



# Seven Signs

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A LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

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*A Journey to Easter*

*Preaching Guide*

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### **About the Author**

*Pastor Burt is a Master of Divinity graduate from Bangor Theological Seminary and ordained in the United Church of Christ. Beginning as a youth minister and later serving as a licensed pastor in Maine, he brings over 30 years of ministry experience. He blends thoughtful leadership with a personable approach, focusing on hope, healing, and community. As a husband and father of four, he nurtures his congregations like family—creating spaces where all are embraced, grow together, and encounter God. He hopes to leave a legacy of fostering welcoming places where people walk in faith together.*



**Preaching Guide**  
**Seven Signs: A Lenten Bible Study**  
*A Journey to Easter Through the Gospel of John*

 **Seven Signs: A Journey to Easter**  
**Complete Unified Preaching Guide**

A cohesive Lenten arc through the Gospel of John, moving from honesty to resurrection life.

 **ASH WEDNESDAY**  
**Marked for Grace**

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:1–12; 2 Corinthians 5:17

**Hymns:** Again We Keep This Solemn Fast; Just As I Am; Give Me a Clean Heart; Abide with Me

**Big Idea:** Ashes name our mortality — grace names our future.

**Theological Thread:** Lent begins not in shame but in mercy. Dust and new creation belong together.

**Message Outline**

**1. The Disarming Nature of Ash**

- Soft, weightless, non-wounding.
- Mortality spoken plainly.
- Psalm 51 as honest prayer.

**2. The Cross in the Dust**

- Ash traced as cross.
- Mortality held inside promise.
- “New creation” spoken over dust.

**3. Fire and Renewal**

- Ash as evidence of fire.
- Fire refines and prepares soil.
- Destruction is not the final word.

**4. Marked for the Journey**

- Not marked for ending.
- Marked for grace.
- Marked for renewal.

**Landing:** Move reverently into Imposition of Ashes.

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 **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**When Ordinary Becomes Holy**

**Scripture:** John 2:1–11; Isaiah 62:1–5

**Hymns:** Praise to the Living God; Come, O Fount; Little Children Welcome;  
Sent Forth By God's Blessing

**Big Idea:** Grace shows up in ordinary life.

**Theological Thread:** Transformation begins in everyday spaces.

**Message Outline**

**1. Lent Begins Again**

- Ashes → wedding feast.
- Scarcity → abundance.
- John begins with joy.

**2. The Quiet Crisis**

- Wine running out = hidden shame.
- Emotional and spiritual depletion.

**3. Trust Without Explanation**

- “Do whatever he tells you.”
- Participation before understanding.

**4. Quiet Glory**

- Servants notice.
- Transformation without spectacle.

**Landing:** Lent is about trusting grace already at work.

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 **SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**Trusting the Word on the Way Home**

**Scripture:** John 4:46–54; Proverbs 3:5–6

**Hymns:** Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer; Be Still, My Soul; Go My Children, With My Blessing

**Big Idea:** Faith grows between promise and proof.

**Theological Thread:** Belief is movement before certainty.

**Message Outline**

**1. Desperation Strips Titles**

- Royal official → frightened parent.
- Urgent prayer.

**2. A Word Given**

- “Go; your son will live.”
- No sign. No proof.

**3. The Long Road of Trust**

- He believed.
- He started walking.
- Faith unfolds in steps.

**4. Recognition Comes Later**

- Healing already happened.
- God was at work unseen.

**Landing:** We walk with a word, not certainty.

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 **THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**Do You Want to Be Made Well?**

**Scripture:** John 5:1–15; Isaiah 43:18–19

**Hymns:** Just as I Am; There Is a Balm in Gilead; Precious Lord, Take My Hand

**Big Idea:** Healing may disrupt long-held patterns.

**Theological Thread:** Jesus interrupts survival identities.

**Message Outline**

**1. Long Waiting Shapes Us**

- Thirty-eight years.
- Survival becomes identity.

**2. The Deeper Question**

- Not medical.
- Existential: Are you ready?

**3. Explanation vs. Desire**

- “I have no one...”
- Familiar narratives of stuckness.

**4. Rise and Walk**

- No ritual.
- A word that moves.
- Movement is the miracle.

**Landing:** Lent asks for courage, not perfection.

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 **FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**Enough in God's Hands**

**Scripture:** John 6:1–14; Psalm 23

**Hymns:** Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer; Break Now the Bread of Life;  
God Whose Giving Knows No Ending; Take My Life

**Big Idea:** Abundance begins with what is offered.

**Theological Thread:** Jesus transforms what is given.

**Message Outline**

**1. The Math of Scarcity**

- Philip calculates impossibility.

**2. The Small Offering**

- Five loaves, two fish.
- “What are they among so many?”

**3. Seated Before Sharing**

- Order before miracle.
- Trust before multiplication.

**4. Blessed, Broken, Shared**

- Thanksgiving over smallness.
- Everyone satisfied.
- Nothing wasted.

**Landing:** What is small in our hands becomes enough in God's.

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 **FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**It Is I. Do Not Be Afraid.**

**Scripture:** John 6:16–21; Psalm 107:28–30

**Hymns:** How Firm a Foundation; Be Not Dismayed; It Is Well with My Soul; Blessed Assurance

**Big Idea:** Presence precedes calm.

**Theological Thread:** Fear does not disqualify faith.

**Message Outline**

**1. Evening Returns**

- Fatigue after obedience.

**2. Fear Intensifies**

- Misrecognition of grace.

**3. The Divine Name**

- “I Am.”
- Identity before resolution.

**4. Receiving Christ**

- No speech of bravery.
- Simply welcome.
- Shore reached.

**Landing:** Fear is not failure. Presence is enough.

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 **SIXTH SUNDAY OF LENT / PALM SUNDAY**  
**Seeing Clearly, Following Honestly**

**Scripture:** John 9:1–12, 35–38; John 12:12–16; Psalm 27:1; 1 Samuel 16:7

**Hymns:** Be Now My Vision; Amazing Grace; In the Bulb There Is a Flower;  
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

**Big Idea:** Seeing clearly is costly but freeing.

**Theological Thread:** Revelation replaces blame.

**Message Outline**

**1. The Blame Question**

- “Who sinned?”
- Jesus reframes suffering.

**2. Participatory Healing**

- Mud. Washing. Obedience.

**3. Conflict After Clarity**

- Systems resist transformation.
- Honest testimony invites tension.

**4. Palm Sunday Irony**

- Celebration without full sight.
- Following before understanding.

**Landing:** The church is a community learning to see together.

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 **Full Series Arc**

Honesty → Grace → Trust → Desire → Offering → Courage → Sight → Love → Cross → Life