

PSALMS

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Jesus



A 20 DAY DEVOTIONAL BOOK BY THE
CARDINAL DRIVE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Jesus

A 20 DAY DEVOTIONAL BOOK

AN INTRODUCTION

It is 2022 and the Cardinal Drive Church of Christ has come together to produce another devotional book for the benefit of the church. This devotional book is designed as a tool to draw our hearts and minds to the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus as we approach Easter weekend. The scriptures and devotionals will help us walk with Jesus through the events leading to the cross and then the resurrection.

This book is organized into 4 weeks (each with 5 devotionals for Monday - Friday) starting on Monday, March 21st and concluding on Friday, April 15th as we head into Easter weekend. Each devotional is centered around Jesus as he is found throughout the Psalms, Letters, Law & Prophets, and Gospels.

We want to say, "Thank You!" to all those who wrote the devotionals for this book. We appreciate your effort and the reflections that you shared with us.

We pray that you will be blessed as you reflect on Jesus over the next four weeks.

Rob Carris & Brian Prewitt

Suggestions for Your Devotion and Meditation

- Utilize some of the Bible reading techniques that we covered in Bible class last year.
 - Highlighting Method
 - Inductive Method
 - Lectio Divina
- Take a quiet moment to read that day's scripture and devotional.
- Pray about the scripture and what God is saying to you through it.
- Share your experience with your family and church family, to encourage them in their spiritual journey and quest for a godly life. Use social media and face-to-face conversations!

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IN THE PSALMS

MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 36:5-11 (ESV)

- 5** *Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.*
- 6** *Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;
your judgments are like the great deep;
man and beast you save, O Lord.*
- 7** *How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.*
- 8** *They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.*
- 9** *For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light.*
- 10** *Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your righteousness to the upright of heart!*
- 11** *Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me,*

DEVOTIONAL

How do you deal with the wickedness that surrounds us in this generation? Perhaps King David provides an enlightening example in Psalm 36. Although, he was a king and a prophet he refers to himself as “The Servant of the Lord” in the title of this Psalm.

David’s description of the wicked in verses 1- 4, of Psalm 36, reminds me of God’s assessment of mankind in Genesis 6:5 (NIV) **“The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time”**. I couldn’t determine the circumstances that caused him to write this Psalm but these verses seemed to grieve his heart.

However, he didn’t ask God to take any action towards the wicked, as God did in the days of Noah, but begins to praise God in verse 5. He mentions God’s attributes of being merciful, faithful, righteous, judging deeply, preserving of man and beast. He describes God’s lovingkindness as being precious, God is the fountain of life, and it is only through the light from God that we’re able to see the light. He gives a contrast between man’s wickedness and God’s goodness. It seems focusing on God is a good way for servants of the Lord to not allow the wickedness to overwhelm us.

In his final instructions, verses 7-12 he describes attributes of the servant of the Lord.

- Puts his trust in the Lord
- Being satisfied with what God provides
- Knowing God
- Being upright in heart

He concludes by praying for himself that God will preserve him.

As we approach Resurrection Day the world in which we live seems to be increasing in wickedness at a rapid pace. We are called to live in this world but not be of the world. Jesus is the light and He died on the cross so we could see the light and be saved from our own wickedness. Let us not become discouraged but follow King David's example.

- Recognize wickedness exists and is real.
- Pursue our relationship with Jesus with vigor and tell others about Him.
- Praise God for His goodness and that He knows how to rescue His people.
- Pray for God to protect us from all harm.
- Don't seek revenge but be mindful of what God says in 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10.

May God strengthen us and have mercy upon us all!

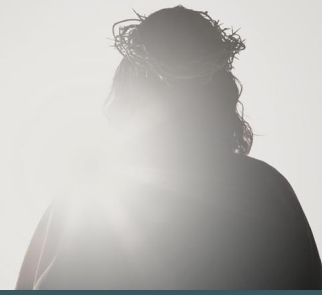
Wes Cunningham

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Jesus

IN THE PSALMS

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 71:1-14 (ESV)

- 1 In you, O Lord, do I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame!
- 2 In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;
incline your ear to me, and save me!
- 3 Be to me a rock of refuge,
to which I may continually come;
you have given the command to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.
- 4 Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.
- 5 For you, O Lord, are my hope,
my trust, O Lord, from my youth.
- 6 Upon you I have leaned from before my birth;
you are he who took me from my mother's womb.
My praise is continually of you.
- 7 I have been as a portent to many,
but you are my strong refuge.
- 8 My mouth is filled with your praise,
and with your glory all the day.
- 9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age;
forsake me not when my strength is spent.
- 10 For my enemies speak concerning me;
those who watch for my life consult together
- 11 and say, "God has forsaken him;
pursue and seize him,
for there is none to deliver him."
- 12 O God, be not far from me;
O my God, make haste to help me!
- 13 May my accusers be put to shame and consumed;
with scorn and disgrace may they be covered
who seek my hurt.
- 14 But I will hope continually
and will praise you yet more and more.

DEVOTIONAL

While reading and studying this scripture, it became clear that the Psalmist is entirely dependent on God because of God's righteousness. The Psalmist trusts that God has the ability and the power to set the wicked, the unjust and the cruel right. God will rule and prevail over all that is unjust.

This Psalm reminds us that those who orient their lives toward the ways of God and the kingdom of God will face hardships. The good news, however, is that those hardships are not lasting, but the strength of God is: from age to age. Faith lives amidst adversity, but praise is not the celebration of the powerful and the prosperous; rather, it is the language and the lifestyle of those who know at all times and in every circumstance that their lives belong to God and that their futures depend on God. Whatever we do in word, action, thought, or deed, is to reflect a lifetime of learning through experience — as the Psalmist has — the goodness of the God in whom we place our hope and trust.

The Psalm is calling out to God because he knows when he does not trust God he has failed. He has learned that God is there for him and will forgive him and even empower him to be an overcomer and as an older man he desires to finish well.

My prayer is as we all live our daily lives, we recognize that God is all we need. We should focus on his greatness and power. Transform our thinking to run to God first, be patient in his works and never turn from him.

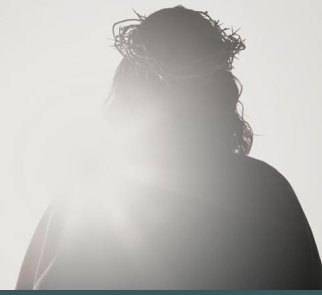
Curtis Sampson

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IN THE PSALMS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 70 (ESV)

For the director of music. Of David. A petition.

- ¹ Hasten, O God, to save me;
come quickly, Lord, to help me.
- ² May those who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.
- ³ May those who say to me, “Aha! Aha!”
turn back because of their shame.
- ⁴ But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
“The Lord is great!”
- ⁵ But as for me, I am poor and needy;
come quickly to me, O God.
You are my help and my deliverer;
Lord, do not delay.

DEVOTIONAL

David is asking God for help to come quickly and emphasizes the urgency of his request through repetition in verse 1.

The help David is asking for is expressed in verses 2 and 3. David is asking for his enemies to be ashamed and confused so they may be turned away and not seek to kill him.

David turns from his urgent problem in verse 4, his enemies, to rejoice in God. David calls all who seek God to rejoice as well.

David humbles himself before God in verse 5 with his truth, “I am poor and needy”.

David finishes by circling back to the beginning, requesting God to deliver him from his enemies and not delay.

I believe we can understand David and apply Psalm 70 to our lives today by using the 3 R's:
Request, Return, Rejoice.

1. Request

Let your prayers be known to God

Philippians 4:6 “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

2. Return

Ask God for protection from your enemies

Isaiah 54:17 “no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication[a] from me, declares the Lord.”

3. Rejoice

Take joy in the Lord and praise Him

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 “Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Kwame King

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IN THE PSALMS

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 (ESV)

- 1 I love the Lord, because he has heard
my voice and my pleas for mercy.
- 2 Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.
- 12 What shall I render to the Lord
for all his benefits to me?
- 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord,
- 14 I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.
- 15 Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his saints.
- 16 O Lord, I am your servant;
I am your servant, the son of your maidservant.
You have loosed my bonds.
- 17 I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call on the name of the Lord.
- 18 I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people,
- 19 in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.
- Praise the Lord!

DEVOTIONAL

Psalm 116 is a wonderful reminder that for the Christian, we get to gather weekly for a Thanksgiving feast. As one of the psalms sung during Passover, it was traditionally used during the fourth cup of wine of the passover meal, the “cup of salvation” where Israel would remember God’s deliverance of the nation from slavery and from the great power of Egypt. In response to that great deliverance, their proper response was to “lift up the cup of salvation,” to worship freely and drink deeply from that wonderful gift God gave them.

For Christians, the Psalm has been often read in association with communion, and I doubt it’s hard to see why. Throughout the Psalm, the writer makes reference to death and “Sheol,” the place of the dead. God has rescued him from that death, bringing him to a place of joyful

salvation. Where once he was ensnared in death, he now walks freely in the land of the living before the Lord. Given that freedom, he can gather with God's people and proclaim together with them the goodness of God seen most clearly in his salvation of a people that would otherwise have known only death.

During this Easter season, I invite you to consider anew the rich meaning in our weekly time in table fellowship. Our practices can sometimes lead us to miss the rich symbolism in our communion: the tiny crackers are echoes of nothing less than the bread of life, the tiny cup of juice an echo of the wine of celebration, the moment's pause together an echo of a king's feast. Psalm 116 can help us restore some of those images in our mind. Through Christ, we are rescued from the land of sin and death, and given nothing less than a place at the king's family table for a holiday banquet. Where we could have been deservedly left for dead, we instead gather in joy at the king's feast and fill our plates with delights. Ours is a celebration of God's goodness, a thanksgiving feast made possible because of the work of Jesus on our behalf.

Come to the table, and enjoy the thanksgiving feast.

Devotional By: Brian Prewitt

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Jesus

IN THE PSALMS

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 22 (ESV)

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
- 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.
- 3 Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
- 4 In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
- 6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
- 8 "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"
- 9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.
- 10 On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother's womb you have been my God.
- 11 Be not far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.
- 12 Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
- 13 they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.
- 14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
- 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

- 16 For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—
- 17 I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;
- 18 they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.
- 19 But you, O Lord, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!
- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dog!
- 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!
You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!
- 22 I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
- 23 You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
- 24 For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted,
and he has not hidden his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him.
- 25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.
- 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord!
May your hearts live forever!
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.
- 28 For kingship belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.
- 29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
even the one who could not keep himself alive.
- 30 Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
- 31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it.

DEVOTIONAL

I love music. I have never met a person who doesn't like music. I believe music is a universal language given by God, so we can praise him. That's one reason I love the Psalms. The Psalms paint a beautiful picture of emotion from all sides, and shows us how to feel in a healthy, Godly way, and present those emotions to God.

Psalm 22, like most of the Psalms, is a song of lament. This whole psalm is a picture of someone in the depths of despair, crying out to God. Just as there are verses, and a chorus,

rhythm, and a beat, flow and structure to a song, there is structure to the Psalms. There is the rhythm of David saying “this is how I feel” and saying “but God, I still trust you and praise you.” Psalm 22 is a beautiful picture of a prayer. Verse 1 is an immediate throwback (or throw forward) to Jesus' last words on the cross:

“Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (Matthew 27:46)

At first glance, it looks as if these words are doubting God. But notice one word that gets overlooked:

MY God, MY God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O MY God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but find no rest.(v. 1)

Sometimes, we don't let ourselves doubt or question God because we think it's wrong (which it can be) and that we need faith (which we do). But, the point where the enemy twists the truth is when we think its bad to ask questions of God. When its bad, and life isn't all sunshine and rainbows, we have to “keep the faith” and keep going without letting ourselves feel these emotions. God gave us our emotions. Emotions let us see deeper into ourselves than we sometimes could if we didn't allow ourselves to feel. Emotions make great servants, but terrible masters. In this verse, David (and Jesus) gives us a beautiful demonstration that it is okay to have questions, because that is how we grow. But in his questioning, David is still trusting. David still calls God “MY God.”

Now take a look at the rhythms of this Psalm. Some clues to the “chorus” or “verses” to a Psalm are repetition and where the breaks between the paragraphs are. The first section (v. 1-2) is David bringing his questions to God, his inner groanings, and laying all of what he's feeling out for him.

In the second section (v. 3-5), David starts off with “yet, you are holy.” he starts off with how he feels and then with the truth of who God is. Verses 3-5 are David remembering what God has done, and remembering who he serves.

The third section (v. 6-8) is David, again, laying his situation out before God. It is an echo of verses 1 and 2 but notice instead of how he's feeling, he talks about what's being done to him. Instead of an inward reflection, we have an outward observation.

In the fourth section (v. 9-11) he again reminds himself of who God is. Notice that in verses 3-5 it is a depiction of who God is and what he has done in the past. It is mainly a picture of justice. But verses 9-11 are more about trust, rather than conquering and justice.

In the next sections (v. 12-18) David describes himself in total hopeless defeat. He is surrounded by enemies, all his bones are “out of joint”, he has no strength, and is basically on the verge of death. But notice the echo of the cross:

a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet-- I can count all my bones-- they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and my clothing they cast lots. (v. 16-18)

The rest of Psalm 22 is all a praise to God. Verses 19-21 is a cry for God to save him. The next section (verses 22-24) is an echo back to verse 1. In verse 1-2, he asks why God has forgotten him, and why he does not listen. But, in verse 24 it says “[God] has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.” he speaks truth back at his doubts. We

are allowed to feel, and to ask questions, but we can't stay in a place of doubt. We have to remind ourselves of the truth. We have to acknowledge how we feel, but also remember the truth.

Take a look at the last verse. In these last few verses, David is looking at the future. And in the last verse, it says that "they shall proclaim...that he has done it." The last words that Jesus said before he died were "it is finished." Jesus has done it. Christians are all proclaiming that he has done it. He has conquered death itself, and given us access to him. He has given us access to his presence, and a relationship with him. He has done it.

Lily Prewitt



W E E K T W O

Jesus

IN THE LETTERS

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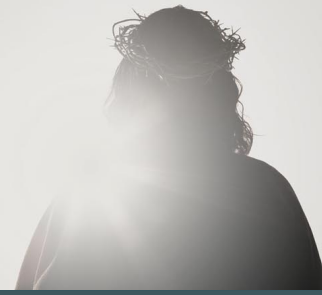
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Jesus

IN THE LETTERS

MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 9:11-15

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. 15 Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

DEVOTIONAL

The sacrifices for sin were made in the Old Testament,
But the yearly sacrifices for sin were not permanent.
The blood of goats and calves couldn't take our sins away.
Only Jesus's blood can do that for us today.

Sacrifices, burnt and sin offerings in the O.T. did not please God,
But when Jesus came to earth and shed His blood, those things were outlawed.
The blood of goats and bulls couldn't cleanse things that were unseen.
Only the blood of Christ can make our consciences clean.

Before Jesus came to this earth, people's lives were filled with strife.
Now his blood delivers us from sin because He's the Bread of Life.
Jesus transforms our minds and hearts—he makes our insides clean.
He is our mediator and our high priest. He's our go-between.

The blood of Christ symbolizes the cleansing of our evil desires.
When we look to Jesus for our salvation—that's what God requires.
We don't have to look at animal sacrifices to be ceremonially unclean.
Jesus was sent to die, to be buried and raised, so we can be redeemed.

In Conclusion:

Our broken relationship with God has completely been restored.
By Jesus's final act in this world—we can live with God forevermore.

Joyce Cunningham

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Jesus
IN THE LETTERS

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2022

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. **19** For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? **21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. **22** For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, **24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **27** But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; **28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, **29** so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. **30** And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, **31** so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

DEVOTIONAL

To those who are not saved, it sounds like the message of the cross is meaningless and ridiculous, but to those who are saved it is freeing and powerful. In verse 19, Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah saying, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.” He means that human wisdom is at the complete mercy of God. He can take it away and make what we think we know completely different. The only wisdom that is absolutely perfect is the wisdom of God.

The cross is such an amazing example of this. The people of Israel had no clue as to whether Jesus was good or bad. Most of the people that the Bible mentions who understand who He is are just regular peasants, nobody that the world would ever look to. The wise were totally lost. All their wisdom that God gave them through Moses and their knowledge of the prophets

did not help them understand what the Messiah was sent to do. Even though He gave us how and when the Messiah was to come, through our own wisdom we could not understand Him. God is so much bigger, stronger, and wiser than we could ever imagine.

As great and amazing as He is, He wishes to interact with us. He wishes to use us in His plan but He doesn't just use the powerful and the strong. He likes to use the things that are weak and despised. Examples of this in the Bible are the story of David and Goliath, Peter and John in front of the Sanhedrin and even Israel. When Israel came up from Egypt, God involved all sorts of people in His plan. It is because of Jesus that we know wisdom from God. That is our righteousness, holiness and redemption. On our own we cannot be holy, righteous, and we certainly can not redeem ourselves because we are so hopeless and cannot save ourselves. Paul quotes Jeremiah "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Ethan Byham

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Jesus
IN THE LETTERS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 12:1-3

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

DEVOTIONAL

This passage opens reminding us about Hebrews 11 “Hall of Famers” who had faith that caused them to act, blazing the trail for us. These pioneers of faith are now cheering us on. Then we are given guidance on running the race that God has given us.

In order to run the race successfully we must first get rid of anything that will slow us down, especially sin that so easily entangles. We must run with perseverance “fixing our eyes on Jesus”. Peter walked on the water as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus. When we fix our eyes on Jesus we can run the race with joy, as Jesus did.

Corrie Ten Boom expressed it this way: “If you look at the world, you’ll be distressed. If you look within, you’ll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you’ll be at rest.”

This word’s troubles and sin can hold us down, keeping us from running. When I moved to Alaska, I decided to become a REAL Alaskan by going fishing. Now I have never fished in my life so I read a lot of books, watched people fish, attended a lecture on fly-fishing, and finally purchased all the right gear. One evening I went down to Ship Creek in Anchorage to “fish.”

Although I had been warned many times not to step on the mud, it was the only way to get down to the creek, and there were many other footprints. So, I stepped out on the mud and after 3 steps got completely stuck. The mud felt like quick sand sucking me down. After about ten minutes a couple of teenagers came by and helped me. That was the end of fishing for me. That’s exactly how our sins hold us down.

Let us remember these encouraging words: Fix your eyes on Jesus and run with perseverance. Keep on keeping on, and never lose heart.

Robin Coughlin



THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

DEVOTIONAL

Occasionally, I find myself feeling *tired*. I remember seeing the title of a book: "Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired." I never read it. Even though I live with managing an incurable chronic condition, I've never subscribed to categorizing myself as "sick". Maybe that's why I never read that book, although I always thought the title was funny, witty, even.

Jesus didn't grow tired as He went about fulfilling His life's purpose on earth. But I can imagine that at times, He grew weary. The Bible does not illustrate specific instances of weariness in Jesus, but we do see His despair. " 32 Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed." Mark 13: 32-33, NKJV We encounter this verse just prior to Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion. Jesus was committed to doing the will of the Father, and although He asked God to "Take this cup away from Me," He persevered even until death.

Each time we remember Christ Jesus by partaking in the bread (His Body) and the wine (His Blood), we proclaim His death until He comes. There must be nothing greater for me, since Jesus gave it all for me, a sinner. So whenever I find myself growing tired or not wanting to go on, I think of my Savior and all that He endured to wipe my slate clean of sin.

So anytime I think of giving up, I know I **MUST** go on. I am doing good by simply living this life with which God has gifted me, since I never know when, how, or who might benefit from my perseverance; even when I want to quit, I won't.

He didn't.

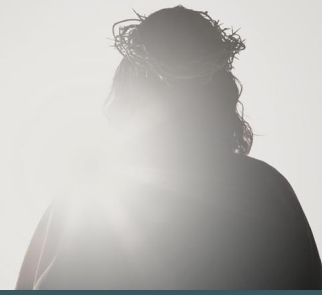
Erika Michelle Bryant (Backstrom)

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Jesus
IN THE LETTERS

FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 2022

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 4:1-8

4 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. 3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4 With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; 5 but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. 7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. 8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

DEVOTIONAL

Okay, so I am currently in a place where I want to read. Reading had always been one of my favorite pastimes, and some years ago I seem to have forgotten about it. But I recently found myself browsing books for checkout from my local library and came across an intriguing title: "Life, In Spite Of Me." That book title allowed clarity so I could finally see My Personal Testimony, and how I can share it.

Unbeknownst to me that, when I began taking steps to return to my beloved hobby of reading, that God would show me the answer to a long-suffering prayer of mine. As a Jesus follower, I sometimes felt like something was wrong with me since I didn't really know my story of how the Lord found me and set me free from my sins.

I am currently reading a book called "Life Is Tough But God Is Faithful" by Sheila Walsh. I am incredibly excited and grateful to God for the opportunity to re-embrace my passion for reading. For a while I had let the devil try to convince me that working full-time kept me so tired I had no energy for anything else. Lies. Lies. And More Lies.

As my personal story of God's saving grace becomes clearer to me, I can be nothing but thankful that I got knocked on the head when I did. He was ALWAYS there, whispering to me time and time again not to commit that particular sin, whatever it might have been. But time and time again, I did it anyway, as if I knew better than God.

Clearly, I didn't know then, and I still don't now. But He was always there keeping me from myself while patiently trying to make me see how much better a life lived in surrender to God could and would be.

Now, may I tell you my story?

Erika Michelle Bryant (Backstrom)



W E E K T H R E E

Jesus

IN THE LAW & PROPHETS

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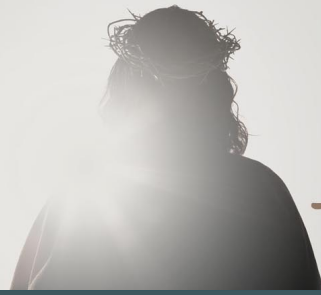
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Jesus

IN THE LAW & PROPHETS

MONDAY, APRIL 4, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 42:1-9

- 1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
- 2 He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
- 3 a bruised reed he will not break,
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
- 4 He will not grow faint or be discouraged
till he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his law.
- 5 Thus says God, the Lord,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people on it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
- 6 “I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness;
I will take you by the hand and keep you;
I will give you as a covenant for the people,
a light for the nations,
- 7 to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
- 8 I am the Lord; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to carved idols.
- 9 Behold, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth
I tell you of them.”

DEVOTIONAL

Isaiah 42:1-9 is a prophesy about the coming of Jesus. In this passage verses 1-4 are a description of Jesus. It begins describing Jesus as God’s servant. Jesus is God’s chosen one and God delights in Jesus. God says that He will give Jesus his Spirit and states that

Jesus will bring justice to the nations. God says that Jesus will not cry out or raise his voice in the streets. Jesus is described as a bruised reed that will not break and also as a smoldering wick that will not snuff out. Jesus will not falter, will not be discouraged until he brings forth justice. Jesus will bring hope to the islands through his teachings. The first four verses describe characteristics of Jesus.

In the next section is only one verse. Verse 5 describes God. God is the creator of the heavens. God has created the earth and all that is on it. God is the giver of life and breath to everyone on earth.

In the final four verses then, God describes what he will do through Jesus. God is the ultimate actor and Jesus is the medium through which God is acting. God says that He will make Jesus a new covenant, a new promise. God describes this new promise as including not only the Jews but also the Gentiles. Jesus will be made a light to the Gentiles. God is describing how He will, through Jesus, give sight to the blind and freedom to the those in prison. God then is described as one worthy of praise because the things that He declares have been done. God tells us what is to happen before it happens.

So what then are we to take away from this passage. Jesus is God's chosen instrument. Jesus will persevere and will not give up in His talk to bring about justice and hope. God, who has chosen Jesus, is the creator of all things and the giver of life and through Jesus God has chosen to bring light and freedom to his creation, to the world. For these things God is to be praised because once God has declared something to come it has already happened.

Jonathan Byham

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Jesus

IN THE LAW & PROPHETS

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24

- 1 I am the man who has seen affliction
under the rod of his wrath;
- 2 he has driven and brought me
into darkness without any light;
- 3 surely against me he turns his hand
again and again the whole day long.
- 4 He has made my flesh and my skin waste away;
he has broken my bones;
- 5 he has besieged and enveloped me
with bitterness and tribulation;
- 6 he has made me dwell in darkness
like the dead of long ago.
- 7 He has walled me about so that I cannot escape;
he has made my chains heavy;
- 8 though I call and cry for help,
he shuts out my prayer;
- 9 he has blocked my ways with blocks of stones;
he has made my paths crooked.

- 19 Remember my affliction and my wanderings,
the wormwood and the gall!
- 20 My soul continually remembers it
and is bowed down within me.
- 21 But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
- 22 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
- 23 they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
- 24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."

DEVOTIONAL

Before we dive into the text, take a moment and recall the lowest point in your life. Can you remember how you got there? Do you remember the thoughts you were thinking and the emotions you were feeling in that moment? Keep that situation in mind as we explore the scripture.

Lamentations was written by the prophet Jeremiah following the Fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The absolute destruction is described in detail in 2 Kings 24:18 - 25:21, Jeremiah 52:1-30, and 2 Chronicles 36:11-21. Jerusalem, God's holy, chosen city for his chosen people, was burned to the ground, the wall torn down brick-by-brick, the temple looted and destroyed, and its people deported to Babylon. The kingdom of Israel, to the north, had already been destroyed, so for the small remnant of Jews left in Judah, this was no less than a complete ruination of their way of life. Your low may not be this extreme, but did it feel that way?

Chapter one is a lament over the city of Jerusalem, while chapter two expands the lament from the city to the nation of Israel. In the third chapter, we see the lament from an individual's personal perspective. Verse 1 explicitly calls out GOD as the afflictor of all of the torments that follow: Walking in darkness (v.2), without God's guidance, our physical bodies, broken and failing (v.4), a prisoner without escape (v.7 & 9), and God will not even hear us (v.8)! Jesus felt all of this when he was on the cross, giving his life, for our salvation (ex. Matt 27:45-46).

Let's go to the second section. Verses 19 & 20 acknowledge all of the previous suffering (even the 10 verses we skipped!), it is an experience of humility the speaker holds onto. And in vs. 21, amid all this darkness and suffering, there is hope! The speaker rebuilds their faith from the lowest point, remembering God's Power over all things, God's Goodness and Character, and God's Provision for his people. God may afflict us, but he will not allow us to be consumed completely. His compassion (vs. 22) for us outweighs ALL the wrath he may ever feel. THIS was the confidence Jesus had in going to the cross. He trusted that God would not abandon him to the lowest pit, but lift him up with his mighty hand. If Vs. 23 and 24 seem familiar, they should. We sing them often in worship in two phenomenal songs. Great is Thy Faithfulness & The Steadfast Love of the Lord. God as our portion, everything we need, every morning, from now, to the end of time

Jon Hill

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Jesus

IN THE LAW & PROPHETS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 12:1-5a, 11-14

1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 2 “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. 3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old.

11 In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.

12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. 13 The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

DEVOTIONAL

Movies have become one of the most powerful and popular art forms of our culture. Most all of us enjoy going out to the theater to enjoy a movie with friends and family. Many of us enjoy watching certain movies over and over again just to let all the details soak in. As a proof of this, a while back I heard a statistic that said the average American had seen Star Wars eight times! One of my favorite moments when rewatching movies is finding all the moments of foreshadowing. They are those intriguing moments that make so much more sense as you look back on them, knowing how the story ends.

Exodus 12:1-14 is a similar moment in the Bible and it is one of my favorites. Moses has been calling on Pharaoh time after time to let God's people go and time after time Pharaoh refuses to allow God's people to leave. God sends flies, frogs, boils, locusts, and more and Pharaoh just continues to work God's people harder. Finally, God sends Moses to Pharaoh one last time to tell him that every first born male will die in Egypt, from the first born of Pharaoh to the first born of the cattle. Pharaoh's heart is hardened and he refuses to let the Israelites go from their slavery.

Then comes this scripture that Jewish Christians probably looked back on after the death of Jesus with all new eyes. God tells his people to take a male lamb without blemish, to kill it, and take the blood and put it on the sides and the tops of the doorway of their home. This was a sign, and when God came to strike down the first born of the Egyptians, he would see the blood and would passover their families. The blood of the lamb was a sign of the people of God, it is what saved them from God's wrath.

While we are not people that are physically enslaved, all of us at one time were (or even currently are) slaves to sin. The shackles of sin and death may or may not have been evident to all but we all wore them at one point in time or possibly still do. Much like the Israelites were mostly powerless to do anything about their enslavement, we too are powerless on our own to do anything about the power that sin and death have over us.

God loves us deeply. This is evident from Exodus 2:24-25 where we are told that God heard the cries of his people and was concerned about them. God was concerned about us as well and the power that sin and death held over us. So instead of asking us to provide a perfect lamb, he provided one of his own... his perfect sinless son. His blood was spilled for our freedom. The blood of Jesus spares us from the wrath of God. It marks us as God's people! The blood of Jesus was spilled so that we might have the forgiveness of sin!

This sacrifice of blood doesn't just provide a physical freedom on earth but rather a freedom that lasts forever. We are covered by blood of the lamb and doesn't it feel good to be free?!

Rob Carris

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Jesus

IN THE LAW & PROPHETS

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Job 14:1-14

- 1 “Man who is born of a woman
is few of days and full of trouble.
- 2 He comes out like a flower and withers;
he flees like a shadow and continues not.
- 3 And do you open your eyes on such a one
and bring me into judgment with you?
- 4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?
There is not one.
- 5 Since his days are determined,
and the number of his months is with you,
and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass,
- 6 look away from him and leave him alone,
that he may enjoy, like a hired hand, his day.
- 7 “For there is hope for a tree,
if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
and that its shoots will not cease.
- 8 Though its root grow old in the earth,
and its stump die in the soil,
- 9 yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put out branches like a young plant.
- 10 But a man dies and is laid low;
man breathes his last, and where is he?
- 11 As waters fail from a lake
and a river wastes away and dries up,
12 so a man lies down and rises not again;
till the heavens are no more he will not awake
or be roused out of his sleep.
- 13 Oh that you would hide me in Sheol,
that you would conceal me until your wrath be past,
that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me!
- 14 If a man dies, shall he live again?
All the days of my service I would wait,
till my renewal should come.

DEVOTIONAL

Job is one of the books of the Bible that challenges us to go where we often don't want to go. Death is no easy subject, and one we often try to avoid. Job goes there in chapter 14, seeing death hovering over the whole of human existence, the inevitable truth that lingers at the end

for all. Our days “are determined,” appointed by God with “limits that he cannot pass.” While Ecclesiastes often reflects on the view of the world without God, these first 13 verses considers a view with God but where he is known only through his wrath. In that experience, Job would rather be in the place of the dead, concealed until God’s “wrath is past,” waiting for a time where God would remember him.

But the trick to that view is that it isn’t the whole story. In verse 14, he asks an important question: “If a man dies, shall he live again?” He immediately gives his answer: “All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come.” Without God, there is no meaning. If God is there but only pouring out wrath and judgment, there is no hope. But Job waits on God, for God to remember him and raise him to life again (vs 13), for God to give him renewal.

Job reminds us of our life of dependance. We need the salvation that comes to us through Jesus. We cannot live without it. It is our only hope, our only source of strength, our only path to a brighter future. Where Job sits in a place of mystery, unsure of what God is up to in that moment, he can still trust in His character while he waits. We can sit from a place of revelation, where we have seen in the resurrection of Jesus the clearest declaration possible of what God is up to, and of His profound intent to save His people. This gives us a certain hope we can cling to when we find ourselves facing our own mysterious paths. We wait for Him, and in His resurrection, we have in Him the renewal that we need.

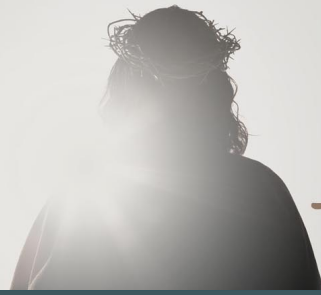
Brian Prewitt

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Jesus

IN THE LAW & PROPHETS

FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

13 Behold, my servant shall act wisely;
he shall be high and lifted up,
and shall be exalted.

14 As many were astonished at you—
his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

15 so shall he sprinkle many nations.

Kings shall shut their mouths because of him,
for that which has not been told them they see,
and that which they have not heard they understand.

Chapter 53

1 Who has believed what he has heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?
9 And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.
10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever felt: *Judged for your appearance *Hated *Rejected *Pain *Suffering *Punished *Criminal *Tortured. I am going out on a limb here but I believe that most of us have experienced one or more of these things in the course of our life, and I'm also sure there are humans who have experienced all of them including death. By choice? Absolutely not. Humans suffer at the hands of other broken humans.

Jesus suffered all of the above His whole life. God the Father allowed, chose, and decided to use Jesus as the Lamb that would pay the penalty for OUR sins. His own Father! And Jesus did so WILLINGLY! How many of us would decide to allow our own child to go through all of the above and to ultimately die for anyone? I will be the first to admit that I don't think I could ever allow that.

Who would you die for? I can honestly tell you that I would give my life to save my sons and my husband. I can also honestly say that I would have to think about dying for others. But Jesus did just that, He willingly endured being judged, rejected, hated, pain, suffering, torture....and before He died He forgave those who had treated Him that way.

It's easy to say that Jesus died for our sins. Let's make it personal, read the below statements with your name in the blank:

Jesus:

*Was wounded for _____

*Was tortured for _____

*Suffered for _____

*Was punished for _____

*Endured pain for _____

*Was rejected for _____

*Was judged for _____

*Was hated for _____

*Was spat on for _____

*Bled for _____

*Died for _____

Thank you Lord for sacrificing your only Son for each one of us. That You loved us that much, to sacrifice Your child. Thank you Jesus for accepting the cup and taking the penalty for our sins, for suffering, being tortured, wounded, crushed, for giving Your life for each and everyone of us. Thank you Lord, for the resurrection of your Son, for the hope of eternal life. Lord help us to never forget the sacrifice that was for us and that we will live our lives showing the world You.

Amen.

Edna Miller

W E E K F O U R

Jesus

IN THE GOSPELS

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Jesus

IN THE GOSPELS

MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2022

SCRIPTURE: John 12:1-11

1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. 3 Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 5 “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” 6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. 7 Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. 8 For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.” 9 When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, 11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

DEVOTIONAL

Mary and Judas. Both were able to witness the miracles performed by Jesus firsthand. Mary was able to see her brother, Lazarus, raised up from the dead. Judas was one of the 12 and the keeper of the purse. You would think Judas, the eventual betrayer, would understand the mission. As we see here, Mary understood it before he did.

I love the idea of the upside-down kingdom in reference to Jesus. A king who came to serve his people instead of the people serving the king.

For even the Son of Man did not come expecting to be served by everyone, but to serve everyone, and to give his life as the ransom price in exchange for the salvation of many.” Mark 10:45

It is obvious that Judas is talking the talk, but he is not walking the walk. Yes, it would be good to sell the perfume to give the money to the poor. However, as we see within the reading, we know that is not Judas’s full intention. It’s only talk, no walk. Mary shows us what it truly means to serve others. She humbles herself before Jesus and bowed to Jesus to anoint his feet. Mary didn’t talk, she did. How can we do? How can we be like Mary? Better yet, how can we be like Jesus?

You see, there is a second part to the Mark 10:45 passage. "... and to give his life as the ransom price in exchange for the salvation of many." We are days away from this ultimate sacrifice. One that took a lot of courage and heart to proceed with. Sometimes, when we do for others, it is hard, expensive, or time consuming. When we come to these crossroads, are we Mary or are we Judas?

Anthony Neal

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Jesus

IN THE GOSPELS

TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 2022

SCRIPTURE: John 12:20-36

20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. 27 “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” 29 The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” 30 Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. 34 So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” 35 So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

DEVOTIONAL

If the life and final days of Jesus were a movie or play you might have a challenge keeping track of all the story lines at work.

Religious and political power structures were up in arms, each faction threatened and enraged that Jesus' teaching challenged their status. Our Savior had ridden into Jerusalem to shouts of worship and honor as the King of Israel. Crowds pressed in from all sides to worship or just the hope of seeing Jesus or Lazarus.

Emotions are running high. What was it like to be in that moment? I imagine the apostles were overwhelmed and confused, possibly frightened at the size and energy of the masses. Jesus tells us his soul is troubled (verse 27).

Through the crowds we see a little nucleus develop, Greeks, probably proselytes, seek the person of Jesus first through Philip and Andrew and finally are brought to our Lord directly.

How does Jesus respond? Despite all the pressure He is on mission; knowledge and anticipation of the cross fills his mind and commands the scene with this small group of seekers.

It might seem incredible that our Lord was so focused in the moment, his mind fixed on His Father and the cross before him. However if we zoom out from the scene and look back across the pages and time of the bible we see our Lord has been on mission since before the foundations of the world were laid.

Revelation 13:8 says “He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.”

The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies about his birth, life, death and resurrection.

It's said one fifth of the gospels are focused on the theme of Christ's death and resurrection.

In John 6:51 our Lord tells us plainly that his purpose on earth is to give His life. He goes on to explain that He has chosen to lay down his life, no one takes it from Him (John 10:17).

Apostolic preaching from the very beginning is of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord, see Acts 2 and Acts 4. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians says "I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2).

Christ's death and resurrection is the theme of worship in heaven. In Revelation the saints and elders of heaven say “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” "The voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” Rev 5:9 & 11

R.C. Sproul, in his commentary John, writes "Christ's glorification involves His resurrection and His ascension, but our Lord makes it clear that it also occurs in His death. There was glory in the passion... Because in His death on the cross He was obeying the Father and glorifying the Father, and all who obey the Father and give glory to the Father are honored by the Father. Disciples are not above their master, so if Jesus must die to be glorified so must His servants."

John 12:25-26 He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to live eternal. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be: if anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Stephanie Vospette

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Jesus

IN THE GOSPELS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2022

SCRIPTURE: John 13:21-32

21 After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” 22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. 23 One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, 24 so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. 25 So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?” 26 Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” 28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor. 30 So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.

DEVOTIONAL

Before the betrayal of Jesus in John 13. Jesus washed the apostles feet, leaving them an example to follow, that they should wash one another's feet. Jesus asked them a question: “Do you know what I have done to you?” Jesus here is not talking about washing feet but about living a life of servitude to God as he has. This was hours before the crucifixion where Jesus was going to die for the sins of the world, he was going to cleanse the Apostle and all who believed in him through his death and bloodshed on the cross. Jesus wasn't talking about all of them, he knew who he had chosen and knew who was going to betray him. Jesus knew that one of them was a devil (John 6:70). Jesus goes on to quote Psalm 41:9, saying “I know whom I have chosen; but that scripture may be fulfilled. ‘He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.’ Jesus told them this so that when the time came, they may believe that I AM he. The word he is in italics and was added later. Jesus tells them these things so that they may believe Jesus is God.

After Jesus shared this, at this point he was troubled in spirit. Jesus was emotionally distressed and burdened by what soon was going to take place. We need to understand 100% that Jesus was completely man. He was not only God in the flesh, but he was completely man. Going to the cross for Jesus was very traumatic for him. He bore the sin of the world on a cross after having a crown of thorns hammered into his skull, beaten and flogged. His body was scourged to the point where he did not even look like a man and then was nailed to a tree for you and me. Jesus once again said “Most assuredly I say to you, one of you will betray me” Simon Peter motioned to the disciple whom Jesus loved, to ask him to whom it is he had spoken. Jesus said, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I

have dipped.” Having dipped it he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. At this point when Judas received that piece of bread, Satan entered him. The significance of Jesus giving Judas a piece of bread dipped shows Jesus’ honoring Judas as the honored guest at his dinner table. Even though Jesus knew what was going to happen, Jesus was still reaching out to Judas. What this means to you and me is the long-suffering of Jesus. Jesus never gives up on any person. Christ never gives up on a person until the person gives up on God. That is what is happening with Judas. Satan entered Judas, which opened Judas to Satanic influences. Jesus told Judas “what you do, do quickly.” Isn’t it interesting that though Judas is under Satanic influence he is still taking commands from Christ? Don’t forget it is Jesus who is running the show, it is Jesus who is in control of all that is happening. When you think of Satan and when you think of demons, they are nothing more than errand boys. They are simply pawns to move about for a period of time in order that you and I may exercise choice. They must have the Lord’s permission to act.

All this happened while it was dark outside. Darkness has come to the soul of Judas and night was falling on the nation of Israel. Before this night be over Jesus will be going to the cross tortured, mutilated and scourged for our sins. The Cross is the living proof that God loves us. God is madly in love with his creation and proves it by sending his only begotten Son to die for you and me. Because of the cross the curtain has been torn and we have been granted full access to God. Although Jesus was fully God, he was also fully man. God wrapped his son in our skin so that he could understand and identify and walk through this life with you.

The hour had come for both the Son and the Father to be glorified. It is the one event where both are glorified. The instrument (the cross) that was meant to bring shame is now going to be the instrument that will glorify Jesus. We glorify Jesus because he went to the cross, because he allowed himself to be crucified. When we recognize our depravity, we glorify Jesus with gratefulness. THANK YOU JESUS FOR SAVING ME! Now put yourself in that gratitude. The Father was glorified in Jesus. The Son came and was completely obedient to the Father. Jesus said “I do always those things that please the Father” (John 8:29). Jesus being obedient all the way to the cross glorified the Father. The cross glorifies both the Father and the Son. What was about to happen at calvary was the greatest event in the history of the universe. What did redemption cost God? His own Son. The most important thing to God is our redemption.

Prayer: Father, thank you for sending Jesus your son in human likeness. Thank you, Jesus, for becoming a human being and taking my punishment that I deserved and taking upon yourself my sin to bear in your body. You know, Jesus, what it is like to be betrayed by those dearest to you. You were tempted in every way and yet you were without sin. Every struggle, every temptation I face you are there with me facing them together lending your strength to me to stand. Thank you for redeeming my soul and granting me eternal life. Help me to refer to myself as John did, the disciple in whom Jesus loved. It is not about whether I love you but that you loved me. It is your love that compels me to do what is right. Help me to submit to the Holy Spirit to allow your love to shine through me and transform me. In Jesus name I pray, amen.

Michael Hyams

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Jesus

IN THE GOSPELS

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2022

SCRIPTURE: John 13:1-35


1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."

31b Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

DEVOTIONAL

What does it look like to love one another? For you it may mean knowing a friend has a stressful day coming up and having a coffee delivered to them at work. For someone else it might mean bringing a 'just because meal' to a friend or helping them do yard work on a warm spring day. For another person it might be sending a card with a hand drawn picture or inviting a friend over for s'mores in the backyard. No matter what it looks like for you, let Jesus be your example.

Jesus and his buddies were sitting around the table about to enjoy a feast. An important feast, but dinner nonetheless. Their table was low to the ground and they didn't have high-backed/sturdy chairs to sit on. Instead they probably lounged around on cushions on the floor. This means that their feet were in plain view of others and not hidden inside shoes and under the table cloth. They all wore open-toed sandals and walked everywhere on dirt paths, so their feet were dusty and very dirty. It was custom for the servant to come out and wash the guests feet, so they were clean for meal time. I mean, I don't want dirt and dust flying off your foot and into my soup either! However, there was no servant at this feast. Instead, there was Jesus.

A photograph of a brick path leading towards a bright, glowing light at the end of the path. The path is made of reddish-brown bricks and is flanked by dark, textured ground. The light at the end of the path is very bright and creates a lens flare effect, suggesting a path leading to a bright future or a divine presence.

He got down and touched the feet of every one of his friends. He washed the dirt from between their toes and rubbed the grime off of their heels. He served his friends without hesitation. He saw their need and he fulfilled it. He loved on them in a very physical way that blessed them immensely. It cost him some time and possibly a bit of money but the gain was tremendous for everyone.

What does it cost you to love each other? What does it look like? How can you serve like Jesus served?

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for being our example. Thank you for showing us how to love each other. Please help us to be like you; help us to serve. Put it on our hearts to see people's need and to fill it. Help us to remember what you said in John 13:34: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." Guide us, show us and teach us!

Amen

Jenny Neal

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GOSPELS



Jesus

IN THE GOSPELS

FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 2022

SCRIPTURE: John 19:16-42

16 So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, 17 and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. 19 Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” 20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. 21 So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” 22 Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, 24 so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things, 25 but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” 29 A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

31 Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. 35 He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. 36 For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” 37 And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. 39 Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes,

about seventy-five pounds in weight. 40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

DEVOTIONAL

Endings matter, so when John ends his description of the crucifixion of Jesus with two quotes from Scripture, those quotes are there to get us to pay attention. Let's take a look at both of them:

“Not one of his bones will be broken.” Here, he is referencing two sets of Scripture. First, Psalm 34:20 speaks of God's care for the righteous man, saying that he delivers him out of all his afflictions, that “he keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.” The righteous one is guarded by God even as he endures great affliction. God will not forget him. Second, it is an allusion to both Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12, both of which specify that no bone of the Passover lamb may be broken. This link, that Jesus is our Passover lamb, sacrificed for the deliverance of God's people, is something that both Paul (1 Cor 5:7) and Peter (1:19) mention in their teaching as well. Take the two together, and Jesus is the righteous sacrifice, giving himself up for God's people, but a sacrifice that will be vindicated by God. As he records Jesus' death, John wants us to start thinking about the resurrection, in which God proclaims Jesus' victory over death.

“They will look on him whom they have pierced.” Here, John is referencing Zechariah 12:10, where God speaks of Israel piercing Yahweh himself with sorrow because of their sin. As people see Yahweh pierced, they experience their own grief and mourning, which leads to a fountain that opens up to cleanse them from their sin. So, in John, as the soldier pierces Jesus, and blood and water come out of him, that prophetic fountain is opening up, and the cleansing can begin. The irony, either beautiful or tragic depending on one's response, is that their very act of piercing him in judgment is the very act where Jesus is providing them release from their own sin. The key is whether they will look on him in faith and repentance.

Jesus is the righteous man, the Passover lamb, and the one pierced for our transgressions. As you look at the cross this season, consider your pierced, righteous Messiah, sacrificed for you. Look at Him, and trust Him as your source of life.

Brian Prewitt

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A 20 DAY DEVOTIONAL BOOK BY THE
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