

Weekly Devotional Guide – March 29th – April 3rd.

Monday, March 29: *John 13:1-17* -- In your spiritual life, who has demonstrated what it means to 'wash feet'?

Precious Savior, as You washed Your disciples' feet You demonstrated the full extent of Your love, knowing full well that within hours they would betray You, deny You and abandon You. The dirt on the feet is just a symbol of the dirt that's inside the soul needing forgiveness and cleansing from sin. As You washed their feet, You were explaining the cross. Your act of humility actually cleansed the disciples' hearts of selfish ambition, killed their pride, and taught them the lesson of love. The act of washing one another's feet is certainly a picture of the love that we should have for one another in Your Body. Love is a decision to treat people the way that You would treat them. By being kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as You have forgiven us, it is a form of washing feet. If we love people, we will be willing to serve them. I have been thinking of people who have impressed me over the years with their servant heart and servant spirit. It doesn't matter in what manner they served, they each possess a servant attitude of the heart. Having a servant's heart is to perform humble acts of service to those who don't expect it and are unable to repay it. It is seeing a need and taking the initiative to meet that need. Thank You for coming to this world to serve rather than be served. Thank you for paying the price for my sins with Your death on the cross. Lord, give me a humble heart to serve. Provide refreshment and relief to those who are burdened through my acts of kindness. Take away any pride that would prevent me from responding in love. Allow me to see others through Your eyes. Help me to love others as You love me. Thank you for equipping me to increase my love for others as I obey Your leading to wash their feet. Help me to follow Your example, not just in words but also in actions. Show me whose feet should I wash this week. Amen

Tuesday, March 30: *John 16:17-33* -- Do you think the disciples truly grasp what Jesus says in verse 28? Why?

Precious Lord, You are the Savior of the world! You came to this earth to sacrifice Yourself for all who have faith in You. You are the promised Messiah and the King of kings. The disciples were men who walked with you. They saw Your awesome healing, shared Your love, and listened to Your stories first hand. They were excited by the crowds, the miracles, and the victory in a worldly kingdom. But Your ways are not man's ways, being a worldly king was not Your plan. You revealed Your plan of salvation to them, but that didn't jive with their perceptions so they couldn't comprehend Your words of suffering, death, and resurrection. When it came to fruition, they abandoned You, denied You, and were fearful. We are no different today. Often we see what we want to see and listen to what we want to hear. You may give us signs or speak to our hearts but we struggle to comprehend, especially if it doesn't match our perceptions and opinions. Today there is evil, suffering, rampant sin in this world and we are grieving. Forgive me Lord, when I don't trust You as You work out Your plan right now. Help me to not betray, deny or abandon You, but rather believe that You can make beauty out of ashes. Allow me to believe that You are very present in my life and in this world right now. I submit to Your will. Help me to see Your awesome healing and share Your love with those who are hurting. Encourage me and give me strength as I spend time with You. Fill me with the faith to trust You no matter what I see with my eyes. Instead of cowering in fear, inspire me to act upon what You put in my heart. Allow me to hear Your voice in the midst of the chaos so that I can follow and respond in ways that support and encourage others to believe in You. I pray that You will find me faithful. Lord, I wait for Your plan to unfold where I can rejoice in Your victory. Amen

Wednesday, March 31: *John 17:1-25* -- How are your prayers for others like and unlike the prayer of Jesus?

Lord how I thank you for revealing yourself again through the prayers you prayed to your Holy Father. Thank you for the gift of sanctification through your mighty word. Lord help me to recognize the full more sure of joy you have instilled in me because I know the future you have for me and that is to spend eternity with you. I thank you once again for your finished work on the cross. All I have is yours, Lord, because you gave your All for me. I look forward to the day when I can praise you and thank you face to face and soak in your glory! Amen

Thursday, April 1: *John 19:28-37* -- How is the death of Jesus real to you?

I was blessed to learn about Your death on the cross and resurrection on Easter Sunday when I was a young child. I knew the story well and celebrated it each year. Although I was grateful, I don't think I really took it personally until I saw the movie "The Passion". The story wasn't new and I already knew the ending, but watching it unfold on that big screen had a dramatic impact on my faith. Seeing how you were brutally beaten and suffered made it more real to me than hearing about it. I saw many pictures of You on that cross but Your suffering was muted. But when I saw the movie, I was horrified by the reality of Your gruesome and violent death. How could people who sang Hosanna less than a week prior yell crucify Him and watch You get beaten to a pulp and killed? I would have fully expected You to quit on us at that

point. How You could refrain from calling upon the angels to stop the vicious, cruel, and evil treatment, is astounding. You could have, but You didn't. You endured the savage treatment, the taunting, the humiliation, the ripping of Your flesh, the nails in Your hands and feet out of Your amazingly deep love for not only mankind but specifically for me. I am stricken by Your love. Even when You were struggling to breathe and stinging from open wounds, You demonstrated love. You forgave those who crucified You and welcomed the criminal next to You to paradise. You took the darkness of my sins onto Yourself and it weighed heavy on You. I'm so sorry Lord, for how I hurt You. Thank You Jesus for loving me so much to die for me, even though I'm utterly unlovable. Thank You Jesus for taking my place to receive the punishment and death that I deserve. Because of Your forgiveness, I can look forward to spending eternal life with You. Because of Your grace, I can have a personal relationship with You. I can't get over what you have done for me by Your Amazing Grace. Let me live with confidence and joy in the fact that You conquered sin and death. No evil will ever defeat You. Not even the evil today. Help me to share that victorious joy with all I meet. Help me to walk in Your love as I forgive, and serve others. Amen

Friday, April 2: *John 19:38-42* -- How does your fear of others and your love of Jesus sometimes conflict?

In today's world, evil seems to be winning. Those who try to live in faith are ridiculed, criticized, and persecuted. They can lose possessions, careers are destroyed, and they are canceled from society. Evil is celebrated and Godly principles are chastised. Many people who call themselves Christian are silent when they see evil. Much like Joseph of Arimathea, people are afraid of leaders so they pray to You in secret. The intimidation of this culture has taken its toll on churches and on Your church families. How You must grieve our world right now. Lord, You stood up to the evil, past present, and future and died to defeat it. Precious Savior, thank You for destroying evil and death on that cross. The devil thought he won by having You crucified but instead, he worked into Your plan to save humanity for eternity. The devil is trying to destroy You through the evil of this world today but again he is working into Your plan. I read the end of the story, and You are victorious. So I can stand firm on my faith and believe that You are the everlasting king that I want to serve. I am not afraid of what man can do to me for You are with me. The cross cancels fear. No one can hurt my soul that has been bought with Your blood. Jesus, please, give Your family the boldness to stand in unity and proclaim the wonder of what You have done for all people. Bring about a revival that can replace fear and intimidation with love, joy, kindness, gentleness, and compassion. Let Your people unite in love, not hate, and to serve not to destroy. Amen

Saturday, April 3: *John 20:1-9* -- What is your proof Jesus rose from the dead?

Heavenly Father, Your Word is true and reliable. Over 400 Old Testament prophecies were accurately fulfilled by Your life, death, and resurrection. That is proof that no one could have manipulated what happened. What is written in Your Word is trustworthy and true. Your crucifixion was a horrendous and traumatic event for Your followers. They were clearly distraught and so afraid that they were hiding. That wouldn't have been so if it was a charade. The empty tomb discovered by the women on Sunday morning was unexpected, even after You told them it would happen. Not only was the large stone, that was secured with seals, moved away from the entrance, but it was tossed aside, which no group of men could have done. The linen cloths and the expensive spices were neatly left in the empty tomb, what thief would have had the time and been so considerate? The Bible records events where You had been seen by many, even more than 500 people at one time. You even ate with Your followers to prove that You were physically alive. The once fearful and cowering disciples boldly risked their lives and all they had to proclaim the news that You had risen. They began preaching in Jerusalem, in the very same city where You had recently been buried where the people could have gone to the tomb to validate the news for themselves. The fact that Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, was specifically named would have exposed fraud immediately if it were not true because he was still alive and would have refuted any inaccuracy. Because of their preaching on the resurrection, Your followers were beaten, persecuted, and even killed, but their testimony never changed. Why would they go through all of this for a deliberate lie? Thank You, Lord, that the evidence is so clear and available for anyone to examine. I know that I can trust in Your Word. But it is more than just believing in the historical events, I know that You are alive today. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The same power and energy that raised You from the dead now live in me. I know that You are alive because I feel You in my soul, I see Your hand working in my life, I hear Your voice in Your Word, and I am guided by Your Spirit. I praise You, my risen Lord and Savior. Give me the conviction of the disciples to boldly proclaim the truth of Your Mercy and Grace to those I come in contact with. Assist all people to see, trust and believe in what You have done for them out of Your great love for them. Let them accept Your gift of Grace and You as their Redeemer. Amen