



# FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

**Meditations for Holy Week 2016**

**First Baptist Church  
Charlottetown, PEI**

# Footsteps of Jesus

## *Taking Time to Reflect*

Welcome to Holy Week, that period that spans Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday.

As we prepare for the celebration of Easter, this devotional booklet has been compiled to help us follow the footsteps of Jesus during His last week leading up to His death, burial and resurrection. Where did He go? Who did He see? What did He say? Why did He die?

Eight contributors from First Baptist Church have penned these articles. They represent different ages, genders and walks of life. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will guide us each closer to the Saviour who loved and gave Himself for us as in our imaginations we follow His steps during that first Holy Week.

Easter blessings,  
Pastor Dave

## *Join Us for These Special Events*

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|----------|----------------|---|
| Thursday | 6:30 to 8 p.m. | Maundy Thursday Preparation – Drop in for a time of quiet meditation and communion. |
| Friday   | 11:00 a.m.     | Good Friday Inspiration – A service in remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice for us.    |
| Sunday   | 9:30 & 11 a.m. | Easter Sunday Celebration – Enjoy the worship and the special halftime cafés.       |

## ***A Humble Servant Robed in Righteousness***

Bible readings: Mark 11:1-11; Philippians 2:5-11

Imagine if a member of the Royal Family came to Charlottetown, and we offered them a donkey as a means of transportation around the city! And greater yet, can you imagine anyone with royal status even requesting such a humble means of travel?

Jesus, the King of Kings, rode into Jerusalem on the day we now call Palm Sunday on a borrowed donkey. Large crowds lined the streets, spreading their coats along the way as a 'welcome carpet' for the One they hoped would deliver them from the current Roman occupation of their country. As Jesus heard the loud cheers of "Hosanna" and "Praise God" He knew that these same voices would be crying, "Crucify Him," within a few short days.

The people of Israel didn't hail Jesus because they recognized Him as their Saviour who could redeem them from their sins. Their ambitions were short-term – they were looking for a temporary fix to their earthly problems. Jesus' purpose was eternal.

Entering Jerusalem that day, Jesus was making public His claim to be the true Messiah. He had no desire to conquer people by force or violence. He chose, instead, to show love, grace and mercy.

Jesus never used his status as God's Son to His advantage. On the contrary, having no selfish ambitions to climb any "social ladders", Jesus humbled himself by being completely obedient to his Father. That willing obedience led him to a cruel and degrading death on a cross.

What are our ambitions when we reach out to Jesus? Are we looking for quick remedies for our woes while here on earth? Or are we truly – and humbly – recognizing the One who came to earth to lay down His very life for our salvation?

*True humility is not thinking less of yourself;  
it is thinking of yourself less.* - C. S. Lewis

***Walking with Jesus***

Bible readings: Isaiah 42: 1-4, Mark 11: 12-19

As we move on into the most demanding week of Jesus' life it is a privilege to walk beside Him and learn more of this man who is our Saviour. The passages in Isaiah and Mark complement each other and together remind me of His purity of purpose and His integrity of character. In Isaiah we see the prophetic image of a true servant, one filled with the desire to help those in need, those already bruised. He would be the one who went to the cross to suffer for each of us.

Then in Mark we are reminded that Jesus is not only gentle and caring but a person who maintained a clear purpose and a strong sense of expecting God's commands and principles to be honoured and upheld. The fruitless fig tree is a metaphor for the nation of Israel, full of promise but lacking evidence of sincerity in its fulfilment of expectations. Hypocrisy had crept into the religious practices of the Hebrew people. The temple was no longer "a house of prayer for all nations" but becoming a commercial thoroughfare. The money changers at the temple were opportunists, profiting from those who had no options left to meet the temple regulations.

Christ, the perfect Son of God, is our Redeemer. He is our model of humility, simplicity, and integrity. As we walk with Him through this most Holy of weeks, may we learn to follow His example in each aspect of our lives.

*Father, may we learn to be your faithful servants,  
acknowledging Jesus as our Saviour and humbly  
striving to follow His example throughout each day.  
Amen*

***Prayer That Moves Mountains***

Bible readings: Isaiah 49:1-4; Mark 11:20-25

Our power to move mountains comes from a right relationship with God. Jesus is in a right relationship with God – a loving and trusting intimate relationship. While He was with us, His spiritual eyes and ears were ever open. He only did what the Father told Him to do and said what the Father told Him to say. The Father and Son were united. They were one.

He tells us we can be one with the Father through Him. “You are in me and I am in the Father.” Jesus' very purpose was for the forgiveness of our sins. If we pray with unforgiveness in our hearts, we are not one with His purposes. We are not one with the Father. But if we pray to God with a forgiving heart in submission to His will and believe Him to be more loving and kind than we can imagine ... we will receive all that He has for us. We will see the mountains move.

Jesus wants us to bear much fruit through our relationship with Him. We are to remain on the vine. He says, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5) Apart from Jesus, we will be like the fruitless fig tree; we will wither and die.

*Thank you, Father, that you are the trusted gardener, and thank you for the grace you give us be able to remain, believe, and bear fruit.*

Shirley MacNaughton

## ***Sheep in Need of a Shepherd***

Bible readings: Psalm 23; Mark 14:1-11

When David wrote Psalm 23, he wrote it as a person who was quite familiar with the roles and responsibilities of a shepherd. Having spent many of his adolescent years tending the flocks of his father, he knew what it meant to take care of sheep. He also knew just how difficult a task it was, given the propensity of sheep to wander off and try to do things on their own. Much like the flocks that David tended, we have a tendency to want to go it alone, regardless of how dangerous the consequences may be. This serves as a practical illustration of just how badly we need a shepherd to care for us.

Taking the characteristics of a shepherd laid out by David in Psalm 23, we can develop a deeper understanding of Jesus' words in John 10 when he says, "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep." Not only did Jesus speak these words, claiming to be a shepherd, but He lived them out, providing the ultimate example of what it means to care for His flock. The love and sacrifice required of a shepherd was intimately understood by David, and this Psalm helps us to come to the same understanding.

Taking all of this into consideration, the prominent theme of Psalm 23 is that of peace. As we read it, keeping in mind the words and ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, we experience this peace in our own lives, trusting that we can follow our Good Shepherd, living in full confidence that He will never lead us astray.

Jonathan Schut

## ***Humility***

Bible readings: Mark 14:17-26; John 13:12-16

*Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.* John 13: 16 (NASB)

Are we sometimes so great as to refuse to debase ourselves for the sake of our brothers and sisters in Christ? Do we feel as if we aren't good enough to accept help? Do we feel as if we are *too* good to accept it?

We forget that if anyone had just cause to see himself as above this sort of thing, it was Jesus. Jesus not only debased Himself, essentially wallowing in the mud for us just by coming to earth to live with us, but even then did not think Himself so great as to not take the time to perform small tasks for His servants.

Can we imagine royalty today standing in the muck to help us with the smallest of tasks? Yet He who is mightier came to earth to walk among us in the streets. He knelt in the mud to raise us up and heal us. He will humiliate Himself just to wash our feet.

Through this great act of humility, Jesus shows us that the mightiest will debase Himself not in spite of His mightiness, but because of it.

None of us is so great, or so small, that help cannot be given or received. God has already humiliated Himself on the cross in the greatest act of love ever performed. He has asked us to do the same for one another, so let's get started today.

## *The Divine Exchange*

Bible readings: Isaiah 53:1-5; Mark 15:1-15

*God forbid that I should boast save in the Cross of Christ.* Gal. 6:14

On this solemn day, we are invited to meditate upon the Divine Exchange Christ made for us on the Cross. As we ponder the blood-price of God that purchased our redemption while we were yet His enemies<sup>a</sup>, may He empower us to grasp and know by experience what is the love of Christ<sup>b</sup>. May the knowledge of His love for us become the upward call of God in Christ<sup>c</sup> to walk the Calvary Road with Him in our own lives<sup>d</sup>.

*Jesus was punished so that we might be forgiven<sup>e</sup>*

*Jesus was wounded so that we might be healed<sup>f</sup>*

*Jesus became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God<sup>g</sup>*

*Jesus became a curse so that we might enter into blessing<sup>h</sup>*

*Jesus died our death so that we might receive His life<sup>i</sup>*

*Jesus endured our poverty so that we might share in His abundance<sup>j</sup>*

*Jesus endured rejection so that we might be accepted in the Beloved as children of God<sup>k</sup>*

*Jesus bore our shame so that we might share in His glory<sup>l</sup>*

*Jesus was cut off by death from the Father so that we would be eternally reconciled to the Father<sup>m</sup>*

*Our old man was put to death in Christ so that the new man could come alive in us<sup>n</sup>* - Derek Prince, *Prayers and Proclamations*

Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus Christ, Spirit of the living God, thank You that through the eternal sacrifice of Christ at the Cross:

All of my sins have been forgiven.

I am healed.

I have become the righteousness of God.

I am blessed with every spiritual blessing.

I am alive!

I have abundance.

I am accepted by God as His child.

I am being restored to the image of God from glory to glory.

I am eternally reconciled to God.

I am a new creation!!

As we behold these glorious truths, may we respond to His invitation to share in the fellowship of His sufferings and death in our own lives<sup>o</sup>:

*...to forgive.* Is there someone you have not forgiven? Would you bear the pain, the 'punishment' of forgiving them so that their debt may be paid?

*...to be wounded.* Mother Theresa once wrote 'love 'til it hurts. Then you know you are really loving.' Would you be wounded so that others might be healed?

*...to cover sin with love.* The bible teaches us that love covers a multitude of sins<sup>p</sup>. Is there someone whose company you avoid because of their ungodly lifestyle? Would you cover their sin by loving them so that they might receive the beauty of God's righteousness?

*...to be cursed.* Is there someone who has cursed you, lied or gossiped about you, harmed you? Would you do good unto them so that they would be blessed<sup>q</sup>?

*...to become poor.* Would you lovingly relate to the poor, so that they would know the riches of Christ?

*...to be rejected.* Would you endure rejection for the sake of the Gospel so that even one person might become accepted by God in Christ?

*...to bear the shame.* Is there someone who for whatever reason you find is beneath you? Would you befriend them so that they might not feel ashamed?

*...to be cut off.* Would you surrender your life as a living sacrifice to Christ, to help establish His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven<sup>r</sup>?

*To put the old man to death.* ... Andrew Murray wrote 'until a humility which will rest in nothing less than the end and death of self; which gives up all the honor of men as Jesus did, to seek the honor that comes from God alone, which absolutely makes and counts itself nothing that God may be all, that the Lord alone may be exalted – until such a humility be what we seek in Christ above our chief joy, and welcome at any price, there is very little hope of a religion that will conquer the world.'

Finally, may we remember that whatever He invites us to do for the sake of a few, He has done for the entire history of the human race, while we were yet His enemies. As we gaze upon the glory of His humility and self-slaying love that led Him to the Cross for the whole world – by the fathomless mystery of grace, the Holy Spirit transforms us into that same image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18), carving out the necessary space in our hearts to walk the Calvary Road in our own lives, to die to self ... that they too might live.

## ***Sealing Up the Truth***

Bible readings: Matthew 27:62-66; Mark 15:42-27

It was Saturday and Pilate was pacing back and forth. The frantic Pharisees had just told him that Jesus, the so-called “King of the Jews” was dead. He should be relieved. The source of the riots was lying motionless in a tomb and all the claims that he was the Messiah died with him. Why were they so worried?

They reminded him about something the man had said. He told his followers that he would rise again in three days. It was an outlandish statement. Impossible even. Jesus was clearly dead. His soldiers made sure of it. He didn’t believe a man could come back to life, but this unlikely act could be staged by naïve disciples if they stole his body. That kind of conspiracy could spark a revolution that would destroy his empire and anger Rome. It had to be stopped!

“Guards, make sure that tomb stays sealed,” he ordered. “Don’t let this situation get out of hand.”

Pilate is not the only one who tried to conceal the truth about Jesus. Many religious experts, atheists and skeptical people have denied the Resurrection. They devised the “swoon theory” or supported the original claim that the disciples stole his body. People believe he was an excellent moral teacher or a good man, and some even agreed he died on the cross. But by refusing to accept his resurrection, they are rejecting him as the Messiah and Saviour. Jesus continues to be sealed in a tomb and the truth of his divine power is hidden from the world.

This Easter weekend, let’s take a peek inside the tomb and find out the truth for ourselves.

***Raised to Life for Us***

Bible readings: Mark 16:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

*“Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene,  
who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here.  
See the place where they laid him.”*

Mark 16:6

What must it have been like to receive the most earth-shattering news imaginable! They had watched him die. They had seen him hastily laid in a borrowed grave. They had prepared to anoint his body for a proper burial. And now, these faithful women were being told that Jesus was not there, that he had come back to life! No wonder they left the tomb, “trembling and bewildered”. (Mark 16:8)

Mark puts a very human face on the story. We overhear their private conversation on the way to the tomb: “Who will roll the stone away?” (vs. 3) We feel their alarm at what they discover (vs. 5). We see them trembling at the import of the news. (vs. 8) These were not spiritual superstars. They were ordinary, hurting, struggling people, like you and like me.

Yet it was to them that was entrusted a thrilling message of hope: Death has been defeated, and now a new life is available thanks to Jesus. Two thousand years later, the news is still reverberating around the world. Hallelujah! Jesus is alive!

*“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”  
The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.  
But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord  
Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

*He whose soul remains ever turned toward God though the nail pierces it finds himself nailed to the very center of the universe. It is the true center; it is not in the middle; it is beyond space and time; it is God.*

*In a dimension that does not belong to space, that is not time, that is indeed quite a different dimension, this nail has pierced cleanly through all creation, through the thickness of the screen separating the soul from God.*

*In this marvelous dimension, the soul, without leaving the place and the instant where the body to which it is united is situated, can cross the totality of space and time and come into the very presence of God.*

*It is at the intersection of creation and its Creator. This point of intersection is the point of intersection of the arms of the Cross.*

- Simone Weil, *Essays*

*God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

- Romans 5:8

#### Footnotes from Friday's Devotion

<sup>a</sup> Romans 5:10. <sup>b</sup> Ephesians 3:18. <sup>c</sup> Philippians 3:14. <sup>d</sup> Matthew 16:24, 1 John 2:6.

<sup>e</sup> Isaiah 53:5, 1 John 2:2. <sup>f</sup> Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 3:24. <sup>g</sup> Isaiah 53:12; 2 Corinthians 5:21.

<sup>h</sup> Galatians 3:13, Ephesians 1:3. <sup>i</sup> 1 Peter 3:18; Galatians 2:20. <sup>j</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:9. <sup>k</sup> John 1:11-13; Ephesians 1:6 KJV. <sup>l</sup> Isaiah 53:3, Hebrews 2:10, 2 Corinthians 3:18. <sup>m</sup> Colossians 1:20-22; Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:18. <sup>n</sup> Romans 6:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

<sup>o</sup> Philippians 3:10. <sup>p</sup> 1 Peter 4:8. <sup>q</sup> 1 Peter 2:23, 1 Peter 3:9, Romans 12:14, 20-21.

<sup>r</sup> Romans 9:3, 12:1