do

Give yourself a calendar for your hard thing. Perhaps today, you will acknowledge how hard it is for you. Tomorrow, you want to shove it in a drawer and forget about it. But the next day, you’ll take the next right step.



## PRAY:

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*God, I want to be the kind of person that doesn't put off the hard thing. Give me courage, today, right now, to do what needs to be done or say what needs to be said. Infuse me with wisdom and grant me your peace that transcends understanding even (and especially) when I'm afraid. Amen.*

# For When We Want More

Read:

“For when we want more” from **page 186**  
of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[Psalm](#)  
[32](#)

## Ask

The psalmist talks about how hiding our human-ness from God compounds it, but when we tell God the truth about our condition, God becomes the place of safety we had longed for. Secretly, honestly, and perhaps under a blanket, offer to God the “God-sized project” of being fully known and loved in all our imperfections.

## Do

Draw a self-portrait (it doesn’t have to be good!). On the page, write down the things that make you, you. Maybe your kindness or stubbornness (for better or worse) or the way your nose crinkles when you smile. Take time to notice the humanity in your gifts and imperfections (that are sometimes gifts if we look close enough!).



## PRAY:

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*Pray today's blessing again (from page 184 of The Lives We Actually Have), and add a secret prayer of response to God that is yours alone.*

# For The Life You Didn't Choose

Read:

"For the life you didn't choose" from  
page 188 of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[Psalm](#)  
[46](#)

## Ask

In the aftershock of sudden grief, in the tender place of wonder and dread, what part of Psalm 46 feels true for you?

## Listen

Maintaining hope in the midst of the lives we didn't choose can sometimes feel impossible. Sometimes it can help to look toward people who really get it—like Jay and Katherine Wolf. Listen to this tender conversation which offers a wide view of their story of hard-won hope.



LISTEN HERE



04

OR IN THE [SPOTIFY PLAYLIST](#)

## PRAY:

*God, as I invite my soul to stillness, help me be aware that you are already present to me, and that you are here right now. Bless the stillness and the wordless wisdom that comes forward to my mind. Give me loving actions to do, that I might be for others in crisis, the presence that reminds them: You are held. You are safe. You are loved. You are loved. You are loved. Amen.*

# For Who You Might Become

Read:

“For who you might become” from  
page 190 of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[2 Cor.](#)  
[4:16-18](#)

“You have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”

— Augustine of Hippo

## Ask

What period of time do you find yourself living in most—past, present, or future? What are the gifts and drawbacks of spending too much time in each? To where do you need to pull your attention today?

## Reflect

Write a note of gratitude to your past self. Thank them for what they did with what they knew. (Sometimes it helps to have a picture of younger-you in front of you. Look at how cute you were!) Now, write a note to your future self. Thank them for the courage it takes to become someone new. (And tell them their hair looks great!) Whisper a word of thanks to God for who you are in this moment.

## PRAY:

*God, what if. What if I walk out on this ledge and feel only the taste of my fear? What if I discover that what I carry cannot be shouldered? What if I live too long without that feeling? That I can set this down. God, fill me with a love that staves off all the darkness. Comfort me when I can't think another reasonable thought. And if I can't, I mean, I just can't feel your nearness, hear you telling me that I am loved, send your armies of do-gooders, tuck my name inside their hearts. Give me people who love to hold more than this day can manage. And if you can't send more than one because more than one would be nice, just send the nearest person to take things out of my hands and into theirs until I know again today that I should never be expected to walk this road alone. Amen.*



*The Second Sunday*

# A Mini-Easter

Today is a Mini-Easter, which means we abstain from our Lenten practices and practice the act of feasting in the truth of the resurrected Christ. Make room for celebration today—even if it's a quick shout of joy or a kitchen dance party to your favorite song.



WEEK  
03

BLESSED ARE



THE CURIOUS

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# For This Garbage Day

Read:

“For this garbage day” from **page 132**  
of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[Psalm](#)  
[88](#)

## Ask

What is it like to be you right now? No need to be polite. Don't hold anything back. Now that you've spoken that truth, what are the tiny, tiny graces that are noticeable in the midst of the garbage parts? And if you can't do it, thank God for honest communication.

## Do

Make a list of five things you are thankful for at this moment, but practice compressing your attention. The smaller the better. (When things were very bad, I could even say things like: “I hate this less than yesterday.” Don't worry about being honest!)



## PRAY:

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*God, show me the life I actually have, the reality that is truest now—the whole of it. Let me hold the doubts and questions together with the graces that are here too. And in your kindness, help me begin to understand how to live more, with fewer explanations. Amen.*

# For When You Are Afraid

Read:

“For when you are afraid” from  
page 134 of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[Psalm](#)  
[23](#)

## Ask

How and where in your body does fear affect you? Ask God to comfort you there.

## Reflect

Play the song, “The House of God, Forever” by Jon Foreman.  
What phrases, words, or themes do you need to cling to today?



[LISTEN HERE](#)



05

OR IN THE [SPOTIFY PLAYLIST](#)

## PRAY:

*Read today's blessing again, adding your own thoughts, feelings, questions, and needs. Be specific.*



# For When You Can't Love Yourself

Read:

“For when you can’t love yourself” from  
page 138 of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[John  
10:10-11](#)

“Rejoice that you are what you are; for our Lord loves you very dearly.”

— Abbe Henri de Tourville

## Ask

What would “life in all its fullness” look like for you?

## Listen

What do you do with a world that is full of things to fear, people we won’t please, kids who die, and parents who don’t change? Writer Anne Lamott doesn’t sugar-coat a single terrible thing, but knows that we also need the kinds of truths we can stand on—like that we, warts and all, are loved and chosen by God.



LISTEN HERE



06

OR IN THE [SPOTIFY PLAYLIST](#)

## PRAY:

*God, who do I need to become, now that this is the world we have and this is the people we are—holy, imperfect, sloppy, joyful, angry, irritated, tired, or maybe just hungry, loved and chosen. So let’s start there. Let’s be people together with all of our frayed edges, with the things we admit only to our best friends, with the people who are hard to love, impossible to forgive—beginning with ourselves. Amen.*

# For When You're Feeling Grouchy

Read:

"For when you're feeling grouchy" from  
page 140 of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[Isaiah  
43:1-7](#)

## Ask

Redeemed. It's a word we use today only transactionally, like when we have a voucher we redeem for a discount. In Isaiah 43, the meaning is love in action. It is what God did through Jesus, whose dying became our living. Re-read this passage, inserting your name: "I have redeemed you, \_\_\_\_\_. I have called you by name, \_\_\_\_\_. You, \_\_\_\_\_, are mine." Bring all your frustrations out into the light of this unconditional love for you.

## Reflect

Listen to Mary Gauthier's song, "Mercy Now." Where could you use a little mercy today? Where could you offer it to others?



LISTEN HERE



07

OR IN THE [SPOTIFY PLAYLIST](#)

## PRAY:

*God, let me crawl up into your lap, and rest my head on your chest and hear you say to me again, "You are loved. You are safe. You are chosen." Let me stay and stay and stay, knowing that this is that starting place. For everything. Amen.*

# For When You're Not Getting Any Better

**Read:**

“For when you’re not getting any better”  
from **page 142** of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[Psalm](#)  
[131](#)

## Ask

Where is contentment possible within the small space that is your life today?

## Reflect

Listen to “Poetry” by Taylor Leonhardt. Reflect on Taylor’s lyrics—that you are God’s poetry. What does it mean to you to hear that the poet God doesn’t waste a word?



**LISTEN HERE**



08

OR IN THE [SPOTIFY PLAYLIST](#)



## PRAY:

*God, I want to believe that I am as precious and thoughtful to you as poetry. But my mind is racing to keep everything held together. Calm my mind from the things of tomorrow. Settle me in today. Help me find a place of contentment and peace right here, with you. Amen.*

# For When You Feel Stuck

Read:

“For when you feel stuck” from **page 148**  
of *The Lives We Actually Have*

[Rev](#)  
[22:1-5](#)

“I do not understand the mystery of grace—only that it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it found us.”

— Anne Lamott

## Ask

Being stuck may feel like living in a deserted place, with no landmarks and no map. The river of the water of life and the beauty of the garden might feel unattainable. But don't forget that it flows underground. Ask yourself, what do I already know of love, even here? How can I send down roots into the hidden places where love still lives?

## Do

When we are stuck spiritually or emotionally, we could use a spiritual reset, but we often can't engineer it for ourselves. If we could, we would! But what we can do is to use our physical bodies to playfully disrupt our habits. We can deliberately switch things up, to see how unclenching from our patterns can create new ones. For example, if you usually sit down to pray, then stand or walk or kneel or lie face down on the floor. Or get into a pool or bathtub and float through your prayers. Somehow, changing one thing can lead to the sense that other things are possible.



## PRAY:

*God, release what is stuck, and let all that I am holding flow into the vast ocean of your love. Let all that I desire flow to your heart of compassion. Let all that I long to do mingle with your power already at work in the world. Amen.*



*The Third Sunday*

# A Mini-Easter

Did you know that in the midst of Lent, toward the darkness and sorrow of the cross, there are regular parties? Every Sunday, we get to take a pause and celebrate a mini-Easter. So today, search around inside, rummage through the stuff of gloom and penitence, and find those Eastery feelings that are longing to come out. Splurge a little as a symbol of God's extravagant love. And be sure to cast aside any Lenten practices. Sundays are Feast Days.

