

Good News Daily

April 9-15, 2017

Sunday, April 9

1 Timothy 6:12-16 *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called...* (v.12a NIV).

You and I are going to have to fight this week. We are going to have to fight to remember that we are in the midst of a particularly sacred time—Holy Week.

The world around us will not be helpful. It will encourage us to go about our daily tasks as if this is just another wonderfully normal April week. But it is not. Don't let yourself be sidetracked. For the Christian, this is the holiest of times. It is in this week that we see echoes of ourselves in the actions of the crowd—hailing, then cursing. We see ourselves, too, in the actions of the disciples who pledged their very lives one moment only to flee when the chips were down in the next moment.

But more importantly, this is the week that we observe the path of Jesus to the cross. We are given the opportunity to re-experience that journey and consider again what our salvation cost. We are able to see anew just how great the love of God is for His people.

Fight for this week.

Zechariah 9:9-12; Psalms 24, 29; Matthew 21:12-17

Birthdays: Jackie Boccia, Tanya Holmes and Constance Williams

Anniversaries: None

Monday, April 10

John 12:9-19 *"Look, the world has gone after him"* (v.19b).

Jesus enters Jerusalem for the last time. He enters in triumph, being hailed by the people. The Pharisees are indignant and frustrated that the world seems to have been taken with Jesus.

But if you notice, the crowds have largely gathered because of the raising of Lazarus (vv.17-18). They were impressed by Jesus' power but, as we will observe, they had missed his personality. They were star-gazing, wanting to see a great man, but they were missing the deeper truth of Lazarus' miracle—just who it was in their midst.

It would take the disciples time, following the resurrection, to understand these events. They were in the presence of power. They were in the presence of a king. They were in the presence of true greatness. They only had a hint, however, of what greatness and power they were witnessing.

As Holy Week gets underway, ask yourself if you have perhaps underestimated God's power and greatness. When we stop and consider just who it is riding that donkey, we might find ourselves stunned with awe as we stand Friday at the foot of the cross.

Jeremiah 12:1-16; Psalm 51; Philippians 3:1-14

Birthdays: Susan Clifford, Trevor Herbert-Snagg and Gloria Rose

Anniversaries: Andrew & Tanisha Valere

Tuesday, April 11

John 12:20-26 *"If anyone serves me, he must follow me;"* (v.26a)

One of the biggest lies in popular Christianity is that it is easy. In an effort to appeal to the masses, many people have said, "Become a Christian and your life will be better and more secure. Your business will prosper; your house will be full of nothing but happiness and your social circle will always be full." In whatever form this approach comes, it is a lie.

Jesus says that those who serve him must follow him. So, where was he going? Calvary. Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior, was heading for a brutal death on the town garbage dump. This is where he says we are to follow—to the place of sacrifice.

The Christian life is a bit of a paradox. Yes, life is better as a Christian—I wouldn't want to go through life without the love and grace of our God. However, Christianity is demanding—Jesus is demanding. Nothing less than all of our life is required. And, as Scripture reveals, nothing else but true life is gained.

Jeremiah 15:10-21; Psalms 6, 12; Philippians 3:15-21

Birthdays: Alexander Corris

Anniversaries: None

Wednesday, April 12

John 12:27-36 *"But for this purpose I have come to this hour"* (v.27b).

This is an amazing statement. When you consider all that Jesus did—all the kind acts, all the healings, all the miracles—it causes us to sit up and take notice when he finally reveals the real reason he has come. But what is this purpose?

Jesus is talking about his death. Through his death and resurrection, the way will finally be clear and, as he says in verse 32, he will draw all people to himself. Jesus' death was not a random act of mob violence or religious corruption (albeit those played a role). Jesus' death was a willful act of love. It boggles the mind and breaks the heart. But through this death, we are in all senses of the word, "saved."

In his book, *Authentic Christianity*, John Stott observes, "[Jesus] did not regard the death he was about to die as bringing his mission to an untimely end, but as actually necessary to accomplish. It was only seconds before he died (and not till that moment) that he would be able to shout 'Finished!'"

It was for you and for me.

Jeremiah 17:5-10, 14-17; Psalm 55; Philippians 4:1-13

Birthdays: None

Anniversaries: None

Thursday, April 13

John 17:1-26 "Holy Father, keep them in your name..." (v.11b)

When we read this, we may tend to envision this prayer happening in the Garden of Gethsemane. We may think this is a private prayer between God and Jesus. But it isn't. They don't depart for the garden until the end of this prayer (John 18:1). This prayer was said in front of the disciples, *for* the disciples.

How amazing and touching! Jesus' concern on the eve of his death was that the disciples be sustained and remain in unity—together. Do you realize that this is Jesus praying for them and for us? Look over at John 12:20 where it says, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word."

Jesus had you and me in mind on the eve of his death. He was praying for us! We might envision a Jesus that commands us, or calls us, or disciplines us. But imagine and take confidence—for our Savior also prays for us.

Jeremiah 20:7-11; Psalm 102; 1 Corinthians 10:14-17, 11:27-32

Birthdays: Jasmine Guy-Wimberly, Tyrone Scott and Pearl Sinclair

Anniversaries: None

Friday, April 14

John 13:36-38 "The rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times..." (v.38)

How unlikely this must have seemed to Peter, "The Rock"! Peter is the one who proclaims, "You [Jesus] have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68). Peter is the one who boasts that he will lay down his life for Jesus. And still this is the one who will deny he ever knew the Lord? Yes, it is.

There are moments in each of our lives where we feel unstoppable, confident, completely "alive" and fired up about our faith. Peter reminds us that none of us are insulated from falling. Even Peter, who lived and learned at the very feet of Jesus, was shaken by his master's betrayal. Afraid of meeting a similar fate, he swore he didn't know Jesus. And he did it three times.

Humility is the hallmark of the Christian. It is a difficult lesson to learn, as Peter could testify. But it is necessary. Don't despair when you fail; remember Peter. Remember that Jesus restored him and sent him out to labor for the kingdom. But some lessons were needed first.

Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 22; 1 Peter 1:10-20

Birthdays: Monica Branker and Maria Edwards

Anniversaries: None

Saturday, April 15

Hebrews 4:1-16 *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (v.16).

This is a dark day. Holy Saturday is the in between time. What a day this must have been for the disciples!

Remember, they were not marking the time until Sunday. They didn't know for sure what was going to happen next. For them, Jesus was dead, betrayed by the very people he had sought to love and to help. They were in hiding, afraid and alone—very alone.

That is where we should be this day. We should strive to enter into their experience of pain and loneliness—only to remind ourselves of the great pain our Lord endured and what his absence from the world would mean. What hope is there if there is no resurrection? What hope do we have if Jesus was simply a nice teacher who died a criminal's death? If that is true, then it is truly a dark day.

But we know there is a new day coming. With daybreak, we will rise to the proclamation that "He is risen!" Nothing will ever be the same again. Then, we can truly draw near to the throne with confidence, not in ourselves, but in the one who has defeated death once, for all (Hebrews 10:10).

Job 19:21-27a; Psalm 88

Birthdays: Michael Gavaghan, W. Ross Hislop, Damian Simpson and Erin Spillers

Anniversaries: None

by Chris Finley

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