

5 Day Devotions, "Holy Week" from Wednesday, March 27, 2024

Day 1: Embracing Humility Through Service

Humility and service are the cornerstones of a life lived in imitation of Christ. The act of Jesus washing His disciples' feet is a profound demonstration of the humility and servanthood expected of His followers. This was not a mere gesture but a radical call to a life of service. In a world that often values power and status, this call to humility stands in stark contrast. It is a reminder that true greatness in the kingdom of God is measured not by how many serve us, but by how many we serve. This act of service is a pathway to true joy and fulfillment, as it aligns one's life with the selfless love of Jesus.

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2:4-7 ESV)

Reflection: Consider a person in your life who could use your help or support. How can you serve them this week in a way that reflects Jesus' act of washing the disciples' feet?

Day 2: Love as the Defining Mark of Discipleship

The new commandment to love one another as Jesus loved us is the defining mark of a Christian. This love is sacrificial, unconditional, and active. It is a love that goes beyond words and is demonstrated in actions. As disciples of Christ, we are called to love deeply and fully, reflecting the love that Jesus has for us. This love is not passive; it is a love that acts, serves, and sacrifices for the good of others. It is through this love that the world will recognize us as followers of Christ, and it is this love that has the power to transform hearts and communities.

"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (1 John 3:16-17 ESV)

Reflection: Is there someone in your life whom you find difficult to love? How can you show them the same kind of sacrificial love that Jesus has shown you?

Day 3: The Mystery of Communion

Communion is a sacred mystery that connects believers to the redemptive work of Christ. As participants in the bread and the cup, individuals are reminded of the sacrifice Jesus made for their sins and the new life they have through His resurrection. This sacrament is not just a ritual; it is a profound spiritual practice that calls believers to live lives worthy of the calling they have received. It is a time to remember, to give thanks, and to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus until He comes again. Through communion, believers are united with Christ and with each other, forming a community that transcends time and space.

"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." (1 Corinthians 10:16-17 ESV)

Reflection: How does participating in communion challenge you to live out the reality of being one with Christ and His body, the church?

Day 4: Contemplating the Passion Narrative

The service of light and darkness is a poignant reminder of the journey from Jesus' betrayal to His crucifixion. The extinguishing of candles symbolizes the encroaching darkness of sin and death, yet also anticipates the ultimate victory of light over darkness through the resurrection. This visual representation helps believers to internalize the gravity of the passion narrative. It is a time to reflect on the cost of sin, the depth of Jesus' sacrifice, and the hope that is found in His victory over death. This contemplation is not meant to lead to despair but to a deeper appreciation of the magnitude of God's love and the light that shines in the darkness.

"For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness. For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall." (Psalm 18:28-29 ESV)

Reflection: In what ways have you experienced the darkness of sin and the light of Christ's redemption in your own life?

Day 5: The Power of Confession and Forgiveness

Confession and forgiveness are integral to the Christian walk. Acknowledging one's sins and receiving God's forgiveness is essential for maintaining fellowship with Him and with one another. As believers confess their sins, they are cleansed and renewed, empowered to walk as children of light in a world that often prefers darkness. This practice is not just about admitting wrongs but also about receiving the grace that restores and transforms. Confession leads to freedom and a renewed commitment to live according to God's ways.

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." (James 5:16 ESV)

Reflection: What is one sin or struggle you need to bring into the light through confession, and how can you seek accountability within your faith community to overcome it?