

Pre-Resurrection Sunday Devotional Series

April 11-15, 2022

Week 4

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.

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 are less likely to 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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Monday: John 13:4-17 – Humility to Serve

¹⁴ “So if I, 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 for you.”

Our Lord, Jesus, set aside His royal status to be a humble Servant to humanity (**read Philippians 2:5-8**). In biblical times, sandals were the most common type of footwear. Walking on dusty roads would obviously result in the need for feet to be washed. This task, in wealthier homes, fell up on servants or slaves to wash the feet of their masters.

Here Jesus states, “You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are speaking rightly, since that is what I am,” yet He took the posture of the servant, and washed the disciples’ feet as an example for those who would follow Him. Humility opens the door for serving; therefore, could it be that pride is the real barrier that keeps us from serving God according to His will for us as individuals? Pride can show up subtly in many ways, such as not serving for fear of how it would appear if we don’t perform well.

Points to Think About

- If I am honest, am I willing to do anything in service to God, to forward His agenda here on earth?
- Imagine taking part in foot washing service with my fellow church members. What emotions come to mind? Embarrassment? Disgust? Unease? Discomfort? Joy? Willingness without hesitation?
- Honestly, what prevents me from serving more?

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Prayer Prompts

“Lord, enable me to see pride in my life, and areas where I need to take on the posture of a humble servant, just as my Lord and Savior did...”

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Tuesday: John 17:6-18 – In the World, but not of the World

¹⁵ "I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." (CSB)

Shortly before being taken away to be crucified, Jesus rendered one of the most moving prayers in the Bible. In this prayer, He prayed on behalf of those who would follow Him. Throughout the centuries since His ascension, various followers, often in groups, isolated themselves from the rest of the world to devote themselves to the study of Scripture and prayer. This is called living a monastic life.

Living a monastic life is not necessarily wrong, but Jesus wanted His followers to remain in the world for a number of reasons. However, the interesting point Jesus raises is that we, His followers, are not to be of the world.

Points to Think About

- What does it mean for me not to be of the world?
- How important is it to me to fit in with those around me?
- What aspects of my life seem as though I am not only in the world, but of the world? In other words, would someone who doesn't know me think that I am no different from others based upon my speech, dress, or general behavior?

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Prayer Prompts

"Heavenly Father, there are aspects of my life that still appear to be of the world. Please make them plain to me, and a burden that I must shed, so that the world can see Christ in me..."

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Wednesday: John 17:21-25 – Bound Together in Christ Jesus

²² *“I have given them the glory you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one.”* (CSB)

The Godhead, or Trinity, makes the God we worship unique in all the universe. Three distinct personages, yet they are One. The sheer uniqueness of God makes it difficult for us, mere mortals, to comprehend. Yet, as Jesus continued in His prayer on behalf of those who would follow, He made this bold challenge to His followers to be one as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are One.

This echoes His teaching found earlier in the Gospel of John.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ *“I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*
(CSB)

It is fairly easy to love and demonstrate the bond of unity in Christ to one’s church family. But are we as quick to extend that love to followers of Christ that are not a part of our church fellowship?

Points to Think About

- If someone saw the interaction of our church family, would they see the same type of unity Jesus described between He and God?
- How does the truth that Jesus has given me, freed me? (Think of specific things in your life that you are free from today, and the truth that liberated you.)
- Do I pray for God’s work, and will, to be done in all areas within the body of Christ (All believers)?

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Prayer Prompts

“Gracious God in heaven, forgive me for having a narrow focus when it comes to all who are serving for Your glory within the Body of Christ. Please help me to...”

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Thursday: John 19:30 –

³⁰ “...he said, “It is finished.” Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.” (CSB)

At this moment, Jesus’ work on the cross was complete. While the victory for all mankind, through His resurrection was still a few hours away, the ransom had been paid for humanity’s sins, through His humiliation, torment, suffering, and death. The salvific work of His substitutionary death for us, was done.

It was through Jesus’ suffering and death that we receive grace, forgiveness, and an eternal pardon from permanent separation from God and torment in hell. Yet, many Christians struggle to believe that they are truly forgiven as they wrestle with overcoming sin in their lives. Jesus did the work on the cross, it is done!

Ephesians 2:4-5

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! (CSB)

Points to Think About

- Do you still suffer from guilt in the belief that you could not possibly be forgiven for some of your past sins?
- Do you lack faith in the completeness of Jesus’ work on the cross?

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Prayer Prompts

“Merciful Father, You know my sins, because you were there when I committed them. Because of my own personal guilt, I struggle with believing that I could possibly be forgiven. Open my eyes to see the incredible work of Jesus on the cross...”

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Friday: John 21:15-19 – Forgiven to Follow

¹⁹ “...After saying this, he told him, ‘Follow me.’”

Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus predicted to Peter, that he would deny Him three times before the next morning. Jesus’ prediction, of course, came true. In John 21:15-19, Jesus forgives Peter and instructs him to follow.

Before we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we lived lives under the automatic, eternal, death penalty for sin. However, after being saved we live under grace, whereby we can ask, and are forgiven for our sins and expected to follow Jesus Christ. Following Jesus Christ means that we are His disciples. Following is not automatic. Following is an intentional act. There are millions, maybe billions of people who have accepted Jesus, but do not live their lives as followers, or disciples.

Points to Think About

- Do I confuse being active in church with being a true disciple of Jesus?
- Am I a follower of Jesus, or merely a Christian participant in religious practice?
- Am I afraid of being a true, committed, follower of Jesus?

NOTE SPACE FOR PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS

Prayer Prompts

“Father I often get caught up in the busyness of daily life, and I know I can be a stronger, better, follower of Jesus. Please open my eyes to see what areas of my life I need to change in order to become a bold, courageous follower of Jesus...”