

Day 4

Reawakening



Individual Reflection

"I believe in process. I believe in four seasons. I believe that winter's tough, but spring's coming. I believe that there's a growing season. And I think that you realize that in life, you grow. You get better." -Steve Southerland

Springtime is symbolic of many things. Easter is one of the big events that occur during springtime for Christians. The story of the resurrection is a prime symbol of what a season of spring can do in our lives. Spring is a reawakening, a rebirth.

Recognizing that you are in a season of struggle is the easy part but figuring out how to bounce back and be born again is difficult. The only way to recover from a season of winter is with the nourishment of the Lord. God is the sunlight, the rain, and the gentle sky.

Hosea 6:3 reads:

"We're ready to study God,
eager for God-knowledge.
As sure as dawn breaks,
so sure is his daily arrival.
He comes as rain comes,
as spring rain refreshing the ground."

(The Message Version of the Bible)

Line One: "We're ready to study God, eager for God-knowledge"

Coming out of a season of barrenness, or winter, we become so eager to recover. We must remember to be aware of how God is working on us and bask in the nourishment. Don't stop reading, learning, and wanting more of Jesus. This will help you recover.

Line Two: "As sure as dawn breaks, so sure is his daily arrival."

Every second of every day, God is with us. Find out how to recognize that. Whether it is listing things you are grateful for every night, or laying down in the sun, anyway you feel close to God is productive.

Line Three: "He comes as rain comes, as spring rain refreshing the ground."

When we are a dry and cracking desert, lacking strong faith and struggling through life, God comes in and refreshes our ground. When we need Him most, He is there to resurrect us and pull us out of despair.

It is important to soak up the Lord's refreshing rain. Nourishment is something we often take for granted. All throughout my childhood I remember thinking, "I can't wait until I grow up and do..." and "I can't wait until I live on my own so I can..." It is difficult to cherish every step of the process. We just want to get to the finish line. We are eager to bloom into our full potential. But we must take the time to step back, reflect, and consider how God is nurturing

us with his refreshing rain. When you need hope that things will get better refer back to Hosea 6:3. Sit with the scripture, comfortably, because God is preparing you to be more than you can imagine FOR more than you can imagine.

Reflection Questions

- When you think of Spring what images come to mind?
 - Flowers, new growth, gardens, sunshine, pastel colors? What do all of these images have in common with one another?

- Are you in the season of spring? What season are you in? What is God preparing you for?
 - If so, enjoy it. Indulge in all the nourishment that you can. Read, study, travel, and experience life. You are being shaped into the person that will soon get the chance to go out in the world. Don't rush the process. Enjoy this time now in incubation with Jesus — it's a wonderful season of blooming into who you want to be. Pushing a flower to prematurely bloom, or rushing a caterpillar out of its cocoon, will hinder its growth. Hold on for a moment. Cherish the experience of being nurtured.

Small Group Discussion

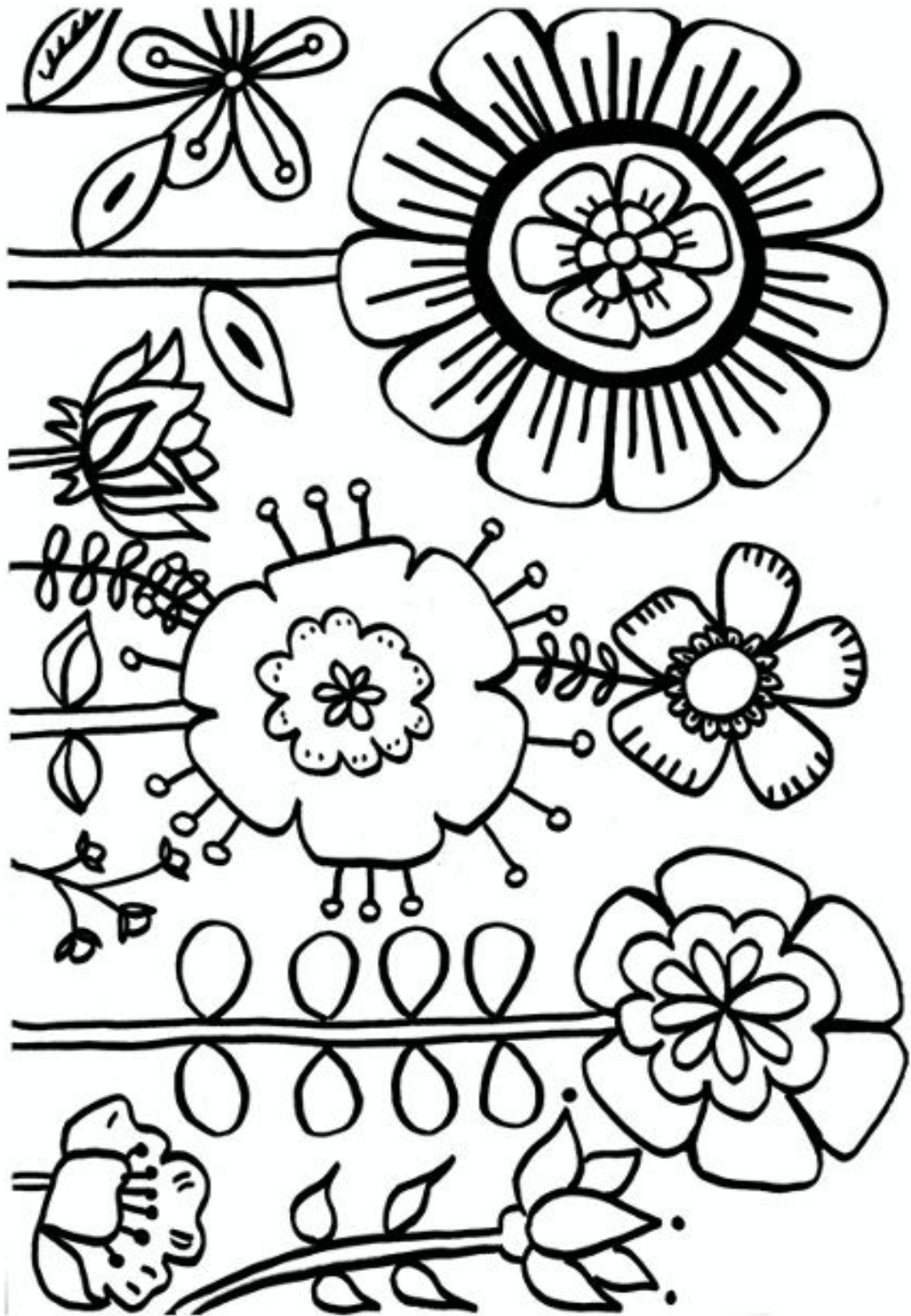
During springtime, signs of new life and rebirth are all around us. Flowers bloom and green grass sprouts up from the earth. In this season, we are reminded that while winter may have seemed to last forever, God's timing and purpose for the world will always prevail. God is in the business of bringing new life out of barrenness in nature. The same is true for us, too. Ecclesiastes 3:11 assures us that "The Lord has made everything beautiful in its time." God brings beauty out of the broken situations in our lives and the imperfect parts of ourselves. No matter how dark a winter season may feel, we can always set our hope on God's perfect plan and timing for our lives.

Attached is a coloring sheet of a springtime scene. First, take a moment to pray and ask God to speak to your heart during this time. Then, color the page and think about the ways that God has brought or is currently bringing beauty out of brokenness or barrenness in your life. Pray that God would fill you with the hope that comes from His love and ability to turn dark seasons into springtime. After you finish coloring and reflecting, discuss the feelings and thoughts you had during this exercise with a partner. Keep this coloring page as a reminder of the hope that we have through Christ and the light He brings.

Discussion Questions

- What are some times you have experienced a season of springtime in your life? What about that time felt like a rebirth or new beginning?
- What personal gifts are God currently cultivating in your life?
- What spiritual practices help you grow in your faith? (Examples: praying, reading Scripture, singing worship music, spending quiet time with God)
- What can you do to remain patient and hopeful while you are waiting for a season of spring?

Ask for a volunteer to end this discussion with a prayer.



Worship Outline

Supplies Needed

- Music playing device/speaker
- String
- Beads
- Scissors

Gathering

You gave me something that no one had before.

You gave me peace

Like a river that had been rushing, pulled by the current for too long,

You made my waters still

I found rest in Your arms

-Poem by Lillie Young

Take a moment to reflect on the poem and center yourself. Think about what you want to receive from this time of worship.

Music Suggestions

- New Wine by Hillsong Worship
- Open the Eyes of my Heart by Paul Baloche
- Springtime by Chris Renzema

Message

Watch here: <https://youtu.be/aKAKIzeqR> |

Sneak peak: I first learned about The Five Stages of Spiritual Awakening in a class called "Difficult Dialogues" last semester. We talked about how many people repeat the first two or three steps over and over again throughout their lives without ever completely reaching the goal, which is sustaining a spiritual high. I think that the final few steps within this process are only attainable by consistently communicating with God. The goal is to attain that crystallization in your relationship with Jesus — through service, compassion, and love. We have to be awakened from contentment in a life of comfort. Just because you're comfortable, does not mean that you are living as Jesus would.

Response: Breath Prayer Bracelets

After listening to the message, it is now time for the response. Have a station set up with beads, string, and scissors. Invite them to start making their bracelets as they feel led to complete the response.

“Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”
Ephesians 5:14

Design a bracelet with 3-5 beads. Knot either side of the beads, so they don't slide around, and tie it on your wrist.

Lean in. Look for Christ's work in our lives and tend the new growth that comes from Him.

Prepare and calm your mind. As you hold the first bead, breathe in deeply and slowly. Move to the next bead to breathe out. Repeat for as many beads you have. Move back to your first bead and repeat this mantra or another breath prayer that resonates with you.

Lord Jesus, awaken me.

Benediction

When everyone has completed the response, read Lamentations 3:21-24:

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

Go forth with confidence in the Lord's unending and unfailing love that will carry you through every season.