

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

APRIL 4 - 8, 2022

SERMON SERIES

March 6 - April 3

What God Intends for Good

LIFE
OF
JOSEPH

MONDAY

Read **Isaiah 26:19; John 11:1-53**

These next two weeks we walk with Jesus toward His mission's fulfillment at Calvary. We'll highlight key events and teaching within the estimated (and disputed) chronology for the weeks preceding Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday. Today's featured incident occurred sometime between Hannukah (December) and April, perhaps several weeks pre-Easter. Regardless, its significance fittingly opens this series.

Siblings Lazarus, Mary and Martha lived in Bethany, a Mount of Olives village two miles east of Jerusalem. They were Jesus' close friends—He stayed with them often while in Jerusalem. Understandably, the Lord likely felt comforted in their company, particularly amidst His dramatic “final weeks.” News of Lazarus' mortal illness came while Jesus was in Bethabara, twenty miles away. Interestingly, Jesus then delayed two days (John 11:6), returning four days after Lazarus' entombment (v. 17).

Ancient Jews believed that the soul departed a corpse after three days—Jesus' timing reinforced that “Lazarus was indisputably dead” by His arrival. Jesus' related exchanges with Martha and Mary prompted a heartfelt response, shared via the Bible's shortest verse: “Jesus wept” (v. 35). But why did He weep? Mere sympathy? Sadness that His friend, Lazarus, would be snatched back from Paradise's bliss? Grief regarding sin's futile, destructive consequences—which He would have to address personally and painfully?

Raising Lazarus provided a living, breathing testimony to Jesus' divine Messiahship and God's sovereign power—while making Lazarus also a marked man (12:10-11). It foreshadowed both Jesus' forthcoming resurrection and that of Christians upon His second coming.

Moreover, this miracle served another purpose—it provoked polarized responses from bystanders. *“Many of the Jews ... who had ... seen what He did, believed in Him”* (11:45). Various Jewish leaders, conversely, *“from that day on ... made plans to put Him to death”* (v. 53). Mindful of Rome's harsh responses to uprisings, political high priest Caiaphas—evil and opportunistic—unwittingly prophesied, *“It is better ... that one Man ... die for the people ... [rather than] the whole nation perish”* (v. 50).

In raising Lazarus, the Messiah drew a battle line separating *“sheep (His followers) from the goats (unbelievers)”* (Matthew 25:32), enabling none to stand passively on the sidelines. The cross was coming into view—everyone would have to choose. This remains true today.

QUESTIONS

Why did Jesus delay upon learning of Lazarus' mortal illness? Why did Jesus weep following His exchange with Mary? What purposes did raising Lazarus serve?

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN & KATE CLARK (Campus2Campus Ministries)

Chi Alpha is a college campus ministry at San Diego State University. They had a Women's Retreat on March 26-27. Pray for the Holy Spirit to move and for lives to be impacted by the love of God after attending this retreat.

TUESDAY

Read [Isaiah 11:1-2](#); [Matthew 19:16-22](#); [Luke 18:9-14](#)

Yesterday's events compelled many to "choose a side." Today we consider some of the Lord's most countercultural teaching. After raising Lazarus, "*[Jesus] left there and went to ... Judea ... [where] the crowds gathered to Him again. And again ... He taught them*" (Mark 10:1). Jesus likely delivered at least some of today's lessons within days of Palm Sunday.

Paul wrote regarding Jesus, "*Though he was ... God ... [He] emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant ... in the likeness of men ... [and] humbled Himself ... to the point of death, even death on a cross*" (Philippians 2:6-8). Anticipating Calvary, Jesus stressed, "*Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be a slave to all. For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom*" (Mark 10:43-45). Christ's harmonious, similarly "paradoxical" teaching: "*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted*" (Luke 18:14).

Though redemption in Christ is free, Jesus warned regarding exclusion: "*Strive to enter [into salvation] through the narrow door (Christ Himself). For many ... will seek to enter and will not be able*" (Luke 13:24). Moreover, "*Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a (dependent, grateful, humble) child shall not enter it*" (Mark 10:15). Jesus' declaration, "*Whoever does not carry their cross ... [nor] give up everything you have cannot be my disciples*" (Luke 14:27, 33),

anticipated Jesus' exchange with "the rich young ruler": "*How difficult ... for [the wealthy] to enter the kingdom of God!*" (Luke 18:24).

Approaching death, Jesus taught about kingdom living: "*The kingdom of God is in your midst (in Christ Himself)*" (Luke 17:21). His related, unconventional advice was: "*When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed ... [and] repaid at the resurrection of the just*" (Luke 14:13-14). Walking faithfully with the Lord fosters an eternal perspective of humble gratitude, generosity and grace. Jesus calls us to the kingdom He embodies—sadly, however, many ignore the invitation.

Jesus' followers still wrestled, at this point, with grasping much of His teaching. His adversaries, provoked, intensified their hostility. Everything was proceeding as planned.

QUESTIONS

Which of Jesus' teachings feel most paradoxical to you? How did Jesus warn regarding potential disqualification from God's kingdom?

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN & KATE CLARK (Campus2Campus Ministries)

Pray for the Clarks as they learn the Indonesian language. They have started classes at a local language center and will hopefully be in this program for 2-3 years. Pray that God would give them a supernatural retention speed and that they would be able to build relationships and share with locals very soon.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Isaiah 35:3-6; Luke 18:35-19:27**

After teaching in Judea, Jesus visited Jericho, about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Following today's events, Jesus would head toward His final showdowns with the Sanhedrin. Today's activities occurred perhaps on Thursday or Friday, a week or so before Good Friday.

His first stop heading into Jericho: "*Bartimaeus, a blind beggar ... by the roadside*" (Mark 10:46). "Bartimaeus makes a messianic declaration when he exclaims, '*Son of David, have mercy on me!*' Although he was blind, he saw Jesus clearly." (Talmidin Way) "Son of David" was a title reserved for Israel's Messiah. Jesus healed Bartimaeus, though the Lord's favorite Self-title, "*Son of Man*" (Mark 2:10, etc.), indicated an agenda broader than Israel alone—He came to "save the world" (John 12:47).

Jesus' next appointment was with the wealthy "*chief tax collector,*" Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1). Israelites reviled tax collectors for colluding with Rome and exploiting them accordingly. Like Bartimaeus, Zacchaeus occupied a low societal rung. Zacchaeus "wanted to see Jesus badly ... [which] sets the stage for another '*last shall be first*' reversal." (Talmidin Way) Following Zacchaeus' redeeming encounter, note Jesus calling him "*son of Abraham*" (v. 9). "Jewish people of that day (like many nominal Christians today) believed they had salvation just by [their heritage]." (Talmidin Way) The Savior affirmed Zacchaeus' lineage, while also identifying him as new to God's family.

Jesus followed this with a parable about Himself (the story's "nobleman") and post-resurrection happenings. The parable's "citizens [who] hated him" (v. 14) were Christ-rejecting Jews. The "servants [receiving] minas" represented the faithful remnant, whether Jewish or Gentile.

"(Prior to His second coming) Jesus [would] be 'away' for a while. ... When He comes again, not only will the wicked be judged ... but those deemed righteous will have their works (stewardship) evaluated. ... If [Jesus] found that [ancient Israel] had produced fruit in keeping with repentance, His arrival would have brought reward—the Messianic Kingdom would have begun. ...

"[The Jews] wanted a national kingdom to replace Rome. ... Jesus would show ... there's going to be a different way." (Talmidin Way) All who were ready to receive Christ—including outcasts—would be accepted. Jesus, the divine "outcast," was bound toward Jerusalem and His ministry's dramatic climax.

QUESTIONS

HWhat are key differences between the Messianic titles "Son of David" and "Son of Man"? What is one thing that Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus have in common? What was the key point of Jesus' parable that is featured this day?

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN & KATE CLARK (Campus2Campus Ministries)

Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare the hearts and minds of Indonesians for the Gospel. Pray that the Lord would go before the team and create divine appointments to see the Kingdom come into people's lives, and that these first new believers would be pillars of the church.

THURSDAY

Read **Isaiah 61:1-3; John 12:1-11**

Today we consider a pivotal event occurring on Palm Sunday eve. This occurrence was meaningful not only on its own, but because it may have been a “last straw” convincing Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus—more on this next Wednesday. “No doubt, Judas objected to Mary’s gift because he was convicted by her simple and powerful display of love.” (David Guzik)

Jesus was back in Bethany, visiting and dining with Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha. “Raising Lazarus ... [had spurred] the multitudes to make Jesus their king. This ... drove the Jewish rulers to hasten their plans to arrest and execute Him.” (Richard Greene)

Spikenard was an expensive ointment used in corpse preparation. Mary was, apparently, one of few who understood that Jesus came to die and to rise again. The Magi who visited the baby Jesus years earlier also appeared to know—the myrrh that was among their gifts (Matthew 2:1) was used to embalm the dead. “How did Mary have such profound insight? ... Because she was at His feet constantly.” (Jon Courson)

“[Note] the contrast here between Mary who pours out on Jesus the most precious thing she owns, giving it all to Him in a memorial act of pure worship, and Judas the thief, who complains that this sacrifice was wasted—wasted on Jesus! Many believe this perfume had been

given to Mary by her parents for her wedding night, to anoint the marital bed for her husband.” (Greene) Mary was, essentially, sacrificing her wedding dowry—which scholars estimate to be valued at a year’s wages—to honor “*the Bridegroom*” (Mark 2:19) and Messiah.

“When Mary anoints Jesus’ feet and then wipes them with her hair, she [also] foreshadows Jesus’ actions at the upcoming Last Supper when the Lord washes the disciples’ feet and teaches them how to love one another through sacrificial, humble service (John 13:1-20). ...

“The word *Messiah* means ‘anointed one’... *Christ* comes from the Greek word *Christos*, also meaning ‘anointed one.’” (GotQuestions.org) God’s Anointed, Jesus the Christ, was prepared to be delivered both to expectant followers and to enemies bent on His humiliating, tortuous execution.

QUESTIONS

What was the significance of Mary anointing Jesus with spikenard?
What sort of sacrifice was this on Mary’s part?

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN & KATE CLARK (Campus2Campus Ministries)

Pray for the team as they are currently on the housing hunt! They have 6-7 houses to find, and apartments here are few and not right for their situation. Pray that God would lead them to the neighborhood that’s right for language and culture learning, and building relationships that could lead towards advancing the kingdom.

FRIDAY

Read Zechariah 9:9; Ezekiel 18:23; Luke 19:29-44

Today's "Triumphal Entry" occurred five days pre-crucifixion. Previously—managing everything per the Father's schedule—Jesus generally had been publicly vague regarding Himself. Apart from His closest disciples, He revealed Himself clearly as the Messiah only to the Samaritan woman (John 4:25-26) and the man born blind (John 9:37). On Palm Sunday, though, Jesus openly invited and received public recognition and worship.

"By His actions, Jesus ... [was] fulfilling ... Zechariah 9:9. ... The Jews recognized this. ... Mark's gospel account ... says [onlookers shouted] '*Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!*' (Mark 11:10) ... [This was] a reference to the promise that God made to David, that [the Christ] would sit on his throne forever." (Steve Gregg)

Jesus, however, was not the Messiah that Israel expected. The Jews generally anticipated a political, military liberator who would overthrow Rome. Had they heeded Zechariah's prophecy and Jesus' approach, they would have known better. "The [donkey's colt] was the mount of a man of peace ... A [political, military] king ... would be more likely to appear on a mighty warhorse. Zechariah's prophecy saw Messiah as the Prince of peace." (Bill Pratt)

Rome rightly saw Jesus as having no political agenda. “[Rome was] always on the lookout for ... Messianic pretenders (who might incite uprisings). ... Interestingly, Rome did not seem to be interested in this case ... Days later Pilate would declare, *‘I find no fault with this Man.’* ... The Romans. ... [had] dispatched ... soldiers who had heard Jesus teach and did not find Him to be a political threat. ... Pilate likely already had a file on Jesus ... and knew that Jesus was not interested in a political revolution.” (Gregg)

Jesus’ coming nevertheless signaled a clear threat—both to Israel’s historic ways and its present corruption. “[Jesus’ lament in Luke 19:41-44 was] a reference to what the Romans would do in AD 70 when they would besiege and destroy Jerusalem. ... [This signaled] the end of the commonwealth and their religious system (‘biblical Judaism’). All of this was so unnecessary, [unfolding] because [Israel] did not recognize ... [the Source] of their potential peace ... [nor] His kingdom. ... The (AD 70) destruction of their whole system [would be] their punishment for rejecting Christ (corporately).” (Gregg) Israel was officially on notice.

QUESTIONS

Do you pray for nations and governments, including our own, knowing that in the Spirit of God our words have power. Prayers do make a difference.

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN & KATE CLARK (Campus2Campus Ministries)

Pray for the health and safety of the team. There are two children on the team and couples hoping to get pregnant soon. Please pray that the Lord would keep the kids, potential new mothers, and all of the team members healthy. And pray for the Lord’s protection of individuals, their homes, and their possessions.

Sources

- Talmidin Way's quotes are from <https://talmidimway.org/commentary/gospels/gb3/38-zacchaeus-and-bartimaeus/>.
- David Guzik's quote can be found at https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Jhn/Jhn-12.cfm.
- Richard Green's quotes are from <https://keystoneproject.org/mary-anoints-jesus-feet-keeping-what-is-given/>.
- Jon Courson's quote is from *Jon Courson's APPLICATION COMMENTARY* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004).
- GotQuestions.org's quotes can be found at <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-anointed.html>.
- Steve Gregg's quotes can be heard at https://www.thenarrowpath.com/audio/verse-by-verse/luke/26_2014_Luke_19.28-20.19.mp3.
- Bill Pratt's quote is from <https://www.toughquestionsanswered.org/2017/02/10/commentary-on-luke-19-the-triumphal-entry/>.

