



Easter Devotions in Luke

As we enter the Easter season, it is helpful for Christians to reflect on the events surrounding the death of Jesus. This has long been a tradition of the church.

These daily devotions are written to follow Luke's account of the final 24 hours of Jesus' life from the Last Supper to his death and burial. They conclude with the morning of his resurrection. The devotions are designed to be used from Mon 30 March up to Easter Sunday.

Each day has a reading, a devotional comment and some praise and prayer points. It will take about 10 to 15 minutes to process the material.

There are no devotions written for the Sundays when most Christians will be participating in church services of some kind.

Through COVID-19 Challenges

These devotions have been written at a unique time in Australia's history. The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary responses to "flatten the curve" have brought Australia to its knees. Industry is reeling, many have lost jobs, hospitals are struggling, and church buildings have been closed. It's a hugely challenging time.

These devotions seek to relate Jesus' cross journey to the realities we are facing. Jesus' journey is not reduced to our journey. Clearly, his journey was unique and was far more costly than anything we will experience. But many of the lessons from these Scriptures are applicable to our situation and these have been drawn out of the passages.

Produced by Qld Baptists

Qld Baptists is a Movement of churches that are passionate about Intentional Discipleship and Biblical Authority. We are committed to assisting all Christians to read God's Word daily. We particularly wanted to resource and unite churches at a time when their members have less access to their normal relational networks.

The devotions have been written by Rev Dr John Sweetman, the Interim Director of the Qld Baptist Movement.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Monday 30 Mar
Luke 22:1-6

Produced by Old Baptists

Introduction

As we enter Luke's account of the Easter story, things are getting difficult for Jesus. At the end of Luke 21, we see Jesus as a popular preacher with the ordinary people flocking to him in the temple precincts every day. But the religious leaders are angry and frustrated and tired of Jesus' provocations and independence. They know they are losing control of the ordinary people and are determined to find a chink in Jesus' armour so they can get rid of him.

Reading: [Luke 22:1-6](#)

Comment

The Jewish religious leaders could see no way around Jesus' popularity. They didn't want to lose face by causing a stir and having the people rebel against them. So they saw Judas' offer of betrayal as a god-send. I guess it was. Judas' disloyalty did not happen unbeknown to Jesus. He was fully aware of it and he knew that behind all of these dreadful events was the decree of God (22:22-23). Nothing happened to Jesus, or to us for that matter, outside of the will of God. God is here in this passage working out his plan. It's not that God was impervious to Jesus' pain and prayer; he just had a bigger plan for Jesus as he does for us. His will usually takes his children through suffering, not around it. Many of us are encountering this at the moment with restrictions and job losses and financial stresses and ill-health.

We're not sure why Judas took such drastic action. He certainly was greedy, and this was a chance to make a few dollars. But I suspect it was probably more likely that he was tired of Jesus constantly sidestepping the pressure of the crowds to become a "real" king and was trying to force Jesus' hand. If arrested by the leaders, surely Jesus would have to show his authority? Judas saw a lot of benefits in being in the hierarchy of a new Jewish kingdom.

By the end of this Scripture it looks like Satan finally has the upper hand over Jesus. Satan has done his work (22:3), the Jewish religious leaders have found a patsy, and Judas has his money (Matt. 26:15). The bad guys have had the last laugh. You can imagine Satan rubbing his hands.

But nothing could be further from the truth. The eternal plans of God are in motion in a more powerful way than at any time in the history of the created world. This is bigger than Noah's flood or the Israelite exodus or King David's conquests. It's bigger than COVID-19. This is the defining moment of history. All is about to be revealed. You need to hold on to the truth that while God's victory may come through unexpected means at surprising times, it will come.

Prayer

Praise God for the victory that is not apparent yet. Pray for those who feel disappointed and defeated at this challenging time – that God will protect them and open their eyes to his love, power and goodness.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Tuesday 31 Mar
Luke 22:7-16

Produced by Qld Baptists

Introduction

I can distinctly remember my year six Sunday School teacher going through today's passage and getting us to list all the miracles involved in this story. It's funny what you remember. Praise God for faithful Sunday School teachers. Note the divine direction and provision as you read this story. Finding a place to meet would not have been easy. Jerusalem would have been packed with people and there would have been plenty of competition for spaces and food.

Reading: [Luke 22:7-16](#)

Comment

There are many meal scenes in Luke (e.g. 5:29-37; 7:36-50; 9:12-17; 10:38-42; 11:37-54; 14:1-24). Meals were the times when Jesus especially appreciated and mentored his friends. This meal was extra special. Jesus was aware that it would be his last meal with his disciples before he suffered, so it was packed with emotion for him. "Eagerly desired" (22:15) is a term that indicates intense emotion. Jesus was deeply moved by the occasion.

The fact that Jesus felt so deeply about his friends might surprise you. He was God and therefore you might see him as above all the emotions that grab our human hearts. But not so. He loved his friends (both men and women). He enjoyed spending time with them. He wanted to be surrounded by them. A special Passover meal together with them was his priority at this painful time. This was a meal that would normally be shared with natural family. But these guys were Jesus' family.

In these days of social isolation, some will struggle more than others. The extroverts will miss the interaction. The isolated will miss being with their spiritual family. The worshippers will miss the powerful praise. The oldies will miss their chats. There is a significant cost that many will bear. But as we see in Jesus here, community is important for us all. Let's make sure we do everything we can to care for, reach out to, catch up with (mostly electronically) and pray with those who "eagerly desire" to be with their family and cannot at this time.

Prayer

Praise God for the tools we now have to overcome social isolation. While electronic communication is never quite the same, it's a great blessing at this time. Pray for those in your church family who are particularly struggling with the necessary social isolation policies. Mention some that you know by name.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Wednesday 1 Apr
Luke 22:17-20

Produced by Qld Baptists

Introduction

I have mostly participated in the Lord's Supper at church. But I've also eaten the bread and drunk from the cup on camps, in small groups, alone at retreats, with friends, and with my family. The Lord's Supper or Communion was never intended to be a formality, but an expression and reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus, cementing his death and its meaning into the depths of our hearts. Read how this precious meal was inaugurated by Jesus.

Reading: [Luke 22:17-20](#)

Comment

The cups in this narrative can get a little confusing. The Jewish Passover meal actually came in four courses with a cup associated with each one. So the first cup Luke mentions was probably the first or second one of the meal. In his toast, Jesus focused on this being his last Passover meal with them until that great celebration to come when he would return to a remade world. Even at this terrible point, Jesus had an eye on what his death would eternally achieve.

The bread (22:19) was part of the third course which also included the lamb and bitter herbs. Jesus put a new meaning on the broken bread saying that it represented his body that would be broken for his community. He inaugurated this memorial for his disciples and later his church with the words, "Do this in remembrance of me" (22:19).

Then Jesus used the last cup to speak about his death (the blood) and the resultant new covenant – we can have forgiveness and new life through the death of Jesus. It commemorates and declares Jesus' sacrificial death for us.

One of the costs of social isolation is our inability to participate with Christians over 2000 years in celebrating the Lord's Supper together in a church service. However, this does not mean that we are stopped from remembering the sacrifice of Jesus this way. Maybe we can do it alone. Maybe we can do it with our family. Maybe we can do it with a friend. The celebration of the Lord's Supper remains central to our worship of Christ.

When our children were young, Wednesday night was family night. As part of our activities, we would share communion together, with the boys taking turns to explain what it meant.

This could be a possibility for nuclear families. You just need to work out a ritual that suits your situation. But don't neglect the bread and cup. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

Prayer

Thank Jesus for what he has done in sacrificing his life for you. Share in the Lord's Supper. Pray for those who have no security or hope or peace as they face this pandemic.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Thursday 2 Apr
Luke 22:21-38

Produced by Qld Baptists

Introduction

There is often a time towards the end of my sermons when I realise that I still have so much to say but not enough time in which to say it. I think that Jesus is like this in this reading. There are so many things he wants to communicate to his followers (the future leaders of his church), but he is quickly running out of time. See how many themes you can find in this passage. The abrupt shift from topic to topic doesn't make understanding the reading easy. That's okay. The disciples didn't understand it all either.

Reading: [Luke 22:21-38](#)

Comment

Even at this stage, the disciples still thought that Jesus was establishing an earthly kingdom and so were jostling for the top spots. A bit like cabinet members with a new prime minister. Once again, Jesus explains to them the upside-down nature of his kingdom (22:25-26). Most people think that the diner (who does nothing but eat) is more significant than the waiter (who works hard). But Jesus makes it clear that he identifies much more with the waiter. So should his leaders. These guys were actually going to finally learn this lesson and turn out to be great servant leaders.

Then Jesus changes tack and expresses appreciation for the loyal support of his friends and actually promises them responsible roles in his future kingdom (22:28-30). Living as a faithful servant will eventually lead to God's type of greatness. It always does. It's the same for you in your struggle and sacrifice. Greatness lies ahead in God's kingdom.

However, the ones at the top (or should we say bottom?) often get the toughest quests. Simon was like that – leader of the apostolic band and biggest target for Satan (22:31). The pressure would be too great for Simon, and he would fail. But then he would be back! But it wasn't just Simon. Things were going to be tougher for all of the disciples. Up until this point they'd had lots of support from the people they served. Now they were going to have to look after themselves (22:36) and it was going to be demanding. The sword they needed was an inner flint to persevere through persecution.

Imagine you're there in the room with Jesus that night. You understand the humble call. You absorb the sacrificial cost. You appreciate the incredible promises. How do you respond?

Prayer

Our leaders (both political and spiritual) shoulder a heavy burden, particularly at these challenging times. They have to make decisions and yet are unsure of the outcomes. They are called to serve and to lead. Make sure you pray for them. Particularly those who are following Jesus. Praise God for our leaders and pray for wisdom, strength, humility and protection.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Friday 3 Apr
Luke 22:39-46

Produced by Old Baptists

Introduction

Jesus had known that Judas was going to betray him for quite some time. I'm sure it was devastating, but it came as no surprise to Jesus when it happened. But at least for the rest of this final ominous night, Jesus had his real friends with him, especially his three closest mates – Peter, James and John. He would not have to face this toughest and last night of his life alone. In these situations, friends come into their own. Or that's what you would think.

Reading: [Luke 22:39-46](#)

Comment

After the meal, Jesus heads off to this favourite retreat place, a quiet garden on the Mount of Olives. He desperately needs to talk with his Father in preparation for his crucifixion. He challenges his disciples to stand in prayer with him for the ordeal ahead that will test them all. Then Jesus prays with such agony (the Greek word is *agonia*) that sweat pours off him and drops to the ground like blood. His distressed plea to be delivered from the cup of God's wrath shows the immense suffering he knows he will face. The short summary of Jesus' prayer that Luke gives us provides a glimpse into Jesus' humanity.

Then submitting to God's will and strengthened by an angel, Jesus returns to find the disciples asleep. The seriousness and sadness of the situation had finally hit them and they were too exhausted and depressed to pray. Sleep seemed the best option.

I think that what transpired over the next 12 hours for Jesus and his disciples was linked to this night in the garden. Jesus prayed in his desperation and then pursued God's will to the cross. The disciples were too worn out to pray and then ran away at the first sign of persecution. What could have happened in their "temptation" if they had prayed that night?

COVID-19 has produced a very stressful and exhausting environment for many of us. Some people have faced loss after loss. There is lots of bad news going around. Many commentators are very negative about our post-virus future. We could see this situation as too difficult and upsetting and go to sleep like the disciples, hoping that things will somehow get better. Or we can pray it through (sometimes with agony) like Jesus and move forward in trust, believing for God to work in his power.

As we have seen here, prayer makes a huge difference to the outcome in overwhelming times.

Prayer

Praise God that he hears our prayers and will pour out his grace and victory as we pray. Pray for strength to walk obediently in submission and love and pray for God's power to work through your struggle and stress. Spend more time in prayer than usual.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Saturday 4 Apr
Luke 22:47-53

Produced by Old Baptists

Introduction

Luke draws clear pictures in this story. On the one, he paints a picture of Jesus' opposition. A suave betrayer who dobs in Jesus with a tender kiss. A resolute rabble with swords and clubs, determined to arrest Jesus this time no matter how he tries to defend himself. On the other hand, there is Jesus who trusts God's will and submissively walks off with the rabble to his death, even healing one of them along the way. And then there are the poor confused disciples, not knowing how to respond to the situation. The question Luke leaves in the air is, "Whose side are you on?"

Reading: [Luke 22:47-53](#)

Comment

The gloves are off now. As Jesus says, "This is your hour – when darkness reigns" (22:53). There is no hiding behind a veneer of respectability and religion here. With no onlookers, this group consisting of religious leaders and Jewish guards armed to the teeth is a menacing mob. They don't want to prove Jesus wrong; they want to destroy him. Even when Jesus graciously heals one of their pack, they are not distracted. Nothing will stop them now. "Darkness reigns."

And in the middle of this darkness is Jesus who remains as gracious and peaceful as ever. He quells the aggression of his defensive friends. He touches and heals a man's ear. He is genuinely bewildered by their uncalled-for aggression. He remains completely undefended and yet in complete control. As John says, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

A problem the church faces is that we are often identified in the community with the powerful mob not the unguarded Saviour. Some people see the church as aggressive, self-protective, dominant, manipulative and corrupt. Research shows that even when people personally know Christians who are nothing like that, they still tend to revert to this conclusion about the church.

Well we need to make our allegiance clear. We are the people of the light. We offer a gospel that has at its heart a sacrificed Saviour who loves deeply and heals freely. As our friends and community face new turmoil and as they question the crumbling foundations of their old life (mainly prosperity and happiness), we must let the beautiful and gracious light of Jesus shine. Some may not like this, but many will believe.

Prayer

Thank Jesus for his authority and humility and commit to living as a light-bearer as he did. Pray for your friends and community - that spiritual eyes will be opened and many will see Jesus and receive his grace, being swept from darkness into his light.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Monday 6 Apr
Luke 22:54-71

Produced by Qld Baptists

Introduction

The Jewish leaders are moving things along quickly now. It's a feast day in which trials were normally prohibited, but they have Jesus where they want him and no religious festival is going to stop them getting rid of him. They knew that they needed to move while the iron was hot. The early hours of the morning were perfect because there was no-one around to protest. See how much happened before dawn (22:66).

Reading: [Luke 22:54-71](#)

Comment

The Jewish leaders had a problem. The Jewish ruling body had no power to pronounce the death sentence (although the leaders did seem to get away with it at times e.g. Acts 7:57-58). So they had to find a crime that would stand up in the Roman justice system. Their best bet was to paint Jesus as a political agitator. The Romans were particularly sensitive about potential revolutionaries. They were extremely severe on rebels. Therefore, the Council of elders had to prove that Jesus was a dangerous dissenter who was trying to establish his own kingdom apart from Rome. We find in the other gospels that their initial case did not go well, so here we find them trying to get Jesus to incriminate himself.

And he plays right into their hands. No beating around the bush. Jesus tells them exactly what they want to hear. He is the Messiah with direct access to God (22:69). He has now signed his own death warrant. This statement is not only blasphemous to the Jews, it is also a threat to the Romans.

I'm often struck by the honesty and boldness of Jesus. He wasn't one to mince words. For him, the truth was the truth and it needed to be said even if it offended the powerful and well-connected. He was gentle with the broken and needy, but tough on the hypocritical and judgmental.

There come times for all of us that we need to stand on our convictions. In this passage, Peter caved and denied Jesus. We have done the same, but once again Jesus comes to us today and calls us to be real, be honest, be confident, be unashamed. We have the truth that is so needed in these tumultuous times and, like Jesus, it is time for us to lovingly and honestly let people know. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16).

Prayer

Thank God for many who have stood for Jesus over the centuries and particularly for those who have suffered and are suffering now for their faith. Pray for a growing boldness and confidence in standing for Jesus.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Tuesday 7 Apr
Luke 23:1-25

Produced by Old Baptists

Introduction

Many people in our world live with deep injustice. Through no fault of their own, they are born into or find themselves in situations where they are mistreated, preyed upon, taken advantage of and abused. Child labourers. Sex slaves. Abused wives. Refugees. Slum dwellers. The list goes on. In the West we are somewhat insulated against such injustice. Life is mostly fair for us. Effort is rewarded. Rights are protected. Freedom is safeguarded. But how do we cope when injustice invades our lives as it inevitably does? This reading is jammed packed with injustice for Jesus. See how he responds.

Reading: [Luke 23:1-25](#)

Comment

Pilate was the Roman representative in Judea. He was the final authority, responsible for the army, taxes and the legal system. Here, he twice found Jesus innocent of the charges against him. He knew that this was an internal Jewish problem that deserved no Roman death penalty. But he was concerned about the stability of his province and didn't want to offend the Jewish crowd. He didn't want to make waves. He was prepared to sacrifice Jesus.

Herod was a local who the Romans had put in charge of Galilee. He seized the opportunity to interview Jesus, hoping for a miracle or two. But he found Jesus disappointing. He was quick to have his men ridicule and abuse Jesus, maybe hoping for a response. But in the end, he wouldn't get involved with the sham trial.

Meanwhile the Jewish leaders and then also the crowd were getting louder and more aggressive and more insistent. Jesus had to die. There was no stopping them. "Crucify him!" was their cry.

It's all so unfair. Jesus, the perfect Son of God, is ridiculed, brutalised and finally condemned to a dreadful death. And as he suffers this deep injustice, he says nothing.

COVID-19 brings new injustices into many lives. Some lose jobs. Some struggle financially. Some are infected with the virus. Some see dreams shattered. All because of this vile virus. For many of us, life may never be the same again. It's just not fair. We were doing well. But Jesus has been there before us. He identifies with our suffering. He understands our pain and frustration. And he quietly stands with us, wiping away the tears.

Prayer

Thank Jesus, the only completely innocent person who has ever lived, for suffering in your place. Praise God for the security this brings. Pray for those who have had their hopes dashed by this pandemic and who are now anxious about their future. Pray for the many throughout our world who struggle daily with deep injustices in their lives.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Wednesday 8 Apr
Luke 23:26-43

Produced by Old Baptists

Introduction

When Jesus was being arrested and the disciples wanted to fight back, he said these words: "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions (over 60,000) of angels" (Matt. 26:53). Read today's Scripture bearing in mind the fighting force that Jesus had at his beck and call.

Reading: Luke 23:26-43

Comment

After the silence of the trial, we find Jesus speaking again in this passage. He's warning of the judgment to fall on Jerusalem. He's forgiving those who are crucifying him. He's saving a repentant criminal. His ministry is going on right until his death. His heart lies with the needs of others. This is our Saviour.

But there is a consistent taunt directed at Jesus that pervades this passage: if he really was the Messiah, he would be able to save himself from crucifixion. We find this sneer on the lips of the Jewish leaders (23:35), the mocking soldiers (23:36) and one of the criminals being crucified alongside Jesus (23:39). To most of those observing this frail man dying in agony as a common criminal one thing was absolutely clear – he was no Messiah.

And as these fallen humans cruelly derided Jesus, 60,000 angels looked on aghast, poised to come to the Lord of heaven's rescue at his slightest cry. But Jesus had no interest in saving himself. He was fully committed to saving us.

In these days of loss and anxiety and shortages and restrictions, humans have a natural tendency to look out for themselves. We saw this in the supermarket toilet paper scramble. It was every man (or woman) for himself. If there is any time that you need to put yourself first, surely it's when things are tough.

But Jesus displays the opposite. He loves and gives and serves and forgives and lays down his life to the end. And he gently calls us to do the same. This is our opportunity to think more of others, to make sacrifices, to share the love of Jesus, to pray for needs. Our deep security through the death of Jesus becomes more obvious as we show the difference Christ makes.

Prayer

Praise Jesus for ignoring the angels and staying on that terrible cross so that you will never face separation from God. Pray for opportunities to pass the love of Jesus on to others. Ask for the privilege of serving someone today.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Thursday 9 Apr
Luke 23:44-49

Produced by Qld Baptists

Introduction

Something about Jesus' dying had a deep impact on those who were watching. The head of the hardened Roman execution gang declared, "Surely this was an innocent man." The onlookers, who had been demanding Jesus' crucifixion a few hours earlier, began beating their breasts in sorrow and regret. I wonder if it was the way Jesus died or his attitude right to the end or maybe the ominous darkness. See what you think as you read this passage.

Reading: [Luke 23:44-49](#)

Comment

Luke doesn't dwell on Jesus' dying. He just says as much as is needed. But what happens in these few short verses has an incredible impact on our lives and our future. This is developed in the rest of the New Testament. Let's explore a few of these facets of the cross.

Jesus' death is a ransom (1 Tim. 2:6). We were enslaved by sin as our ruthless master and could not break free. We were imprisoned forever. In dying for us, Jesus paid the ransom for our release so that we are rightfully free people. Free to love God. Free to please God. Free to live with God forever. Free, free at last!

Jesus' death is a substitution (2 Cor. 5:21). As sinners and rebels, we were under God's curse and eternally separated from him. In dying for us, Jesus became the substitute for us by taking our sin and facing God's wrath instead of us. Jesus became sin for us, so that we could be pure and clean and right with God.

Jesus' death is a reconciliation (Col. 1:19-20). We were alienated from God and from each other. Our basic selfishness soured our relationship with our creator and his creation. There was no solution; no way out. In dying for us, Jesus secured peace for us. Peace with our heavenly Father, peace with people, peace with our world.

Something incredible happened in those dark hours that is greater than any words we can muster, any pictures we can paint. God's loved and perfect Son, the ruler of heaven, offered himself and was crucified as a criminal in our place, bearing the fearful price of sin for us. Even the centurion and the mob eventually got it. Jesus' death was blatantly unfair. Innocence and brutality mingled together. But from this magnificent sacrifice flowed new life for us.

May the pain or problems of our world not turn us away from the One who bore the greatest pain of all because of his love for us.

Prayer

Thank Jesus for his sacrificial death for you. Take your time. Go through the pictures above.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Friday 10 Apr
Luke 23:50-56

Produced by Qld Baptists

Introduction

Sometimes its hard to see what God is doing. You try to be positive but there seems to be so little to keep your hopes alive. Today's reading describes one of these times for Jesus' followers. Jesus was dead. All the dreams had been dashed. Nothing was happening now. We, of course, know that Sunday was coming, but they didn't. A decent burial was the best they could hope for. Put Jesus' body in a proper tomb and make it smell sweet. At least they owed him that. But even in this darkness there were tiny flickers of hope. See if you can find them in the passage.

Reading: Luke 23:50-56

Comment

The people mentioned in this narrative were deeply religious. Joseph was in a hurry to get the body into the tomb before sunset when the Sabbath would begin. Despite their eagerness to do something about Jesus' body, the women rested on the Sabbath in obedience to God's commandment. In the middle of their sorrow, they all remained committed to doing things God's way. That's a start.

But the text tells us a little more about them. Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leadership. Up until now we were under the impression that this group were all a bunch of legalists and hypocrites, but not so. Joseph was a "good and upright man" who had not voted for Jesus' death but had seen in Jesus a hope for the future. He was prepared to risk his reputation and possibly position to give Jesus a decent burial.

The women were from Galilee and had been disciples of Jesus for some time, receiving his message and supporting his ministry. They had followed him to Jerusalem and were deeply loyal, remaining at the cross to the gruesome end and then following Jesus' body to its burial. They were devastated but not afraid. They remained unbowed.

There is still a glimmer of hope here if you look closely. A godly mover and shaker. A group of devoted women. Each full of courage and commitment despite the circumstances. Maybe God isn't finished yet?

There is always hope if you look closely enough. When circumstances are really tough, this hope is often seen in people – those who persevere, those who keep loving, those who continue to pray, those who bring joy, those who show courage. If you look, you will see them – these godly women and men who remain faithful.

Prayer

Praise God for good, godly people like this in your circle. Pray for the strength and courage to join them at this crucial time.

Easter Devotions in Luke through COVID-19 challenges

Saturday 11 Apr
Luke 24:1-12

Produced by Old Baptists

Introduction

We've been waiting for two weeks for this devotion. Reliving Jesus' cross journey is important but harrowing. Many years ago, I watched Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ." I got through it once but have never chosen to view it completely again. Maybe it was all the blood, but it took a lot out of me. Well the cruel cross has done its work, the sacrificial lamb has been slain, Friday has finished, and Sunday has come. The disciples can't believe it, but we know it's true. After the poignancy and sadness of the cross journey, relish the marvel of the Christ's resurrection.

Reading: [Luke 24:1-12](#)

Comment

Once the Sabbath observance was over, the women were keen to go. They couldn't leave the degenerating body of Jesus for one more hour. You can imagine their concern when they arrived in the dark to find the stone covering the entrance rolled back and the body gone. Jesus' body had been stolen. This was a disaster. How much more pain could evil inflict?

Nothing could be further from the truth. Evil had actually been completely defeated. It had no more power. Jesus' body was not in the tomb because he was alive. As the angels said to the women, "There is no point looking for a Jesus in a tomb. This is the last place you will find him." Then they remembered that this is exactly what Jesus had told them. Somewhere in all their early expectations and then final disappointments, they had forgotten the narrative Jesus had spoken about. Death would come, but resurrection would follow.

This remains the narrative of Christian faith. Life always follows death. We see it in the process of becoming a Christian (we die to ourselves and come alive to Christ). We see it in the process of sanctification (pain and sacrifice lead to life and growth). We see it in our Christian hope (our physical death will lead to greater life). We see it in the future establishment of God's kingdom (the dead in Christ will rise with new bodies to their eternal reward). Death never wins. It's just a pathway to new life.

And this is our story now. Faced with COVID-19 and all its deathly ramifications, we hold on to God's consistent narrative. Life will inevitably follow death. This doesn't mean that we don't feel the pain, but it does mean that we have hope. Jesus is alive and at work. He's not confined to some grave but is powerfully moving in our world. And just maybe this is the moment in Australia when many will die to their shallow life and will open their hearts to the grace and love of the risen Jesus who died for them. May God's life flow through our land.

Prayer

Praise God that life always follows death. Pray for a fresh awakening in our country.