

Pre-Resurrection Sunday Devotional Series

The Early Ministry of Jesus: March 21-25, 2022

The purpose of this devotional series is to take an abbreviated journey with Jesus from the time He performed His first sign, through some of the events surrounding His crucifixion and resurrection. The devotionals pause at key points during His ministry to allow us to reflect upon what each event means for our lives today, with an emphasis on the importance Jesus has for the lives of his followers today.

Please note that the events presented do not represent a complete, or exhaustive list, nor are they ranked by importance. They are provided to give the reader opportunities for reflection and prayer.

How to use these devotionals

- The series will run for four weeks leading up to Resurrection Sunday (Easter)
- A devotional will be provided for Monday through Friday, each of the four weeks
- **Be intentional and be consistent**
 - Choose a time / place where you can be interrupted (e.g., in your car before going into work, at your desk before virtual meetings start, or after the kids have left for school)
 - Set aside at least 15 minutes (more time is always good)
 - Mute phones and other devices to reduce or eliminate distractions
 - Quiet yourself
- First read the entire passage provided
- Pay careful attention to the highlighted verse(s)
- Take time to really think about the thought-starters provided in the “*Points to Think About*” section of each devotional
 - Be honest with yourself
 - Allow the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to truth
 - Make notes on any thoughts that come to mind, or anything that is revealed to you in these moments. (This will also help with content for your prayers)
- The *Prayer Prompts* are provided as key thoughts to launch you into a conversation with God

Allow yourself to be blessed by the experience of time with the Lord!

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Week 1: The Early Ministry of Jesus

Monday: John 2:1-11 Turning Water into Wine

⁴“What has this concern of yours to do with me, woman?” Jesus asked. “My hour has not yet come.” (CSB)

This verse may appear as though Jesus is being disrespectful to His mother, Mary, yet the translated text does not capture the true flavor, or tone, of the original Greek from which it was written. The word, “woman” in this case can be read as, “Woman Dear” or even, “Mother Dear.”

The context for the event is that Jesus left home to begin His public ministry some weeks before, during which time He was baptized by John the Baptist, anointed by the Holy Spirit, then tempted by the devil while fasting for 40 days in the wilderness (Matthew chapters 3 and 4). Jesus then returned to His home community, and His mother asks Him to assist with a catering emergency at a wedding. Jesus respectfully reveals to Mary that He has eternal concerns.

Points to Think About

- What are my life’s priorities?
- Are my priorities for my life, Jesus’ priorities in my life?
- How can I align my priorities with Jesus’ priorities in my life?

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Prayer Prompts

“Heavenly Father, please open my eyes to the distractions and the misguided priorities that I have placed in my life. Help me to align myself with Your priorities and Your will....”

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Tuesday: John 2:13-22 Cleansing the Temple

²¹ *"But he was speaking about the temple of his body."*

The temple was viewed by the Jews as the place that housed the presence of God on earth. It was viewed as sacred and holy; yet, but the time Jesus began His ministry, aspects of the temple had become corrupted by profiteers who were selling items to sacrifice at inflated price. Jesus "cleansed" the temple of the corruption that was defiling this sacred place.

Jesus spoke of His body in terms of "a temple." He had been anointed with the Holy Spirit, and thus His body was the temple, housing the presence of God in the personage of the Holy Spirit. This is no different for us, who are saved, followers of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:19

¹⁹ *"Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,"*

Points to Think About

- How do I *view the reality* of the Holy Spirit's presence of the in my life?
- *Can I sense the power* and presence of the Holy Spirit?
- What *areas of my life need to be cleansed* from corruption, so that I can experience the presence of the Holy Spirit?

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Prayer Prompts

"Heavenly Father, please open my eyes to the corners of my life that are not pleasing to you, and interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit. Please forgive me for _____...."

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Wednesday: John 3:1-7, 16-18 Jesus and Nicodemus

³ Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Birth symbolizes a new life. Jesus came so that those who acknowledge that they are sinners, and accept Him as Lord and Savior, could be born into a new life, free from the absolute death penalty of sin. And, should they follow His teachings and pattern of life, they would enjoy a new life, becoming new persons.

2 Corinthians 5:17

⁵ "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!"

Points to Think About

- Reflect on your life before Christ and the kind of life you would be living today without Him
- What things in your past life would you thank God for removing?
- What are areas of your life that still need to be changed?

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Prayer Prompts

"Lord, I thank You for bringing me out of a life of darkness into your marvelous light! I thank you for changing _____...."

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Thursday: John 4:4-14 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman—"Living Water"

¹⁰ Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would ask him, and he would give you living water.".... ¹⁴ But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life."

Water is a unique and special compound, uniquely created by God. Did you know that you might survive for only 8 to 14 days without food and water, but may be able to survive on only water for upwards of 30 days? Based upon the biblical narrative, water also appears to have been a unique building-block for creation, as God literally hovered over water and nothingness, then spoke creation and order into existence from chaos. It is no wonder why Jesus used water for as an illustration for the gift of His life as an eternal life source.

Jesus says that He will give us living water—Him as source for eternal life!

Points to Think About

- Do I really recognize when I am thirsting for something spiritual in my life?
- What areas of my spiritual life are dry, parched, in need of quenching?

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Prayer Prompts

"God I need you. Even though I have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, I still thirst for you because _____..."

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Friday: John 4:46-53 The Healing of the Official's Son

⁵⁰ "Go," Jesus told him, "your son will live." The man believed what Jesus said to him and departed.

The official, either out of desperation, or great desire, demonstrated extreme faith. It is very easy to lapse into state of complacency until we are in great need. This is often referred to as "foxhole religion," in reference to the amazing need soldiers have for God as bullets are whizzing past their heads and bombs are exploding nearby. But once things calm down, and the dust settles. The need for God becomes distant.

We cannot afford to be complacent and let our faith waiver.

2 Corinthians 5:7

⁷ "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Points to Think About

- Do I really believe?
- How strong is my faith? Do I believe God for only the small things?
- Will my faith stand up against trials and adversity

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Mark 9:23-24

²³ Jesus said to him, "If you can't? Everything is possible for the one who believes." ²⁴ Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

Prayer Prompts

"Heavenly Father, I understand that my entire relationship with You is based upon faith. Please forgive me for my lapses in faith, please open my eyes to all that you do in my life, so that my faith will be strengthened..."