



DEVOTIONAL

eyewitnesses
to **JESUS**

February 26 - April 14, 2023

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION:

Luke 9:18-20

¹⁸ Once when Jesus was praying alone, with only the disciples near him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?”

¹⁹ They answered, “John the Baptist; but others, Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has arisen.”

²⁰ Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “The Messiah of God.”

Saturday, February 25, 2023

Read Luke 7:1-10 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

How does this passage tie in with last week's teaching about humility? The power of God?

Sunday, February 26, 2023

We welcome all to worship!

9 am traditional service.

10:30 am contemporary South Ridge service.

Live streamed on FPCAmbler.org, Facebook, and YouTube.



Prayer Practice

Read Psalm 103.

Pause after each line to reflect and personalize.

You may want to spend all week praying through this Psalm.

Bill Brams wrote this week's devotions.

Monday, February 27, 2023

Read: Luke 7: 1-2

Reflect: This passage follows Luke's Sermon on the Plain which parallels the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. Capernaum was on the north shore of the sea of Galilee and is mentioned in all the gospels. The Roman centurions, although gentiles, often showed character to be admired by the Jews. Here we have a centurion who expressed great concern for his slave.

Prayer: Dear Lord help me be as empathetic as the Roman centurion and offer comfort to others in need. I pray not only for empathy but to take action to assist others in distress. I ask this in the name of our savior Lord Jesus.

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Read: Luke 7: 3-4

Reflect: In this account the centurion enlists Jewish elders to connect with Jesus. In the Matthew account the centurion talks directly to Jesus. Clearly the centurion had heard all about Jesus and was willing to ask for Jesus' to help his valued slave.

Prayer: My dear Lord Jesus so often many of us are reticent to seek help from others. We do so more readily for others but help me also do so for myself. The centurion reminds me that help directly or indirectly can be there for us if we find strength in you and just ask.

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Read: Luke 7: 5-6

Reflect: It is curious to me that the centurion who helped build a synagogue and was willing to ask Jesus for help did not otherwise feel worthy. We also are humbled and feel unworthy when we seek help from God. particularly for self-help but I believe less so on behalf of others.

Prayer: Gracious God, we are broken and imperfect people and often do not feel worthy just like the centurion. Help us recognize your free gift of grace and to seek you out as our loving Father who will always listen to us.

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Read: Luke 7: 7-8

Reflect: Not the best side of the centurion. Quoting his authority to Jesus is all that should matter. Of course, Jesus, this will not take much effort. All you need to do is speak a healing word. Jesus turns what I perceived as negative speaking into a positive response. Stay tuned.

Prayer: My loving Jesus, you can find the best in each of us. I ask that you help me discover my gifts that might advance your kingdom. Dear Jesus, I am broken and imperfect but you still love me and are please to use even me. I give thanks for your love.

Friday, March 3, 2023

Read: Luke 7: 9-10

Reflect: In what I perceived as imposing his authority on Jesus; Jesús found something amazing. The centurion believed that Jesus could heal with some simple words which demonstrated his great faith. What do we need faith to believe?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, like the centurion help me believe in all that you can do. My faith can waiver. Please guide me to a steadfast faith in you each day.

Saturday, March 4, 2023

Read Luke 8:26-39 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.
Where can you see yourself in this story?

Sunday, March 5, 2023

Come, let us worship together!

9 am traditional service and 10:30 contemporary

Can't make it in? Join us online on YouTube, Facebook, or
[FPCAmbler.org](https://www.fpcambler.org).

This week's devotions are the gift of Bill Brams.

Monday, March 6, 2023

Read: Luke 8: 26-28

Reflect: The tombs were isolated burial grounds and generally places to be avoided. Jesus intervenes, casting out the legion of demons from the man. Healing and casting out demons were frequent parts of Jesus' ministry and a surprise to many around him. Unlike many others that Jesus healed, the demon possessed man was fearful of Jesus.

When I think of Jesus' interaction I am always struck by the diversity of his encounters. He ministered to what we would describe today as the underdog, the forgotten the outcast. Every man or woman can easily relate to Jesus' ministry no matter their status.

Prayer: Gracious God, there are so many things that can beset our bodies. some of the spirit and some more physical. I prayer for comfort for me and others that are suffering whatever the malady. I ask this in the name of your blessed son Jesus.

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Read: Luke 8: 29-31

Reflect: The man's response of Legion is viewed as the demons responding and indicating their great number possessing the man. A Roman legion was 6,000. The abyss was considered a bottomless pit to be avoided by the horde of demons. Clearly, they fear Jesus and his powers.

I have never felt fearful of Jesus as my focus has always been on his fatherly appeal and great love for us. However, there is the judgment day coming, which is not to be ignored.

Prayer: My dear Lord Jesus, your powers are beyond our comprehension. My faith can know no bounds when I am in your hands. Please help me accept your embrace and to reach out to you for strength each day.

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Read: Luke 8: 32-33

Reflect: Pigs were considered unclean by the Jews. Jesus curiously consents to the demon's request. They perished in the deep waters, perhaps, a symbolic abyss.

When I reflect on Jesus' action there is so much to consider. Those tending the pigs had a job, the owner of the pigs had something of great value. Although the Jews considered them unclean, they were food for many. In the moment Jesus weighs all things and chooses to focus on the evil posed by the demons and the benefit to healing the demon possessed man. t

Prayer: Again, our Lord Jesus, you are all powerful and sovereign in our earthly environs. You are our protector and the architect of all things we see and don't see. Help me to treasure all we have been given on this earth and to be in your gracious hands each day. Give me strength to overcome the trials I will surely face and focus on your gift of salvation.

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Read: Luke 8: 34-37

Reflect: The people of the town had ostracized the demon possessed man. He lived naked and in chains at the isolated tombs and his behavior was disturbing. To see him clothed and right thinking was beyond their comprehension, so they asked our Lord Jesus to go.

When I see something beyond my comprehension, how do I react? Such a good question for each of us to ask. The towns people told Jesus to leave! Can we ask the Holy Spirit to show us Jesus in every circumstance?

For me, the actions and miracles of Jesus are so often beyond comprehension and belief. They are a test of our faith and yet I am led to believe.

Prayer: Jesus, our savior and redeemer, sometimes your powers are beyond comprehension and in our weakness we can become fearful. Jesus, please help me channel my fears and imperfections to focus on your gift to us of grace.

Friday, March 10, 2023

Read: Luke 8: 38-39

Reflect: It is curious to me that at other times Jesus asks those that have benefitted from his healing to stay silent and not spread the word of his miracles. This time he specifically asks the man to spread the word of what had happened.

We are asked as Christians to spread the good news to others. Do I? Do you? I ponder this often and know I fall short but can do so much more.

Prayer: My gracious lord Jesus, you have given us so many teaching moments in the scriptures. Guide me to seek and to discern your word so my faith can grow. Help my faith to continue to guide me to further your kingdom on this earth. Help me to encourage others to seek and find Jesus. We ask this in Jesus' name. AMEN!

Saturday, March 11, 2023

Read Luke 9:18-27 to prepare for tomorrow's sermon.

Jesus asked, "Who do the crowds say I am?" Who do YOU say he is?

Sunday, March 12, 2023

Celebrate Sabbath.

Our traditional worship meets at 9 am
and contemporary at 10:30 am.

Both are livestreamed on Facebook, YouTube, and FPCAmbler.org.
Join us!

This week's devotions are based on Luke 8:40-48 and are the gift of Debra Lee

Monday, March 13, 2023

Read: Luke 8: 40-48

Reflect: The story of the Hemorrhaging Woman is in three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It takes place within a larger story. Jesus is on his way to the home of Jairus, a synagogue leader, to heal his dying daughter, and is surrounded by a huge crowd that is crushing in on him! Despite it being nearly impossible to get close to him, a woman who had been suffering 12 years with a painful bleeding condition that doctors couldn't heal, crawled through the crowd, in an act of bold desperation, to get close enough to Jesus to touch the end of his cloak. Not only did she suffer from a medical condition (that is treatable today), but also suffered emotionally because she was considered "unclean" and was an outcast in Jewish society. Anyone who even touched her was also considered unclean, including Jesus and the people in the crowd. Her presence in the crowd would have been prohibited.

One can only imagine the desperation this woman felt, the horrible isolation, ridicule, condemnation, shame. She spent all her money on doctors who couldn't heal her. She was a total outcast from her family and society. If she had been married, her husband would likely have divorced her. If she had children, she couldn't care for them. She couldn't worship at the Temple. People would skirt around her, avoiding touch, or even friendly gestures. Her only hope for healing was Jesus. Think of a time when you felt hopeless with nowhere to turn. Think of that space and ask God to show you where Jesus was in that space.

Prayer: Lord, your healing compassion extends to all who suffer. May our suffering draw us close to you, and as we focus on you, may we find hope and faith in your healing power, and grow more into your character.

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Read: Luke 8: 40-48

Reflect: Immediately upon touching the edge of his cloak, her bleeding stopped. In an instant, Jesus did what no doctor in twelve years had been able to do. This proves the power of Christ, of course, but it also illustrates an important point about Jesus and the Law, that through Jesus the penalties of the Law are reversed--the woman did not make Jesus unclean by touching Him — He made her clean.

Prayer: Lord, it is often through illness, pain, and turmoil that we draw close to you. We have need of your merciful touch, and through the example of this woman in your Word, we are assured that when we reach out to you, we can trust in your comfort, compassion, and healing.

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Read: Luke 8:40-48

Reflect: Because of the huge crowd surrounding Jesus, the hemorrhaging woman went unnoticed by the disciples and the throng when she made her way close enough from behind to touch the hem of his cloak. But Jesus felt the power go out from him, and asked, “Who touched me?” Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.” But Jesus insisted on knowing who it was who touched him.

He could have continued moving through the throng on his way to the home of Jairus without stopping, but he wanted to meet her face to face, and to acknowledge her. How has Jesus acknowledged you when you’ve reached out to Him in times of suffering?

Prayer: Precious Savior, my heart is full, knowing that even the least of us matter to you, that you desire to meet us face to face and acknowledge our faith and heal us in our suffering. Help us to notice your healing presence.

Thursday, March 16, 2023

Read: Luke 8:40-48

Reflect: When the woman realized she couldn't go unnoticed, she came trembling and fell at Jesus's feet and told everyone around her why she had touched him and about how she had been healed instantly.

Imagine her simultaneous emotions of fear, awe, and gratitude once she realized she couldn't go unnoticed. The fear of being "caught" in the crowd of men where she wasn't supposed to be in the first place in her "unclean" illness, and the awe of coming face to face with the renowned Jesus who had healed her.

This shows we can come to Jesus no matter what, without fear of rejection or condemnation, and with faith he can heal us. Have you ever felt that you were to blame for your suffering, condemned yourself somehow for illness or heartache?

Prayer: Lord, you desire to meet and acknowledge, us no matter what. You don't condemn us, but comfort and heal us in the midst of our suffering. We need not fear or be ashamed to come into your presence of perfect love and acceptance. You fill us with awe and gratitude. May we be filled with the Holy Spirit and extend the same compassion you show us to others.

Friday, March 17, 2023

Read: Luke 8:40-48

Reflect: After the woman fell at Jesus' feet, and in the presence of all the people, told why she had touched him and that she had been healed, Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in Peace."

Jesus "adopted" her into the family of God, calling her "Daughter." Imagine, after all the years of shame and rejection, being called "Daughter" by the Lord and receiving not only healing, but his blessing. One can only imagine the sheer joy and gratitude beyond what words can describe. I wonder how she lived out the rest of her days as a Daughter of God and disciple of Jesus. Can it inspire our own discipleship and faith in Jesus' healing power and love for us?

Prayer: Dear Lord, Help me to remember the great faith that the hemorrhaging woman showed. And to boldly come to you when I need healing of any kind—physical, emotional, or spiritual—knowing that you will always help me. I can also draw near to other people who are sick instead of distancing myself from them. I can pray boldly for their healing as well. I can offer compassion and show them that they are not alone. In Jesus' Precious Name, Amen.

Saturday, March 18, 2023

Read Luke 14:1-11 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Where do we see Kingdom values and priorities that differ from those of our culture?

Sunday, March 19, 2023

You are welcome here!

9 am traditional service 10:30 am contemporary South Ridge service.

Live streamed on FPCAmbler.org, Facebook, and YouTube.

Monday, March 20, 2023

Read: Luke 14:1

Reflect: The Pharisees invited Jesus for lunch after services. Such a nice way to spend the Sabbath, right? But their motives were anything but pure. They were carefully watching Jesus, waiting for an opportunity to accuse him of some punishable crime. Have you ever been in such a position? A situation in which people are just waiting for you to mess up? Contrast with our all seeing, all loving God. We DO mess up and we cannot hide from him. And yet God's stance toward us is forgiveness for all who believe. Jesus now sits at the Father's right hand, advocating for us. By his wounds we are healed, by his sacrifice, we are forgiven. On our part, thanksgiving and gratitude, not fear and condemnation, even as we are seen by the Almighty God.

Prayer: Lord God, thank you that you watch over us, always with eyes of mercy and grace. Help us to extend that same generous grace to others.

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Read: Luke 14:1

Reflect: Jesus was under scrutiny as he dined with the Pharisees and we are, too. In 2 Corinthians 3:2-3, Paul explained that we are letters from Jesus, that all men read; and that the letters are not written with ink, but with the Holy Spirit, and not on paper, but on our own hearts. We are the only kind of Bible many will ever read. We are called to live worthy of our holy calling and people are watching. Of course, we will mess up. What we do when we do mess up is important and powerful. Do we try to excuse it away? Defend? Hide? Or do we confess, apologize with humility, and ask forgiveness? We have been forgiven much, and have every reason to own our sin and turn to God.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for the example you give us to follow. For showing us what righteousness looks like. And thank you for taking the punishment for my sin to the cross. Help me to admit my sin and ask forgiveness from those I hurt. Thank you for forgiving me.

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Read: Luke 14:7-11

Reflect: Have you ever been asked to move your seat to make way for someone with more status? How embarrassing! Jesus tells his listeners to choose a low place that the host may move them to a spot of greater value. This is part of the upside-down Kingdom of God in which the lowly are lifted up and humility is valued. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up." When we humble ourselves before our God, we become his heir, his beloved child. No greater status than that!

Prayer: Lord Jesus, forgive us from pride that keeps us from receiving your forgiveness. For pride that leads us to do things in our own strength and our own way, instead of allowing your Holy Spirit to fill us, guide us, and use us. Thank you that when we humble ourselves before you, you lift us up!

Thursday, March 23, 2023

Read: Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Reflect: Our culture esteems sports heroes, movie stars, and internet influencers. Contrast with Jesus' description of the blessed. To be poor in spirit is to be humble, to empty ourselves of pride, self-sufficiency, and any sense of entitlement. We enter the kingdom of heaven with empty hands and full hearts. And when we do, we are given status as children of God, "a little lower than the angels."

Prayer: Thank you for the way you rock our world, disturb our worldview, make us re-examine our priorities and values. There is nothing we have that is not from you. We come to you poor and needy and you clothe us with the righteousness of Christ and use us to fulfill your purposes. In you we have significance, honor, forgiveness, and unconditional love. We give you thanks and praise.

Friday, March 24, 2023

Read: Philippians 2:5-10

Reflect: The reading from this week's sermon brings to mind Philippians 2:5-10. Jesus, fully God, humbled himself to become human, taking on a low status, and even submitting to a humiliating death. When we look at Jesus, we see a helpless baby, born in a stable; a refugee fleeing authorities; a young man entering Jerusalem on a donkey. This Jesus is now exalted, now crowned with glory, now sitting at the right hand of God the Father. This Jesus invites us into his kingdom and crowns the humble with love and mercy. Let our RSVP be an resounding "yes!"

Prayer: Jesus, it is mind boggling that you, the glorious King of all kings, you who deserve all honor forever and ever, humbled yourself, walked dusty roads, hung out with sinful people, and died on the cross for sinners...for me. Thank you for making us your own sons and daughters and for loving us the way you do. May we take pride only in you.

Saturday, March 25, 2023

Read Luke 10:38-42 slowly, several times in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Ask God to show you something you haven't seen before.

Sunday, March 26, 2023

Come, let us worship together!

9 am traditional service and 10:30 am. Contemporary.

Can't make it in? Join us online on YouTube, Facebook, or FPCAmbler.org.

This week's devotions are the gift of Suzy Moore

March 27, 2023

Read: Luke 10:38-42

Reflect: In reading our passage I am reminded of the story about the young ensign who had nearly completed his first tour of sea duty when he was given the opportunity to display his ability at getting the ship underway. With a stream of crisp commands, he had the decks buzzing with men and soon the ship had left port and was streaming out of the channel with remarkable efficiency. The deck was abuzz with talk he had set a new record! He glowed at his accomplishment and was not surprised when a seaman approached him with a message from the captain. However, he was a bit surprised that it was a radio message, and even more surprised to read, "My personal congratulations on completing your underway preparation exercise according to the book and with amazing speed. In your haste, however, you have overlooked one of the unwritten rules-make sure the captain is aboard before getting underway." The idea is that God's Manual for Life, the Bible, is our manual for getting our lives underway. However, we must never become so bound to our book or our plans that we forget the Author and the relationship he desires to have with us on the voyage.

Pray: Dear Lord, may we always remember to keep you in every aspect of our lives and never leave home or begin a new relationship or activity without making sure to check in with you and bring you along.

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Read: Luke 10:38-42

'Reflect: We are reminded by author Michelle Christy that Martha's distracted serving led her to a place she did not want to go. Surely, she regrets the way she speaks to Jesus. Yet, Jesus, always patient, invites her to consider a way of serving that is without distraction or self-righteousness. Martha seems to think she has no choice but to serve and worry. Jesus reminds her she has a choice. She can spend time doing the one necessary thing from which all else flows. How easy it is for us to get wrapped up in our list-making and tasks. Perhaps we are thinking that once we get it all done, once everything is taken care of, then we will take time to visit, connect, and be with people. That is also when we think we will have time to pray. Turning first to God will allow for him to do his work in our lives.

Pray: Dear Lord, we have a bit of Martha in us. We want to serve you. We want to make sure everything is just right. We want to do it ourselves, so it gets done. How often we have thought this. How often we have been disappointed in others for not doing what we think they should? How often have we forgotten to turn to you for guidance and help or missed opportunities simply to be with the people you place around us. We know you know...Still, you are patient with us, love us, and wait for us to look to you, lean on you, and believe.

Wednesday, Marcy 29, 2023

Read: Luke 10:38-42

Reflect: We hear from Michelle Christy once again. “We see that Jesus not only acknowledges Mary sitting at his feet, but compliments, applauds, and affirms it. Jesus declares that one thing is needed as his disciple: an attentiveness to Jesus that glorifies his presence, a serving that bears eternal fruit. Mary understands the priority and necessity of choosing to abide with Christ. Jesus gently admonished Martha for being worried and upset-not for serving. Service is a good thing, but sitting at Jesus’ feet is best. We must remember what is most important. The beauty in this is as we sit at Jesus’ feet-as we listen to how he teaches us to be with other people, we learn to share our lives and hearts with other people. It is then that community begins and grows. As we kneel before God in prayer and sit at his feet, we find the discernment, clarity, wisdom, strength, and courage to bring Christ’s loving presence into the world.

Pray: Dear Lord, yes, we have a bit of Mary in us. We are growing in you. We can feel it as we come to better understand what you are teaching us in the familiar story of Mary and Martha. They witnessed and experienced your love, compassion, patience, and heart. We are comforted, emboldened, and assured as we come to learn new ways to serve you by serving others.

Thursday, March 30, 2023

Read: Luke 10:38-42; Matthew 11:28-30

Reflect: Drawing again from author Michelle Christy- So, is it to be Martha or is it to be Mary? The answer is YES. There is a bit of each in us and this is good. As disciples, we are called both to sit and to serve. To abide and bear fruit. Yet, day by day, we become anxious, overwhelmed, afraid, when responsibilities and deadlines approach or the unexpected happens. We begin to feel we have to take care of it all. We forget God's promises to us that he watches over us always and his constant invitation is to come to Jesus for *his* rest as he reminds us in Matthew 11- "Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me: for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Pray: Dear Lord, we acknowledge that we are a little bit Mary and a little bit Martha. We strive to get it all done, we worry that it won't, and we envy those who seem to be focused on visiting and chatting rather than doing. Carry us Lord, yoke us to you, lead us through every tribulation and every joy. Make us aware of your presence in every moment, we pray.

Friday, March 31, 2023

Read: Luke 10:38-42; Philippians 4:2-9

Reflect: My favorite book of the Bible is Philippians. I believe the plight of Euodia and Syntyche was similar to that of Martha and Mary. These two women most likely had to get done the necessary aspects of the nuts and bolts of organizing a Christian Community and needed help so much that Paul asked his loyal yolkfellow (what a great nickname) to help these women who had contended at his side in the cause of the gospel. No doubt they were facing the same frustrations, anxieties and worries faced by Martha and the joys, excitement and peace experienced by Mary in hanging out with Paul in the name of Jesus. Paul gives us all a key to life when he exhorts us to: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Pray: Dear Lord, this day may we witness your love, patience, and peace to all we encounter. May we speak your love, joy, peace and hope in all of our conversations and may we put others before ourselves. As we know Jesus did. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Saturday, April 1, 2023

Read Luke 19:29-44 to prepare for tomorrow's sermon.
Can you get caught up in the praise of the crowd?

Sunday, April 2, 2023

Come celebrate Palm Sunday with us!

9 am traditional service

10:30 am contemporary South Ridge service

Online at FPCAmbler.org, Facebook, or YouTube



Prayer Practice

Praise.

Worship. God for who he is and thank him for your many blessings.

Repent.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you are off course
and turn back to God.

Ask.

Lay your needs and those of others before God
and ask for His loving, wise intervention.

Yield.

Let go of your timing, your plans, your fears and trust God.
His perfect, redeeming will be done.

Monday, April 3, 2023

Read: Luke 19:29-30

Reflect: After so many occasions on which Jesus exhorted his disciples NOT to tell, here Jesus is deliberately setting the stage for a very public reveal. He was about to fulfill prophecy from Zechariah 9:9, “Your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Let’s look too at Galatians 4:4: “When the time had fully come, God sent his Son...” God has his timing and his timing is perfect. It may not be *our* timing. Certainly Martha thought Jesus was late in coming when Lazarus was sick and died. Yet, Jesus showed that his timing was intentional and would bring him glory. How often are we anxious about God’s timing? Can we trust God to work it out?

Pray: Lord God, you reign over all and will redeem every situation. Help us to trust your timing in everything. Often, that means waiting. Sometimes we will see why and sometimes we will have to wait until heaven to understand. We pray now for your will to be done in our lives, in every circumstance, in this world you love and created all in your good time.

Tuesday, April 4, 2023

Read: Luke 19:30-36

Reflect: What kind of king enters the scene on a donkey? Can you imagine King Charles riding a bike into London? Vladimir Putin exchanging a stallion for a pony? President Biden approaching a village in Ryan's PT Cruiser? Here we have the King of all kings riding an unbroken colt. The humility of our Savior is astonishing...and the model for our lives.

Pray: Lord God, King of kings and Lord of lords, we marvel at your humility. Born of a woman, in a stable, a dependent fleeing persecution, washing the dusty feet of your followers. Your "triumphal entry" was on a lowly donkey. Help us to learn from you. To live in humility. To value the lowly. To serve with love.

Wednesday, April 5, 2023

Read: Luke 19:32-37

Reflect: Jesus told his disciples to go ahead of him and take someone's donkey. Without hesitation, they went. The owners asked what they were doing. Can you imagine the scene? When told, "The Lord needs it," they let it go. People threw their cloaks on the dusty ground for the donkey carrying Jesus to walk on, and they praised God for all the miracles they had seen. What was so compelling about Jesus that his disciples obeyed his strange command? That the donkey's owners released the animal? That people threw their needed cloaks down for him? Days later, this same crowd called for Jesus' execution. What might Jesus be asking you to do? What miracles have you seen that cause you to praise him? Will you still honor him if the tide turns?

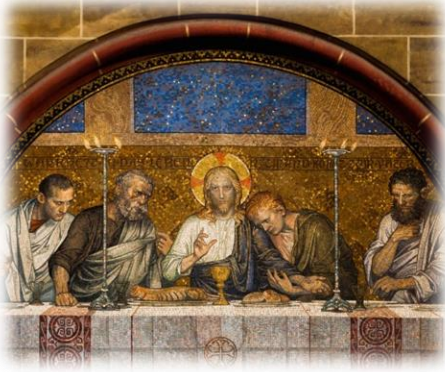
Pray: Lord Jesus, we know that we, too, are fickle people. At times, we are full of faith and in the next moment, we doubt your goodness, your plans, your very existence. Sometimes we follow you with joy. Other times we twist your words or just say no. Help us to stay faithful to you, to honor you with our lives, to praise you forever.

Thursday, April 6

Read: Luke 19:41-44

Reflect: Jesus wept over Jerusalem, a name which means something like “pointing the way to completeness.” To Jesus’ great sorrow, the city rejected the Way with terrible consequences, breaking the heart of the One who would bring her peace. Jesus stands at the door and knocks (Rev 3:20.) Open wide the door and invite him in. Accept the love he offers and surrender all to him. This will bring peace with God and protect you from many sorrows.

Pray: Lord, I open the door of my heart to you. Come in. Let’s sit together. You offer the bread and wine of your own life given for me, for us, in sacrificial love. Help us to give back to you the life you gave to us.



Maundy Thursday, April 6th, 2023 Special Devotion by Bill Brams

Read: Luke 22: 7-27

Reflect: As we read this passage there is such a foreboding since we know what is to come.

Jesus sends the disciples looking for a man with a jar to secure the room. A man with a jar would be highly unusual; therefore, a clear sign to the disciples they found the right man. Jesus is identified as the teacher, true enough, but masking his true identity. Perhaps to thwart or delay Judas' intentions.

So much is weighing on Jesus' mind as the Passover meal is prepared. Jesus' words of the Last Supper make clear that he is near the end. Jesus announces he will be betrayed. Judas seems to have done a good job concealing it is him as the disciples do not seem aware....and then Jesus' marvelous teaching moment occurs on the subject of greatness. This was not the disciple's finest hour as they dispute who among them is the greatest. At his final hours with a betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion they reach a new low. Jesus humbles himself once again when he says to them: "For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves?"

The disciples in many ways are to be admired. After all, where would Christianity be without them. Yet there were so many times they disappointed Jesus.

How many times do I disappoint our Lord? Too many, for sure. Leadership should not be ego driven and sought but comes from our actions and trust in God. Lead by example is the catch phrase.

Prayer: Gracious God, help me to fully gasp your sacrifice for us each time I take communion. Your love for us is boundless. I need to bring a solemnity and deep love for you during each communion.

Help me be a leader in your kingdom on this earth. Help me discover my gifts. Help me recognize that my actions speak loudest. Sometimes like Moses, I find myself asking why me instead of trusting the Holy Spirit to guide me on how best to serve. I ask all this in Jesus's name.



Today's devotion was written
by Suzy Moore

Good Friday, April 7, 2023

Read: Luke 23-32-43

Reflect: Thankfully, we know the cross was not the end, but the beginning. We know that it was the criminal who witnessed Christ at the end who saw Jesus and simply announced that while, he and the other criminal were hanging to their death for deeds deserving this punishment, Jesus had done nothing wrong. Jesus honored the criminal "Jesus remember me when you come into your Kingdom" by assuring him that today, you will be with me in paradise."

Pray: Dear Lord, Lord may our faith lead us to your Kingdom, as well. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

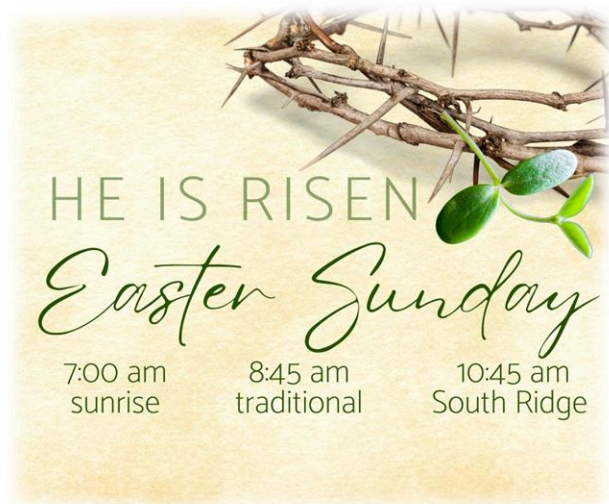
This week's thought-provoking devotions are the gift of Leslie Wise

Saturday, April 8, 2023

Read: Read Luke 23: 50-56

Reflect: The day before Easter can be a busy one, filling Easter baskets, dying eggs and planning for Easter dinner. It is often a time of preparation for Easter Sunday's glorious celebration. Imagine, though, how the disciples may have felt on this Holy Saturday. Jesus was lying broken and lifeless in the sealed tomb. It seemed that death had its final say. The anguish of grieving for Jesus settled into a seemingly unending time of sorrow and lament. Yet, it was far from over. Jesus was experiencing death for us to bring forth life. This was not only an expression of His humanity but of His deep love for us. In the midst of that still, airless vault, life was stirring in the face of death. We have the advantage of the resurrection recorded in the Gospels. We do not grieve as those who have no hope. Jesus gave us that hope by being willing to endure the cross and the grave.

Prayer: Thank you Jesus for Your willingness to endure such grief for our salvation. Help us to remember Your love for us when life may seem to hold no cheer.



Sunday: April 9

Please join us in worship today.

Celebrate Easter morning at the 7:00, 8:45 or 10:45 am services. Live streaming is also available.

Read: John 24:1-24

Reflect: Picture yourself in a doctor's office waiting for test results. The table paper is crinkly, your palms are sweaty, dread permeates the air. Finally, the doctor enters the room. His words are astounding! "Your scan is clean, the spot we examined earlier is gone. We can't explain it, in spite of past medical evidence to the contrary. It is no longer there!" How can such a thing be possible? Imagine the relief and amazement, even disbelief, you might feel at this good news. In John 24, women came at dawn bringing their prepared spices and perfumes to complete the burial of Jesus. They found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. The angels present proclaimed to them; "He is no longer here but He has risen!" Imagine again the wonder and disbelief upon hearing those words. "He is no longer here. He has risen". He has risen indeed! Halleluiah! Receive those Words into your heart today with joy.

Prayer: Thank you God that the tomb received the breath of life. Enter into our airless spaces with Easter triumph and the Good News of Your resurrection.

Monday, April 10, 2023

Read: Mark: 15:42-46 Luke 23: 50-54

Reflect: Joseph of Arimathea is described as a good and righteous man, a prominent, wealthy member of the Council. He was a well-respected member of his Judean community, faithfully waiting for the kingdom of God. He had the courage to boldly ask Pilate for permission to take Jesus' body down from the cross. Joseph wrapped him in linen and placed Jesus in an unused tomb that may have been saved for his own burial. All of this was completed before the Sabbath according to the commandment. Joseph helped to provide Jesus with an honorable burial. Yet, we don't hear about Joseph again in the Bible. What price did he pay for the removal and burial of Jesus body? Did Joseph lose his standing, finances or family? This was a public acknowledgement of his devotion and care for Jesus. What would you be willing to forsake for the sake of the Gospel?

Prayer: Thank you, God, for the example that Joseph of Arimathea has given to us. Grant us the same courage to openly use our gifts in Your service.

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

Read: John 3: 1-16, John 19: 38-42, Luke 23: 50-54

Reflect: Nicodemus assisted Joseph in the burial of Jesus' body. He was described as a ruler of the Jewish people and a man of the Pharisees. He was learned in the Law and the Holy Scriptures. Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of night to discuss His teachings but later he openly brought one hundred pounds of myrrh oils and aloes to assist in Jesus' burial. Joseph of Arimathea was known as a secret disciple. He had not consented to the plan to crucify Jesus but feared the Jewish leaders. I saw myself in both of these men. Like Joseph, I often hide my faith for fear of the judgment of others. I question the sovereignty of Jesus as Nicodemus did in John 3. Yet, a secret disciple and a stealth questioner have their places forever remembered in Scripture. Through this, we are given the hope that God can use even our frail humanity to accomplish all things.

Prayer: Help us have boldness in our lives of faith. Help us not to fear the world but to have courage to share openly our hope in the Gospel with others.

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

Read: Luke 23: 55, 56, Luke 24:1

Reflect: In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the second Sunday after Easter is known as the Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing Women. Who were these faithful women? There are eight women who were identified in the Bible as the Myrrh Bearers. They are Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Salome, Susanna, Mary of Bethany, Martha of Bethany and Mary, the wife of Cleopas. These women and unnamed others cared for Jesus during His public ministry. They prepared the funereal perfumes and myrrh oils needed to finish the burial of Jesus after His crucifixion. Myrrh was used as a perfume or for embalming in biblical times. How can we be a myrrh bearing people? While we might not come bearing spices or perfumes, we can carry the balms needed for the care of others. They might involve a meal, card, phone call, finances, time, or prayer. The gifts you bring may bear the sweet fragrance of the Gospel to those you serve.

Prayer: Help us be myrrh bearing people. Give us wisdom to know what is best to bring to others in need.



Icon of the holy myrrh-bearing women

Thursday, April 13, 2023

Reflect: Consider the words of this Greek Orthodox troparion hymn sung on the Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing Women. Joseph and Nicodemus may also be celebrated on this day.

“The noble Joseph, taking down thy most pure Body from the tree,
Wrapped it clean linen and sweet spices and laid it in a new tomb.
But on the third day, thou didst rise, Oh Lord,
granting the world much mercy.
Verily the angel came to the tomb
and said to the ointment bearing women,
“the ointment is meet for the dead
but Christ has shown to be remote from corruption.
But cry ye, “The Lord is risen, granting the world the great mercy.”
You did command the myrrh bearers to rejoice, O Christ!
By Your resurrection, You did stop the lamentation of Eve, O God!
You did command your apostles to preach: the Savior is Risen.”

Prayer: Thank you God that we no longer lament as Eve. Thank you for the different hymns and observances of those who worship You.

Friday, April, 14, 2013

Listen: If you're able, listen to the St. Matthew Passion by JS Bach in whole or part.

Reflect: These beautiful words are from the 53rd Chorale from this oratorio. I pray they will comfort you as they have me. ([St. Matthew Passion BWV 244 No. 53 Chorale-YouTube](#))

“Commend your way and whatever troubles your heart,
to the trustiest care of him
Who controls the heavens;
He gives clouds, air and winds their paths, course, and track.
He will also find ways where your feet can walk”.

Pray: We are often lost Lord and can't find our way home to You. Help us to trust that your path is true and that you will direct us safely home to life giving pastures again.



First Presbyterian Church of Ambler
4 South Ridge Avenue • Ambler, PA 19002
215.646.3030 fpcambler.org

A place where lives are changed by Christ
and we live out our faith together.

