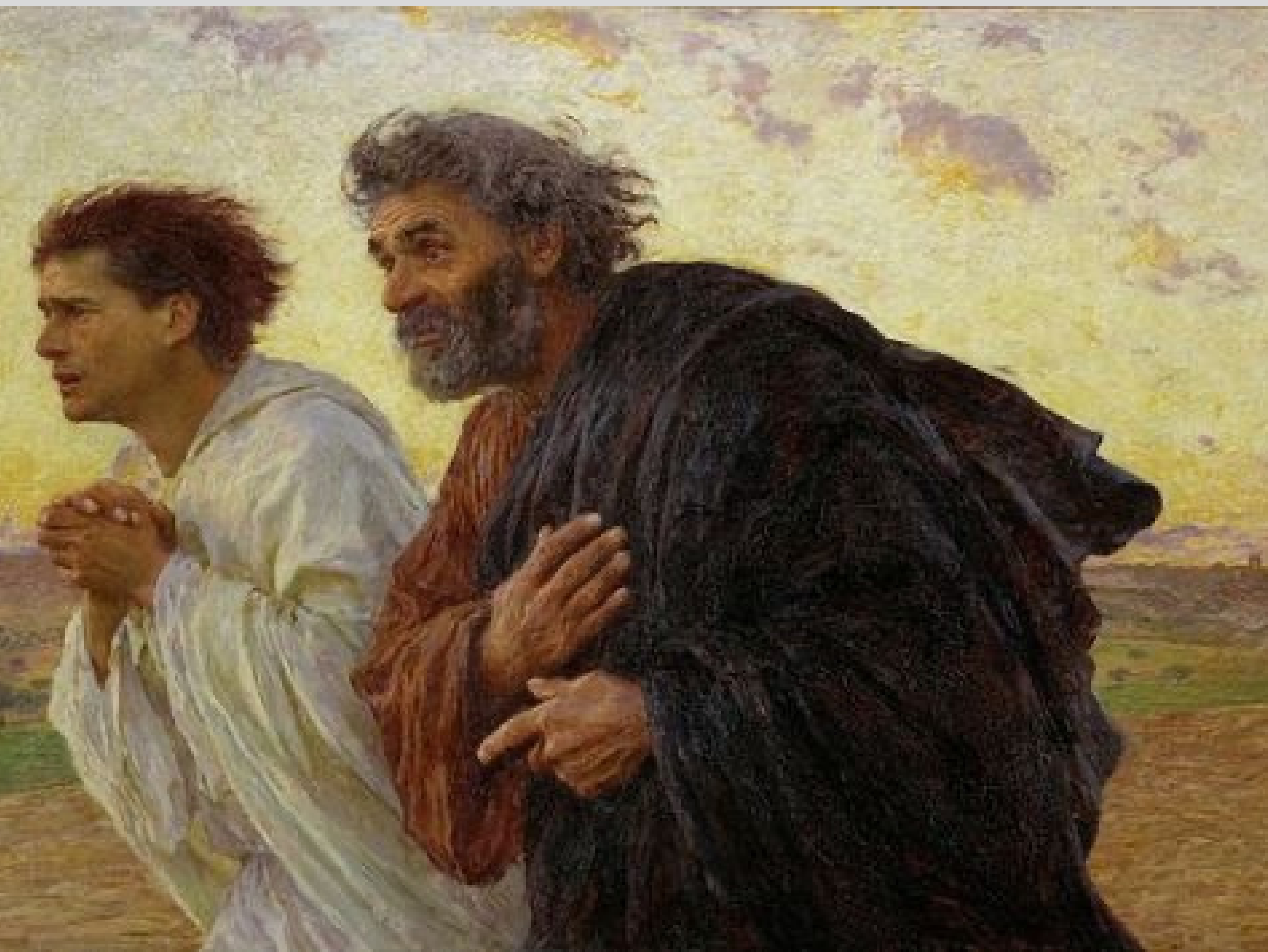


Community Baptist Church

A Passion Week Devotional

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS



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Front Cover: Image *The Disciples Peter and John Running to the Sepulchre on the Morning of the Resurrection* by Eugène Burnand design via Canva

Introduction

Son of David: Have Mercy!

Text: Mark 10:46-52

Three of the four Gospels tell the story of Bartimaeus receiving his sight from the Lord Jesus as He made His way to the cross. Mark specifically arranges this story in contrast to the bickering disciples (not for the last time) arguing over which of them was the greatest. Here is the incarnate Son of God, humbling Himself by taking the form of a servant, and there are His disciples arguing about who ought to receive a promotion in the soon-arriving kingdom.

Jesus' answer to this is to teach them in both word and deed. His words are a correction and reorientation about kingdom greatness in the sight of God (Mk. 10:42-45). His actions are in healing Bartimaeus, a blind beggar in Jericho. While everyone else was shoving the blind man away and "sternly telling him to be quiet..." (Mk. 10:48) the Son of David called for him to come near, asked what he wanted done for him, and healed him. Jesus truly did come to serve. That would be most evident as He yielded Himself as the Servant Savior suffering on the cross.

As is not uncommon in the Gospels, the blind man saw more clearly than most that day. He was able to see with eyes of faith that Jesus was truly the Son of David, Who alone was able and willing to make him well. As we approach this Passion Week, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His

might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

— Ephesians 1:18-23

Sunday

The King is Coming

Text: Luke 19:28-44

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on the Sunday before His crucifixion, it was not the first time the King had come after His people. The scene recorded for us in all four Gospels is of the Lord of Glory, mounted on a donkey, according to the Word of the Lord, as had been promised centuries before by Zechariah (9:9). The crowds seeing this moment and recognizing its unmistakable meaning from prophecy, begin to receive Jesus as if they really wanted Him to be their king. Which they indeed did, for the moment, and on their own terms, just not His. They respond in a frenzy of excitement, quoting a text they know well, as they rehearse the miracles only just recently performed by Jesus in their midst. The crowds in Jerusalem, now equipped with palm branches, were doing their best impression of a humble and godly people. They even quoted Scripture: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord;...” (Lk. 19:35).

But Jesus knew what was in man. This crowd was riotously disingenuous. They would in just a few short days (less than the week we’re in!) be calling for the crucifixion of the very same One to whom they, for this day at least, sang Hosanna.

As was said above, this wasn’t the first time God had come after His people. In Genesis 3, after our first parents, Adam and Eve, plunged the whole of humanity into rebellion against God, they went into hiding. Why? Because God came looking for them. Genesis 3:8 tells us that they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the Garden and in their shame, they hid themselves. The omniscient God knew not only what they had done but also where they were. So verse nine should surprise us a little when we read, “Then the LORD God called to the man...” He was seeking them out. He was coming to them, calling them to Himself to confess and repent.

God is always the initiator. He comes to His people. He draws them near to Himself. He makes promises, keeps them, and then reminds His people of His great faithfulness. In the Triumphal Entry we get both a glimpse of that consistent characteristic of God coming to His people as He promised, as well as a preview of His Second Coming, when He will return for His people and claim the throne that belongs to Him. In the Garden, man rejected God's right to rule over them: in the Triumphal Entry, Jesus was reasserting His identity and right to rule as King.

Monday

Cursing & Cleansing

Text: Mark 11:12-18

It will not be until later in the week that Jesus would stay in the city of Jerusalem. Instead, each evening, Jesus returned from Jerusalem to Bethany where he was staying with Lazarus' family. Each morning, He and His disciples would walk back into the city. On Monday morning, as Jesus is making His way into the city, there was a curious scene that illustrates the spiritual situation of Israel at that moment and the absolute necessity of faith. This scene occurs when Jesus sees a fig tree that gives off every appearance of fruitfulness but actually isn't fruitful at all. Jesus' response to this fig tree's false-profession of fruitfulness is to curse it: "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!". Mark is sure to tell us that the disciples were listening; they heard what Jesus said and were trying to take it in.

Passing on from this scene, Mark tells us that upon entering the Temple Jesus begins to drive out the moneychangers, overturning tables, and putting a halt to the trade and traffic of the Temple. The scene is one of upheaval to the accepted order of the chief priests and scribes. They were murderous in their outrage (v. 18).

What was happening? Was Jesus having an off day? Was He simply worn out and irritable from the Triumphal Entry the day before? He hadn't eaten from the fig tree, maybe He was just hungry? He had started the day cursing the fig tree and now He was flipping tables in the Temple. No, instead, this was a perfect response to the spiritual condition in Jerusalem among the people of God. While Jesus was tempted in every way like we are, He never lost His temper and yielded to sinful anger or flailing temper tantrums. Instead, His teaching in verse 17

and His answer regarding the fig tree in verse 22, explain these events of the second day of Passion week.

The religious leaders of Israel had turned the court of the Gentiles into a marketplace for their own greed: their disregard for the spiritual good of others had dishonored the Living God and disbarred the nations from a place to worship. All of this had been done in the name of piety. They were changing money and selling acceptable animals for sacrifice in the name of pure worship to YHWH. It was leaves without fruit. This wasn't the first time Jesus had cleansed the Temple, either. John 2:13-25 records the first cleansing of the Temple three years prior to this. Similarly Jesus had rebuked their merchandising and defiling of God's worship. But the sin had crept back in and set their tables back up only to have them flipped once more by the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why Jesus' curse was so poignant. That's the lesson of Jesus' answer in verses 20-26. The absence of faith which should work so powerfully in our lives, had not produced anything in Israel. It had all the pretense of piety and none of the fruit. Therefore, it deserved to be cursed.

Cleansing and cursing is not uncommon in the economy of God. In the first millenniums of human history, mankind had so corrupted themselves that God brought a flood of His wrath against them (Genesis 6-9). While that had wiped away the sinful men it had not wiped away sinfulness. A greater cleansing was needed: a cleansing by blood and not merely of water. That's what Christ was there in Jerusalem that week to provide: a cleansing that would endure.

Tuesday

The Word of God and the Power of God

Text: Matthew 22:23-33

On Tuesday, Jesus had once again returned to the Temple to teach. There He was delivering the most direct and powerful denunciations of the hypocritical religious leaders of Judaism. There was unveiled parables that portended their destruction (Matt. 23:33-46). There was direct declarations of “Woe” upon them (Matt. 23:1-36). And there were confrontations from every sector from the most skilled debaters they could throw at the Lord (Matt. 22:15-22, 34-46) until they dared not “ask Him another question.” (Matt. 22:46). It’s in that context we find the Sadducees martial their greatest argument that had consistently stumped their Pharisaical opponents.

Matthew helpfully explains to us that the Sadducees “say there is no resurrection.” Really, the Sadducees said a lot of things like this. They disbelieved in miracles, angels, a resurrection, and pretty much anything after the first five books of the Old Testament were out as well. Its with this in mind that Jesus answers their hypothetical scenario from the book of Exodus when he flatly tells them: “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God.” Their wrong doctrine was the outgrowth of their ignorance both of God and His Word. They disbelieved in a resurrection because they disbelieved God. That was why they could miss something so critical in God’s own statement to Moses that He is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. The verb tense that was used by God signified that He currently “is” the God of the patriarchs because they still are: they’re living still. As Jesus sums up in verse 32: “He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

The idea of resurrection was not one that was unfamiliar to the story of Abraham either. Throughout his story, stretching across Genesis 12-25, we see the theme of life coming from

death: Sarah's barren womb and the hope filled promise of a son to be born to one "as good as dead" (Heb. 11:12). But there's another resurrection story embedded in Abraham's life, and it comes from the most famous story of him and his son Isaac. Hebrews 11 tells us that when Abraham took his son to Mount Moriah to sacrifice him according to the command of God, He obeyed by faith, considering "that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which He also received him back as a type." (Heb. 11:19).

While Abraham did not have to actually put Isaac to death, he had as much as sacrificed him already when he had laid him on the altar. Why? Because He knew both the testimony of God and the power of God. Abraham did not have the same error as the Sadducees. Though they called themselves children of Abraham, they did not do his works. Abraham knew that God had made promises about his son that were yet to be fulfilled. Therefore, somehow, God would remain true to His Word, even if that meant raising Isaac from the dead. As far as Scripture tells us, up to this point in history, there had been no one raised from the dead. Abraham wasn't drawing on the testimony of God having done this before, but from the trustworthiness of His promise. He had already enlivened Sarah and him enough to bring this boy to life, why not do it again?

There was a promised Seed that extended far beyond Isaac anyway. That much is made clear in Galatians 3:16. Jesus was the promised descendant through whom the world would be blessed. The Sadducees missed that as well. They missed out on Life, though He stood before them, because they did not know the Scriptures nor the power of God."

Wednesday

Silent/Spy Wednesday

Text: Mark 14:1-11

Traditionally, Wednesday of Passion Week is known as Silent Wednesday or Spy Wednesday because we do not have specific deeds or sermons by Jesus attributed to this day, but we do have the deeds of Judas and the chief priests and scribes recorded for us. Matthew specifically tells us that Jesus knew that His words of late had pushed the Pharisees and Sadducees to the final breaking point. No longer were they idly plotting to kill him. Now it was an active conspiracy. They were gathering with this specific design and consulting at the highest levels just how and when they were going to “seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him.” (Matt. 26:4-5).

Jesus’ teaching had already brought enemies together against Him. Matthew 22 and Mark 12 both tell us that the Herodians, who were detested by the religious authorities, were willing to work together to entrap Jesus (Matt. 22:16, Mark 3:6). The Sadducees and Pharisees, who typically were rivals were all brought together in common cause against Christ. This wouldn’t stop here either, even after Jesus was arrested and is put on trial, His execution would bring together Herod and Pilate, political rivals who “became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.” (Lk. 23:12). Psalm 2:2 was happening place in real time: The kings and rulers of the earth were taking counsel together “Against the Lord and against His Anointed”.

But there was one final piece of the puzzle. Matthew, Mark, and John all link the pieces together for us. We don’t know exactly when the first seeds of betrayal were sown in Judas’ heart. But we do know what, fleshly speaking, some of the final circumstances were that pushed him out of the realm of pretended disciple and into the role of traitor to the Savior. Matthew,

Mark, and John all link the anointing of Jesus with costly perfume by Mary, Lazarus' sister, to Judas' eventual betrayal. Matthew and Mark link this by their structure: they relay the event and then tell us that it was after this that Judas went to the chief priests and began haggling over the price of betrayal. John links it in a more subtle way. In Mark and Matthew we're told that the disciples were scolding Mary and were indignant (Mt. 14:5b and Mt. 26:8) but we're not told which disciple objected with the pious sounding "Why this waste?" (Matt. 26:8) and the reasonable corrective "This perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii and given to the poor." (Mk. 14:5) Instead, John gives us more specific insight: "But Judas Iscariot....said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it." (John 12:4&6).

This appears to have been the final impetus for Judas. Perhaps he read the signs and understood the risk was about to start outweighing the reward. He wanted to cash out before things got too costly. When Jesus commended this extravagant display of worship and Judas watched three-hundred denarii get poured out on Jesus, he started looking for other options. He wanted more lucrative gains than could be received from pilfering the money box. Judas' mammon shaped god led him to the chief priests where he sold the Savior for a bargain thirty pieces of silver. Luke is one of the Gospel writers who tells us that the chief priest and others "were glad" (Lk. 22:5) and that Judas began to seek "a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the crowd." They were always anxious to avoid causing too much of a ruckus in their evil doing.

This was certainly not the first time someone had been sold out in Scripture. The story of Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery (Gen. 37) provides an interesting parallel to Jesus and Judas, especially because of how Joseph is characterized in Psalm 105. There, in verse seventeen, the Psalmist tells us that God sent Joseph ahead of his brothers, "sold as a slave." Joseph wasn't just sold by his brothers, he was sent by God, for the deliverance of his family from starvation. Their scheme to get rid of their father's favorite was redeemed by God for their preservation. As dastardly as Judas' betrayal was it was according to the plan of God. Jesus wasn't caught off guard by it. Even the most despicable deeds are turned to the good of God's people.

Thursday

A Meal to Remember

Text: Luke 22:7-23

The last evening with Jesus' disciples is one of the most detailed spans of time we're privileged to observe from the life of Christ. The space devoted to it in the Gospels is immense relative to other events. John devotes fully two chapters just to the Last Supper - the time in the Upper Room with the disciples - nearly 10% of his record of Jesus' life. There is much to be observed from that evening: the Supper, the Garden, the Arrest & Trial, but let's focus for just a moment on the occasion for which they had gathered: the Passover. This annual feast was always a high point in the festal calendar for God's people, but Jesus tells us this one particularly was one which He had "earnestly desired to eat" with His disciples before His suffering (Lk. 22:15). The reason for it was that He knew it would be their last together for a long time. This feast too would be transformed and reapplied with new lessons. But before we consider those, let's consider what they were remembering in the Passover itself.

The time in Egypt had turned into an inescapable life sentence of servitude. In the centuries following the days of Joseph, Moses tells us that "a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph." (Ex. 1:8) Recognizing the threat of the outsized Israelites population, he decided to "deal wisely with them" (Ex. 1:10) and instituted a policy of slavery, oppression, and extermination. Nothing like a little ethnic cleansing on which to build a secure empire. But all of this was subverted by God-fearing Israelites who were being used by the Lord to prepare a deliverer (Ex. 1:11-2:4). When that deliverer tried to take matters into his own murderous hands and had to flee from Egypt (Ex. 2:11-14), the burden of the Israelites increased they began to cry out to God. Moses writes that, "their cry for help...rose up to God." (Ex. 2:24) After forty years of shepherding, God's deliverer was ready to be sent back to Egypt. There, Moses stood before Pharaoh with a message: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go that they

may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.” (Ex. 5:1) Pharaoh, as God had told Moses, refuses. Pharaoh is warned, Moses is reminded that this will bring about ruin on Egypt for the sake of His name among the nations, and Pharaoh resists. The subsequent chapters chronicle the Lord’s unfolding judgment on Egypt and its people. Finally, after devastating the land of Egypt, God was sending one final plague. In the middle of the night, the LORD Himself would pass through the land of Egypt striking down the first born from every home “from the firstborn of the Pharaoh...even to the firstborn of the slave girl...all the firstborn of the cattle as well.” (Ex. 11:5). For the Israelites though, they could be spared this execution. They were instructed to take the blood of an unblemished year old lamb and put its blood on the doorposts of their house. The lamb itself would be eaten in preparation for their departure. Outside, the LORD passing through the land would see the blood “and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.” (Ex. 12:13).

From that first Passover, the Lord instituted it as a perpetual feast. They were to observe it in all their homes through all their years as a reminder of the deliverance provided by the Lord. The purpose was restated in the book of Deuteronomy when the children of Israel were preparing to enter the Promised Land after decades after wandering in the wilderness. There, God through Moses said, “You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.” (Deut. 16:12) The Passover was to remember. It was to remember what God had done for His people, how He led them out of slavery by a mighty hand and overthrew the power of their bondage and was bringing them into land that He had promised.

That’s one reason the Lord Jesus was eager to eat this Passover with His disciples: it would be their last together for awhile but it also was going to be transformed and reapplied into a new meal: the Lord’s Supper. The cup and the bread are specifically utilized because He was the Lamb. They were to this meal - the bread and the cup “in remembrance” of Him (Lk. 22:19). But this meal, the Lord’s Supper, it was instituted both to look back and to look forward. It looks back to Christ’s sacrifice and looks forward to the glorious day when we take the cup with Christ in the kingdom (Mk. 14:25) Though Jesus announced to His disciples that evening that He was going to be handed over by His betrayer, He also assured them that He would be with them victorious in the future.

Friday

The Better Sacrifice

Text: Matthew 27:33-54

Have you ever really consider the timing of the crucifixion? Typically the notes about time mentioned in the text can escape our notice. From the time Jesus was arrested in the Garden, stood in trial before Caiaphas, was dragged before Pilate, marched around Jerusalem, beaten severely, stood before the crowd that cried for His crucifixion, and finally sentenced and sent to the cross, Jesus must have been exhausted in so many ways. The crucifixion, Mark tells us, began at the third hour, approximately 9am. Jesus hung on the cross until the ninth hour, sometime around 3pm. For those sent to be crucified, this was not a long time. That's one reason that Pilate was so surprised when he received the request from Joseph of Arimathea (Mk. 15:44) for the body of Jesus, and why the legs of the prisoners had to be broken to speed up their death.

Crucifixion was an agonizing way to die. So debasing was it that Roman citizens were not legally allowed to be crucified. Death, most people believe, occurred through asphyxiation, rather than blood loss. But the death of Christ was not horrific merely for the terrible physical suffering - of which there was an abundance. Christ's greatest suffering was bearing the wrath of God against the sin of the world and the estrangement from God that produced. He was the ultimate mediator. He was taking on the role of the substitutionary sacrifice that absorbed the death intended for the sinner. This is one reason Jesus is identified as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He is the Lamb that was slain. On the cross Christ was suffering the outpouring of the holy and just wrath of God, not due to Himself, but due to everyone who has ever sinned and been granted faith and repentance in Christ.

By this substitutionary atoning death, Christ was becoming sin for us. He was standing in our place as the justice of God was poured out against our evil doing. He was standing there so

that we might stand in Him. Our sins were not merely put out of sight temporarily or ignored. Rather they are dealt with. Put out of the way in that they have been completely punished in Christ's suffering. Those hours on the cross fulfilled the debt of sin incurred by all who believe. There can be no longer any condemnation for those who believe because it has already been poured out completely in Christ on the cross.

The Old Testament had given glimpses of this practice of a substitute atoning for sin. A dim, shadowy, pre-enactment of this had been played out in the Tabernacle and Temple complexes for centuries before this. The sinner would symbolically transfer their guilt to an animal as they confessed their sin. The animal would be killed, dismembered, and arranged on the altar. There the fire would consume it. As the blood and life was poured out, the flames flickered from beneath the altar, the sinner was reminded that what was being consumed ought to have been them. But that lamb had taken their place.

When the high priest on the Day of Atonement brought the blood of sacrifice in before the presence of the Lord to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat, they had already made sacrifice for their own sin. They had to be cleansed themselves before entering as the mediator for the sins of the people. They came now with blood to keep back the wrath of God for one more year.

But all of it was temporary. The priests had to continually be replaced because they kept dying off. The sacrifices had to continually be offered because they were only a placeholder and the blood of the animals were insufficient to atone for man's sin. There had to be a better Sacrifice. There had to be a better Priest. There had to even be a better Temple in which offer it. Hebrews answers all of these. Christ, as the Great High Priest has offered Himself once, finally, fully, and forever and has been seated in exultation. That's why when Christ laid down His life, the veil was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51), because the impenetrable barrier to drawing near to God had been done away. We approach now through a new and living way: through the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:19-22).

Saturday

Lo, in the Grave He Lay

Text: Matthew 27:62-66

Only one verse in the Gospels tell us what the Jesus' followers were doing in the days between Christ's death and His resurrection:

Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes.

And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

— Luke 23:56

But what about Christ? What was He doing during the time His divine spirit was absent His body? We're given glimpses of this across the pages of the New Testament. Colossians 2 tells us that when Christ's work of atoning for sin was taken out of the way, He "disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." (Col. 2:14-15) Some mistakenly believe that Christ was suffering in Hell during between His death and resurrection. But that very clearly cannot be. Before He died, Christ had already accomplished reconciliation and redemption. What followed was not a pilgrimage into Hell that secured His suffering for our sin. Rather, it was more akin to a Triumph - a victory parade - in which those who had been triumphed over were paraded behind the Victor. Spirits that had long ago been imprisoned saw the victorious Christ as He went to their eternal spiritual cells and proclaimed His victory against all their best designs (1 Pet. 3:19).

Christ was intent upon His victory being proclaimed. Though all the powers of evil had been arrayed against Him, they had raged and plotted, they had schemed and even brought their plans to pass, they did not know that the very cords they were weaving would be used for their

own binding and destruction (1 Cor. 2:8). They had been brought to nothing. Their doom was sealed and Christ was proclaiming His certain victory over them. Paul invokes this image of a Triumph again in Ephesians when he draws from Psalm 68 to tell us that in this victory march, Christ was not only demonstrating victory over His enemies, He was gathering the trophies of His triumph (Eph. 4:7-10). The victorious King would distribute gifts to His followers from the spoil of His victory. This is exactly what Christ did spiritually.

But while we're told in only one verse of what Jesus' followers were doing, and in a few verses we're able to catch glimpses of what Christ did, we're told in several places what the enemies of Christ were doing. Matthew gives us the most detailed account when he describes how the chief priests and the Pharisees petitioned Pilate for a guard to be given to secure the tomb. They genuinely were afraid of the Lord Jesus. They wanted to hedge their bets and do all they could to ensure that their silencing of Jesus in death was totally successful.

This ought to give us a tremendous amount of pause. While Christ is declaring His utter victory over all His enemies, while His disciples are silently and sullenly sitting in shock, the enemies of Christ were still spinning their wheels in the fruitless attempt to stop the Lord of Glory. One way in which we can be encouraged by this is to be reminded that while it sure seemed from this side of eternity that the enemies of God had triumphed and things were awfully hopeless for the followers of Jesus, on the other side of the grave there was no doubt Who had won. We can live with that certainty that in eternity there is no doubt Who the Victor is. We can face every temporary trial knowing it is just that: temporary. Christ is victorious. We are assured of this because He did not remain on that side of the grave. He came back. He returned. And what's more is that He is returning.

Sunday

Resurrection Morning

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

In the dark and early hours of that first Resurrection morning, an angel of the Lord erupted upon the tranquil Garden scene, striking fear into the guards around the tomb entrance, scattering them to the ground like so many men struck dead. He rolled away the stone, sitting atop it, and waited for the first of several followers of Christ to appear to whom he would be making known that Christ was not there. The events of that resurrection morning were incredible and busy! There was the running to the disciples, the running back, the disciples running one ahead of the other to the tomb's entrance, the walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, the rushing back to Jerusalem, the wonder, the bewilderment, the sadness turned to joy, the doubting, the hope, the fear and amazement, all of it leaves the careful observer breathless. Jesus had died. That was undisputed. But now, Jesus was risen. This could mean only one thing: that the wildest hopes of His identity as the Messiah were confirmed beyond a doubt.

In the days that followed, Jesus would appear to the disciples a number of times. He would make himself known to groups, individuals, and even to those who later, it seems, did not faithfully follow Him. Even His enemies weren't in the dark about what took place. They knew what happened but chose to try to buy peace for their conscience at the price of their souls, spreading lies about what really happened early that Sunday morning just outside Jerusalem (Mat. 28:15). But what had taken place?

For one, the promise made concerning the Messiah had been fulfilled: He was not allowed to see corruption (Ps. 16:10). Christ was not left to rot in the grave. Instead, and secondly, Christ rose to indisputably declare His victory. Third, Christ's resurrection previewed the resurrection that all who trust in Him will experience as well. Paul writing to the counter the false teaching that had crept into the Corinthian Church told them (and us), that "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep." (1 Cor. 15:20). In other words, His resurrection is an anticipation of the resurrection of those who die in Christ. Christ, at His coming, will put death into the Lake of Fire, utterly wiping its power over believers out. His resurrection serves as a model and a guarantee that all who believe on Him will not just live forever as disembodied spirits in the ether. But we will instead be re-embodied with a new and

glorious body far superior to this one in glory. Just as surely as Christ arose, all who are in Him will arise as well.

Post Script:

Monday

Waiting to See Him Again

In the days following that first Resurrection Sunday, Jesus appeared other times to His disciples. Repeatedly He told them that they were going to be His ambassadors. John tells us that Christ made the explicit parallel:

So Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

— John 20:21

As Jesus had been sent, so His followers are sent as well. We are to be the proclaimers of what Christ accomplished. As Matthew recorded it, we’re to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded.” Luke tells us that Christ in one of His appearances to His followers told them that they were to be His witnesses after they received the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:48-49). This glorious message of Christ’s death, resurrection, and soon return, is to be shared. It is to be declared and proclaimed and heralded forth by all who believe it. For those who are the disciples of Christ, we are to make known the greatness of His power and glory in all the Earth as we look for and hasten the day of His return.