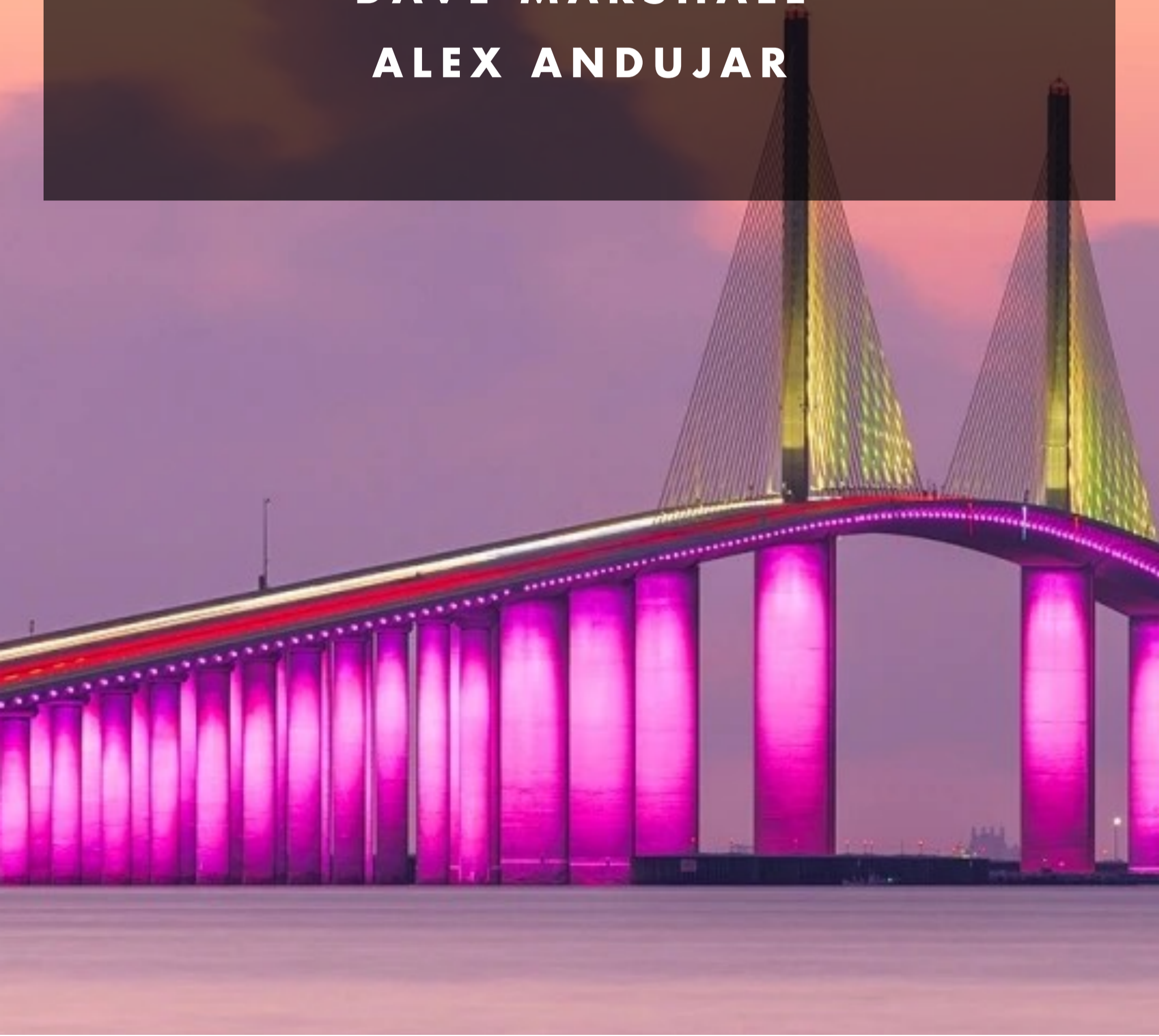


BRIDGING LENT TO EASTER
A 5-WEEK LENTEN
STUDY

DAVE MARSHALL
ALEX ANDUJAR



I'm Fr. Alex Andujar, and I'm Fr. Dave Marshall, this is *A Bridge Between Lent and Easter*. It is a five-week exploration of the Gospel lessons in the season of Lent that will bring us to the joy of Easter.

Each week we will introduce the Gospel lesson, discuss it, and then give you some questions that you can either answer on your own, like a journal, or in a group discussion.

Our prayer book calls us, "To the observance of a holy Lent by self-examination, repentance, prayer, fasting, self-denial and reading and meditating on God's holy Word." *Bridging Lent to Easter* will focus on self-reflection and meditating on God's holy Word (we'll leave the repentance, prayer and fasting up to you).

To help us read and meditate on God's holy Word, and for us to reflect on the Gospel, we are going to look at each lesson with this question: *What is Jesus; the Rabbi (which means teacher); teaching us in this lesson*. We ask that when you listen to the reading that you ask yourself the same question – what is Jesus teaching me in this lesson?

Week 1 - The temptation of Jesus Christ.....4

Week 2 - Jerusalem! Jerusalem!6

Week 3 - The parable of the fig tree8

Week 4 - The prodigal son.....10

Week 5 - Mary Anoints the feet of Jesus12

WEEK 1 - THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. ³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” ⁴ Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’”

⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And the devil said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸ Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”

⁹ Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’

¹¹ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

¹² Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the

test.’” ¹³ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Questions:

- 1) What did you hear in the discussion with Alex and Dave?

- 2) Underline or re-read the passages that begin with the phrase, “If you”...

- 3) How does Jesus experience temptation?

- 4) What is he teaching us through his experience?

- 5) Following Jesus’s example, how can you resist temptation?

- 6) What do you say “yes” or “no” to in your life?

- 7) Is faith or fear guiding your decisions?

WEEK 2 - JERUSALEM! JERUSALEM!

Luke 13:31-35

Some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” ³² He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³ Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ ³⁴ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵ See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

Questions:

- 1) What did you hear in the discussion with Alex and Dave?

- 2) What is the relationship between a fox and a hen and her chicks? How is that relationship an allegory to the authorities, Jesus, and his followers?

- 3) How does Jesus experience rejection? How does he express lament? Does it change the way that he behaves?

- 4) What is he teaching us through his experience?

- 5) How do you handle rejection or lament?

- 6) Where in your life could you offer God to work it out for you?

- 7) When have you resisted being under the wings of God?

WEEK 3 - THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

Luke 13:1-9

There were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³ No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. ⁴ Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the other people living in Jerusalem? ⁵ No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish just as they did.”

⁶ Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷ So he said to the man working the vineyard, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ ⁸ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.’ ”

Questions:

- 1) What did you hear in the discussion with Alex and Dave?

- 2) What does this phrase mean to you: *Unless you repent you will all perish just as they did.*

- 3) How do you compare that phrase with the compassion of the gardener who stands up to the angry landowner and fertilizes a tree that has never produced fruit?

- 4) What is Jesus teaching us with the need to repent and the compassion of God?

- 5) How is God present to you in times of suffering and loss?

- 6) If things don't go your way, who do you blame? How quickly would you cut down a tree that is not producing?

- 7) Does this story tell you more about the nature of God or about your own nature?

WEEK 4 - THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11-24

[A man had two sons; the younger demanded that the father give him his inheritance. The son took the money and squandered it in dissolute living. Poor and starving, the son said this to himself:]
I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.” ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe — the best one — and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

Questions:

- 1) What did you hear in the discussion with Alex and Dave?
- 2) Who is the metaphorical father in this story? What is the farm? Who is the son?
- 3) What does this phrase mean to you: *This son of mine was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found.*
- 4) What is Jesus teaching us about the ability to turn our lives around and return – like the son who returned to his father and said, “I have sinned against you.” What does it say about the compassion of God?
- 5) Ask yourself this: What do I know for sure?
(Not what you have been told to believe, but what do you truly believe?)
- 6) Which do you know better: greed, mercy, certainty, humility?
- 7) What really matters to me? What do I find worthy or unworthy?

WEEK 5 - MARY ANOINTS THE FEET OF JESUS

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him. ³ Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus's feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Questions:

- 1) What did you hear in the discussion with Alex and Dave?
- 2) What does Mary know that no one else seems to know? How did this knowledge guide her actions?
- 3) What does this phrase mean to you: *You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.*
- 4) Is there a Judas in your life who criticizes you for how you serve? How does Jesus deal with Judas's assertion of what he believes should be done with money?
- 5) With whom do you identify more in this story?
- 6) What was Mary looking for? What was Judas looking for? What are you looking for?
- 7) Are there things that I'd prefer not to examine and deal with? Have you considered giving those things to God in

