

## **DEVOTIONS: MONDAY 4-6-20 ~ MATTHEW 21:12-17**

**Matthew 21:12-17:** Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. <sup>13</sup>“It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’”

<sup>14</sup>The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. <sup>15</sup>But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.

<sup>16</sup>“Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him.

“Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read,

“‘From the lips of children and infants  
you, Lord, have called forth your praise’?”

<sup>17</sup>And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

Just a few short notes for today:

1. Yesterday – Palm Sunday ... Jesus assumed his place of AUTHORITY as KING. Riding into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9) – Jesus exerted his KINGLY AUTHORITY.
2. Most historians believe that Jesus went to the temple and cleared the money changers away on Monday. --- Read all the gospel account of PALM SUNDAY --- WHAT DO YOU THINK?
3. Note Matthew 21:13 --- Jesus is RECLAIMING THE CHURCH and exerting his PRIESTLY AUTHORITY – further in verse 14 when Jesus intercedes for the needy and heals the blind and the lame.
4. SO COOL that the children have a voice --- (see verse 13) ... God loves the children!!!!
5. Jesus exerts his PROPHETS AUTHORITY, particularly in verse 16.
6. SO --- in the span of 2 days, JESUS EXERTS his KINGLY, PRIESTLY, and PROPHETIC ROLES as the long promise MESSIAH ---- PROPHET, PRIEST & KING!!!!

BOTTOM-LINE --- the religious leaders had long neglected their RESPONSIBILITY & CARE for the needy, the outcasts and those on the fringes (note the blind man and Zacchaeus in Luke 18 & Luke 19) ...

WILL WE BE MORE RESPONSIBLE THAN THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN THE DAY OF JESUS?

PALM SUNDAY and the MONDAY that followed was huge --- JESUS IS RE-EXERTING HIS AUTHORITY and RE-ESTABLISHING HIS CLAIM OVER THE CHURCH ... the church that he has invited us to share and be a part --- the church to whom he has delegated RESPONSIBILITY to represent God to the world ... and to be the hands and feet of Jesus!!!

Dear God, please help us to be all that you would intend ... thank you for your grand and wonderful entry into Jerusalem --- re-exerting your AUTHORITY and PLACE as the head of the church --- the intended KOG on earth.

In Jesus' name, AMEN

## DEVOTIONS: TUESDAY 4-7-20 ~ MARK 11:22-25

### Mark 11:22-25 --- Jesus teaches the disciples regarding the withered fig tree

<sup>22</sup>“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. <sup>23</sup>“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. <sup>24</sup>Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. <sup>25</sup>And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

These words were recorded as spoken by Jesus as Jesus explains the withered fig tree.

1. Jesus cursed the fig tree because it was without fruit --- YET, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN FULL OF FRUIT!
2. I believe that Jesus did this to make a dramatic visual learning experience FOR THE DISCIPLES.

WHAT COULD JESUS BE HOPING TO TEACH THE DISCIPLES?

1. I believe that Jesus was working to PREPARE the disciples for their pending appointment as LEADERS in the CHURCH of JESUS --- commissioned by Jesus in the context of his Ascension.
2. As Jesus exerts his authority over the church --- Jesus wants his disciples to know that the work and commissioning that they will be called to requires FRUITFULNESS.

FRUITFULNESS that is found in FAITH & BELIEF in JESUS --- FAITH & BELIEF THAT ALL THAT JESUS WAS PREPARING TO CALL THE DISCIPLES THEN (and US TODAY) ... they and we are called to be faithful followers of Jesus the Christ.

We are called to believe --- to have faith --- and to be RESPONSIBLE for the work that God has called us as believers – as Disciples of Jesus --- and as the church.

IF GOD HAS GIVEN US AN ASSIGNMENT (and HE HAS) ... and IF WE HAVE FAITH IN GOD --- THEN GOD WILL MOVE MOUNTAINS TO ENABLE HIS CHARGE TO US TO BE FULFILLED ---- **“IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US”** (Romans 8:31)

I believe that Jesus wanted the disciples to see that the leaders of the religious systems, that Jesus came to replace, WERE NOT FAITHFUL to GOD’S CALL or GOD’S COMMISSION.

BUT with JESUS’ TRIUMPH OVER SIN AND DEATH (that will be evident come Easter morning) .... JESUS HAS COMMISSIONED A NEW CHURCH TO DO AND BE CHRIST TO THE WORLD ... WE ARE TO BE CHRIST’S HANDS AND FEET ... to be his ministers --- all of us – to serve and draw people to the SAVING KNOWLEDGE & BELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST ... who is the **“WAY, THE TRUTH, and the LIFE”** (John14:6)

SO MUCH MORE THAT I COULD SAY --- BUT HERE IS THE BOTTOM-LINE:

The verses and words of Jesus recorded in today’s text IS THAT GOD WILL ENABLE US TO DO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH --- ALL WE NEED IS TO KEEP OUR EYES ON JESUS ... TO FAITHFULLY TRUST & OBEY JESUS ...

And as Jesus tells Peter earlier in Matthew --- **“and the gates of hell will not prevail against the church”** (Matthew 16:18)

FRIENDS, JESUS CAME AND PROVED HIS AUTHORITY OVER THE CHURCH --- JESUS HAS COMMISSIONED ALL OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM TO DO AND TO BE THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST AS HIS CHURCH.

WE HAVE BEEN COMMISSIONED BY THE KING --- BY THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST AND THE MIGHTY VOICE OF GOD ... WE HAVE TOUGH TIMES FACING US ... BUT GOD HAS AND WILL ENABLE US ALL THAT WE NEED SO THAT WE MIGHT BE FRUITFUL IN TOUGH TIMES AS WELL AS GOOD TIMES.

WHATEVER WE FACE TODAY ... WE FACE IN THE POWER OF GOD ALMIGHTY.

**STAND TALL AND BE MINISTERS OF THE LOVE AND GRACE ... COURAGE & STRENGTH OF GOD ALMIGHTY --- JESUS SHOWED US THE WAY** --- as part of the LAST SUPPER --- Jesus tells his disciples, ***“VERY TRULY, I TELL YOU, WHOEVER BELIEVES IN ME WILL DO THE WORKS I HAVE BEEN DOING, AND THEY WILL DO EVEN GREATER THINGS THAN THESE BECAUSE I [JESUS] AM GOING TO THE FATHER. AND I WILL DO WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME (for my work) SO That THE FATHER MAY BE GLORIFIED IN THE SON”*** ... John 14:12-13.

Friends --- HOLY WEEK is that week that Jesus exerted his authority ... setting aside the old church and commissioning and invigorating the new church ... with the power of his resurrection and the bestowing of the Holy Spirit upon the church ...

I encourage you and me to LIVE INTO THE CALL THAT JESUS HAS COMMISSIONED US ... a CALL TO BE FRUITFUL --- and a CALL TO BE FAITHFUL.

PRAYER: Dear God, thank you for today's teaching ... may we live into the life and call and responsibility that Jesus has put upon his disciples in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and today --- upon the church --- upon each of us as today's disciples of Jesus the Christ --- mighty and glorious ... the Risen Lord ... OUR KING --- OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST and THE REVELATION OF GOD .... WRAPPED IN THE LOVE AND GRACE OF JESUS, AMEN.

## **DEVOTIONS: WEDNESDAY 4-7-20 ~ PSALM 91:1-2 & MATTHEW 11:28**

Good morning friends ☺

When we consider the calendar of Holy Week the following is generally considered the outline of the week:

Sunday – Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey – claiming his kingly authority

Monday – Jesus 'cleanses' the temple – claiming his priestly and prophetic authority

Tuesday – Jesus & disciples travel to Jerusalem --- general teaching & personal encounters with the religious leaders and a condemnation of the religious leaders.

**Wednesday – “REST” -- generally considered to be a day when Jesus stayed close and “hung-out” at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus... and the disciples**

Thursday – Maundy Thursday --- PASSOVER --- the LAST SUPPER .... Jesus taken captive.

Friday --- “Good Friday” --- FEAST of UNLEAVENED BREAD

Saturday --- “SABBATH” for the Jews’ Day of Silence ...

Sunday --- Feast of the 1<sup>st</sup> Harvest --- JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD!!!! The 1<sup>st</sup> EASTER

We've been pretty intense the past week (or more) --- COVID-19 --- working from home, on-line school, all kinds of traumas and change!!!!

As I consider that Jesus (even Jesus) planned for times of rest & rejuvenation --- especially before times of intense spiritual challenge ... Jesus would “rest up.”

So, we'll take a one day break from our Holy Week study to "rest" --- to rest our minds --- and our emotions --- to let things decompress and to 'juice up' for the intensity, which Jesus knew was before him Thursday through Sunday.

**My verses for us today:**

**Psalms 91:1-2:** WHOEVER dwells in the shelter of the Most-High

WILL REST in the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup>I will say of the Lord, "He is **my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.**"

**Matthew 11:28:** "Come to me, ALL YOU who are weary and burdened; and I will give you REST."

1. God offers REST to "WHOEVER" dwells in the protective care of Jesus.
2. Jesus invites ALL PEOPLE to come to him.

**APPLICATION:**

I was a part of a ZOOM meeting yesterday that included our Bishop. The Bishop reminded us to be "kind to ourselves" ... to take more time than normal to rejoice and re-energize --- during stressful times and times of almost constant change our bodies and our psyche NEED TO RESET and REFOCUS ... to RE-ENERGIZE and REST.

SO my simple word to you today --- be kind to yourself and take time to RESET and REST...

Dear God, please help the people of SHUMC and of our community to take a breath and 'rest' ... THANK YOU for the gift of rest and please help us to have the capacity & ability to do all that needs to be done between now and when this passes. Thank you for including this note that Jesus rested just before the intensity of his world-changing work on the cross. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**DEVOTIONS: THURSDAY 4-8-20 ~ MAUNDY THURSDAY & THE LAST SUPPER**

Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-20; John 13:1-17

Verbs are important --- "verbs" are ACTION words ... they describe "ACTION."

Matthew, Mark and Luke all include the following verbs in their respective accounts of the Last Supper...AND Paul uses virtually the same verbs in 1 Corinthians 11:23-24a. "***The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, TOOK the bread, and when he had given THANKS, he BROKE it.***" There must be something important and significant about these 4 verbs in this context....

**MATTHEW 26:26-30:** While they were eating, Jesus TOOK bread, and when he had given THANKS (blessing), he BROKE it and GAVE it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

<sup>27</sup> Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup> This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

<sup>30</sup> When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

- TOOK
- BLESSED / GAVE THANKS
- BROKE
- GAVE

**Rev. Magrey deVega considers Henri Nouwen's, "Life of the Beloved"** and the use of these 4 verbs – not only as part of the Holy Sacrament but also in TERMS OF WHAT JESUS IS DOING IN US. For if Jesus is the BREAD OF THE WORLD (and he is) ... what would it look like if WE were the very bread that Jesus TAKES, BLESSES, BREAKS & GIVES?

1<sup>st</sup> – WE HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY GOD. At the moment of our baptism, God made claim to our lives. When the waters of baptism touched us --- God said, "YOU ARE MINE." The world will try to get their hands on us --- the devil will try too ... BUT GOD says, that "my grace will work IN YOU & THROUGH YOU to lead on a path of FULL RELATIONSHIP WITH ME"--- as a child of God! WE ARE NOT OUR OWN --- WE BELONG TO GOD.

2<sup>nd</sup> -- And even more --- WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED. We are children of God --- given a unique composition that makes us unlike ANY OTHER --- we are each A SPECIAL HANDIWORK OF GOD. Our skills, passions, relationships, gifts, talents, dispositions ... all put together that we might be equipped to FULFILL a particular purpose in the world --- according to God's PLAN. God loves us – God loves YOU --- and you are a gift from God.

3<sup>rd</sup> – And we have been BROKEN --- sometimes there is no way for us to EXPERIENCE the FULLNESS OF GOD without going through some process of STRUGGLE & TRIAL. You have been BROKEN and you can identify the moments in your life when you were at your lowest ... ONLY TO DISCOVER that those pivotal points were CRITICAL TRANSITIONS OF GROWTH --- & ACCOMPLISHMENT – and we were totally dependent upon GOD.

4<sup>th</sup> --- Like the bread --- GOD HAS GIVEN US ... we have been given to the world to meet the needs of people who hunger for something joyful, loving, and peaceful. We ARE NOT here simply to meet our own needs...but we are here to be GIVEN OUT to those who seek to find Jesus for themselves.

Dear God, I am but bread in your hands ... to be TAKEN, BLESSED, BROKEN, and GIVEN OUT. I offer myself to you for your purposes. In Jesus' Name, AMEN.

GO back and think of these four special VERBS:

TAKEN BY GOD  
BLESSED BY GOD  
BROKEN BY GOD  
GIVEN BY GOD

**DEVOTIONS: FRIDAY 4-10-20 ~ JESUS RECITES THE PSALMS ON THE CROSS**

**Psalms 22:1 MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?** Why are you so far from saving me?

**Psalms 22:31** They will declare his righteousness ... declaring to a people yet unborn .... HE HAS DONE IT ---- IT IS FINISHED

**Psalms 31:5 INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God ....**

**7 Last Words of Jesus**

**What Phrases Did Jesus Speak on the Cross and What Did They Mean?**

by Mary Fairchild (Updated December 06, 2018)

Jesus Christ made seven final statements during his last hours on the cross. These phrases are held dear by followers of Christ because they offer a glimpse into the depth of his suffering to accomplish redemption. Recorded in the Gospels between the time of his crucifixion and his death, they reveal his divinity as well as

his humanity. As much as possible, given the approximate sequence of events as portrayed in the Gospels, these seven last words of Christ are presented here in chronological order.

### 1) Jesus Speaks to the Father

#### Luke 23:34

*Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."* (As translated according to the New International Version of the Bible [NIV](#)).

In the midst of his excruciating suffering, the heart of Jesus was focused on others rather than himself. Here we see the [nature of his love](#)—unconditional and divine.

### 2) Jesus Speaks to the Criminal on the Cross

#### Luke 23:43

*"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."* (NIV)

One of the criminals who was crucified with Christ had recognized who Jesus was and expressed faith in him as Savior. Here we see [God's grace](#) poured out through faith, as Jesus assured the dying man of his [forgiveness](#) and eternal salvation.

### 3) Jesus Speaks to Mary and John

#### John 19:26–27

*When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."* (NIV)

Jesus, looking down from the cross, was still filled with the concerns of a son for the earthly needs of his mother. None of his brothers were there to care for her, so he gave this task to the [Apostle John](#). Here we clearly see Christ's humanity.

### 4) Jesus Cries Out to the Father

#### Matthew 27:46 (also Mark 15:34)

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (As translated in the New King's James Version ([NKJV](#)).

In the [darkest hours](#) of his suffering, Jesus cried out the opening words of Psalm 22. And although much has been suggested regarding the meaning of this phrase, it was quite apparent the agony Christ felt as he expressed separation from God. Here we see the Father turning away from the Son as Jesus bore the full weight of our [sin](#).

### 5) Jesus is Thirsty

#### John 19:28

*Jesus knew that everything was now finished, and to fulfill the Scriptures he said, "I am thirsty."* (As translated in the New Living Translation ([NLT](#)).

Jesus refused the initial drink of vinegar, gall, and [myrrh](#) (Matthew 27:34 and Mark 15:23) offered to alleviate his suffering. But here, several hours later, we see Jesus fulfilling the [messianic prophecy](#) found in Psalm 69:21.

### 6) It Is Finished

#### John 19:30

*... he said, "It is finished!"* (NLT)

Jesus knew he was suffering the crucifixion for a purpose. Earlier he had said in John 10:18 of his life, "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." (NIV) These three words were packed with meaning, for what was finished here was not only Christ's earthly life, not only his suffering and dying, not only the

payment for sin and the redemption of the world—but the very reason and purpose he came to earth was finished. His final act of obedience was complete. The Scriptures had been fulfilled.

## **7) Jesus' Last Words**

### **Luke 23:46**

*Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. (NIV)*

Here Jesus closes with the words of Psalm 31:5, speaking to the Father. We see his complete trust in the Father. Jesus entered death in the same way he lived each day of his life, offering up his life as the perfect sacrifice and placing himself in God's hands.