

Devotions – March 29 – April 4, 2015
By Members of Trinity Lutheran Church
Ishpeming, Michigan

Sunday, March 29

“Preparing for the Journey” - by Rose Larson

Text: John 13:3-5

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

Preparation, we do it every day. We prepare for school or work. We prepare meals or for bed each night. We prepare for the holidays or birthdays each year. We prepare for a journey.

This scripture reading is one that many are familiar with. One where Jesus is acting as a servant and washing people’s feet. Such a simple act of washing...hands, feet body, hair. Water cleanses, refreshes, renews, anoints, blesses, prepares.

A few years ago I had the honor of helping prepare my brother for his final journey. Our family prayed, held hands, cried and comforted each other as my brother “walked on” from this life into his new life with Christ. As a final gift to Jerry, I helped wash his body in preparation for his journey, just as Jesus washed his disciples’ feet in preparation for their journey. A blessing, an anointing.

In the passage it says that Jesus knew that his Father had put everything in his control. That he came from God and would be going back to God. He foresaw his death, had control to change his journey but chose not to.

Jesus was preparing his disciples, his followers, his brothers for their journey without him physically by their side. He was anointing them, blessing them, just as in baptism Jesus prepares, blesses and anoints us for our journey.

Jesus chose his final journey. What journey will you choose?

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, help us in our journey through this life we have. Wash us, anoint us, prepare us. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Monday, March 30

“Our Sinful Lord” - by Pastor Kenneth Lahners

Text: Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”

Are you comfortable with the fact that as a Christian you follow a condemned and cursed man? And a man condemned and cursed, not just by unjust leaders, but by God himself? Paul quotes from Deuteronomy and (while he doesn't include the specific words that anyone hanged on a tree is cursed “by *God*”) this is *God's* law that curses and condemns the wrongdoer.

Are you comfortable with the fact that this Lord you follow is full of sin, burdened down by it, until it overflowed out of every pore of his body? It is because Jesus was a sinful man that he was on the cross. That is why he died; to receive the penalty and curse of God's law for wrongdoing. The world has never known one as sinful as Jesus.

Yet it was not his own sin that led to his crucifixion, to his being cursed by God. It was our sin, yours and mine and the whole world's. He bore *our* sins and received the curse for it. And in exchange he has given us his righteousness and God's blessing. On the cross, that hideous instrument of execution, we see the depths of God's love for us. For there Jesus truly redeemed us from sin and death, from the curse of God's law, from all that keeps us from God.

Let us Pray: Heavenly Father, thank you for the redemption won for us at such great cost by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Help us to walk in faith, knowing that through him the curse of the law has been lifted and we stand before you in assurance of your love and forgiveness. Amen



Tuesday, March 31

“The King of Truth” - Brian Anderson

Text: John 18:37

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

This passage represents the time of judgment of Jesus by Pilate. The word “king” is relative to who says the term. Jesus came to us as our eternal king – and to tell the world the truth. He spent his life testifying the truth to the world. He did not have fancy parties, host heads-of-state, or watch over royal parades as “kings” do today – he had simple disciples. It was not a glamorous life like the modern-day royalty live. His purpose on earth was to speak of God and all of the wonders that God does for us. Jesus says that those who believe him are on the side of what is right. Jesus has been our King for over 2000 years and will be eternally with a lot of people following the truth.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, thank you for coming to us and being our one true king eternally. We can only hope to listen to you and to understand your words so we can better understand the truth. Please watch over us, your students, to help guide us to eternal life with you. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.



Wednesday, April 1

“That Your Faith May Not Fail” - Martha Nurkala

Text: Luke 22:31-34

“Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” And he said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!” Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.”

The words we speak are powerful. They can be an everlasting blessing or they can be hurtful and unforgiving.

The Lord prayed that Simon Peter’s faith would not fail him. Simon told the Lord he would go to jail for him; even die for him. But the Lord said that before the cock crowed three times Simon would deny even knowing him.

How often do we say I would go to jail, even die for someone? Perhaps not ever. But we may say, “I’ll fix that for you,” or “I’ll call you,” or “I’ll visit you,” or “I’ll pray for you,” and then we promptly forget while others wait for our response. How good are our promises and do we mean what we say? Christ knows the intentions of our hearts, even though we don’t and He prays that our faith will not fail.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, keep our words kind and our hearts open to your Holy Spirit that we may follow your will. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.



Thursday, April 2 – Maundy Thursday

“Sorrow Unto Death” - Pastor Kenneth Lahners

Text: Matthew 26:38

Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.”

Just before his arrest, Jesus went to a garden, where he wrestled in his spirit over his coming death. This trial caused him deep sorrow and sadness, even, he said, to the point of death. I suppose most of us would have some measure of sorrow over our impending death, especially such a violent one as Jesus would undergo. Even so, many early critics of Jesus (as well as some modern ones) were turned off that such a savior would be less than heroic.

Yet, while he was fully divine, Jesus was also fully human. It would be understandable that he felt sorrow at what was coming. But it was deeper than that. For his sorrow was not just his own, but that of all humanity. As he bore the sin and death of all, so he bore the sorrows of all. Jesus was reversing the curse on Adam. In the garden, Adam was given a death sentence for his sin, to be borne in sorrow and pain. And so his descendants have received the same. In another garden, Jesus took that curse upon himself, with all the sorrow and pain that it entailed.

Greater sorrow than anyone has known. For your sake.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the sorrows of your Son our Savior. Help us to always thank him for his great sacrifice. Amen.



Friday, April 3 – Good Friday

“Enduring the Insults” - by Pat Phare

Text: Matthews 27:39-43

Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the

King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'"

Jesus Christ died for our sin in a horrible and painful death: nails that pierced his hands and feet, and a crown of prickly thorns placed on his head. While the blood and sweat ran down his tired body, he was offered vinegar for his thirst, but would not drink it.

He suffered in pain and agony and paid for our sins so that we might have eternal life.

He was scorned and spit on by the crowd as the soldiers enjoyed wounding his body with stabs and mocked him to come down from the cross. Would we willingly give our body so that others may live? I think not! Yet, Jesus sacrificed his life and paid our debt so we might live.

Let us pray: Blessed Savior, we praise and thank you for the precious gift you bestowed on us. May your compassion and strength empower us to live a life of faith, to obey your will and to love one another. Amen.



Saturday, April 4

"Flee, Fight or Forgive" by Norman and Mary Johnson

Text: Matthew 26:53-54

Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?

Jesus could have fled from the crowd that came for Him...He could have called to his Father for help. But He knew the promise of salvation was being fulfilled as written in the scriptures.

God could have sent more than twelve legions of angels (a legion being 6,000 in number) and taken Jesus away.

What would your response have been, knowing ahead of time what the end result was to be?

The following is a poem I enjoyed reading by Helen Steiner Rice:

Before the dawn of Easter
There came Gethsemane...
Before the Resurrection
There were hours of agony...
For there can be no crown of stars
Without a cross to bear,

And there is no salvation
Without Faith and Love and Prayer,
And when we take our needs to God
Let us pray as did His son
That dark night in Gethsemane –
“Thy Will, Not Mine, Be Done.”

Let us pray: Dear Heavenly Father, because of your Son’s death we are given salvation. May we give thanks and forever praise your name. AND MAY ALL GOD’S PEOPLE SAY AMEN!
Amen.

