

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

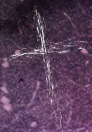
The DEVO

MARCH 29 - APRIL 2, 2021

LENTEN SERIES 2021

FEB 21 - APR 4

New Rhythms



MONDAY

Luke 22:1-6

JUDAS | BETRAYING CHRIST

It is difficult to not recall the events of Holy Week, the significance of the crucifixion, and the hope we have through the resurrection of Jesus Christ without contemplating His betrayal by Judas. That kiss recorded in three of the four gospels was a turning point in Judas' spiritual life that would change history. A spiritual life! Wasn't Judas a traitor? Scripture records for us that Judas did walk with Christ; he did hear Jesus first hand; he went out and preached the Gospel; and he was one of Christ's twelve disciples. The sad part of his story is that in the end, when he had a choice between light and darkness, he abandoned the light and his faith. This serves as a warning to us that Satan is on the prowl trying to lead us down this same path of abandoning Christ. So, was Judas so unlike me? Let's see ...

Called and Committed. Judas left everything to follow Jesus. He was active in the ministry and had "power and authority" (Luke 9:1) as did all the other disciples (Luke 9:1-2). Active ministry is outstanding and necessary, but as we see from the character of Judas, this is not a guarantee of spiritual well-being.

Witness of the Glory of God. Over a three-year span of 24/7 time with Jesus, Judas was in Jesus' inner circle. He witnessed miracles—he saw a man raised from the dead. Judas heard the Sermon on the Mount; he listened to the parables and had the mystery of these parables explained by Christ Himself. This stands as a sober reminder that not even the best church, most wonderful pastors, or most loving

Christian families can ensure our strong, personal faith. It is our heart relationship with Christ alone that keeps us at one with our Savior.

We Have a Choice. Scripture tells us that Satan entered into Judas' heart. Judas made a choice and left a door open for Satan to enter. Stealing, secrets, and plotting were indicators of Judas' unconfessed sin. This is a lesson to us that Satan is always seeking a path which isolates us and draws us away from Christ. It may be subtle, but it is there, and the right choice is always Jesus.

The story of Judas reminds us that we need to stay strong in our spiritual walk, to guard our hearts against Satan, and to always choose light over darkness. There is no middle ground. We must examine our walk with Him daily or we may, like Judas, give way to temptation and abandon Jesus, our most indescribable gift from God.

QUESTIONS

In view of the cross and resurrection, how am I going to “guard my heart” for Jesus this week? What is God convicting me to do this Holy Week?

Holy Week Lenten Practices

Sometime today sit or stand at a busy intersection or shopping area. Granted, this is not like the Temple Courts where Jesus overturned the tables, but you might prayerfully ask these questions:

- Jesus, how do I get caught up in the buying and selling of things?
- How do the ways of the world draw me away from living for you?
- Where does jealousy and the desire for things show up in ways that are not God honoring?
- Am I caught up in hurry? Where might God be calling me to slow down?
- Lord, how might I do a better job of loving you and loving others?

TUESDAY

Matthew 26:33-75

PETER | DENYING CHRIST

One of my favorite people from the New Testament is Peter the fisherman, disciple, church leader, and theologian. Peter was certainly impulsive, yet he is recorded as the genuine salt-of-the-earth kind of person who, unfortunately, seemed to regularly speak or act before thinking. Peter was one of Jesus' closest companions—close enough to be in the inner circle—and after the ascension of Christ, Peter was one of the most influential Christian leaders in the beginning and growth of the early Church. And yet, as we read the events in this dramatic last week of Christ's earthly life, there is one blemish: Peter's seemingly unforgivable act, the denial of Christ—not once, not twice, but three times. It is not an event to quickly brush over knowing that reconciliation happens later, but it is a reminder that this in fact may be part of our story.

It is easy to be critical of Peter, especially when we know that just three days later Jesus would indeed rise from the dead after shedding His blood for our sins. Yet, in many ways we all face Peter's same temptation. When we are close and alone with the Lord in the safety of our prayer times, we can promise Jesus anything. *He is our Lord.* We may declare with sincerity and genuine intention that even if the whole world denies Him, we as His children will stand firm. We really do mean it! Peter certainly meant it. He was definitely not pretending when he stated, *"Even if all fall away on account of You, I never will"* (Matthew

26:33). Yet, Jesus warned him that, when he thought he was standing, there was a real danger that he, Peter, would fall. And thus begins one of the greatest stories of redemption in the New Testament as we read the intimate conversation between Jesus and Peter recorded in John 21. Three times Peter declared his love for Jesus Christ, and three times Jesus—longingly recognizing and loving the transformed Peter—commands Peter to feed His sheep.

What an encouragement that is to us each day as we reflect upon and recognize the times that we have denied Christ in our own words, by silence, with action or inaction. Jesus went to the cross and rose again; He has redeemed us to go out and feed His sheep.

QUESTIONS

Take time to reflect on Jesus' undying love for you this week. What can you do today to feed His sheep?

Holy Week Lenten Practices

Today find a garden to go to and sit and pray for a while, asking questions like:

- Jesus, in what ways am I tempted to sleep rather than pray?
- Where am I tempted to deny you, whether in word or deed?
- Where am I weak, and where do I need your Holy Spirit's strength?

Reflect back on the last year:

- What has God been doing in your life?
- What themes are emerging that you need to pay attention to?
- In what ways are you tempted to live out of an entitlement mentality rather than love of neighbor?

WEDNESDAY

Matthew 26:56

THE DISCIPLES | DESERTING CHRIST

For the three most amazing years they could imagine, the disciples, these closest companions of Jesus—who were able to be with Him 24/7—became eyewitnesses and participants to miracles, teachings, healings, and interpretation of Scripture. We can only dream of an experience like this! These disciples, just ordinary men, were with Jesus for an amazing 1000 days of history—they lived and experienced an extraordinary time and their lives were forever changed.

But even with all this intimate time with their Lord, even with all His teaching through the parables, Jesus' foretelling of His death and resurrection continued to mystify them. Firsthand they heard Jesus predict His death and resurrection, and they were present as He broke bread and sipped wine symbolizing His death and the assurance of His resurrection. Patiently they had waited at first, before falling asleep, as Jesus stepped away to pray—not once but three times—in the place called Gethsemane. They must have remembered vividly Peter's declaration of unflinching loyalty to Jesus made just a few hours before. They had certainly been warned by Jesus on several occasions as they approached Jerusalem in the preceding days that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer there.

One would think that they should have realized the risk to their own lives when the time came for His arrest. They were His inner circle.

However, they did not prepare for such an eventuality, and when it came to fight or flee, they fled. They deserted their Lord. Not just one of them or a few, but Scripture records, “*Then **all** the disciples deserted Him and fled*” (Matthew 26:56). They were so afraid that they fled together and stayed in a locked room in fear of what might happen to them (John 20:19).

Today, it is easy to be a little prideful. We know the outcome of the narrative, that hope in Jesus’ fulfillment of the Scripture was 100% accurate and that these things all took place within just a few days. Couldn’t they have just stood strong a little while longer? How hard would that have been? Sadly, they did not stand firm. What application is there for us today? Perhaps this is a reminder to us that with increasing pressure on religious freedoms, Christianity, and our Biblical worldview, we must stay strong in our faith, stand firm in our confidence of Scripture, and be firmly convinced of the hope we have in Jesus our Risen Savior!

QUESTIONS

What can we do today in preparation to stand firm for Jesus?

Holy Week Lenten Practices

- Sometime today go online and prayerfully experience the Stations of the Cross.
- Join us at Glenkirk Church at 6:00pm at the cross for evening prayer.



MAUNDY THURSDAY

Luke 23:47

THE CENTURION | ACKNOWLEDGING CHRIST

Jesus made it clear to His disciples many times that He must suffer. His mission, His very purpose on earth was not to change governments, lead uprisings, nor topple Jewish tradition but to fulfill prophecy. The journey to the cross was not a terrible miscalculation on His part—this was His mission. Jesus was born to die on the cross and to rise again—conquering death—so that we might be reconciled with God and have an eternal relationship with Him. The cross was definitely not the failure of God’s plan, but His fulfilment of it. It was the central and only reason why He came to earth.

Without Christmas there is no Good Friday, and without Good Friday there is no Easter Sunday. We celebrate these events in our Christian calendar because they retell the story of Christ’s birth, sacrificial death, and resurrection—the complete and only story of eternal importance to you and me! His teachings were wonderful, His miracles remarkable, and His resurrection glorious, but none of these would have counted for anything had He not fulfilled His mission on the cross. Christ the Lord suffered and died for our sins, and He has risen, conquering death once for all (Romans 6:10)!

How interesting it is that the only one who seemed to understand the significance as our Lord hung on the cross was a Roman centurion, an unbeliever. Something about how Jesus conducted Himself in those

agonizing hours convinced the centurion about the divinity of Christ. Something about the compassionate way Jesus spoke to the criminals dying alongside Him caused this man to witness and experience the true meaning of the cross.

And as the door to our sovereign God opened wide, the centurion understood: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16), and he believed. Something about Jesus’ last breath, committing Himself to fulfilling the purpose to which He was sent to this earth caused this Roman centurion to praise God and exclaim publicly, *“Surely this was a righteous man”* (Luke 23:47).

QUESTIONS

Do we seek God’s purpose for us on this earth? Do we prayerfully seek clarity and guidance as to our calling? As we fulfill His purposes through our lives and witness even through times of hardship and distress, does our witness always point unbelievers to the Son of God?

Holy Week Lenten Practices

- Grab a few nails and carry them around in your pocket today. Reflect on the cost Jesus paid in leaving heaven to die on a cross to turn back the penalty of death.
- Join us for our Maundy Thursday service at 7:00pm.
- What are some practical ways you might love others over these next few days?

FRIDAY

Luke 23:26 - 24:10

THE WOMEN | SUPPORTING CHRIST

The ancient world at the time of Christ was a man's world in which women were regarded as inferior and subservient. Core to Jesus' mission and at the heart of His ministry was an intention to change that. Women were among His wider group of disciples, and they were included in every aspect of His ministry. Even as He hung dying on the cross, He expressed concern for His mother and entrusted her care to His beloved disciple. Women were there at the cross when He was dying (Luke 23:27; Luke 23:49), they were ready to honor Him in death (Luke 23:56-57), and they were the first to witness His resurrection (Luke 24:1-10).

As we consider the cross and the events of that day we label as Good Friday, note the diversity of those who stood at the foot of the cross to share His hours of suffering: Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, one who was a woman formerly demon-possessed, and some even think a woman from Herod's own household. These women stood by Jesus to the very end—even after the disciples fled in fear to lock themselves in a room. When the going got really tough, women were the model of true discipleship.

The women in Christ's life and ministry may not have been public figures, but their support and understanding of His ministry was unquestionable, and "*these women were helping to support*" His ministry sacrificially "*out of their own means*" (Luke 8:1-4). Scripture recounts the importance of women throughout the life of Jesus. In details of His birth, lineage,

and ministry, we find Mary, Elizabeth, Anna, Mary Magdalene, Martha, and more—women downtrodden by society but treated with dignity, respect, and compassion by our Lord. These chosen and beloved followers supported and provided for all the disciples throughout the ministry of Jesus.

Women played a vital role in the message of Jesus and His sacrifice for each one of us on the cross. Women lingered at the cross to the very end as “*darkness fell over the whole land*” (Luke 23:44); they heard Jesus utter His final words. In agony they watched as their Savior took His final breath. It was finished, or was it? These women were the first to witness the empty tomb! They were loyal in their support of Jesus and His ministry, and God used them to do mighty things, including to announce that Christ is Risen!

May we be found faithful, may we help others to seek and know His truth, and may we remember why Jesus came to this world—to give us eternal life.

QUESTIONS

Is there anything that is preventing you from being a devoted follower of Jesus? Today is the day to remember how much Jesus loved you, give thanks, and consider how you can show your love for Him?

Holy Week Lenten Practices

- Find a cross and sit by it today, giving thanks for all that you have received from Jesus.
- If you come to Glenkirk, walk prayerfully around the campus, praying for the Easter services and other ministries.
- What does it look like to wait on God? Are there some things God is calling you to die to? What resurrection might God want to bring about in your life?



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