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Most of the meditations in this devotional were written by the elders of Covenant Presbyterian Church. Several of our deacons and Elders Jim Cunningham, John Kuebler, and Joe Slater of the Blue Ridge Presbytery collaborated with us in this project; we'd like to thank them very much for contributing their insight and skill in this way. We also are deeply grateful for the work of our children's ministry director, Lisa Updike who distilled down the longer meditations into the "Main Ideas Made Simple."

Many thanks to Hannah Leetch, Angie Davis, Teresa Wildermuth, and Grace Good who invested countless hours in putting this booklet together, arranging artwork, proof-reading, etc. The Lent Devotional would not exist if not for their efforts.

Lent is a time of preparation. The people of God throughout ages and denominations have used this season to prepare their hearts for the worshipful celebration of Easter. We at Covenant Presbyterian Church are taking advantage of this liturgical time to ask the Holy Spirit to move in our hearts, families, small groups, ministries, church, state, nation and world. I completely understand that Lent has been misused and abused in different ways throughout church history. However, the misuse of something does not negate its proper use, so let us use this season to earnestly and honestly prepare for Easter.

This series of Scriptures, songs, meditations, and activities are designed to walk through the whole of the Bible as we move toward the cross. They are also put together so as to give you a template for individual and family devotions. You'll find that one day has a longer Scripture reading, a song, a brief meditation and an activity. The next day along with a brief meditation or activity you will find a longer meditation written by an elder (from our church or our presbytery) or a deacon based on a section of the previous day's passage. I encourage you to use the same song both days in your devotions or use a different song (perhaps chosen from our chorus book).

As you incorporate song into your devotional times with God, remember that God loves joyful noise, so don't be hesitant to raise a worshipful raucous to Him whether or not you consider yourself a good singer. Another great tool for worship in song is recorded music. Consider downloading or buying some of these songs on CD so that they can continue to be part of your weeklong worship even after Lent is finished.

If you have children who are busy being children while you are trying to have family devotions, the brief meditation "main ideas made simple" and the activities are great for them. You can also think about reading just one or two verses in the passage or getting them involved in the reading of it (i.e. everyone reads two verses). Then involve the kids in the song. Ask them to play instruments or bang on things or sing a verse as loudly as they can and then sing the next verse as softly as they can. These things will help them interact in their own ways with our Almighty God.

I am thrilled that we get to include in this series of devotions the art of some of our own folks. We believe that God is glorified in His people's creativity, as it reflects His image in us. So we're thankful for this opportunity to let God's people lead us in worship by using their creative gifts. They have taken the time and care to create artwork that goes along with these meditations. Please take the time to thank them as you see them.

May God richly bless you as you prepare for the worship and celebration of Easter!

Every blessing,
Burrell McCombe, Pastor for Worship

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Wednesday, February 14

Scripture: Hebrews 2:9-18

⁹ But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹² saying,

“I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”

¹³ And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

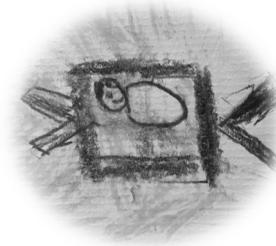
“Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Hebrews 2:18

Jesus was a person, a person just like you and me! Just like you, He was tempted to be naughty sometimes, but He didn't sin. Just like you, He was young and grew in the knowledge of God! Just like you, He grew physically bigger and stronger!



Activity:

Look at baby pictures of your family members. Look how you have grown! Jesus was a baby and grew up, too.

Song: And Can It Be

*And can it be that I should gain
An in'trest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

Refrain:

*Amazing love!
How can it be
That Thou, my God,
Shouldst die for me?*

*He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself because of love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free!
For, O my God it found out me!*

Refrain

*Long my imprisoned Spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.*

Refrain

*No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown,
through Christ my own.*

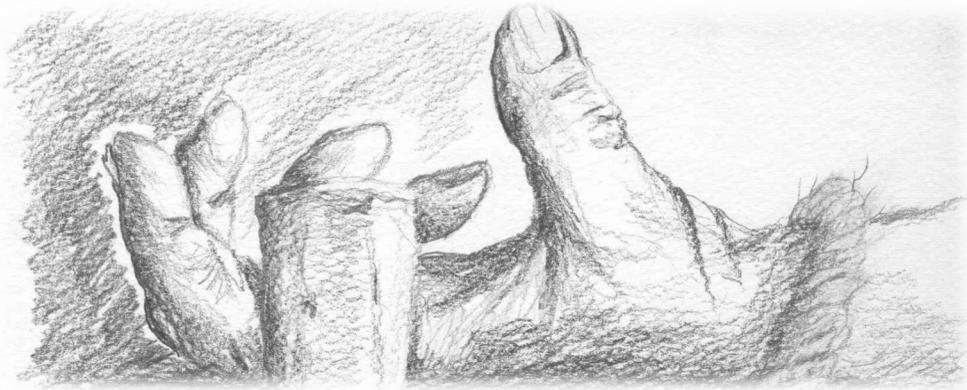
Charles Wesley

*That I should gain Heaven by this one offering... how can this
be? Oh the pain. HIS PAIN. Too great a cost for*

Thursday, February 15

Scripture: Hebrews 2:14-15

¹⁴Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.



Meditation:

We have been taught the truth of the incarnation and often it becomes just another accepted reality of the Christian faith. However, we should be amazed by this truth and awed at the extent to which God has gone to reveal his love to us. I am struck by the humility demonstrated in Christ as he willingly identifies with us by taking on flesh and blood. The importance of this is seen in the way he further demonstrates his love by willingly going to the cross “that he might render powerless him who had the power of death.” This is the heart of the gospel. Christ subjected himself to death so that we “who through fear of death were subject to slavery all [our] lives” could be free.

“For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:16-18)

In being made like us, and in freeing us from the grips of death, Christ not only understands the temptations and sufferings we go through but he also has the power to help us overcome them. That's an important distinction. We not only have one who can sympathize with us – a wonderful thing in and of itself – but we also have one who can do something about it. Because Christ makes propitiation for our sins, he not only understands, he not only has the power to help us through our trials, but he also is the means by which we can confidently approach the throne room of heaven. We can bask in the glorious riches of our God which are made available to us through Christ. And so we can sing:

*No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.*

Tim Frost, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Hebrews 2:14-15

Jesus was tempted but never ever sinned! He is the only person ever to live without any sin.

Sometimes, you are naughty. What happens when you disobey? Do you get punished? We all deserve to be punished by being separated from God. Do you think it is fair for someone to get punished if he didn't do anything wrong? It doesn't seem fair to me, but that is exactly what Jesus did. He took the punishment that you and I deserve. Thank you, Jesus!

Activity:

Think about the great kindness Jesus has shown you by taking your punishment. Do something kind for someone as a way to honor God.



Friday, February 16

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-31

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.



Song:
All Creatures of Our God and King

*All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam,
O praise Him, O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
Ye clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!*

*Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice;
Ye lights of evening, find a voice!
O praise Him, O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*And all ye men of tender heart,
Forgiving others take your part.
O sing ye! Alleluia!*

*Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care!
O praise Him, O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness.
O praise Him! Alleluia!*

*Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

St. Francis of Assisi / William H. Draper

Main Ideas Made Simple from
Genesis 1:27 & 31

When you look in a mirror, whom do you see? You see yourself, of course! A mirror reflects the image of whomever is in front of it. God made man in His own image so that every person reflects a little bit of God's glory, just like a mirror reflects you! That means every person is really special because in some way every single person reflects the glory of God!

Activity:

Make a list of some people you know and write down some of the wonderful things you notice about them!

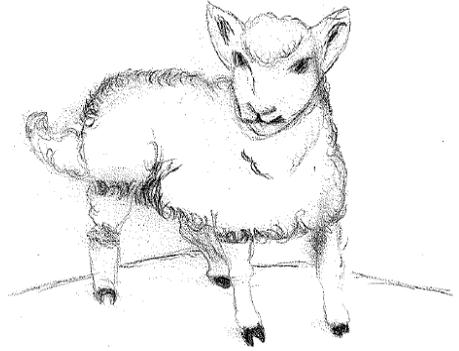
A scroll-shaped writing area with horizontal lines for text. The scroll has a decorative top-left corner and a decorative bottom-right corner. There are ten horizontal lines for writing.

Saturday, February 17

Scripture: Genesis 1:27-28

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”



Meditation:

You bear the image of God. I bear the image of God. Every person that you meet, drive by, get into arguments with... bears the image of God. Everyone that you love and everyone that you can't stand bears this image. There is no opt-out clause. You can't vote people off the island. The Fall could not eradicate it. Satan can't stamp it out. The image of God is irrevocably placed on man. It defines our humanness. Far more than the ability to use tools, or problem-solving skills, or intelligence, or appearance, or "quality of life standards," the image of God speaks directly to our personhood.

God calls us, as those who bear His image, to something more than just being pictures of Him trapped in frames gathering dust. His call, pre-Fall and post-Fall, is to "be fruitful and multiply." God's design is that the whole earth will be full of image bearers who live out His glory in every-moment worship! Pre-Fall, this meant that our first parents were supposed to have children who bore God's image just as they had. Post-Fall, the dignity of the image of God remains, but depravity, the taint of sin, and the dissonance of brokenness runs through our every thought and action.

So here we are, broken image bearers reflecting God's likeness in shattered, skewed ways. We turn our worship to glorify ourselves, our status, our security, our safety, our desires. We are meant to "be fruitful and multiply," calling other image bearers to worship God, but instead we call them to worship all sorts of other things through our lifestyles, advertisements, campaign slogans, etc. Is there a way for us who bear the image, though tarnished and soiled, to truly worship God? Could there be One who could...who would...who does free us to live out our call to be a part of multiplying God's worshippers?

Our forefathers in the faith looked forward to Christ's coming because they knew that He was their only hope. His sacrifice would remove the tarnish and stain from His image in them. Their faith in His resurrection, though they could not have seen it clearly, released them to call fellow image bearers to true worship, multiplying those who would glorify God.

We look back at Easter for those very same things. What they hoped for, we know. In this Lenten season, will you reaffirm your commitment to treat other people as image bearers of your Almighty God? Will you be challenged by the Word of God to bear the fruit of the Spirit and therefore be a part of multiplying worshippers here in Harrisonburg and all over the globe? In other words, will you be part of God's Great Commission? Will you lift up your voice and sing with all creation that praises God? Will you call others to sing with you?

Burress McCombe, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Genesis 1:27

You are wonderfully made! Your family is wonderfully made! Your friends are wonderfully made! God made all these people in His image and for His glory. Think about it. It's really amazing. Every face you look into was designed to carry the image of God, and made to reflect God's glory!

Activity:

Make a card for friends or family members, or some people who need to be encouraged, telling them some of the wonderful ways they show God's character to you!

And Can It Be

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

4

G Am/C D7 G Am/C D7

1. And can it be that I should gain an in - t'rest
 2. He left his Fa - ther's throne a - bove, so free, so
 3. Long my im - pri - soned spi - rit lay fast bound in
 4. No con - dem - na - tion now I dread; Je - sus, and

6

G D/A A7 D G/D D

in the Sa - vior's blood? Died he for me, who
 in - fin - ite his grace! Emp - tied him - self be -
 sin and na - ture's night. Thine eye dif - fused a
 all in him, is mine! A - live in him, my

11

G D C G G/D D7 G

caused his pain? For me, who him to death pur - sued?
 cause of love, and bled for A - dam's help - less race!
 quick - 'ning ray; I woke the dun - geon flamed with light!
 li - ving Head and clothed in right - eous - ness di - vine,

17

G D G C A7 D G

A - ma - zing love! how can it be that thou, my
 'Tis mer - cy all, im - mense and free, for, O my
 My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went
 bold I ap - prouch the e - ter - nal throne and claim the

22

C D G D

God, _____ shouldst die for me? A - ma - zing love! how
 God, _____ it found out me. _____ A - maz - ing love! -
 forth, _____ and fol - lowed thee.
 crown, _____ through Christ, my own. _____

27

D7 G C G Am/C G/D D7 G

can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
 - how can it be that thou, my



Sunday, February 18

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-13

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Genesis 3:4-5

Sin—or disobeying—is kind of like breaking or twisting a mirror. We can still see the image, but it’s messed up. Distorted. Even ugly. Even though we can still see the image of God in all the people around us, because of sin, the reflection of God’s image in people is not perfect.

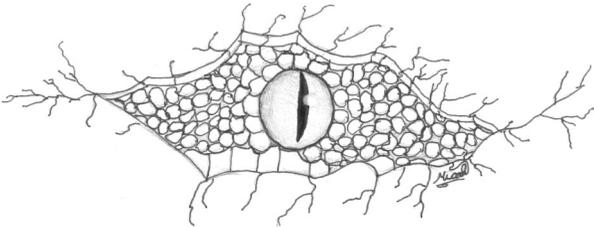
Activity:

Look in a spoon or shiny pot. See how you can still see your image, but does it look strange?

Song: Psalm 130 (From the Depths of Woe)

*From the depths of woe I raise to Thee
A voice of lamentation
Lord, turn a gracious ear to me
And hear my supplication
If thou iniquity dost mark
Our secret sins and misdeeds dark
O who shall stand before Thee?
(women echo)
O who shall stand before Thee?
women echo)*

*To wash away the crimson stain
Grace, grace alone availeth
Our works alas are all in vain,
In much the best life faileth
No man can glory in Thy sight,
All must alike confess Thy might
And live alone by mercy (women echo)
And live alone by mercy (women echo)*



*Therefore my trust is in the Lord
and not in mine own merit
In Him my soul shall rest,
His word upholds my fainting spirit
His promised mercy is my fort,
my comfort and my sweet support
I wait for it with patience (women echo)
I wait for it with patience (women echo)*

*What though I wait the live-long night
And till the dawn appeareth
My heart still trusteth in His might,
It doubteth not nor feareth
Do thus O ye of Israel's seed,
Ye of the Spirit born indeed
And wait till God appeareth (women echo)
And wait till God appeareth (women echo)*

*Though great our sins and sore our woes
His grace much more aboundeth
His helping love no limit knows,
Our utmost need it soundeth
Our shepherd good and true is He,
Who will at last His Israel free
From all their sin and sorrow (women echo)
From all their sin and sorrow (women echo)*

Words: Martin Luther Music: Christopher Miner ©2007

Monday, February 19

Scripture: Genesis 3:8-10

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”



Meditation: Monday in the Garden

It's Monday, and sometimes Mondays can be the “bad day” of the week. This text from Genesis 3 is probably the worst day the planet has ever had, except maybe for that Friday on a hill outside of Jerusalem.

Everything changed the day the serpent showed up and did his deceiving. Everything changed. “I was afraid,” says Adam. When had fear ever been a part of his life? How much does fear control the decisions that you and I make? “I was naked,” complains Adam. And what had once been “normal” and beautiful and free is now shameful. This is the pattern of twisting God's intentions, never to be recovered. “So I hid,” finished Adam. Had anyone ever hidden before, for any reason? The man who has been given everything and blessed with the closest relationship with the Creator now knows that this relationship is broken. And God knows it too.

What was God doing walking in the Garden? Pursuing Adam. What do we do with a God who pursues us when we have blown it on a cosmic level? Adam, in his foolishness, didn't think God knew. But God knew, and He went after Adam. God took the initiative, even as His two finest created beings sinned. Did He pursue to squash them? No. He pursued them to confront them and to introduce them to the privilege of mercy, forgiveness, and redemption. When was the last time these three became close friends?

Today, this Monday, is God walking in the Garden crying out, “(your name), where are you?” Is this the convicting of the Holy Spirit for you? He still pursues. He still pursues. That’s why “from the depths of woe” we can move toward Him for the forgiveness He offers, “to wash away the crimson stain.”

We still hide, but He promises to pursue. That’s cause for worship – even on a Monday.

Steve Draper, Elder

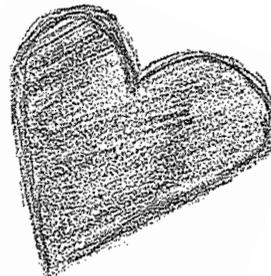
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Genesis 3:8-10

Why did Adam and Eve hide? What do you do when you disobey? Do you hide? Maybe you try to hide what you’ve done. Do you know that even when you disobey you are loved? God still loved Adam and Eve. He came to look for them.

Activity:

Hide from Mommy and Daddy. Let them look for you. When they find you, get big hugs and remember that you are always loved!



Tuesday, February 20

Scripture: Genesis 3:14-24

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,
“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.
¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the
woman,
and between your offspring and her
offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶To the woman he said,
“I will surely multiply your pain in
childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to your
husband,
but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷And to Adam he said,
“Because you have listened to the voice of
your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of
your life;

¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for
you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
¹⁹By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰The man called his wife's name Eve,
because she was the mother of all living.
²¹And the LORD God made for Adam and
for his wife garments of skins and clothed
them.

²²Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the
man has become like one of us in knowing
good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his
hand and take also of the tree of life and
eat, and live forever—” ²³therefore the
LORD God sent him out from the garden of
Eden to work the ground from which he
was taken. ²⁴He drove out the man, and at
the east of the garden of Eden he placed
the cherubim and a flaming sword that
turned every way to guard the way to the
tree of life.



IT WAS MY GUILT TO BEAR. I am the sinful one. I am the
one who should have paid the price.

Song:
Come, Oh Redeemer, Come

*Father enthroned on high,
Holy, holy
Ancient eternal Light,
Hear our prayer.
Lord, save us from the dark
Of our striving
Faithless and troubled hearts
Weighed down*

*Refrain:
Come, oh Redeemer, come,
Grant us mercy;
Come, oh Redeemer, come,
Grant us peace.*

*Look now upon our need,
Lord be with us,
Heal us and make us free
From our sin.*

Words and Music by Fernando Ortega Metro Music 1996

Main Ideas Made Simple from
Genesis 3:21

Poor Adam and Eve! When they sinned, they realized that they were uncovered. God had compassion on His children, and made them clothes, but it was at a great cost. The first time blood was ever shed was when God took an animal, killed it, and covered His precious children with its skin. From the beginning the penalty of sin has been death. How we rejoice that Jesus took that punishment for us. He died on the cross, and His death covers our sin.

Activity:

Draw a cross, and use red marker to write some of the sins you have committed.

Examples:

- Hitting
- Lying
- Making an ugly face at someone
- Ignoring Mom or Dad when they ask me to do something...

Save this cross and the red marker for tomorrow's activity.

Wednesday, February 21

Scripture: Genesis 3:16-18

¹⁶To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife

and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you,

‘You shall not eat of it,’

cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;

and you shall eat the plants of the field....

Meditation:

The Scriptures teach us there was a time when all was perfect. In Genesis 1:31, “Then God saw everything He made and it was very good...” The man and woman were very good, image bearers who clearly reflected the glory of God to all creation (Genesis 1:26-27). Perfection in creation was accomplished by our Creator. In Genesis 2, life and relationship were perfect and our original vocation was to rule and reign over the earth in righteousness as an act of worship to our Creator. What brought about broken relationships, broken families, and the disappointments of life that we all live with?

Genesis 3 tells us that Adam and Eve sinned by not trusting God and choosing their will over God’s will. This sin of rebellion and treason brought the consequence of falling under the judgment of our Creator God. God’s judgment brings physical and spiritual death that came from our first parents to *all* of their descendants (Romans 5:12). This judgment was directed toward the family (Genesis 3:16-18). The struggle for the husband lies in his presence, protection, provision and leadership of the family and *pain* was added to the cultural mandate which is to “fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 2:19-24). The struggle for the wife, increase of pain in childbearing, also increases trouble in everything to do with children. For both the husband and wife a *cosmic change* in their relationship occurs, as he will “rule over” her and her desire will be for her husband’s role. (Susan T. Foh writes in the *Westminster Journal*,

“Man no longer rules easily, he must fight for his headship.”) This, God’s mission for the family as an act of worship, is now a painful task.

We also see in Genesis 4:25 with Abel’s death that pain and emotional grief are a result of our first parents’ fall from grace and into sin. Thus, *every home is broken because every individual in that home is broken*. This reminds us how far we have fallen from our original state.

Glory and praise to our Creator God that He does not leave us in this hopeless situation. Paul reminds us in Romans 8:18-25 that our current sufferings at this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is revealed in us. *Suffering is a result of sin. Glory is a result of grace, found only in Jesus who is the Christ*.

As we remember the purpose of this Lenten season, we walk toward the hope and joy found in Christ demonstrated with the empty tomb. It is by understanding the severity of the fall and the reality of salvation that our families can begin to heal of their brokenness. We come to accept and realize the reality of sin and the reality of what Jesus did on the cross to save a people for Himself.

I hope you will rejoice this Lenten season as you reflect on the cross and look forward in hope to Christ’s glorious second coming (Revelation 21:1-4).

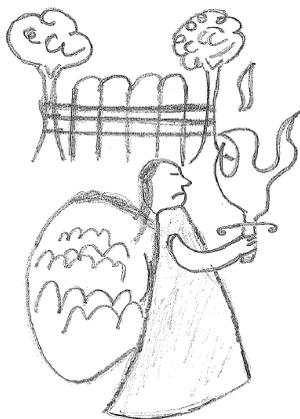
John Kuebler, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from Genesis 3:17b

Adam and Eve had to pay a high price for disobeying God. They had to leave the garden. Death now became part of their world, and work was changed from something pleasurable to toil. But God still loved His children. Even then He had a plan to bring His children back to Himself!

Activity:

Using the cross and red marker from yesterday, color in the whole cross with the red marker, so that you can no longer see the sins—just the blood!



Thursday, February 22

Scripture: Romans 3:19-28

¹⁹Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

²⁰For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

²¹But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.



Song: In Christ Alone

*In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my all in all,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.*

*In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied—
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.*

*There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.*

*No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand.
Till he returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand!*

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Romans 3:23

Jesus is the only person ever who did not do even one naughty thing. Everybody else has sinned. Sin separates us from God. Remember how Adam and Eve hid from God when they disobeyed? They could feel that they were separated from God.

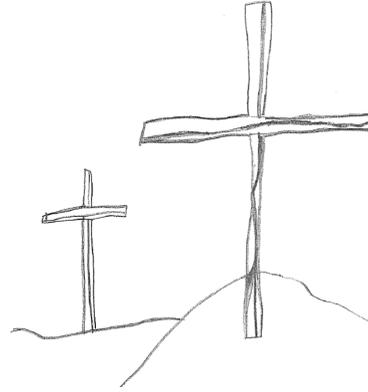
Activity:

Ahead of time, Mommy or Daddy should place a treat up high, just out of reach of the children. You see, we cannot reach God on our own. Relationship with Him is beyond our grasp! But Jesus came to make a way for us to be with God. Go get a step stool. Now you can reach the special treat! Just like there was no way you could reach that treat on your own, there is no way for you to have relationship with God on your own. Jesus is the only way!

Friday, February 23

Scripture: Romans 3:21-24

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—
²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...



Meditation:

Have you ever heard anyone ask, “How can God be just and loving at the same time? It seems He can be just and give people what they deserve or He can be loving and forgive them their sins; but how can He be both?” The answer to that question is in yesterday’s Scripture passage from Romans 3. Verse 26 says, “so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” This passage tells us that the answer to the question is “JESUS.” It is because God sent Jesus that He can be just (punishing sin) and loving (the justifier who sent Jesus to take our punishment). Praise God for His provision of Christ on our behalf!

Taken as a whole, Romans 3:19-28 is a beautiful statement of the gospel. In some of the portions of Romans, including this one, it is easy for our eyes to gloss over with all the theological terms and expressions. However, in this passage we have a glorious statement of our salvation. First, we are told we are sinners in need of a savior. The passage tells us in verse 23 “there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” As people born sinners, we can’t possibly keep God’s holy Law. That is why v. 20 says “by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight.” So all mankind has this problem: we are made to glorify God and yet sin causes all of us to fall short of that glory. This is where God steps in. He sends His only Son to take the penalty of sin we deserve and give us Jesus’ perfect righteousness. Jesus was the only person who kept God’s Law perfectly. He has given this perfect record to all who by faith trust in Him for salvation.

This passage introduces us to a big word that is easy to skip over – “*propitiation*.” A propitiation is something, or in this case someone, who turns away God’s wrath. As sinners who have broken God’s Law and who are in rebellion to Him, we rightly deserve God’s wrath; but Jesus took our punishment upon Himself, thus turning God’s wrath away from us and onto

Himself. As yesterday's song says, "the wrath of God was satisfied" since Jesus took the penalty for sin.

The passage also introduces the term "*redemption*." To redeem something is to buy it back. Again as yesterday's song says, we were "bought with the precious blood of Christ." Let us not lose sight of the fact that this purchase was made at an incredibly high cost, the sacrifice of God's own Son, Jesus. In v. 24 we are told we are "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." Paul doesn't want us to lose the fact that we do not earn our salvation, but rather, it is a gift given by God to those who don't deserve it. In our "pull ourselves up by our bootstraps – I'll do it myself" culture, it is hard to believe that we don't have to earn our salvation ourselves, but this is exactly what God is telling us in this passage. Isn't it amazing that God would love us so much as to send Jesus to take our punishment, turning away God's wrath from us, to purchase us for Himself with the blood His Son, and to offer this salvation as a free gift to us?

And last of all, this passage tells us how this precious gift of salvation can be ours. Verse 22 says that this righteousness of God given to us is "through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe." Verse 28 says "a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law." As the passage indicates, faith is the opposite of works. "Works" means trusting in ourselves to acquire something we deserve. Faith is trusting in someone outside of ourselves for what we don't deserve. This wonderful gift of salvation can be ours, not by working for it, but by placing our faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The question is, what are you going to do with this gift offered to you? It is my prayer that all reading this devotional will respond by trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of sin and the righteousness that comes through faith. During this season of Lent, let us praise God for this wonderful gift of salvation provided to us through our precious Savior, Jesus.

J.D. Patton, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Romans 3:21-24

When Jesus died on the cross He took all our sins on himself. Remember—He never did anything wrong—He didn't deserve to die! But He was willing to take our punishment.

Activity:

Imagine, you have done something very wrong and you are about to get a BIG punishment. You know you deserve it. How do you feel? Imagine somebody else comes up and tells your parents that even though he didn't do anything wrong, he would like to take your punishment. How do you feel now?

Saturday, February 24

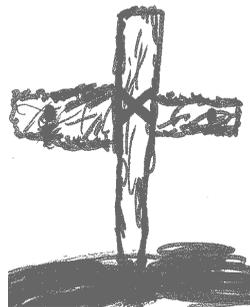
Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-9

- 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."

Main Ideas Made Simple from Isaiah 42:6-7

Remember how sin separates us from
God? Isn't it wonderful that when we trust
Jesus and believe that He died on the cross
for our sins, we can then know God and
look forward to life forever with Him?



Activity:

When God calls you to Himself, you
believe in your heart, and you accept His
payment on the cross. Then you are part of
His kingdom and get to be a worker in His
kingdom. List some people whom you
know aren't following Jesus. Take time to
pray for them now, and regularly.

Song: Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul

*Hallelujah, praise Jehovah,
O my soul, Jehovah praise;
I will sing the glorious praises
Of my God through all my days.
Put no confidence in princes,
Nor for help on man depend;
He shall die, to dust returning,
And his purposes shall end.*

*Happy is the man that chooses
Israel's God to be his aid;
He is blessed whose hope of blessing
On the Lord his God is stayed.
Heav'n and earth the Lord created,
Seas and all that they contain;
He delivers from oppression,
Righteousness He will maintain.*

*Food He daily gives the hungry,
Sets the mourning pris'ner free,
Raises those bowed down with anguish,
Makes the sightless eye to see.
Well Jehovah loves the righteous,
And the stranger He befriends,
Helps the fatherless and widow,
Judgment on the wicked sends.*

*Hallelujah, praise Jehovah,
O my soul, Jehovah praise;
I will sing the glorious praises
Of my God through all my days.
Over all God reigns forever,
Through all ages He is King;
Unto Him, your God, O Zion,
Joyful hallelujahs sing.*

Text from Psalm 146

What held Him on the Cross?

IT WAS MY GUILT TO BEAR. I am the sinful one. I am the one who should have paid the price.

His was the sacrifice. He bore my shame. **His**

was the pain and suffering. I am the sinner and yet I am now free. Why, why, why? How could it be the Father's plan?

What held HIM there? Without the Father-how could He bear it? **Sorrow.**

Loneliness. But no doubt. **Fear.** But never turning back. He was always looking ahead to the prize.

That I should gain Heaven by this one offering... how can this be? Oh the pain. **HIS PAIN.** Too great a cost for me. I could not have done this for myself or any other. Not a possibility.

What held Him on the Cross?

Mine is now the joy! **MINE IS NOW ETERNAL LIFE!** MINE IS NOW HIS LOVE TO SHARE.

HEALING. Rest... Peace... JOY, JOY, JOY!

I needed someone to wash my sins away. Hallelujah...WHAT A SAVIOR.

It was HIS love for me and you.

Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul

Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Ps. 146:1, 2

D G D Em⁷ A⁷ D

1. Hal - le - lu - jah, praise Je - ho - vah, O my soul, Je - ho - vah praise;
 2. Hap - py is the man that choos - es Is - rael's God to be his aid;
 3. Food he dai - ly gives the hun - gry, sets the mourn - ing pris - ner free,
 4. Hal - le - lu - jah, praise Je - ho - vah, O my soul, Je - ho - vah praise;

G D Em⁷ A⁷ D

I will sing the glo - rious prais - es of my God through all my days.
 he is blessed whose hope of bless - ing on the Lord his God is stayed.
 rais - es those bowed down with an - guish, makes the sight - less eye to see.
 I will sing the glo - rious prais - es of my God through all my days.

G D G D

Put no con - fi - dence in princ - es, nor for help on man de - pend;
 Heav'n and earth the Lord cre - at - ed, seas and all that they con - tain;
 Well Je - ho - vah loves the righ - teous, and the strang - er he be - friends,
 O - ver all God reigns for - ev - er, through all a - ges he is King;

G D Em⁷ A⁷ D

he shall die, to dust re - turn - ing, and his pur - pos - es shall end.
 he de - liv - ers from op - pres - sion, righ - teous - ness he will main - tain.
 helps the fa - ther - less and wid - ow, judg - ment on the wick - ed sends.
 un - to him, your God, O Zi - on, joy - ful hal - le - lu - jahs sing.

Sunday, February 25

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-4

- 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.

Meditation:

Matthew quotes a portion of this prophesy (Isaiah 42:1-4) in his gospel (Matthew 12:18-21). He does so just after Jesus has been accused, by the Pharisees, of breaking the Sabbath because He had healed a man with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath. Jesus reminds them that it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath and then completely restores the man's hand. In response the Pharisees plot how they might kill Jesus. So Jesus withdraws from that place and as the people follow Him, He continues to heal their sick. Matthew tells us (Matthew 12:17) that this was to fulfill what the prophet Isaiah had spoken and quotes Isaiah 42:1-4.

And so it is in the context of these events (the Pharisees' accusations of Him healing a man on the Sabbath) that we are told *who* Jesus is. He is God's servant, chosen by the Father, loved of the Father, and possessing the Father's Spirit (Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 12:18). As I think of Jesus, God's servant, I'm reminded of Jesus' own words, "...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). As I think of Jesus being chosen by the Father, loved of the Father, and possessing the Father's Spirit, I'm reminded of the events of Jesus baptism, "At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased' (Matthew 3:16-17)." These accounts and many others testify, with certainty, that Jesus was the one that Isaiah's prophecy was all about.

We are told *what* He came to do. He came to proclaim justice to the nations until justice had its victory, after which the nations would put their hope in His name (Isaiah 42:1, 3-4, Matthew 12:18, 20-21). All of this was accomplished at the cross, for it was there that Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). And, it was His resurrection to which He was referring when He said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). Is this not a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, "In His name the nations will put their hope" (Matthew 12:21)? Of course it is! Matthew tells us that these things were to fulfill what Isaiah the prophet had spoken (Matthew 12:17).

We are told *how* He would do it. “He will not quarrel or cry out: no one will hear his voice in the streets” (Isaiah 42:2, Matthew 12:19). He would not come making a big public scene as a political leader would, bringing a political rule and an earthly kingdom. But, rather Jesus’ kingdom is established by changing lives from within in a way that is not immediately recognized, but yet establishes a most powerful rule. And the kingdom He would establish can not be overthrown. Speaking of this kingdom, Jesus says, “...I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18b). It will be an eternal kingdom. “How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation” (Daniel 4:3).

Again, we are told *how* He will do it. “A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out” (Isaiah 42:3, Matthew 12:20). You see, Jesus was coming to a weak and needy people to mend, restore, and redeem their broken lives. What He had done for the man with the shriveled hand was the beginning of the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, and a picture of what He would do for the lives of all who would call upon Him. So, today (and every day) if we realize that we are weak, needy, broken, and in need of restoration, we must take heart, because Jesus came for us, the weak, needy and broken.

What can we do in response to all of this blessing, but sing and praise His great name! Indeed,

*Happy is the man that chooses Israel’s God to be his aid;
He is blessed whose hope of blessing on the Lord his God is stayed.
Food He daily gives the hungry, sets the mourning pris’ner free,
Raises those bowed down with anguish, makes the sightless eye to see.*

Larry Chico, Elder

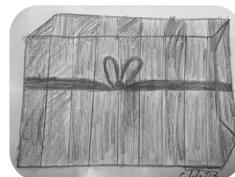
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Isaiah 42:6-7

This is God the Father speaking in this verse. Who is His servant? Why does God delight in Him? Jesus did exactly what the Father told Him to do. Oh, how that made the Father glad! Oh, how Jesus was glad to bring YOU the gift of salvation!

Activity:

Let’s play hide and seek again! Parents find your children. When you find them bring them a small gift or treat (like dessert) and remind them how sweet are the things God has for His children when they come to Him!



Monday, February 26

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.
- 53 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.

Song:
Hallelujah, What A Savior!

*Man of Sorrows! What a name
For the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim:
Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

*Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood,
Sealed my pardon with His blood:
Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

*Guilty, vile, and helpless, we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
Full atonement! Can it be?
Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

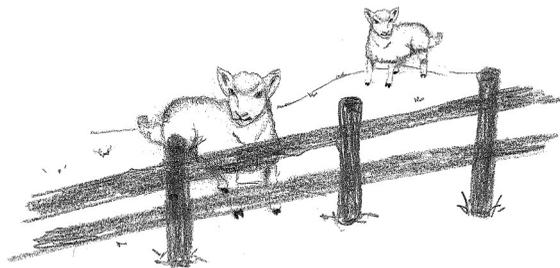
*Lifted up was He to die,
"It is finished!" was His cry:
Now in heav'n exalted high:
Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

*When He comes, our glorious King,
All His ransomed home to bring,
Then anew this song we'll sing,
Hallelujah! What a Savior!*

Philip P. Bliss

Main Ideas Made Simple from Isaiah 52:6

If sheep don't have a fence or a shepherd, they just wander away. Think about it: is that safe for them? What could happen to a sheep that wanders away? The Bible says we are like sheep that wander away. How are you like a sheep that wanders away? Do you know that when you wander from God's path, that is sin? Remember, sin separates us from God. But the Lord laid on Jesus the punishment for our wandering!



Activity:

Take turns closing your eyes and leading someone by your voice. Listen carefully so that you don't bump into anything! God leads us with His Word, the Bible!

Hallelujah...WHAT A SAVIOR.

Tuesday, February 27

Scripture: Isaiah 53:11 & 12b

- 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 Yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the
transgressors.



Meditation:

There are many movies and plays made about “The Passion” of Christ. Most of them portray much of Christ’s physical and verbal abuse and torture. However, they all fall short because they miss something vital. They miss the actual passion of Christ Jesus as he suffered. They show him physically rejected and abused (which was in every way horrifying) and portray him being verbally abused and mocked with pure hatred.

But they can’t capture the part where his own Father rejected him. They miss the part where his soul was torn away from his Father’s heart to bear the punishment of wickedness that had lain in wait for him since Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator in the Garden. They can’t show when the beautiful perfection of the Son of God was exchanged for the horrifying ruin of sin. It can’t be depicted when his Father’s unimaginable love for him exchanged for anger and judgment against the guilty, vile, helpless, shameful man of sorrows he had become. Rightly condemned, now he is lifted up to die. Crucify him!! Crucify HIM!! CRUCIFY HIM!! Who is that young boy in the crowd shouting against this condemned man?

His cry was, “MY GOD, MY GOD WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?!!” What treachery!!!

And then I hear “IT IS FINISHED!!” What? Finished? This is not what I would cry were I hanging on a cross feeling the full course of my father’s anger and hatred leveled at me. If my father rejected me like his Father rejected him, I would be beyond crushed, I would be undone! The physical abuse would pale in comparison, the verbal abuse from my brothers would mean nothing..... DAD! What have I done that you HATE me?!!

“As a result of the anguish of his soul, he will see it and be satisfied” (Isaiah 53:11). Hope in the midst of anguish? Really? What will the anguish of his soul accomplish? How could this anguish bring satisfaction? Isaiah sheds light and hope on the purpose, the guarantee, the value of this suffering. He will see his offspring, he will prolong his days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in his hand! He will bear their iniquities and justify the many.

The great exchange has taken place! He left his Father’s bosom so that you and I might be gathered into our Father’s bosom. My sin, our sin, was placed on him. HE became sin. He BECAME sin. He became SIN, who knew no sin, that I might become the righteousness of God, his inheritance. I am his inheritance?! I am his righteousness?! Wow!

I who had no hope of being held in his arms am one of his ransomed ones. He has seen it and is satisfied and so am I.

Rest, rest, rest my son, for it is finished.

Dave Shank, Elder

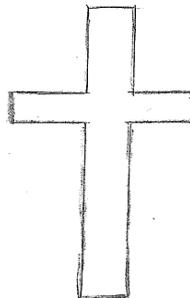
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Isaiah 53:12

Imagine getting punished for something somebody else did. How would you feel? Is it fair? Now imagine your parents turning away from you because of the bad things somebody else did! God the Father turned away from Jesus because Jesus took all of OUR sin on Himself. God the Father turned away from the sin. It made Jesus so very sad, but Jesus was willing for this to happen.

Activity:

Give your parents a big hug! Aren’t you glad they are here to hug you? Say thank you to Jesus that God will not need to turn away from you because He already has turned away from your sin when Jesus bore it.



Wednesday, February 28

Scripture: Psalm 22:1-21

- 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!



Song:
Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted

*Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!
'Tis the long expected prophet,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
By His Son, God now has spoken:
'Tis the true and faithful Word.*

*Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?
Friends through fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting His distress:
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would interpose to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him,
Was the stroke that Justice gave.*

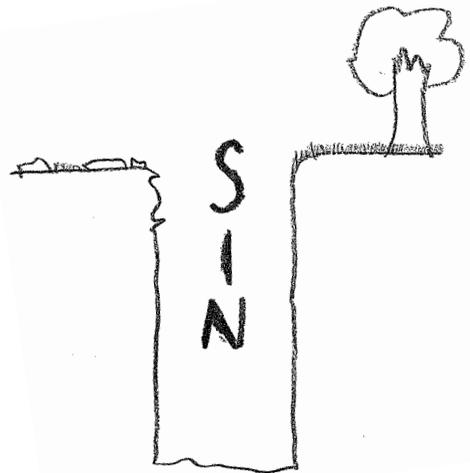
*Ye who think of sin but lightly,
Nor suppose the evil great,
Here may view its nature rightly,
Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the Sacrifice appointed!
See Who bears the awful load!
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,
Son of Man, and Son of God.*

*Here we have a firm foundation,
Here the refuge of the lost.
Christ's the Rock of our salvation,
His the Name of which we boast.
Lamb of God for sinners wounded!
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Him their hope have built.*

Thomas Kelley

Main Ideas Made Simple from
Psalm 22:1a

Remember what sin does? It separates us from God. God cannot be with sin. When Jesus died on the cross He not only took our punishment, He took all our sin upon Himself! Think of the very naughtiest thing you have ever, ever done. Jesus took that yucky guilt upon Himself.



Activity:

Put on somebody else's heavy coat or jacket. Jesus put on your sin and wore it. When God the Father looked at Jesus, He saw YOUR sin on Jesus—not on you. Thank Jesus for wearing your sin, and taking it with Him to the cross.

Thursday, March 1

Meditation from Psalm 22:1-21:

Verses 1-2:

In the opening verses of Psalm 22, David recalls a time of acute torment. In Psalm 46 God is said to be an ever present help in time of trouble, but here David describes a moment that seems to contradict God's promise of nearness. The pain is so great that, in the moment, all he can do is offer up groaning (v. 1). That word in Hebrew carries with it the idea of a roar similar to that of a lion. The same word is used in Job. David's anguish is such that all he can do is roar for relief.

Verses 3-5:

David's depression begins to lift as he recites the truth about God. He reminds himself of God's holy nature and past goodness to the forefathers. Because God is the Holy One, he justly was the object of Israel's praise. Like Habakkuk, who likewise wished for God's answer to his repeated cries (Habakkuk 1:2-4), David reminds himself that God is altogether holy (v. 3; cf. Habakkuk 1:12). "Because holiness is represented in the Scriptures as being the quintessential attribute of God (Exodus 15:11; Psalm 99:9; Isaiah 6:3), and is therefore what ignites the believer's ethic (Exodus 19:6; Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 1 Peter 1:16), God is often called 'the Holy One' (Job 6:10) and especially 'the Holy One of Israel' (Psalm 71:22; 89:18). Although God seemingly does not now listen to David's cries so as to deliver him (vv. 1-2), David knows that Yahweh is one who is holy and has answered the cries of his covenant people in the past. Perhaps David needed the reminder that the Lord could safely be trusted.

Verses 6-10:

David understands himself as a sinner. But more than that, his treatment at the hands of his accusers has driven him into the pit of self-loathing. The mocking he endures is simply derivative of the mocking directed at Yahweh. But once again David reminds himself of the truth (vv. 9-11). The Lord has protected him from the womb. So now, surely, the Lord will not turn his child away.

Verses 11-21:

The second stanza of the psalm focuses on David's plea for God's presence in the midst of his agonizing trials. Like the first stanza, this portion also contains the plaintive cry, "be not far from me," and a plea for help (vv. 11, 19). Further distress came from enemies surrounding him like a pack of predatory dogs. Moreover, the psalmist is emotionally and physically drained. The images of poured-out water and dislocated bones seem to describe his physical deterioration. His heart like melted wax seems to describe his loss of emotional

strength What is more, David finds himself in desert-like conditions. He describes his tongue sticking to the inside of his mouth. All his vital fluids were draining away and with them, his strength.

Little wonder then why Jesus would use the words of this psalm to express his anguish on the cross: “And about the ninth hour 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). That is not to say that Jesus’ experience on the cross was the same as David’s anguished experience. Indeed, what Christ suffered on the cross was a far greater torment than any man ever bore. What greater degree of abandonment has ever been known than that experienced by God the Son as God the Father heaped upon him the sins of the world? So as the moment of propitiation arrived, Jesus, the God-man lifted up his anguished cry, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Some have erred in claiming that Jesus became a sinner on the cross. This is not so for atonement demanded a perfect sacrifice, free of any blemish. Rather, the Father treated the Son as if he were the greatest sinner so that he could treat his sinful people as if they were righteous. This is the wonderful blessing of imputation. God credited to Jesus’ account our sin so that he could justly credit to our account the righteousness of Jesus.

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Todd Pruitt, Elder

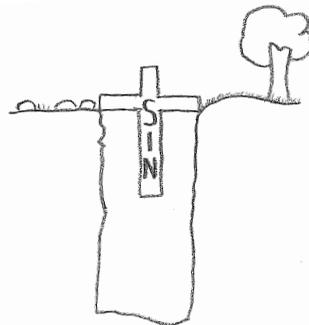
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Psalm 22:1a

Remember, sin separates us from God. So, while Jesus was on the cross He became sin. All the punishment for all our sins was poured out on Jesus. God hates sin, and because He is holy, He cannot be with sin. Then the saddest thing happened: God the Father actually turned away from Jesus. Jesus became sin, and sin cannot be with God. Jesus knew this would happen—that His precious Father would have to look away from Him. Nothing sadder has ever happened. Jesus did this for you.

Activity:

Think about this: Wouldn’t you feel so sad if your parents would not even look at you? Draw a picture of a happy time with your parents. Make sure to say thank you to Jesus for all He has done for you!



Friday, March 2

Scripture: Romans 5:6-21

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— ¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Song:
Before the Throne of God Above

*Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea,
A great High Priest whose name is "Love,"
Who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart;
I know that while in Heav'n He stands,
No tongue can bid me thence depart.
No tongue can bid me thence depart.*

*When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end to all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me,
To look on Him and pardon me.*

*Behold Him there! The risen Lamb,
My perfect spotless Righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace!
One with Himself I cannot die,
My soul is purchased by His blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ my Savior and my God,
With Christ my Savior and my God.*

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Main Ideas Made Simple from
Romans 5:6-8

Think of a cute little baby. Oh, it's so precious! I want to do everything I can to protect it and take care of it. We are like little babies. We are helpless! We can't rescue ourselves from sin. Jesus rescued us and takes care of us. That's how much God loves us.

Activity:

Pretend to take care of a little baby. What can a baby do? Can a baby dress itself? What does a baby do if it is hungry? Can a baby make itself a sandwich? What if a baby gets dirty? Can it clean itself? A little baby—that's what we are like!



Saturday, March 3

Scripture: Romans 5:6-9

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person— though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.



Meditation:

Years ago many were captured by the story of the rescue, one by one, of workers trapped in a mine in Chile. I tried to imagine what those miners were thinking and what their families were feeling while the miners remained trapped far below the earth's surface. Hopelessness and helplessness must have been daily visitors. They could do *nothing* to change their condition. Help had to come from the outside. And as we watched that help come and each one be saved, it felt as though we were witnessing the miraculous.

Apart from Christ, our condition was just as desperate and hopeless. We lay trapped under the power and penalty of sin. Each of us—trapped. But God, through the gracious sacrifice of His Son and the miraculous power of His resurrection, has brought salvation. Jesus, through His death on the cross, is our rescue. As Romans 5 says, “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly...much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Romans 5:6, 9). Christ really did make an end to all our sin. Because our sinless Savior died, our sinful souls are counted free!

Do you remember the smiles, joy, and jubilation of those miners when they were finally brought to the light? How much greater should our joy and jubilation be as we celebrate this season of Lent? Lent points us toward and prepares us for the glory revealed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We who once were lost have been found. We who once sat in darkness have been brought to the light. We who once were trapped in our sin have been set free. We who once were a people far off have been made children of God. What a gift of grace! Let's celebrate that gift this Lent and every day hereafter!

Joe Slater, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Romans 5:8

We can't do one thing to rescue ourselves from our sin nature. It is like being in a deep, dark cave! We can't be good enough to escape, or nice enough, or pray enough, or read the Bible enough in order to earn our escape. And yet, even while we were stuck in that "sin cave," God loved us and made a plan for our escape!

Activity:

Since God loved us even while we are still sinners, let us show love toward others! Is there someone you know who is not very nice? Is there someone you know who doesn't have many friends? Ask Jesus to help you show the same love that Jesus shows to you. Maybe send a note, or a gift, or even just pray for that person who is kind of hard to be around. Remember: Jesus loves you; pass it on!



Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted

We considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. Is. 53:4

1. Strick - en, smit - ten, and af - flict - ed, see him dy - ing on the tree!
 2. Tell me, ye who hear him groan - ing, was there ev - er grief like his?
 3. Ye who think of sin but light - ly nor sup - pose the e - vil great
 4. Here we have a firm foun - da - tion, here the ref - uge of the lost;

'Tis the Christ by man re - ject - ed; yes, my soul, 'tis he, 'tis he!
 Friends thro' fear his cause dis - own - ing, foes in - sult - ing his dis - tress;
 here may view its na - ture right - ly, here its guilt may es - ti - mate.
 Christ's the Rock of our sal - va - tion, his the name of which we boast.

'Tis the long - ex - pect - ed Proph - et, Da - vid's son, yet Da - vid's Lord;
 man - y hands were raised to wound him, none would in - ter - pose to save;
 Mark the sac - ri - fice ap - point - ed, see who bears the aw - ful load;
 Lamb of God, for sin - ners wound - ed, sac - ri - fice to can - cel guilt!

by his Son God now has spo - ken: 'tis the true and faith - ful Word.
 but the deep - est stroke that pierced him was the stroke that Jus - tice gave.
 'tis the Word, the Lord's A - noint - ed, Son of Man and Son of God.
 None shall ev - er be con - found - ed who on him their hope have built.



NON EST LASTIS SAISAT

JFurman^{SPG}

Sunday, March 4

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-25

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Matthew 16:24

Jesus knew that He was going to have to suffer on the cross. He loves you and He loves His Father, so He was willing to go to the cross. The cross is all about LOVE!

Activity:

Draw a cross, or cut out a cross from construction paper. Think of ways God has shown his love for us, and write them all over the cross.

Song: Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

*Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee.
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be.
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought or hoped or known.
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heaven are still my own.*

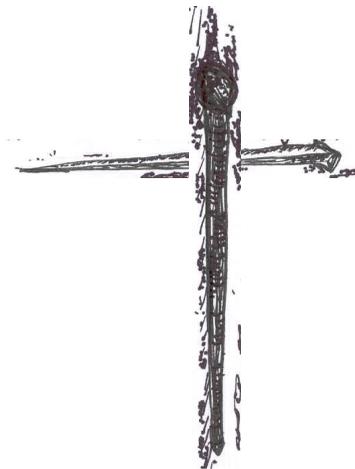
*Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Savior, too.
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
Thou art not, like them, untrue.
O while Thou dost smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate and friends disown me,
Show Thy face and all is bright.*

*Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to Thy breast.
Life with trials hard may press me;
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest.
Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me
While Thy love is left to me;
Oh, 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with Thee.*

*Soul, then know thy full salvation
Rise o'er sin and fear and care
Joy to find in every station,
Something still to do or bear.
Think what Spirit dwells within thee,
Think what Father's smiles are thine,
Think that Jesus died to win thee,
Child of heaven, canst thou repine.*

*Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith, and winged by prayer.
Heaven's eternal days before thee,
God's own hand shall guide us there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.*

*Text; Henry Lyte, Music; Mozart (alt. Bill Moore)
© 2001 Bill Moore Music.*



Monday, March 5

Scripture: Matthew 16:21-25

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Meditation:

Verses 21-23: One of the greatest things about the Bible is that it enables us to see things from *God’s* point of view. Today’s Scripture passage reveals the huge chasm between God’s ways and man’s ways regarding Jesus’ death on the cross. A related passage (1 Corinthians 1:23-25) explains that *Christ crucified* is “a stumbling block to Jews (as illustrated by Peter’s response in Matthew 16) and foolishness to Gentiles. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom; and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”

God’s *foolishness* and God’s *wisdom* are summed up in two words: “*Christ crucified*.” To the worldly mind (typified by Peter’s response to Jesus), the cross is the ultimate example of *shame, weakness, foolishness and defeat* – but in God’s plan it is the key to *glory, power, strength, wisdom and victory*. That’s the contrast between God’s ways and man’s ways.

God planned the crucifixion. It’s not something that happened by accident, causing God to react to limit damage to His kingdom. The crucifixion was foreknown and preordained by God before he created the world. God knew that Jesus would be crucified – Jesus knew he would be crucified. He warned his disciples many times, but they didn’t understand because they still thought like the people of the world. They associated the cross with foolishness and weakness and thus couldn’t believe or comprehend what Jesus was telling them about his death – any more than the people of today’s world can understand and accept it. But to those who have had their eyes opened by the Spirit and the Word of God, Jesus’ crucifixion represents the ultimate, invincible strength of God. The cross expresses of Jesus’ wisdom and strength and His Fathers’ perfect and glorious will.

Verses 24-25: We must take up our cross, daily. What does this mean? What is your

cross? The cross is the place where *God's will* and *your will* cross. Jesus came to that place in the garden of Gethsemane. He never took up the physical cross until he had come to that place. He said to God, if it be possible; let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but what you will be done. And he said it three times. He said it until there was nothing else in his mind but to do the will of God at the expense of his own will.

There are some wrong concepts about what taking up your cross means. I used to think that my cross was my job. Some may consider their cross to be an illness or a difficult member of their family. But we're not, in most cases, free to pick up our job, our illness, or our difficult relative – so this concept breaks down. In the context of Scripture, *taking up our cross* is doing just the same as Jesus demonstrated for us at Gethsemane. It's saying, "God – not what I will, but what *you* will." In a real sense, the cross is the place appointed for us to die. The cross is the place where we deny ourselves – where we crucify our fleshly desires.

In the Scripture we have read, Jesus explains that this is the pattern that we, his followers, must take. We are to deny ourselves and follow Him. We must be willing to die at the place that God has called us – to come to the end of our own self-gratifying life. There is a life to lose and a life to find. As long as we hold onto the life that is so precious and exciting and gratifying – that fleshly life, that self-asserting life – we cannot find the life that God has for us. But when we lose that first life, then there is another more satisfying, more fruitful life that God will open up for us – a life in his will. A life that's beyond the cross that we enter through the cross.

Hal Baker, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Matthew 16:24a

The cross is all about love! Jesus knew it would be hard, but He loves you so much that He took up the cross! He loves the Father so much that He was willing to be obedient and take up the cross!

Activity:

Sometimes obedience is hard, but obedience is one way to show love. What are some things that are hard to do but you know they please your parents?

Do some of those things this week!

Ideas:

- Clean your room without being asked.
- Share your toys cheerfully.
- Wash the dishes.
- Do your homework without complaining.
- Try not to beg about something when you have been told, "No."

These things can be hard to do, can't they? Ask God to give you the strength to do them.

Tuesday, March 6

Scripture: Mark 9:2-13, 30-32

² And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵ And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁶ For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son; listen to him.” ⁸ And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. ¹¹ And they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” ¹² And he said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³ But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”

³⁰ They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, ³¹ for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” ³² But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

Song:
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

*All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!*

*Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all;
Hail Him who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all!*

*Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all;
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all!*

*O that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all;
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!*

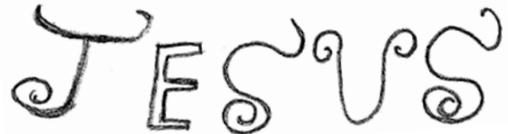
Edward Perronet and John Rippon

Main Ideas Made Simple from
Mark 9:2-7

Jesus is God! Most of the time when He walked on earth, He looked like a regular person, because, even though He is God, He was also fully a man! God and man AT THE SAME TIME! Peter was terrified when He saw Jesus revealed in glory. He couldn't understand it. He realized Jesus was a pretty special man, but WOW, to see Jesus transfigured was breathtaking! Think about it. It is pretty amazing!

Activity:

Write the name Jesus in your nicest writing. Get out the glue and markers, glitter and jewels. Decorate the name of Jesus with as much beauty and glory as you can to remind yourself that Jesus is God!

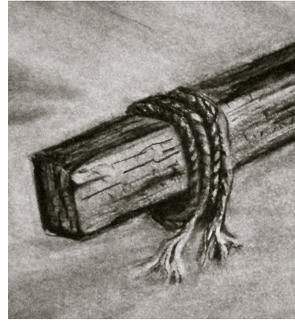


JESUS

Wednesday, March 7

Scripture: Mark 9:7

⁷ And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."



Meditation:

The fact that Jesus only took his three closest disciples with him to the mountain might have been a signal to them that this was to be an important trip. Once there, Mark tells us that Jesus was "transfigured before them." This experience was to teach the disciples something about Jesus' identity and work. What does it teach us?

When Moses encountered God on Mt. Sinai, his face shone with a reflection of God's glory. Here Jesus himself shines. This is a clear signal that we are dealing with God incarnate...his true glory revealed here for his disciples to fully understand his identity. It is significant that both Moses and Elijah had encounters with God and His glory on a mountain. Here we see them talking with Jesus. Again, there is a clear signal that as they speak with Jesus they are in the presence of God. And the presence of Moses, who represents the Law, and Elijah, who represents the prophets, shows us that the Old Testament hope for salvation converges on Jesus, the fulfillment of both the Law and the prophets.

The disciples were terrified, and rightly so. As a pastor/author once said, "If you have never stood before a holy God and been afraid, you've never stood before a holy God." Do we have an appropriate regard for Jesus' holiness and glory? Even in the midst of this incredible moment, the disciples were scrambling to put their experience into their own box... to build tents for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. It took the voice of God, who tells them "Listen!", to make them fully appreciate the fact that this Jesus who they were following is indeed the King of the Universe.

In verses 30-32 we see that Jesus did not want the disciples to tell about the transfiguration. But he did want them to know that he would soon suffer, die and rise from the grave. This is the heart of the gospel. And as hard as it was for the disciples to grasp all of the implication of the events on the mountain, it was still harder for them to grasp the idea that this One who had been transfigured and glorified before them was going to meet his death at the hands of men.

In this Lenten season, what boxes do you put Jesus into? How might you tend to reduce his glory or the message of the gospel into manageable terms that allow you to escape the full weight of his glory and his work? Take some time today to pray that you would be able to “listen to Him” as the three disciples were admonished to do.

Jim Cunningham, Elder



Main Ideas Made Simple from Mark 9:7

Jesus revealed Himself in glory, and then God the Father reminded the disciples to listen to what Jesus said. As they walked back down the mountain after this, Jesus was telling them that He was going to die and rise again. They couldn't understand. How could His glory fit with the suffering of death? Glory!

What is the most beautiful thing you can imagine? God's glory is even more beautiful. And yet, God shows His glory in the places that are not so beautiful: in the hospital among the very sick, in the smiling faces of children living in a poor village, in you when someone is being mean to you! Jesus was glorified on the mountain, and on the cross.

Activity:

If you have Jesus living in you, you can show God's glory in the dark places too. Draw a beautiful picture, or make a lovely card and give it to someone who is going through a hard time—someone who needs to remember that God is glorified even in the dark things.

Thursday, March 8

Scripture: Luke 9:37-45, 18:31-34

³⁷ On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. ³⁸ And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. ⁴⁰ And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” ⁴¹ Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” ⁴² While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. ⁴³ And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁴ “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.” ⁴⁵ But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

³¹ And taking the twelve, he said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³² For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. ³³ And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.” ³⁴ But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.



Song: Jesus, I Come

*Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come; Jesus I come.*

*Into Thy freedom, gladness and light,
Jesus, I come to Thee.*

*Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my wanting and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee.*

*Out of my shameful failure and loss,
Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come.*

*Into the glorious gain of Thy cross,
Jesus, I come to Thee.*

*Out of earth's sorrows into Thy balm,
Out of life's storms and into Thy calm,
Out of distress into jubilant psalm,
Jesus, I come to Thee.*

*Out of unrest and arrogant pride,
Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come.*

*Into Thy blessed will to abide,
Jesus, I come to Thee.*

*Out of myself to dwell in Thy love,
Out of despair into raptures above,
Upward forever on wings like a dove,
Jesus, I come to Thee.*

*Out of the fear and dread of the tomb,
Jesus, I come; Jesus, I come.*

*Into the joy and light of Thy home,
Jesus, I come to Thee.*

*Out of the depths of ruin untold,
Into the peace of Thy sheltering fold,
Ever Thy glorious face to behold,
Jesus, I come to Thee.*

William Sleeper / Greg Thompson © 2000 Greg Thompson Music.

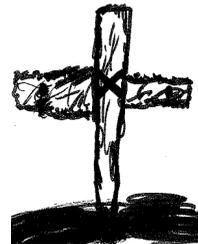
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Luke 9:37-39, 42b

Do you know that EVERYBODY has problems? Everybody gets sick sometimes. Everybody gets sad sometimes. Everybody gets teased sometimes. And, of course, everybody sins. In fact, our biggest problem is sin. So who do we go to for help? In this story the daddy took his son to Jesus. That was the perfect thing to do.

Activity:

What are some problems in your family, church, or school? What is the perfect thing to do? That's right! Take these problems to Jesus. Pray about these things right now.



Friday, March 9

Scripture: Luke 9:37-42

³⁷ On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. ³⁸ And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. ⁴⁰ And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.” ⁴¹ Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.” ⁴² While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

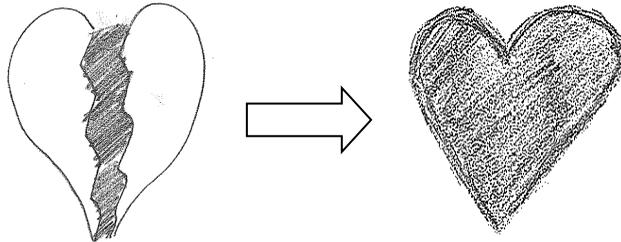
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Luke 9:38, 42b

Jesus knows how to heal sickness, and sad hearts, and confused minds. Best of all, He heals us from sin. This father knew where to turn for help. You can turn to Jesus for help too!

Activity:

Play doctor. Pretend to make your patients well! Remember that Jesus knows how to heal our greatest sickness, sin.



Meditation: A Consultation with THE Specialist

For a long time, perhaps years, this man's only son had been afflicted with seizures. The disciples couldn't heal him, even though they had been given the power to do so (Luke 9:1-2). The boy's father sees Jesus and shouts out, begging for THE Specialist to work the miracle to free his son and his family from the bondage of this affliction that was constantly seizing and mauling the boy, scarcely leaving him before the same awful scenario repeated itself. How helpless and hopeless the father, his family, and all who knew him must have felt.

Jesus hears the symptoms and knows the diagnosis, treatment, and cure. His words in verse 41 are not those of frustrated condemnation, but rather a simple observation of this seemingly hopeless situation.

Then Jesus commands the boy's father to "Bring your son here"—to the ONE, the only ONE, who can heal him! In sight of all those helplessly standing by, the boy is once again torn, dashed, and slammed to the ground. Jesus knows exactly what to do! Striking back and casting the demon spirit aside, Jesus completely heals the boy and returns him whole again to his father. All who see are amazed and marvel.

Look at the song, "Jesus, I Come." With pen and paper in hand, list the conditions found after each phrase "out of," (i.e. bondage, failure, loss, arrogant pride, etc.). Then prioritize them personally for your life, thinking of how each one tears, mauls, and slams you to the ground. There are "demons" with which we all are afflicted. Bring these to Jesus, the only ONE who can heal you! Then be amazed, marvel, and be thankful for His greatness and His goodness in your life.

Michael Marsh, Elder

Saturday, March 10

Scripture: Luke 19:28-48

²⁸ And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” ³² So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. ³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” ³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” ⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

⁴¹ And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side ⁴⁴ and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

⁴⁵ And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.” ⁴⁷ And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, ⁴⁸ but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

Song: O Worship the King

*O worship the King,
All glorious above,
And gratefully sing
His wonderful love:
Our Shield and Defender,
The Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor,
And girded with praise.*

*O tell of His might,
O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light,
Whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath
The deep thunderclouds form
And dark is His path
On the wings of the storm.*

*Thy bountiful care
What tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air;
It shines in the light.
It streams from the hills;
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills
In the dew and the rain.*

*Frail children of dust,
And feeble as frail,
On Thee do we trust,
Nor find Thee to fail.
Thy mercies how tender!
How firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender,
Redeemer, and Friend!*

William Kethe / Robert Grant

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Luke 19: 37-40

Jesus deserves our praise! Joyful and loud was the praise of the disciples on the day Jesus came into Jerusalem. Some people wanted the disciples to be quiet, but Jesus knew that He was worthy of their loud and exuberant praise!

Activity:

Gather some pretty rocks. Wash them, and find a nice bowl or basket for them. Put them in a special place where you will see them throughout your day. Let them remind you that it is important for YOU to praise Jesus...we don't want the rocks to steal that privilege from us!

Sunday, March 11

Scripture: Luke 19:45-48

⁴⁵ And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, ⁴⁶ saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”

⁴⁷ And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, ⁴⁸ but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.



Meditation:

Well, let's see now...when sending two of His disciples on ahead, Jesus told them not only where to find a colt for Him to ride, but also the very conversation that they would have with the colt's owner, including a simple response, with no details, that would satisfy the man.

Then when Jesus is riding the colt toward Jerusalem, the crowd is praising God for the miracles that Jesus had done. He cleans out the temple of those who would make it a market, then proceeds to teach the people daily in the temple, teaching with authority (Luke 4:50).

So the Chief Priests and that whole crew were rejoicing to have such a powerful spiritual leader, right? Well, not exactly. In fact, they were looking for some way to destroy him. Some of them no doubt thought that they were actually doing the will of God, but human nature being what it was then just as much as it is now, a good bit of it was probably jealousy, envy, pride, and ego.

Now flash forward a couple of thousand years. We, as God's people, are also persecuted (Matthew 10:17, 24:9) and tempted by the world and Satan. We find ourselves to be the victims of the same traits of human nature that Christ faced; and perhaps even worse we are tempted to mistreat others for the same reasons.

But because Christ endured the abuse and hatred then, including death on the cross, for us, we have a way out. Because we are His, He will not allow us to be completely overwhelmed (1 Corinthians 10:13) in this life.

*“Frail children of dust,
And feeble as frail,
On Thee do we trust,
Nor find thee to fail.
Thy mercies how tender!
How firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender,
Redeemer, and Friend.”*

He who has made us defends us from the enemy’s slings and arrows of lies and deceptions; He has redeemed us from slavery to sin, and now calls us into close, intimate relationship and friendship with Him.

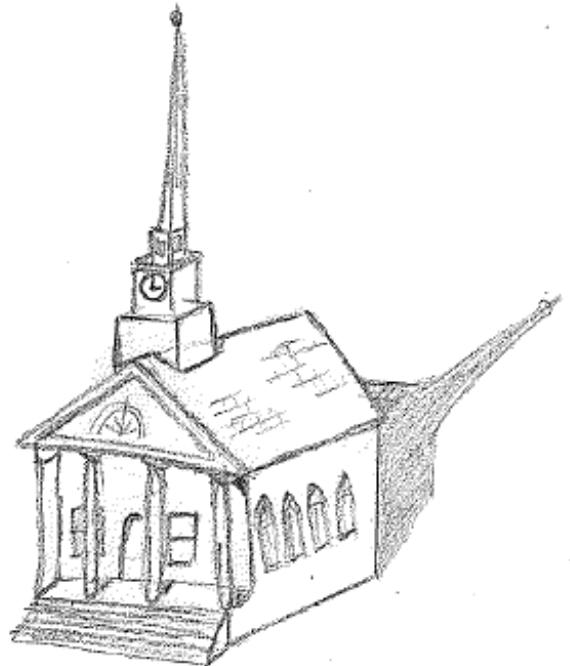
Marshall Butler, Deacon

Main Ideas Made Simple from Luke 19:45-46

What is a temple? It is the place where God is worshipped. When we get together to worship God, we are a temple. He calls us His house! God loves to meet with us. He loves our worship, and prayer, and He loves when we hear from His Word! Next time you go to church remember how special it is to God. He calls you His friend, and invites you to His house!

Activity:

Make an invitation and invite a friend to come to church, or to come to your house. Share God’s special love with your friend.



Monday, March 12

Scripture: Matthew 26:1-16

¹ When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, ² “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. ⁵ But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

⁶ Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷ a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. ⁸ And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? ⁹ For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” ¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.



Song:
What Wondrous Love Is This

*What wondrous love is this,
O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this
That caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse
for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!*

*When I was sinking down,
sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down, sinking down;
When I was sinking down
Beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside His crown
for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul!*

*To God and to the Lamb,
I will sing, I will sing,
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing!
To God and to the Lamb
Who is the great "I AM"
While millions join the theme
I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme I will sing!*

*And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on!
And when from death I'm free,
I'll sing and joyful be
And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on
And through eternity, I'll sing on!*

S. Mead / William Walker

Main Ideas Made Simple from
Matthew 26:6-7

Oh, how God loves our worship! The Bible tells us it is a sweet fragrance to the Lord. In this passage of Scripture a woman poured expensive perfume on Jesus as her extravagant act of worship. Sometimes we are a little embarrassed to worship God in ways that are extravagant. We don't want to sing too loudly, or raise our hands, or kneel. It might be a little embarrassing, people might look at us. But let's think about this woman. When she worshiped, the fragrance filled the house!

Activity:

Ask your parents to help you smell something good. Maybe they could light a scented candle, or spray perfume, or air freshener. Imagine the sweet smell of our worship blessing the Lord!

Tuesday, March 13

Scripture: Matthew 26:6-7, 14-16

⁶Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, ⁷a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table.

¹⁴Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.



Meditation:

When reading through this Scripture passage, you can sense something big is about to happen. Jesus has the foreknowledge to know what is coming, but the disciples do not. Matthew lets us see what is happening in the presence of Jesus as well as what is happening in the presence of those who are plotting his death.

Verse 7 states that a woman came to Him and poured very costly perfume on His body; other gospels say this woman is Mary. This selfless action, given with no regard for what others might think, reflects her love for her Savior. The disciples saw this action as a waste of money. This perfume was worth a year's wages, and they thought it should have been sold and the money used to help the poor.

As I thought of how this applies to me, I, like the disciples in this passage, miss so many opportunities to show Christ's love to those I love as well as those in my everyday life. It reminds me of a phrase I was told many years ago, “Always remember: life is short, Jesus is worthy!”

As we live our lives, we should frequently be asking ourselves, “What is God's purpose for my life?” As Christians, there are many good things we could be doing, but it always should be about Christ!

Finally, as we come to the end of the passage in verses 14-16, we see Judas Iscariot betraying Jesus to the Chief Priest. Often I have wondered, how could someone who walked with, listened to, and lived with Jesus for three years, betray Him? But then, I remember, I too know the whole story of what Christ did for me by coming to the earth to live as a man, suffer and die to pay the penalty for my sins, so that I may know His forgiveness and the depth of His love for me. Yet so often, I betray Him as well, by not living my life as if it is all about Christ!

As we reflect during this season of Lent, may we know the joy of forgiveness and have a heart of thankfulness for the grace, mercy and love that has been given to us by God and daily choose to live our lives in the reality that life is all about the relationship we have with Jesus Christ!

Dennis Houff, Deacon

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Matthew 26:6-7, 14-16

The woman had worshiped Jesus with all that she had. Right after that, one of Jesus's best friends left and was thinking about hurting Jesus. This seems crazy! But think about it...have you ever gone to church where we were all praising God, and then you leave, get into the car, and start complaining or fighting with your family? That's crazy, too! We betray Jesus, too, just like Judas. Thank God for His grace. He still loves crazy people like you and me.

Activity:

Play some worship music—dance, clap, play instruments. Praise God and hold nothing back! Ask Jesus to help you to worship Him with all of your might, and all of your days!

Wednesday, March 14

Scripture: John 13:1-20

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." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

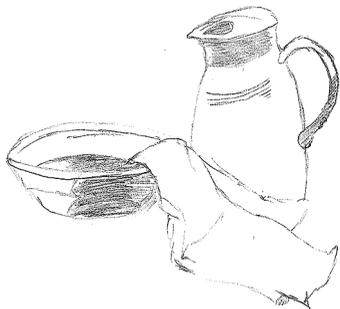
¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. ¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

Song: There is a Fountain Filled with Blood

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains:
Lose all their guilty stains,
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.*

*The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away:
Wash all my sins away,
Wash all my sins away;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.*

*Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more:
Be saved to sin no more,
Be saved to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more.*



*E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die:
And shall be till I die,
And shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die.*

*When this poor lisping, stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save:
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save,
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save;
Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save.*

Text: William Cowper, Music: Traditional American melody

Main Ideas Made Simple from John 13:5-7

Remember, sin makes us dirty and separates us from God, but Jesus washes us clean. Jesus washed His disciples feet with water just like you use water to wash your hands clean when they are messy. The water helps us remember all that Jesus has done for us by washing us so that we can come into the presence of God!

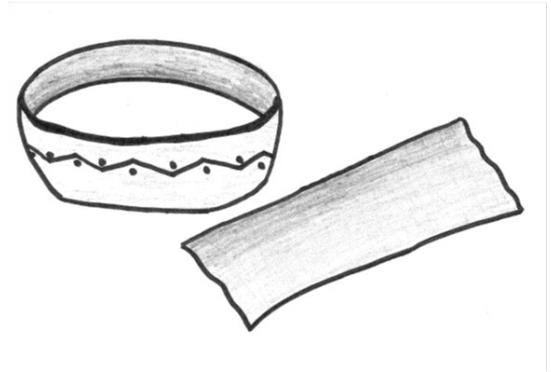
Activity:

Serve one another by washing each other's feet tonight. As you do this, give thanks that Jesus has washed us clean.

Thursday, March 15

Scripture: John 13:1-4

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.



Meditation:

Consider with me, there were many things which could have been the focus of Jesus attention at this time: He could have been discouraged that the disciples didn't 'get it' (again), he could have been distracted by the world's current events or entertainments, he could have known himself to be a victim and endlessly discussed how unfair Judas's betrayal was with his disciples, or he could have withdrawn from relationships and lived in isolation while considering the near future. However, while he did mention his betrayal and near future, it did not identify him.

Jesus' circumstances did not dictate to him who he was. He *knew* that he was going to be with God. He *knew* that all things had been given to him. Knowing the truth about the biggest of things that he loved, he continued to deal lovingly with people all the way to the end of his life. In this case, he patiently demonstrated an answer to the disciples' question (Luke 22:24).

In John 13:15, Jesus says, "For I gave you an *example* that you also should do as I did to you." This example is helpful for us. Surely it includes what Jesus did—washing feet—but could it also include what frees us to do what he did—knowing who we are? It is the *knowing* of what Jesus knew that frees us to *do* what Jesus did. We need this entire example; we must *know* who we are in Christ! We are not greater than our Master, that we should be able to do without knowing.

Biblically knowing who we are in Christ is freeing, empowering and encouraging. This is not a place for our independent confident opinions of ourselves – often an untrustworthy distraction from a twisted heart and clouded mind; but it is a place where God proclaims to us (and we must learn) the truth of who we are in (and out of) Christ.

Where the Bible identifies me as a sinner – I need to learn ‘God’s understanding’ of who I am and have been. Where the Bible speaks to the promises and realities of being in Christ, I need to learn ‘God’s understanding’ of who I am. There is no sin that God identifies that he does not joyfully and fully cover for those in Christ. Do not shrink away from the truth – even if it is difficult truth; for the truth will set you free.

Is there sin? Yes; but is there sin Christ’s precious blood cannot wash away? No! Do we fall short of the mark? Yes, however, we do not rest in our works, but on Christ’s perfect life imputed (transferred) to us. Are there consequences in this world? Yes, but this world is passing away and a new world is coming. This is truth we can embrace with the same certainty and joy with which God himself, who proclaims it to be, embraces it!

We too, like Christ, are going to the Father; we too have been given a great inheritance secured by Christ; we too are the objects of our Father’s joyful delight and lavish affections in Christ. Soon, the fallen nature of this world will become but a memory; we will soon be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He is. We will soon be singing with the holy angels unencumbered by sin. He has gone to prepare a place for us and there we shall be with him forever! Today we are closer to that day than we were yesterday! Knowing, he loved. May we do the same.

Mark Bentz, Deacon

Main Ideas Made Simple from John 13:1

Jesus loves us! The amazing thing is that even though He is God, He serves us. Usually when we think about kings and queens, we imagine them with a whole lot of people standing around ready to serve them in any way that they demand. Jesus turns that whole idea upside down. He is the King of kings. He is the Lord of the universe, and yet He serves us. He loves us so much that He serves us by making us ready to enter the presence of God.

Activity:

Jesus has shown us His love, and therefore we can share His love with others. As a family, make a list of ways you can show God’s love to those around you. Which one will you do first?

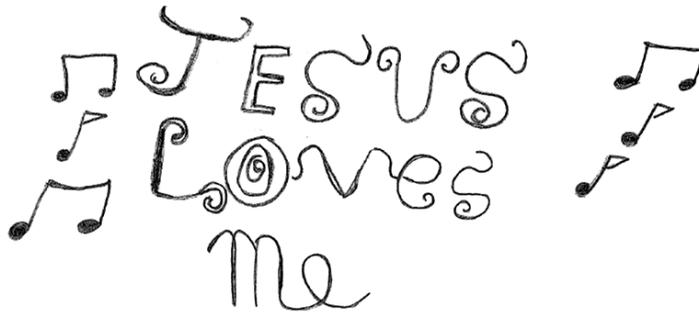
Friday, March 16

Scripture: John 13:21-38

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. 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.”

³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.



Song: I Will Praise Him Still

*When the morning falls
On the farthest hill,
I will sing His name,
I will praise Him still.
When dark trials come
And my heart is filled
With the weight of doubt,
I will praise Him still.*

*For the Lord, our God,
He is strong to save
From the arms of death,
From the deepest grave,
And He gave us life
In His perfect will,
And by His good grace,
I will praise Him still.*

Fernando Ortega © 1997 Margeedays; CCLI #353794

Main Ideas Made Simple from John 13:34-35

Jesus loves us, and, oh, how He longs for us to love one another, too! He wants His love to shine out from us to each other so that the whole world will see it.

Activity:

Sing “Jesus Loves Me” and “This Little Light of Mine.” Ask your parents to help you light a candle tonight to remind yourself that the world will see the light of Jesus through the love you share with each other.

Saturday, March 17

Scripture: John 13:31-32

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.

Meditation:

After Judas' departure from the Lord's Supper, Jesus announces that the time of His brutal suffering and shameful death on the cross was at hand. Yet, He proclaims that He will be highly exalted in them. For He is to obtain a renowned, eternal victory over Satan and all the powers of darkness. Through these things, He is to work out a splendid deliverance of His people by His death, to reconcile them to God for eternity.

At this time He is going to give the ultimate glorious example of self-denial and patience under the cross. As well, He demonstrates to the souls of men and women a selfless love that will forever make Him admired and exalted by those cleansed, once and for all, with His shed blood at Calvary.

God the Father was also going to be glorified in that by Christ's sufferings and death, God's justice would be satisfied. The Father's holiness and mercy were clearly displayed in Christ's suffering.

Christ is certain that God will glorify Him. Hell and earth strive together to destroy and defame Christ, but our Sovereign Almighty God determined to glorify Him. Our Savior and Lord looked upon the joy and glory set before Him as not only great, but also about to occur. He was absolutely sure that He would be raised from the dead shortly after His death on the “cursed tree” at Golgotha.

Indeed as we are told in Philippians 2:8-11, “being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death, even on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on



earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father.”

As Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:20-21, let us close with this: “Now to Him Who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Don Perkuchin, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from

John 13:31-32

Jesus knew when the time of His suffering was to begin, and He announced to His disciples that it was time for Him to be glorified. Usually, we think of Jesus being glorified when He was raised from the dead—and that is true—but He was also glorified in the suffering of the cross, because dying on the cross was exactly what He had come to do. He had come to suffer and die on our behalf so that our sin might be removed and we could be united with the Father!

Activity:

Ask your parents to light a candle with all the lights on. Oh, yes, it looks pretty, but now turn the lights off and leave the candle glowing. Oh, now it really looks beautiful! It really shines against the darkness! So also, in the darkness of His suffering the glory of Jesus shone brightly!



The King of Love My Shepherd Is 171

1. The King of love my Shep - herd is, Whose good - ness
 2. Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow My ran - somed
 3. Per - verse and fool - ish oft I strayed, But yet in
 4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill With You, dear
 5. You spread a ta - ble in my sight; Your sav - ing
 6. And so through all the length of days Your good - ness

fail - eth nev - er; I noth - ing lack if
 soul He lead - eth, And where the ver - dant
 love He sought me, And on His shoul - der
 Lord, be - side me; Your rod and staff my
 grace be - stow - ing; And O what trans - port
 fails me nev - er. Good Shep - herd, may I

I am His And He is mine for - ev - er.
 pas - tures grow, With food ce - les - tial feed - eth.
 gen - tly laid, And home, re - joic - ing, brought me.
 com - fort still, Your cross be - fore to guide me.
 of de - light From Your pure chal - ice flow - ing!
 sing Your praise With - in Your house for - ev - er.



Sunday, March 18

Scripture: Luke 22:7-22

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.” ⁹ They said to him, “Where will you have us prepare it?” ¹⁰ He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters ¹¹ and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹² And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.” ¹³ And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. ²¹ But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. ²² For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!”

HIS love for me and you.

Song:
The King of Love My Shepherd Is

*The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine forever.*

*Where streams of living water flow,
My ransomed soul He leadeth
And, where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.*

*Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.*

*In death's dark vale I will not fear
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me,
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.*

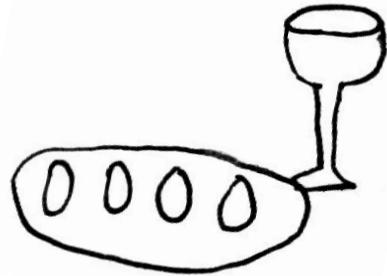
*Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
Thine unction grace bestoweth;
And, oh, what transport of delight
From Thy pure chalice floweth!*

*And so, through all the length of days,
Thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever.*

*Text from Psalm 23 by Henry W. Baker, 1868 Traditional Irish
melody, arr. Michael Card, Gary Duncan. Arr.
© 1998 Mole End Music*

Main Ideas Made Simple from
Luke 22:16,19-20

Jesus was having a very special meal with His close friends. Today we call it the “Last Supper” because it was the last meal he had with His friends before He died on the cross. On the first Sunday of every month, we take communion so that we will remember this meal and what Jesus taught. Jesus was broken for us, and His blood was poured out to cover our sin.



Activity:

Have a very special meal together as a family. Ask your parents if you may use your nice dishes and maybe even have candlelight. Nice meals can be a time to listen and learn from each other. Ask each other questions, and listen to what each one of you has to say. Jesus wanted to have a special meal with His friends. He had important things to tell them.

Monday, March 19

Scripture: Luke 22:15-20

¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

Meditation:

The Lord’s Supper is the Christian Passover. As Luke points out, Jesus shared this meal with his disciples on the eve of Passover. In doing this Jesus instituted what we now call the Lord’s Supper. It is one of the two sacraments of the church, baptism being the other.

The significance of the timing of this event cannot be overstated. Passover marked that time in Israel’s history when God delivered his people from captivity in Egypt. Every household in Egypt that was marked by the blood of a spotless lamb would be passed over by God’s judgment and receive mercy instead. And now in the event described by Luke Jesus is preparing to be the ultimate Passover Lamb.

There is some dispute about just exactly what Jesus is referring to in verses 16 and 18. It seems that Jesus is saying that he will not share this meal with his apostles again until the great wedding feast of the Lamb. Until that time, Christ’s church is to share this meal as a proclamation of His death until He returns (1 Corinthians 11:26). In this way the Lord’s Supper helps us not only to look to what Christ accomplished on the cross but to also look forward to the final consummation of His kingdom.

In verses 19 and 20 Jesus speaks words of institution helping us to understand that the Lord’s Supper will be far more than a mere memorial to his death. “And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood’ (vv.19-20).

The bread and wine do not literally transform into the flesh and blood of Jesus; however, there is a close correspondence between these signs and what they signify. Here Jesus promises that the simple tokens of bread and wine will become for God’s people a means by which the Lord spiritually nourishes his people. This is why we call the Lord’s Supper a sacrament. It is a means of grace by which the Lord Jesus confirms to us his gospel promises.

In his Concise Theology, J.I. Packer writes:

The prescribed ritual of the Supper has three levels of meaning for participants. First, it has a past reference to Christ's death which we remember. Second, it has a present reference to our corporate feeding on him by faith, with implications for how we treat our fellow believers (1 Corinthians 11:20-22). Third, it has a future reference as we look ahead to Christ's return and are encouraged by the thought of it. Preliminary self-examination, to make sure one's frame of mind is as it should be, is advised (1 Corinthians 11:28), and the wisdom of the advice is obvious.

In verse 20 Jesus makes reference to “the new covenant in my blood.” The wine that Jesus blessed that night signified the blood he would shed in a very short time. What his disciples still did not understand in that moment is that Jesus’ life led purposely to these very hours when he would be betrayed, arrested, tried, and crucified. The very thing they denied and resisted was the whole purpose for Jesus’ coming. Our Lord came to be our Passover Lamb, the One whose blood would cover our sin and shame, whose dying would mean our life, whose abandonment would mean our salvation.

Todd Pruitt, Elder

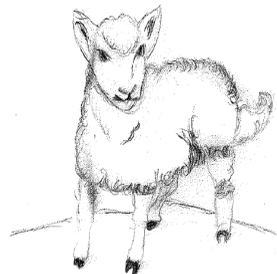
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Luke 22:19-20

Long ago before Jesus died on the cross, people who followed God would offer sacrifices for their sin. You see, the cost of sinning is death. Now this is very sad, but it is important for you to know. A lamb was killed, and its blood would be enough to pay for that person’s sins at that time. Today we no longer have to offer the sacrifice of a lamb. Do you know why? Jesus died on the cross and His blood was enough to pay for all of our sin forever! That’s why you sometimes hear Jesus called the “Lamb of God.” He sacrificed Himself, just like a lamb, for you and me. His blood is enough to wash away the sins of the world!

Activity:

Ask your parents to help you get a piece of dark construction paper, a cotton swab, and a small amount of bleach. Carefully dip the cotton swab in the bleach and draw a picture on the construction paper. The color disappears where ever you draw the bleach! So does our sin, when we ask Jesus into our heart!



Tuesday, March 20

Scripture: Matthew 26:36-56

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” ³⁹And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” ⁴⁰And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? ⁴¹Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴²Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” ⁴³And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” ⁴⁹And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. ⁵¹And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” ⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. ⁵⁶But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Song: My Sins, My Sins, My Savior

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Matthew 26:47-50

It was time; time for Jesus to begin His trip to the cross. Judas, one of the twelve disciples—the close friends of Jesus—showed the enemies of Jesus which one was Jesus by giving Him a kiss. Even though Judas was handing Jesus to His enemies, Jesus still calls Judas “friend.” The truth is, we are enemies of God, too. Our sin has made us an enemy of God! Yet, Jesus calls us “friend” and makes a way for us to have friendship with the One True God!

*My sins, my sins, my Savior!
They take such hold on me,
I am not able to look up,
Save, only Christ to Thee;
In Thee is all forgiveness,
In Thee abundant grace,
My shadow and my sunshine
The brightness of Thy face.*

*My sins, my sins, my Savior!
How sad on Thee they fall;
Seen through Thy gentle patience,
I tenfold feel them all;
I know they are forgiven,
But still, their pain to me
Is all the grief and anguish
They laid, my Lord, on Thee.*

*My sins, my sins, my Savior!
Their guilt I never knew
Until Thy desert tempting
Displayed Thy passion new;
Till in the garden pleading
Thou spoke Thy suffering pray'r.
Thou poured out sweat drops bloody
My guilt and sin to bear.*

*Therefore my songs, my Savior,
E'en in this time of woe,
Shall tell of all Thy goodness
To suffering man below;
Thy goodness and Thy favor,
Whose presence from above
Rejoice these hearts, my Savior,
That live in Thee and love.*

Words and lyrics by John S. B. Monsell



Activity:

List some of your friends and also list one or two people whom you really don't like. Maybe they are mean to you, or just kind of annoying. Even though you know you shouldn't, maybe you sometimes even think of these people as enemies. Remember, just like you, they are made in the image of God. Take time as a family right now, and ask the Lord to help you treat these people as friends. Ask the Lord to help you show them kindness, and to forgive them. Jesus called Judas friend; He calls you friend; He can help YOU call these kids friend, too!

Wednesday, March 21

Scripture: Matthew 26:36-39

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” ³⁹And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

Meditation:

In this passage we find Jesus and the disciples adjourning from the Passover meal and on their way to the Mount of Olives, also known as the garden of Gethsemane. Stepping into the garden Jesus came face to face with the reality of which had been predicted for so long. Betrayal, desertion, arrest, false accusations, abuse...the cross. Jesus, who had always obeyed the will of God, would once again have his obedience tested, and it would cost him the highest of prices. As the hour drew near Jesus chose only his closest friends Peter, James, and John to walk with him and support him. Jesus openly shared his troubled heart with them saying, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.” His agony and humility were expressed in his posture as he fell down with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father.”

The sleepy disciples may have wondered what could possibly be troubling the divine Son of God to solicit such a visceral response. They had yet to comprehend fully the “cup” that Jesus would drink. What was this cup that Jesus wanted desperately to avoid? Was it death or the pain and humiliation of the cross? Yes, but it was much more. The cup designated for Jesus was the one mentioned by the prophet Isaiah. Jesus was to drink from the hand of the LORD, the cup of God’s wrath (Isaiah 57:17). With this in mind the gravity of this situation and the enormity of the tension Jesus faced can be better understood. “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” This cup being God’s righteous indignation, divine



justice, and wrath toward all the sins of the elect throughout history. Considering the possibility of bearing the immense weight of sin and the terror of God's fury was enough to cause Jesus to request an alternative, three times. Nevertheless, Jesus said, "Not as I will," three times. These are words of submission spoken with sober resolve.

During this season of Lent it is right for us to be reminded of the appropriate wrath God has toward sin. God is both loving and just, therefore, the sins of his people must be atoned for if there is to be any hope of salvation. Such a great atonement would come at a great cost and it was the reality of this exchange that Jesus agonized over in the garden of Gethsemane. The perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God satiated divine justice and redeemed us from the curse of sin (Galatians 3:13). For you, brothers and sisters, Jesus declared, "Not as I will," then turned to head towards the cross. It is because of Jesus' perfect obedience we can sing with joy, *"Therefore my songs, my Savior, E'en in this time of woe, Shall tell of all Thy goodness, To suff'ring man below; Thy goodness and Thy favor, Whose presence from above, Rejoice these hearts, my Savior, That live in Thee and love."*

John Kidd, Elder

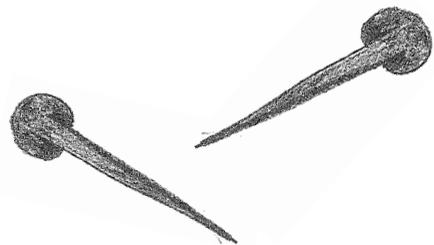
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Matthew 26:47-50

This is amazing! Jesus knew it was going to be terrible to die on the cross. He knew it would be terrible to have our sin on Himself. He knew that the Father would have to turn away. Oh, He knew what was about to happen was going to be awful! He even asked if there might be another way to do this thing, another way to pay for our sin. But no, the cross, the suffering, the separation from His Father was the only way to bring us close, and the only way to remove our sin. Because of His love for us, He was willing.

Activity:

Ask your parents, then get some nails and a scrap of wood. Hammer the nails in (if you want to be fancy, you could even make a design). Jesus was nailed to the cross. But it wasn't the nails that kept Him on the cross. He could have done a miracle and come down from the cross! His love for the Father and for us kept Him on the cross.



Thursday, March 22

Scripture: Mark 14:53-72

⁵³ And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. ⁵⁴ And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. ⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. ⁵⁶ For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. ⁵⁷ And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, ⁵⁸ “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” ⁵⁹ Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. ⁶⁰ And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” ⁶¹ But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” ⁶² And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” ⁶³ And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? ⁶⁴ You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. ⁶⁵ And some began to spit on him and to

cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophesy!” And the guards received him with blows.

⁶⁶ And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.” ⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you mean.” And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. ⁶⁹ And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” ⁷⁰ But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” ⁷¹ But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.” ⁷² And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.



Song: God Be Merciful to Me

*God be merciful to me.
On Thy grace I rest my plea;
Plenteous in compassion Thou,
Blot out my transgressions now;
Wash me, make me pure within,
Cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.*

*My transgressions I confess,
Grief and guilt my soul oppress;
I have sinned against Thy grace
And provoked Thee to Thy face;
I confess Thy judgment just,
Speechless, I Thy mercy trust.*

*I am evil, born in sin;
Thou desirest truth within.
Thou alone my Savior art,
Teach Thy wisdom to my heart;
Make me pure, Thy grace bestow,
Wash me whiter than the snow.*

*Broken, humbled to the dust
By Thy wrath and judgment just,
Let my contrite heart rejoice
And in gladness hear Thy voice;
From my sins O hide Thy face,
Blot them out in boundless grace.*

*Gracious God, my heart renew,
Make my spirit right and true
Cast me not away from Thee,
Let Thy Spirit dwell in me;
Thy salvation's joy impart,
Steadfast make my willing heart.*

*Sinners then shall learn from me,
And return O God to Thee
Savior all my guilt remove,
And my tongue shall sing Thy love
Touch my silent lips O Lord,
And my mouth shall praise accord.*

Richard Redhead / Chris Miner ©2001 Chris Miner Music

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Mark 14:66-72

We may think “How could Peter lie about being a friend of Jesus? Wasn’t Peter one of Jesus’s best friends?” Dear one, don’t you see? Whenever we disobey, or act ugly, or are selfish, we, too, deny Jesus. We act as if we don’t even know Him!

Activity:

Draw a rooster, or find a picture of a rooster that you can cut out. Hang it up to remind you that it is very easy to deny Jesus and act as if you don’t know Him. When you see the rooster picture, ask the Holy Spirit to help you walk in His ways!

Friday, March 23

Scripture: Mark 14:57-65

⁵⁷ And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, ⁵⁸ “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” ⁵⁹ Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. ⁶⁰ And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” ⁶¹ But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” ⁶² And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” ⁶³ And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? ⁶⁴ You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. ⁶⁵ And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” And the guards received him with blows.

Meditation:

Have any other two simple words changed the course of the world as much as the words “I am”? Christ is not using this phrase in the same way that His Father uses it in Exodus 3:14 or that He Himself uses in John 8:58, but He is saying the same thing. The high priest asks Him if He is the Christ and Jesus responds, “Positively, I am!”

Peter, although he denies Christ soon after these verses, is part of another great use of the words “I am.” In Matthew 16:15 Jesus asks “But who do you say that I am?” This is perhaps one of the greatest questions of all human history. Peter confesses Him to be the Christ. But, reader, who do YOU say Jesus is? Do you confess Him as Lord and Savior? If so, does He rule over every aspect of your life, the good and the bad? Do you believe that He has taken your sins to the cross upon His shoulders or do you continue to carry guilt and shame over your sins? Christian, believe that He has died for ALL of your sins. Stop allowing the lies of Satan to pull you away from Jesus and prevent you from confessing Him as the one true Christ. Believe that His death and resurrection has the power to release you of those sins that you feel will always burden you.

Perhaps you read this question of Jesus’ and respond like those in the court before Him. Do you give a false testimony by giving examples in which Jesus did not fulfill His promises to you? Do you twist His words to fit into your agenda? Do you respond with rage against the truth? We’ve all hated God’s truth and have walked in darkness. I plead with you to open your heart to the words of Christ. He speaks no lies and is calling you out of the pit of darkness. Look upon the cross and see a man full of love and truth. He died there for you specifically.

If Christ's words are true, do we live as though they are? He says in verse 62 that we will see Him sitting at the right hand of power and that He will come again with the clouds of heaven. Are we anticipating this return of Christ with all of our hearts? It has been so long, to us anyway, since He said He would return. It is sometimes hard to hold onto His words of truth and continue to have faith. He promises to return to call all of His own to Himself and we must have hope in this. He will come again to begin all things new. If it is in our lifetime it will be awesome to see, but if it is not, we must continue to do the work He has set out before us. He has chosen us to be His instruments of truth, love, mercy and grace to a world that is in desperate need of all four. We need to work in advancing His kingdom here among our co-workers, neighbors, country and world. God has put us into specific places that only we can be used to glorify Him. Work and serve Him, not so He will accept any part of our works as restitution, but so that we can glorify Him in our weakness and in His grace poured upon us. Let us truly worship Him for who He is and what He has done for us until His return.

John Wickenheiser, Deacon

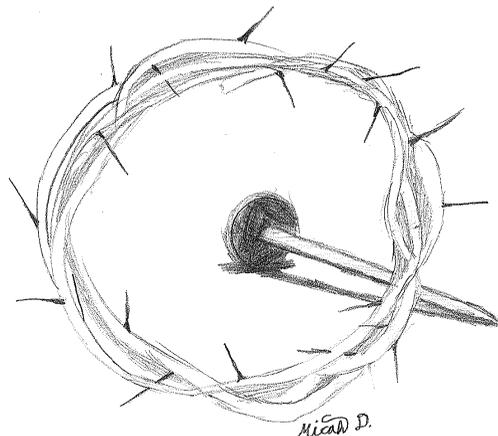
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Mark 14:61b-62

The High Priest was angry when Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Son of God. The High Priest did not believe. The Holy Spirit helps us to believe. We know who Jesus is because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Activity:

Think and talk about this very important question: *"Who is Jesus?"* Ask your parents to tell you about how they came to know that Jesus is the Son of God.



Saturday, March 24

Scripture: Matthew 27:11-31

¹¹ Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.” ¹² But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” ¹⁴ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

¹⁵ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶ And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” ¹⁸ For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. ¹⁹ Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” ²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” ²² Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” ²³ And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.” ²⁵ And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” ²⁶ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

Song:
How Deep the Father's Love for Us

*How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son,
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss,
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the chosen One,
Bring many sons to glory*

*Behold the man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders;
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life—
I know that it is finished.*

*I will not boast in anything,
No gifts, no pow'r, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer,
But this I know with all my heart,
His wounds have paid my ransom.*

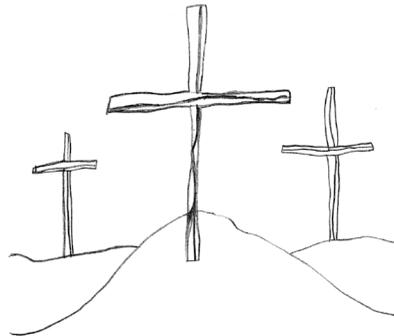
*Stuart Townend © 1995
Kingsway's Thankyou Music/ASCAP ARR, UBP*

Main Ideas Made Simple from
Matthew 27:27-31

The soldiers did not realize that Jesus really was the King over all kings standing right in front of them. They made fun of Him for saying He was the King. Jesus could have lashed out at them in anger, and yet He humbly stood there and took all the hurtful teasing—for you, for me.

Activity:

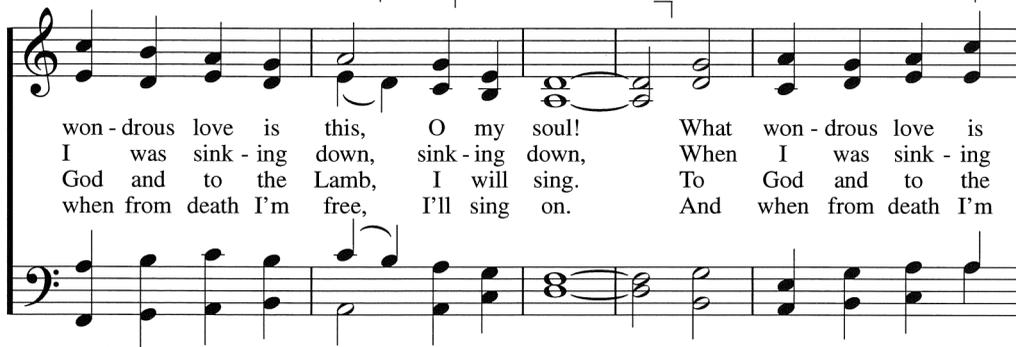
Dress up like members of royalty. Jesus has made you part of His royal family through His suffering.



What Wondrous Love Is This 190



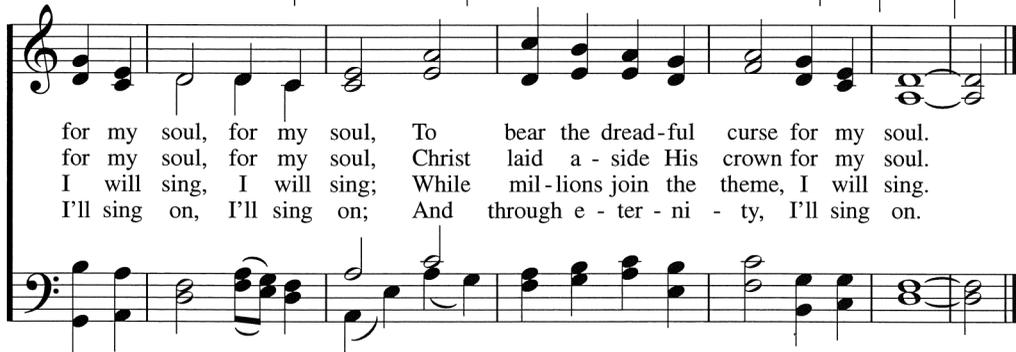
1. What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What
2. When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing down, When
3. To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing; To
4. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; And



won - drous love is this, O my soul! What won - drous love is
I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, When I was sink - ing
God and to the Lamb, I will sing. To God and to the
when from death I'm free, I'll sing on. And when from death I'm



this That caused the Lord of bliss To bear the dread - ful curse
down Be - neath God's right - eous frown, Christ laid a - side His crown
Lamb Who is the great "I AM"; While mil - lions join the theme,
free I'll sing and joy - ful be; And through e - ter - ni - ty,



for my soul, for my soul, To bear the dread - ful curse for my soul.
for my soul, for my soul, Christ laid a - side His crown for my soul.
I will sing, I will sing; While mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.
I'll sing on, I'll sing on; And through e - ter - ni - ty, I'll sing on.

Words: American Folk Hymn

Music: William Walker's *Southern Harmony*; arr. Mark Rice

Sunday, March 25

Scripture: Matthew 27:27-31

²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

What held HIM there?

Meditation:

When I think of love that shows depth...I may think of a marriage that has stood through the trials of life... "For richer or for poorer, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health" ...or a true friendship, where one friend faithfully sticks by another through the thick and thin of life. There seems to be one common thread in those relationships...sacrifice. When necessary, they are willing to be very uncomfortable for the good of the other.

We all know that the depth of love in our marriages and friendships can grow, but as I consider what took place as recorded in Matthew 27:11-31, I'm learning that God's love doesn't need to grow, because His love is demonstrated completely and perfectly in Christ. My love and worship needs to grow as I consider this ultimate act of love for me.

"How deep the Father's love for us":...?

Christ's and the Father's sacrifice...the Creator of the universe, who has no beginning or ending; who knows the number of hairs on my, Pilate's, Barabbas', the chief priests', the elders', the Jew's, the Roman cohorts', and all of mankind's heads; the one who spoke us into being; and the Holy One who knows the full extent of all our sins...not only leaves a perfect place with His Father and takes human form, but willingly lets His created beings falsely accuse Him and harm Him!

"How vast beyond all measure"...think with me...Jesus doesn't defend himself against the false charges brought against Him. A notorious criminal goes free in His place, and those he gives breath to speak yell, "Crucify Him!"

Holiness—true perfect innocence, the Creator willingly allows one that He created to take a whip consisting of several leather strands attached to a wooden handle, and that

contained bits of metal or bone attached to those strands, to whip Him. His wrist would have been bound high above His head and to a post. This scourging literally tore flesh from His back (sometimes scourging even exposed internal organs).

*How deep the Fathers love for us
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son,
To make a wretch His treasure!*

After reading the description of a scourging, not to mention what a Roman crucifixion was like, I'm tempted to think that it can't get any worse than that. But what happens when we consider the holiness of God in this sacrifice of love for us?...the guilt and shame of *our* sin. But wait a minute...they also mocked their Creator, pressed a crown of thorns (long ones!) into His head. They struck Him with their dirty fists and spat on Him, they beat him on the head with what would have been similar to a broom handle!

*How great the pain of searing loss
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One,
Bring many sons to Glory.*

Indeed... "How deep the Father's love for us!" And we just scratch the surface in our understanding!

Rodney Landes, Deacon

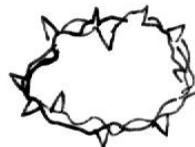
Main Ideas Made Simple from

Matthew 27:31

The soldiers were making fun of Jesus. They thought it was crazy for a man such as Him to proclaim Himself a king! Of course, we know Jesus is the King over all kings. Sometimes kings go into battle. The soldiers knew about battle, but they did not understand that Jesus was going into battle. Jesus was going into battle on the cross: a battle to win our souls and set us free from sin and death!

Activity:

Make a coat of arms for your royal family. Put symbols on it that show you are a son or daughter of the King! In the olden days, a coat of arms declared to all who saw it what family you belonged to. We belong to the family of God. A coat of arms is also a shield. Jesus is our Shield and Protector.



Monday, March 26

Scripture: Mark 15:22-47

²² And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull).
²³ And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. ²⁴ And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. ²⁵ And it was the third hour when they crucified him. ²⁶ And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” ²⁷ And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, ³⁰ save yourself, and come down from the cross!” ³¹ So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³² Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

³³ And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ³⁵ And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.” ³⁶ And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” ³⁷ And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

⁴⁰ There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹ When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

⁴² And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. ⁴⁵ And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. ⁴⁶ And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. ⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

Song: O, to See the Dawn

*O, to see the dawn of the darkest day;
Christ on the road to Calvary.
Tried by sinful men, torn and beaten, then
Nailed to a cross of wood.*

Refrain:

*This the pow'r of the cross:
Christ became sin for us.
Took the blame, bore the wrath;
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

*O, to see the pain written on Your face,
Bearing the awesome weight of sin.
Ev'ry bitter thought, ev'ry evil deed
Crowning Your bloodstained brow.*

*Now the daylight flees;
Now the ground beneath
Quakes as it's Maker bows His head.
Curtain torn in two, dead are raised to life—
"Finished!" the victory cry.*

*O, to see my name written in the wounds,
For through Your suffering I am free.
Death is crushed to death,
Life is mine to live,
Won through Your selfless love!*

Last Refrain:

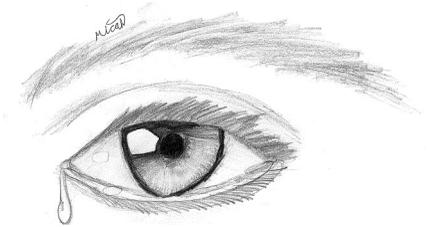
*This the pow'r of the cross:
Son of God—slain for us.
What a love, what a cost!
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

*Words & music by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend
©2005 Thankyou Music*

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Mark 15:46

Imagine the pain and sorrow of taking the lifeless body of Jesus, your beloved friend, and gently wrapping it for burial. Killed! Your friend, killed! Gone. Sadness. Grief. Loss. Many of His friends had heard Him say that He would come back from the dead, but it looked too impossible. His body was wrapped, and laid in a tomb. How could they hope any longer?



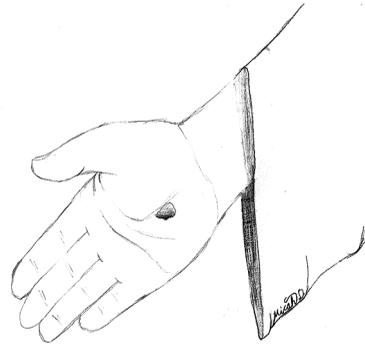
Activity:

Pick a nice sheet and gently wrap a willing family member in it (if no one feels comfortable, pick a favorite stuffed animal or doll). Imagine how sad you would feel as you cover the face of the one you love, thinking you will never see that sweet face again.

Tuesday, March 27

Scripture: Mark 15:37-39

³⁷ And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"



Meditation:

Every year around Easter Becky and I celebrate another year of marriage! Another way to think of Easter is the anniversary of our groom, Christ, giving his life to purchase for himself his bride, the Church. More specifically, He died to make you and me his bride.

I love verse 38, "and the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" because of what it signifies. It is now possible for us to come into God's presence. Not only that, we can have a personal and intimate relationship with our groom, Christ. God has given us marriage as a picture of the relationship He desires to have with us. Obviously, marriage between a husband and wife is intimate. He desires the same with us. At Christ's death, all of this was made possible. Until then, the veil in the temple separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple where men dwelt. The Holy of Holies was the earthly dwelling place of God's presence. No one was permitted beyond the veil except the high priest, once a year, to enter into God's presence for all of Israel and make atonement for their sins.

When we think of a veil, we think of thin white mesh that a bride wears. The temple veil was anything but that! The temple veil is thought to have been four inches thick and sixty feet tall! It represented the barrier our sin had created, making us unfit to enter God's presence. When Christ's flesh was being torn for us on the cross, He was also tearing the temple veil so that we now have free access to the Father. As you read the rest of the text, you see in detail the high price our groom paid to purchase us, his bride. May we rejoice in this season, our anniversary with our groom, Christ.

Gary Shickel, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Mark 15:37-39

In the temple there was a thick veil that separated the Holy of Holies (where God made His presence known) from the rest of the temple. Only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies. When Jesus died on the cross, He removed sin from those who would trust in Him.

Remember—sin separates us from God. God tore the veil in the temple to show us that now we could come into His presence! Jesus took our sin upon Himself!

Activity:

Get some fabric scraps and tear them from top to bottom. Rrrrrrip! No more veil to separate the Holy of Holies! Rrrrrrip! “I am no longer separated from God!”

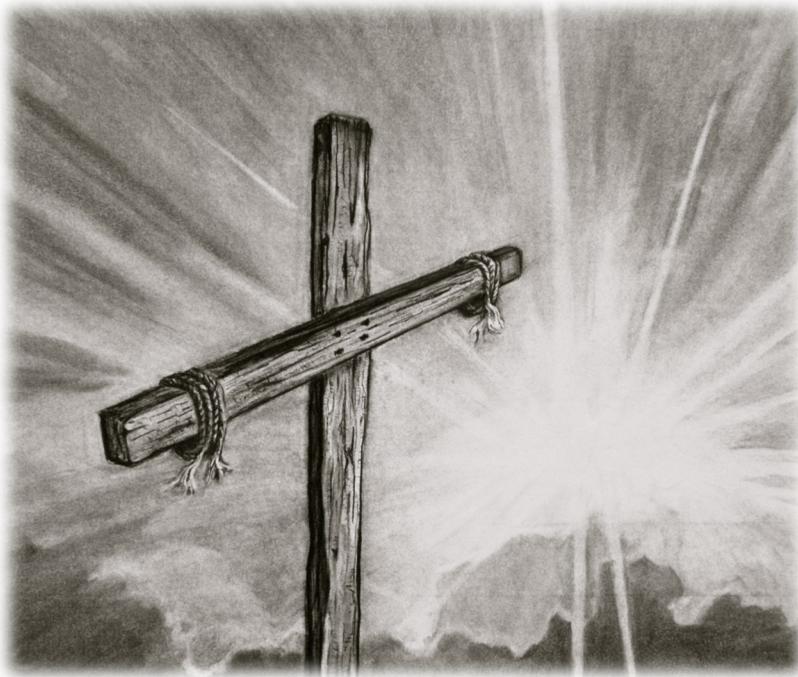


Wednesday, March 28

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11

¹ So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to

be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



Song: Jesus Shall Reign

*Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.*

*People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.*

*Blessings abound where'er He reigns;
The pris'ner leaps to lose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.*

*Where He displays His healing power
Death and the curse are known no more;
In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost*

*Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honors to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud amen!*

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719; based on Psalm 72

Music: John Hatton, 1793

Fourth Verse: Burrell McCombe

Main Ideas Made Simple from Philippians 2:3-4

Jesus died on the cross so that we would not have to be separated from God. He did what was best for us, at a great cost to Himself. Surely, if Jesus could do that for us, we can honor others above ourselves!

Activity:

Brainstorm as a family ways to honor others above yourself. Hmm...How about doing your brother's or sister's chores, or sharing the last cookie, or thanking mom for dinner?

Thursday, March 29

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-8

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.



Meditation:

The Word to the Philippians is a message from prison. The power of the Roman Empire and the Jewish religious power put Paul in prison. Paul's imprisonment was legal but not just. Legal actions are not always just. Whether detained justly or unjustly, Paul had the conviction that Christ would be exalted in his body. If the Philippians, however, want to console Paul at this difficult time, they need to live in unity: with one mind, one heart, united in spirit and in purpose. For both Paul and for Christ Jesus, in crucial moments of their ministries, the unity of the Church is raised as a petition to the Church herself and to God.

But unity demands humility: considering others as more important than ourselves and seeking not only our own interests but also those of others. This is where unity confronts its greatest difficulties and challenges. This is what makes the difference between a church and a club; between an organism and a mere organization; between a family and a group of persons; between salt that salts and that which has lost its flavor; between light that illuminates the house and that which has been put under the bushel.

The Church of Christ is in crisis because she has incorporated into her reason for being the cultural values of individualism and comfort and has abandoned the attitude of Christ: Who, being God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. The Church holds onto economic, social and political privilege to not lose comfort and well-being.

The Church of Christ is in crisis because she has incorporated into her reason for being the cultural values of power and has abandoned the attitude of Christ of making herself nothing, taking on the nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. Now that the Church has lost the power that was once hers in society, she resists being a servant and becoming flesh in the world as Christ became flesh.

Much theology and much doctrine have been derived from this passage, while very little lifestyle has been derived because the Church does not want to believe that Christ speaks to us not only through his words and concepts but also through his very way of life. For this reason Paul says: Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

Jacinto Hernandez, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Philippians 2:5-8

In our country we often talk about our rights! We have freedom of speech and freedom of religion. We want our rights! But rather than grasp for His rights, Jesus laid aside His rights so that He could serve, even die.

Activity:

Discuss some of the rights we have. How can we use these rights, or set them aside to serve and love others?

Wondrous Love

Wondrous Love

Wondrous Love

Wondrous Love

Good Friday, March 30

Scripture:

Matthew 27:57-61, 28:1-20

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.

⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.

⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

¹ Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great

joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

¹¹ While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers ¹³ and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’

¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Song: Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery

*Come, behold the wondrous myst'ry
In the dawning of the King,
He, the theme of heaven's praises,
Robed in frail humanity
In our longing, in our darkness,
Now the light of life has come;
Look to Christ, Who condescended,
took on flesh to ransom us.*

*Come, behold the wondrous myst'ry:
He the perfect Son of Man,
In His living, in His suffering,
Never trace nor stain of sin.
See the true and better Adam
Come to save the hellbound man,
Christ, the great and sure fulfillment
Of the law, in Him we stand.*

*Come, behold the wondrous myst'ry:
Christ, the Lord, upon the tree;
In the stead of ruined sinners
Hangs the Lamb in victory.
See the price of our redemption;
See the Father's plan unfold,
Bringing many sons to glory,
Grace unmeasured, love untold!*

*Come, behold the wondrous myst'ry:
Slain by death, the God of life;
But no grave could e'er restrain him,
Praise the Lord, He is alive!
What a foretaste of deliv'rance;
How unwavering our hope:
Christ in power resurrected;
As we will be when He comes.*

*Matt Papa, Matt Boswell, and Michael Bleecker,
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Main Ideas Made Simple from

Matthew 27:57-60

This day is called “Good Friday.” When we think about the body of Jesus—wounded, broken, bloody, dead—it is hard to think of this Friday as good. But Jesus considered it good. Shedding His blood to pay the price for our sin was exactly what He had come to do! Still, we have the sadness of His lifeless body in the tomb. Good Friday, but *sad* Friday.

Activity:

Plant some seeds in peat pots. The seeds look dead. We bury them, but we are full of hope! We know that in a few days life will spring up!

Saturday, March 31

Scripture:

Matthew 27:57, 28:1

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

¹ Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

Meditation: A Day in Between

Saturday was a day in between the two most significant events in the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. You can imagine the sadness in the hearts of the women as they approached the tomb that held the body of Jesus. Jesus had been put to death on the cross and His body lay in a borrowed tomb. These two women, as well as His disciples, believed they would see Him no more. Their dreams and hopes seemingly had been dashed. Surely they thought the Roman government and Jewish leaders had won. And now His tomb was even being guarded by Roman soldiers and maybe they would not even be allowed to approach the tomb. They had probably spent the day after His crucifixion in a daze, trying to make sense of all that had happened. Their hearts were heavy with sadness as they looked back over the events of yesterday and the years of being with Jesus, remembering especially how He had loved and cared for them. I'm sure the day was spent reminiscing of all that He had spoken to them, of trying to understand all that He had shared with them and recalling perhaps even some of the Old Testament Scriptures that He had spoken of. Surely all these thoughts were present as they now approached His grave.

Perhaps you also have suffered the loss of a loved one and know the heartache of placing them in their resting place. Your thoughts turn to remembering all the experiences as you had shared life together. Remorse floods your very soul and tears overflow as you recall special moments in their life. Perhaps you cannot even believe what has happened. Maybe despair has set in or disappointment has even risen in your mind and your thoughts

turn to asking, how can this be happening to me? Your faith may even be tested.

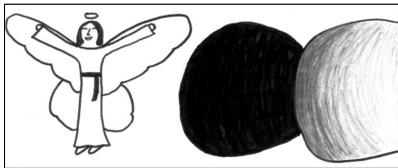
Take heart! For words of encouragement awaited these women, “He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said.” These are the words of hope; they bring forth the “Alleluia” from our lips. They are tomorrow’s joys: the redeeming work is done. For just as the words of promise of the resurrection of our Savior awaited these women, we too have the promise of the resurrection to all who have placed their faith in Christ. These are the words of comfort (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Ken Van Sickle, Elder

Main Ideas Made Simple from

Matthew 28:1

Saturday. The friends of Jesus awakened in the morning. Grief. Sadness. Sorrow. These emotions wrapped around them, smothering them. They did not want to think about the awful day. Was it just yesterday? Their friend had died a horrible death. They didn’t want to think about it, but they could not help it. Heavy, heavy hearts. Mary was looking at the grave. Oh, we can imagine how they might have felt, but we know the rest of the story. That grave won’t cradle the body of Jesus for long! That tomb will soon be empty!



Activity:

Make Resurrection Rolls

Ingredients:

- * 1 can refrigerated crescent roll dough
- * 8 large marshmallows
- * Melted butter
- * Cinnamon
- * Sugar

Directions:

- ◆ Give each child one triangle-shaped section of crescent roll.
 - ◇ *This reminds us of the tomb in which Jesus was laid.*
- ◆ Each child takes one marshmallow.
 - ◇ *Remember the sweetness of Jesus.*
- ◆ Dip the marshmallow in the butter and roll in cinnamon and sugar mixture.
 - ◇ *This reminds us of the oils and spices used to anoint the body with upon burial.*
- ◆ Lay the marshmallow on the dough and carefully wrap it around the marshmallow.
 - ◇ *Jesus was wrapped in the cloth.*
- ◆ Make sure all seams are pinched together well (otherwise the marshmallow will ooze out of the seams as it cooks).
- ◆ Bake according to package directions.
- ◆ Cool completely.
- ◆ Break open the roll and the marshmallow is no longer there.
 - ◇ *When the tomb was opened, the body of Christ was no longer there!*
- ◆ Eat and celebrate. *We know the end of the story!*

Easter Sunday, April 1

Scripture & Meditation: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 13-18, 57

Today, we celebrate Easter, not just any holiday, but rather a foundation of our faith! The truth is that more than 2000 years ago, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, arose from the dead! Here are the plain facts from the apostle Paul written in I Corinthians 15:3-8 (ESV):

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

What makes this so foundational? Paul continues in verses 13-18 (ESV):

¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

As I put this meditation together, the holiday season is fast approaching. Christmas and Easter are often considered the bookends of our faith. Christmas celebrates His birth, which is the beginning of the abolishing of sin. “For, today in the city of David there has been born for you a *Savior*, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Easter celebrates the resurrection which celebrates the abolishing of the last enemy, *DEATH*. (I Corinthians 15:26). Although this side of heaven we continue to groan inwardly as we wait for the fullness of our adoption as sons, the *redemption of our bodies*, (Romans 8:23) we also groan with *HOPE* since our perishable (mortal) bodies will one day be imperishable (immortal) (1 Corinthians 15:53).

“...but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory (over sin & death) through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 15:57).

Greg Becker, Elder

Song: Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

“Christ, the Lord, is risen today,”

Alleluia!

Sons of men and angels say;

Alleluia!

Raise your voice and triumphs high;

Alleluia!

Sing, ye heavens, and earth, reply;

Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King;

Alleluia!

Where, O death, is now thy sting?

Alleluia!

Dying once He all doth save;

Alleluia!

Where thy victory, O grave?

Alleluia!

Love’s redeeming work is done;

Alleluia!

Fought the fight, the battle won,

Alleluia!

Death in vain forbids Him rise;

Alleluia!

Christ has opened paradise;

Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led,

Alleluia!

Following our exalted Head;

Alleluia!

Made like Him, like Him we rise;

Alleluia!

Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

Alleluia!

Charles Wesley

Main Ideas Made Simple from

1 Corinthians 15:3b-5, 57

He is alive! Not only did Jesus die—shedding His blood for our sins—but then He came back from the dead, defeating death itself! We no longer need to be afraid of death! HE IS RISEN!

Activity:

Celebrate! Sing, paint, dance, color, shout, draw, jump, eat, smile, laugh, pick flowers, run, hug someone! CELEBRATE! When someone says to you, “He is risen!” answer this way, “He is risen indeed!”



312 Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four systems. Each system includes a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The first system contains four numbered verses. The second system contains a single line of lyrics. The third system contains a single line of lyrics. The fourth system contains a single line of lyrics. The score concludes with a double bar line.

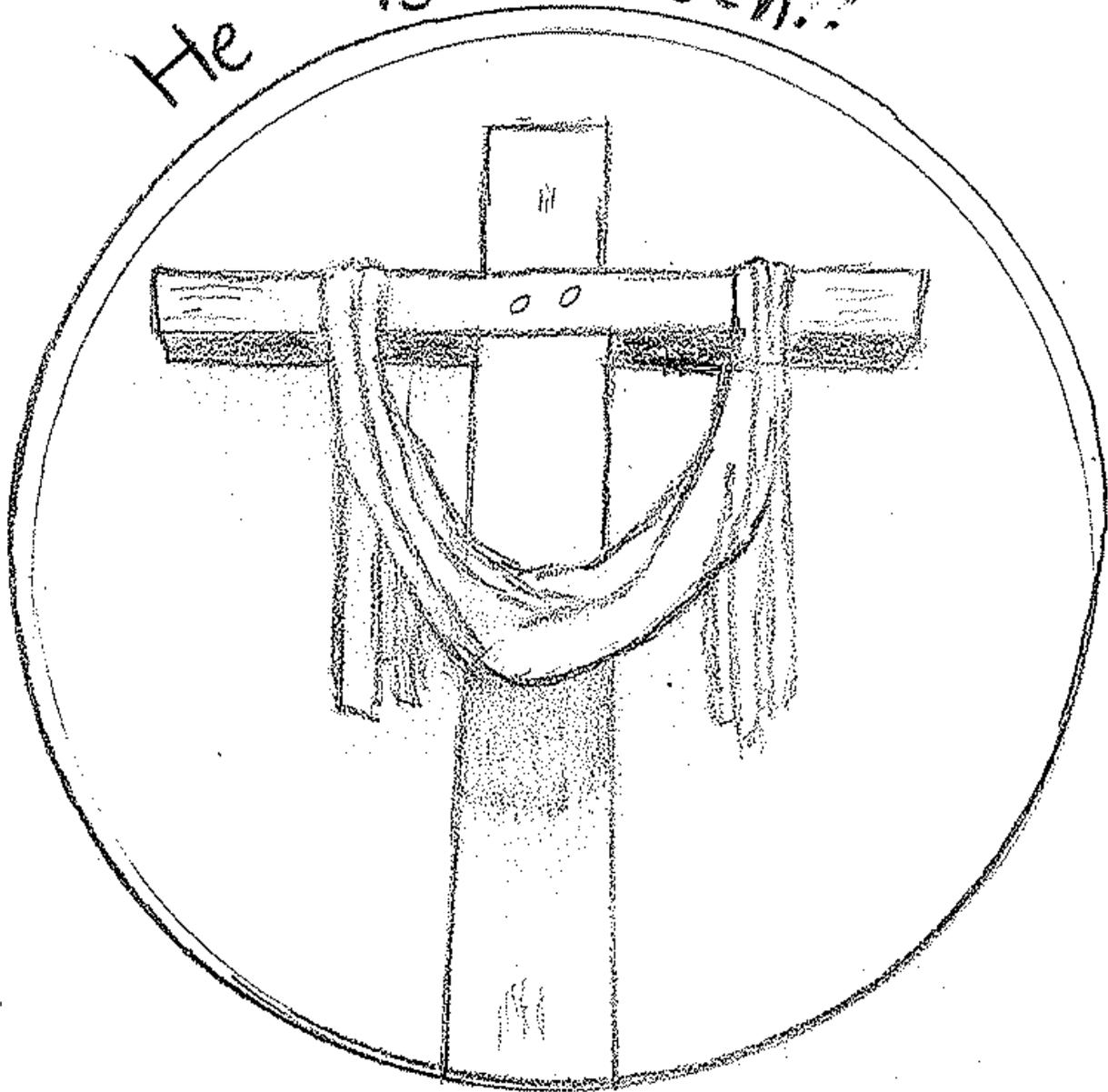
• 1. Christ the Lord is risen to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!
• 2. Lives a - gain our glo - rious King, Al - le - lu - ia!
• 3. Love's re - deem - ing work is done, Al - le - lu - ia!
• 4. Soar we now where Christ has led, Al - le - lu - ia!

Sons of men and an - gels say: Al - le - lu - ia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Al - le - lu - ia!
Fought the fight, the bat - tle won, Al - le - lu - ia!
Fol - l'wing our ex - alt - ed Head, Al - le - lu - ia!

Raise your joys and tri - umphs high, Al - le - lu - ia!
Dy - ing once He all doth save, Al - le - lu - ia!
Death in vain for - bids Him rise, Al - le - lu - ia!
Made like Him, like Him we rise, Al - le - lu - ia!

Sing, ye heav'ns, and earth, re - ply: Al - le - lu - ia!
Where thy vic - to - ry, O grave? Al - le - lu - ia!
Christ hath o - pened Par - a - dise, Al - le - lu - ia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Al - le - lu - ia!

He is Risen!!



296 Hallelujah, What a Savior!



1. "Man of sor - rows!" what a name For the Son of God who came
2. Bear - ing shame and scoff - ing rude, In my place con - demned He stood,
3. Guilt - y, vile and help - less we, Spot - less Lamb of God was He;
4. Lift - ed up was He to die, "It is fin - ished," was His cry;
5. When He comes, our glo - rious King, All His ran - somed home to bring,



Ru - ined sin - ners to re - claim! Hal - le - lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!
Sealed my par - don with His blood; Hal - le - lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!
Full a - tone - ment! can it be? Hal - le - lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!
Now in heav'n ex - alt - ed high: Hal - le - lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!
Then a - new this song we'll sing: Hal - le - lu - jah, what a Sav - ior!

