

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS



Goochland Baptist Church's Holy Week Guide

THE MINDSET OF MARY

Monday, April 6, 2020 • Shannon Wilson

*Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you,[c] but you will not always have me." Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him. **John 12:1-11 (NIV)***

The passage above shows how Mary loves while Judas calculates. Mary seems to know that practicalities and efficiency are perhaps the two greatest threats to love. The true motive for serving Christ is because He is worthy of everything you can do for Him and because you love Him and want to please Him because He gave Himself for you on the cross. We learn this from Mary's act of devotion. In this passage it embrac-

es affection as part of a devotion to Jesus that is nothing less than the costly, precious gift of one's whole self - down to every last strand of hair. The love of God is priceless! May we spend our lives in endless devotion.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, may I sit at Your feet and worship You with all my heart and all that I am and all that I have. Amen



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CHOOSING SACRIFICE

Tuesday, April 7, 2020 • CT Stewart

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up[a] from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?" Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them. **John 12:20-36 (NIV)**

Jesus speaks in this passage of the sacrifice He was about to make, that He was to be lifted up. Earlier in John (John 3:14) when He speaks of this, He likens Himself to the bronze serpent that Moses was instructed to raise high in the wilderness, so that the people would not die, though they had provoked the LORD to anger. Being far greater than bronze serpent, Jesus would not purchase merely the rest of our natural lives for us, but rather eternal life when we set our eyes on Him.

Like in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus speaks of His soul being troubled, but nevertheless knew this was the purpose for which He came. He came to show us God in His fullness, the breadth and depth of His love and mercy, as well as His righteous and justified indignation toward our sin. Jesus, the only righteous one, took on our guilt

and died for us that we might be accounted a righteousness we could never by our own means attain.

Like the grain of wheat He speaks of, His death bore much fruit, the salvation of all those who believe in Him. Salvation is more than eternal security. It involves a change that takes place in the heart of a believer, a turning away from your old life of sin and a turning toward those things which are good and glorify God. This is what is meant by hating your life that you may keep it. We are to put off the old self who was born of the womb but dead in the spirit. We follow Jesus to Calvary by living out this change, bearing in mind that the troubles of this life are not even worthy of comparison to the eternal joy we will have for eternity in our Lord Jesus who is the Christ.



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ONE OF YOU WILL BETRAY ME

Wednesday, April 8, 2020 • David Angel

*After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me. His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means. Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So, Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night. **John 13:21-32 (NIV)***

It is one of the darkest scenes in scripture. From the ranks of his most trusted comes one to launch the profane conspiracy that will lead to the cross. The nightmare unfolds quickly. There is the cowardly arrest. The soul rending betrayal. The torment of the whip. The blood thirsty crowds. The searing horror of crucifixion. The bone cold darkness of the tomb. This is holy week.

Few of us do it justice. In many liturgical churches, the week includes a Tenebrae service. There are variations but, generally, this service takes place on Holy Wednesday in a darkened sanctuary with fifteen burning candles the singular focus. The Passion account is slowly read. With each reading, a candle is extinguished. The space slowly darkens even more. Finally, when only one candle remains, we hear the words of Jesus "it is finished". The final candle is extinguished, bringing total darkness. A loud crash fractures the night

and concludes the service. The faithful file out in silence.

Evangelicals are inclined to think such worship is morbid. It is not. We Baptists have never been very good at Holy week. We recoil from these somber images and ask to quickly move on to a more buoyant image of an empty tomb. Holy week is endured but only as peripheral digression. This is a mistake. There will be no light of resurrection without the darkness of the tomb. Holy week reminds us that forgiveness is expensive. Grace is undeserved. It is a cold-hearted faith that discounts the cost of salvation. It is a deformed faith that refuses to live with the angst of tenacious repentance.

Thankfully, we know how this story ends. There will come a time to bellow out our resurrection hymns but now is not that time. Now is a time to be broken.



JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

Thursday, April 9, 2020 • Teresa Kessler

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

John 13: 1-17 (NIV)

Jesus knew that his time on earth was almost over and soon he would be returning to Heaven to be with his Father. Jesus was surrounded by those whom he had chosen to walk with him and learn from him while he was on earth. These were the men that he loved, the men that would carry on his Father's ministry on earth. Jesus knew that Judas was the one who would betray him. How that must have hurt. Jesus could have called Judas out, tried to talk with Judas about his decision, or even distanced himself from Judas. What Jesus chose to do was another affirmation to us as to how we should treat those that are hurtful to us.

Jesus chose to wash his disciples' feet – a job for the lowest of servants. Jesus was performing this act out of love and service. Jesus tried to teach his disciples, once again, by his example, of how we are to treat others. The disciples probably didn't know what to think when Jesus began to take off his outer garment, wrap a towel around his waist, retrieve a basin of water and start to wash the first disciple's feet. As he continued to move around the group, I can imagine the questioning looks on the disciples' faces.

But Peter spoke up. He wasn't about to let Jesus perform this lowly task on him. Peter felt that if anyone should be washing someone's

feet, then he should be the one to wash Jesus' feet. He didn't get the true significance of Jesus' actions. Isn't that like us too many times? Peter just jumped in and wanted to do something without seeing what God was doing. Sometimes we need to "let God wash our feet". We need to understand that the God of the universe knows everything about us. We need to listen to God and respond to His desire for us. By jumping in without listening to God, we miss the blessing. Just allow God to bless you.

Jesus set the example for us when he washed his disciples' feet. Jesus told the disciples that just as he had washed their feet, the disciples were to wash one another's feet. Isn't that what Jesus calls every Christian to do? Have a servant's spirit, be humble, take action, and continue to spread the Good News to everyone. We may encounter Judases along the way. Jesus' actions show us that we must follow the example he set and make sure we respond to them with a humble and loving spirit.

As we prepare for this Easter season, let us remember that Jesus washed his disciples' feet as an act of service. Let us humbly pray that we will be open to seeing how God can use us as His servants to further His Kingdom on earth.



THE CRUCIFIXION

Friday, April 10, 2020 • Kelly Anderson

*Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus Of Nazareth, The King Of The Jews. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.” Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.” When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.” This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, “They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.” So this is what the soldiers did. Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken,” and, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.” **John 19:16-37 (NIV)***

Think of your favorite movie you have ever seen for a moment. Often the story leads the main character through many twists and turns, until a final conflict that seems disastrous for them. Then, out of nowhere, a moment of redemption comes and it appears all is right in the world again. What does the main character overcome by the time the credits role?

Here in John 19, we have reached what appears to be that disastrous moment in the story of Jesus. He is not only on his way to being crucified, but he is being forced to carry his own cross! Yes, this is happening to Jesus! The man who healed the sick and brought the dead back to life bearing a cross all the way to the place he will be put to death. Now if this were a movie, we have now approached the scene where it feels like all hope is lost.

The protagonist is going to die and it surely seems like evil has come out victorious. However, we have an inclination that this is not how the story will end. Even in Jesus’ most challenging moments, we learn something deeply profound from Jesus. During the most difficult part of his

life here on earth, he is bearing his cross towards redemption. The redemption of all things!

I think we are finally seeing what Jesus meant when he told his disciples in Luke 14:27 “And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple”. When we go through those uncertain times, whether it be individually or as a community, when we are faced with the challenge of “bearing our cross”, we can either choose not to and hope there is some other way or follow the way of Jesus into a renewing of our hearts and minds.

On this Good Friday, may we be reminded that even through bearing our cross, God is working through us to bring the renewal of all things to the way He intended it to be in the beginning. Now that makes for a wonderful movie worth all of the Oscar Awards, right? The wonderful thing about this movie is that it does not even have an end! Another awesome thing about this movie is that we are in it! We are now carrying that hope that the world so desperately is searching for all because Jesus chose to bear the cross!



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THE TOMB IN A GARDEN

Saturday, April 11, 2020 • Barbara Fillion

At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

John 19: 41-42 (NIV)

A garden is generally thought of as a peaceful, beautiful space, where the aroma of flowers is in the air and the chirping of birds is gentle and sweet, a quiet place for one to take in the beauty of nature.

At the thought of a garden, my mind drifts to the first perfect Garden of Eden. At the tempting of Satan, Eve ate the forbidden fruit and offered it to her husband. It only took one sin to create a fire that is still burning today.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, knowing full well what was to come, fell to the ground and prayed to His Father. Soon after, Judas the betrayer kissed Him and the soldiers took Him away. A silent place of prayer became a place of conflict.

Have you ever realized that God chose the place where His Son would die, and knew that nearby, there would be a tomb in a garden where Jesus would be buried? When God placed Adam and Eve in the perfect Garden of Eden, He knew that He would allow His Son to suffer for the sin they committed. Eden was the Garden of Life that became a garden of death. The tomb was a garden of death that became a garden of life.

The Father's plan started in the Garden of Eden. It continued to the cross to a tomb (in a garden). It was brought to fulfillment in the resurrection and would bring us new life. Does this inspire awe in you? Is your faith strengthened when you ponder God's sovereignty? God's Word was fulfilled in Jesus, our perfect Passover Lamb.

I'm amazed that almighty God orchestrates every detail. God clearly was and still is in complete control. The more we meditate on our Heavenly Father, the more we see the grandeur of His love for us. His plan to save is beyond our understanding.

Oh, what love our Savior has that He would leave the comforts of His heavenly home to come and bear the cruel cross of agony. Christ alone satisfied our debt to the fullest, so we could gain the undeserved gift of eternal life. I wonder, dear sisters and brothers, if we ponder enough the severity, the pain, and the truth of the cross. "Oh what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God!" 1 John 3:1. Will you take up your cross for Him?

