

Cross Keys United Methodist Church

2017 Lenten Devotional

Week 7

Monday, April 10

1 Peter 2:22-24

*"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness...
1 Peter 2:24a*

Lent is a very perplexing time and it still amazes me that Jesus was sent by His father to take on the sins of the world. Jesus never questioned what His purpose was. He simply did His Father's will. Jesus who was without sin, willingly in silent submission, went to the cross as our sacrificial Lamb. It was through His death on the cross that we were forgiven and it is through our faith in Jesus that we are saved. In prayer at night I ask Jesus to please make me worthy of his sacrifice and help me to be more like Him. I know I am undeserving of His love and forgiveness, but Romans 5:8 tells me Christ died for me while I was still a sinner. What a wonderful savior He is.

Sandy Cox

exactly how you feel. Didn't Jesus himself feel the very same hostility (those that witnessed his everyday miracles), blame (those who rebuked Him for healing on the Sabbath) and betrayal by His friends (Judas, Peter) when He needed them most?

David was a "man of God's own heart". Be assured that God knows your heart! He knows when you are truly repentant and brings about the means for your healing. He knows what others think of you but ***His vision is perfect!*** With Christ as your savior, ***you are already perfect in His vision*** because of His grace!

Let me not be so hardened by the situations and realities of this life that I might miss the blessings and love surrounding me on my daily walk with my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

Jay Johnson

Tuesday, April 11

Psalm 41

*The Lord sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness.
Psalm 41:3*

In Psalm 41, David remembers all that God has done for him in the past and is confident in God's mercy and healing. Have you ever been in a position of sickness, whether it is physical, mental or spiritual, and you feel betrayed by your family and friends? Have you ever heard the words "You've brought this on yourself by____, or if you hadn't done____ you wouldn't be in this position?" Our God of healing and restoration knows

Wednesday, April 12

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:10

Paul was given a gift, a continuous reminder that God would always be with him. God is simply reminding Paul ("I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me." v7) that he would be there for him, and Paul understood this. God allows all of his children a level of burden to carry--a thorn in our flesh. Without it we would not realize that we can rely on His strength to carry us through difficult times.

Gods reminds us of His eternal love for us; He is always with us and will lead us on a journey that will ultimately work out. Many times during our tribulations we cannot see or understand His plan for us. "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."(v9) During our weakness God is abundantly present, providing strength in our lives and guidance to a resolution that in many cases we could have never imagined. This is God's will!

God will never over burden his children. "My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness." The amount of grace that God has given to each of us is the amount of grace needed to see us through our burdens, our weakness, and our difficulties.

Bill Dillon

Thursday, April 13 Matthew 26:36-44

Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Matthew 26:38

This is often known as "The agony in the garden". Jesus knows just what is about to happen to Him. Being God's own son, He knows the future. Being a man of flesh, He knows the kind of pain He is about to endure! I understand this kind of mental anguish. Many years ago, when my husband was facing his first open heart surgery the doctors gave us a video of the entire procedure. Even though my husband would have anesthesia and plenty of pain medication during his recovery, as time drew near the mental anguish became more prevalent. Jesus would not have anesthesia or pain medication; in fact he states at the last supper, that He would not drink the fruit of the vine again until in His Father's kingdom. No one could

accuse Him of being drunk, or in any way dulling the pain that was to come. 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us for our sake He made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. "So, Jesus is to be separated from the Father He loved his whole life." Isaiah 53:10 says "Yet it was the will of Lord to crush him." To be rejected by your own Father, was harder for Him to bear then the physical pain to come.

The second portion of this scripture deals with the three disciples that Jesus asked to wait with Him, while he prayed. Jesus asked His Father in heaven to remove the pain and suffering that was about to come, but He also prayed that his Father's will be done, therefore He would accept His Fathers decision! His disciples could not stay awake for one hour with Him. Jesus is right when He says, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak". That applies to us all!

This was a very sad devotional for me. Praise God that a Happy Resurrection Day, Easter is coming soon!

Doris Caola

Friday, April 14 Philippians 2:25-27

Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Philippians 2:27

The Apostle Paul sat in prison. He had traveled far and wide evangelizing for the Lord. The desire to spread the Gospel took him to places like Asia Minor, Athens, Syria, Italy and numerous islands of the Mediterranean. He sailed the Aegean Sea, the Gulf of Naples and the Mediterranean Sea, and walked the Appian Way. Paul spread the Good News of salvation made possible by the

great mercy of God. He told the story everywhere he traveled about the greatest act of mercy ever shown to man. We call it Good Friday and Easter.

For now, Paul sat in prison. No longer kicking along the dusty trails or knowing the rush of the sea winds against his face, Paul described a different kind of mercy in his letter to the Philippians. The kind of mercy that says God is with me, He loves me, and He is mindful of my need for Him. God is present in His mercy, not just in the past of salvation or in the future of glory, but shows His mercy and kindness to us daily. Paul wrote of his thankfulness that God showed him mercy in healing Epaphroditus so that he didn't suffer sorrow upon sorrow at the loss of him.

Epaphroditus was sent to Paul with a care package from the church at Philippi. They were not a wealthy church and it was a sacrifice to send the package and Epaphroditus to Paul. The faithful messenger became ill while with Paul and he almost died. He was anxious to return to Philippi and let them know he was well and relieve their worries. Paul was relieved by the mercy God showed him in the healing of his brother in Christ. He looked up from the prison surrounding him, from the confinement of his difficulties, and saw God's mercy for him in that moment.

Paul wrote to his supporters in Philippi and instead of complaining about his difficult circumstances he shared that moment of mercy he recognized as coming from God. Do you have those moments? When, just when you need it most, something happens to tap you on the heart. When by the sheer grace of God you look up from your difficulties and see an act of God's mercy.

I had a phone call like that recently. It was not a phone call I wanted to make. I would

have avoided if I could have, honestly. I was just too stressed with something else to deal with it. And God saw me in my distress. Through the stranger on the other end of that unwanted call, God showered His mercy down on me. It didn't take my other problem away. It DID remind me that God is with me, He loves me, and He is mindful that I need Him every day.

As we travel through the days ahead leading up to the darkness of Good Friday and the glorious victory of Easter we can think about Paul's message to the Philippians. When the dust of the road settles and the winds on the seas grow still God is with us in every moment. From our prisons, look for God's daily mercies and know that He is there.

Darlene Schoenewald

Saturday, April 15 1 Corinthians 15:38-57

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.
1 Corinthians 15:50

Well there you have it. Paul tells us straight out, we can't get to heaven. Nope, no way, no how. We are flesh and blood, so it can't happen; there is no getting to heaven for us. Oh, you say "what about the rest of the verse". Think you caught me in a partial quote? But, Paul continues "... nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable." No hope there either, we will surely perish and heaven never perishes. We are sunk, how will we ever be with God forever?

Reading the entire scripture selection will help. Paul explains the differences between earthly (us) and heavenly or Godly. He says

we are different from animals, birds and fish, and even the heavenly bodies themselves differ from each other. But in verse 44, he states there is a natural earthly body and a spiritual body. The spiritual body in holiness and glory is raised to be with God. That is what we want, the spiritual body. But, to get this spiritual body, we have to die. Oh, brother and sisters, to die is to perish and Paul said "perishable" can't be with God.

Paul also says: "The body sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body it is raised a spiritual body." So, all we need to do, is get some of this "raised." But, we have to die from this world and be resurrected to be "raised". Can't be resurrected without dying and can't die without having an earthly body. God actually made a simple path for us to follow.

Jesus has already done this for us. He could not be resurrected without dying and he could not have died without having a natural earthly body. Jesus was alive as we are. Jesus died as we will. Jesus is the Christ and He was resurrected from death in a new spiritual body. He spoke, He walked, and He ate in this imperishable spirit body before witnesses. Jesus ascended to the Father in heaven and He awaits our arrival. If we believe in the Christ's resurrection, we too will be resurrected in a spiritual body. That's all it takes, believe the truth, Jesus is the son of God and died for you and arose from His grave to cleanse us all of our sins.

Paul quotes Isaiah and Hosea: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death is your victory? Where O death, is your sting?" Christ has taken the victory and sting away from death (Hell). All that separated us from God is gone--death, the wrath of God, the power of Satan, sin--all are eliminated by

His death and resurrection. The cross is empty, Jesus lives!

It was all planned; remember God even created the seed that grew the tree that Christ gave His life on. "...thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"

Sam Sprengle