

Sunday Scriptures and Study for April 19, 2020

What is the most valuable thing you have? What do you think is most valuable to God? What happen on Good Friday and Easter morning should clue us in on the answer.

1) Start with prayer (Use your own words or the prayer below to help you get started)

Holy Spirit we invite you to be with us this morning as we worship, pray and hear the Word of God. Reveal the glory of God to us as we center our attention on the living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and on Jesus our Lord and Savior. May we experience your presence anew and afresh. Father, thank you for lent, for Good Friday and for the new beginning of Sunday resurrection.

Fill us with the Spirit of truth that our words would breathe life into others and be edifying to those we love. We thank you for your healing and the improvement we see happening related to the virus. May we be back together in fellowship and worship in our Church buildings soon.

Give our nation a hunger and thirst for truth and righteousness and restore your church for your name's sake and your glory. Please don't delay your compassion and hear the cry of the afflicted. We ask for recovery and a cure for the coronavirus. We ask that you have mercy on our nation and through this trial we would turn to You. Open the eyes of our hearts to see to the truth of your Word, your Son and your way. In Christ name. Amen.

2) Listen to or sing your favorite hymn or song. Here are a few examples:

- a. Majesty
- b. I Exalt Thee
- c. Amazing Grace
- d. Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

3) Follow this with the tithes/offerings

Tithes and offerings to God are an act of our worship and recognition of who is truly our provider. When God opens his hand we are blessed, however when he closes his hand we are in big trouble. Giving and thankfulness keeps his hand open. Thank you Father for providing for us out of your creation and abundance. Every good and prefect gift comes from you. Amen.

(Note to the church: Again, Thank you so much for your faithfulness in your tithes and offerings. Many of you have brought them by or mailed them to the church.)

4) Psalter Reading Psalm 93 (Read from your Bible)

Take a minute to turn Psalm 93 into your own prayer before you read scripture and study the next section. Use the Psalm to lead your prayer and with that prayer ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart up to the truths of God's Word.

5) Scripture Reading and study. We pick up where we left off last Sunday:

⁷ *But **go, tell** his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'*

⁸ *Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.*

Matthew 28:5-10 (NIV)

⁵ *The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.*

⁶ *He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.*

⁷ *Then **go quickly and tell his disciples:** 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."*

⁸ *So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.*

⁹ *Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.*

¹⁰ *Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

Luke 24:1-12 (NIV)

¹ *On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.*

² *They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,*

³ *but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.*

⁴ *While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.*

⁵ *In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"*

⁶ *He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:*

⁷ *'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'*"

⁸ *Then they remembered his words.*

⁹ *When they came back from the tomb, **they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.***

¹⁰ *It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.*

¹¹ **But they did not believe** the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

¹² *Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.*

From last week: O. S. Hawkins says, "A witness is a person who simply tells others what they have seen or heard. They share with others about their firsthand experience."

e. That is what we are to do. To be witnesses to what Christ has done for us. Yes, it can be a frightful thing. Remember the Holy Spirit will give us the words.

f. We don't have to know every scripture, be a Bible Scholar, or a preacher. We just have to tell of Jesus' incredible love for us and for others. The Holy Spirit will give us the words and take care of the rest.

- We are **not** recruiting people to join our club
- We are **not** asking people to buy our product
- We simply are to be Jesus' witnesses

Here is where we left off last week. Let's dive in deeper as we look at the other accounts of Jesus' resurrection and what the women did. In Mark, we are left with the three women going off afraid and never telling anyone. Some of you may remember Paul Harvey saying "Here's the rest of the story." The other gospel accounts shed some light on the rest of the story. The women did eventually go and tell the disciples. But, in Luke's account the apostles didn't believe them.

Isn't that one of the reasons why we don't share or witness to what Jesus has done for us and the world? We are afraid people won't believe us. The women's words seemed like nonsense to the apostles. You can imagine the harsh words or tone of the apostles as they responded to the women's

witness. No one wants to deal with that when sharing Jesus. However, our attitude should be the same as the women. They didn't back down on what they had experienced and knew. They shared with the others, not letting fear of what someone else might think or what they say, stop them.

Fear of what others might think or say was an issue during Jesus' ministry and will be until Jesus' return.

John 7:12-13 (NIV) ¹² *Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people."* ¹³ **But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.**

The writer of Hebrews talks about how we should have confidence in the Lord and not fear man.

Hebrews 13:6-8 (NIV) ⁶ *So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

⁷ *Remember your leaders, **who spoke the word of God to you.** Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.*

⁸ *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

Peter takes it even farther.

1 Peter 3:13-18 (NIV)

¹³ *Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?*

¹⁴ *But even if you should suffer for what is right, **you are blessed.** "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."*

¹⁵ **But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.** *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*

¹⁶ *keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

¹⁷ *It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.* ¹⁸ *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but **made alive by the Spirit,***

Peter said a couple of things here to take note of. If we suffer for what is right, like telling the truth of Christ, we will be blessed. We would much rather have God's blessings than the worlds'. Peter encourages his readers to set Christ apart in their hearts as Lord. If we do that we will be ready to give an answer to anyone for our belief in Christ. When Christ is set apart in

our hearts we will be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, who again will give us the words. People need to know where to find hope and we have the answer.

In fact, we have a great answer. Have you ever paid less for an item hoping it was as good as the more expensive one, only to find out you got what you paid for?

Christ got what he paid for and it cost him everything. What did he pay for? **You and me! In God's eyes, you are worth what Jesus paid for you.** That's worth repeating! You are worth what Jesus paid for you. That should cause us to shout with joy and praise. That should cause us to want to know the God that would love us that much. It should cause us to want to love him back with all that we are.

In our own eyes, it's hard for us to do that because we often listen to the lies of the world and the deceiver about our value. However, that does not change the truth. The sinless Christ died to become a sin offering for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21). Wow! Only he could do that. We can't do that for ourselves by our own efforts but only by receiving the gift of salvation. That's why it says that in him we **might** become the righteousness of God.

Everyone has to choose. That's why we share so people have an opportunity to accept the good news. In the cross, God is saying they are worth what I paid for them! We can share that with others by simply telling them how much they are worth to God. **He wants what he paid for!** It cost him his Son which was the greatest act of love the world has ever seen. He wants everyone to be saved. Let's try sharing that this week with someone.

Love is: to put yourself in the place of another, to feel their feelings, walk in their shoes, weep with their tears, rejoice in their joys, take upon yourself their burdens, and give to them your life. Love must put itself in the place of another. So what would be the greatest possible manifestation of love? That God would put Himself in the place of another and he did. In our place, even to the point of taking our judgment and our death. He gave his life. Then God is love.

(From the Book of Mysteries, Jonathan Cahn)

5a. **Stop for a few minutes and reflect on this.** Maybe pray and thank God for how much he loves you! Also this is a good time to take a short break. Listen to a favorite Christian song/hymn or get a cup of coffee/tea/water.

In our day and time there is another equally difficult hurdle to get past when sharing our faith and that is the fear that we might offend others. We live in a time when people are offended by just about everything and anything. We can fall into that trap ourselves if we are not careful. Jesus said in Matthew 11 that a person is blessed if they are not offended by him.

Jesus indicated in Matthew 24 that near the time of his coming back and the end of the world people will be easily offended by each other. Proverbs gives advice on this issue: **Proverbs 12:16 (NIV)** ¹⁶ *A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.*

Also, the word intolerance is often used against Christians who talk about the love of Christ and that he is the only way to the Father and the only means of salvation. Truth is truth, no matter what people think, how hard it is to take or how inconvenient it is to do. Our truth claims that Jesus is the only way, the only truth and the only real life, is taken as bigoted and prideful by the world. It can be intimidating to tell the world that they need what only Jesus can give them. Again, truth is truth whether one accepts it or not.

Dr. Jim Denison address this for our current situation:

The good news of God's love is especially urgent in these difficult days. Psychologists are warning of increases in depression and anxiety as a result of the pandemic. The crisis could lead to an escalation in suicides as well. Everyone needs to know that God loves everyone.

The key is to depend not on ourselves for strength and wisdom but on the risen Lord who lives in us by his Spirit. It is a mistake to serve an Easter Christ as though it were still Good Friday. As Paul noted, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). Unfortunately, many of us attempt to serve this risen King in our futile ability.

If we are afraid our words will fail, it's because we are not speaking words inspired by God. He says of his word, "it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

If we are afraid we won't know what to say, it's because we are not depending on the Spirit of God. Jesus taught us, "Do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:12).

We have a risen Lord who will empower and lead us as we share the good news of Easter Sunday on Monday.

Remember our weekly Prayer Guide for the church directs us on Wednesdays to pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit and for the Holy Spirit to empower us with the same kind of boldness that the early church had in speaking God's Word (Acts 4:29).

One more thing to consider as we think about what we have to share with others.

John 20:24-29 (NIV) ²⁴ *Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.*

²⁵ *So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "**Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.**"*

²⁶ *A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"*

²⁷ *Then he said to Thomas, "**Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.**"* ²⁸ *Thomas said to him, "**My Lord and my God!**"*

²⁹ *Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

Have you ever wondered why Jesus showed up with the scars from the nails that had been driven in his hands and feet and the spear that had been thrust in his side?

I mean, he was resurrected with a new body, yet the scars were still there. When Thomas saw and touched the scars he said, "My Lord and my God!" We can see them ourselves through this story but we can't physically touch them. Yet, Jesus makes an amazing statement, "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." That's us, I hope.

Today will you say with me out loud, "Jesus, My Lord and my God?" We were once blind but now we see, Amen. Obviously, we are blessed when we believe in what we can't see because of faith. The promise is that we are made new and have eternal life with Christ. We can share that.

But what about the scars?

Jesus' scars are visible reminders of what happened to him and what he overcame through the power of the cross, resurrection power, so that we would **know our value to God**. The scars are a visible sign of hope.

It's the same with us. We all have been wounded at one time or another. We all have wounded others. It is only when we forgive and trust God with our wounds do they become visible signs (scars) of hope for others. By his wounds we are healed (1 Peter 2:24).

When we are wounded, we don't stay in "Good Friday" as Dr. Denison said. Forgiveness allows us to move to Easter morning every time. That brings great freedom in our lives.

I know most of us have been wounded at some time in our lives and you may be there now. Often, it is by the very ones we love. We have the scars to prove it. We can show our scars off as proof that others have hurt us and that we deserve to hurt them back, or we can show them as Jesus did, as signs of resurrection, redemption and hope. Our scars remind us of trauma but also healing. We have the scars but Jesus has our wounds. He has, does and will heal us. If you are still dealing with wounds then there is a chance you need to seek God's help in forgiving those who have wounded you. Start by thanking Him for forgiving you and then ask him to help you to forgive those who have wounded you. Next, ask him to heal the ones you have wounded.

Prayer: Lord God, we thank you for forgiveness that comes through Jesus Christ. Heal our wounds and turn them into scars like those of Jesus', so we can turn them into testimonies of your resurrection power and how you restore us back to life. Help those that are healed but scared, to bear up with those that are still wounded. Forgive us when we have wounded and forgive those that have wounded us. Help us to love with the love of Christ, who dwells in us. In Christ's Holy name, Amen.

Colossians 3:12-14 (NIV)

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

I believe we are going to come out of this pandemic with even greater opportunities to share the good news of Jesus. As we look at what the virus has done and caused there will be many wounded and hurting that we will need to minister to. That is what the church was created to do.

I hope as we look at all that has happened, we will remember that every moment and every breath is a gift from God. We serve a risen Christ and have resurrection power in us. We live to love God and love others. That's the command of Jesus from Matthew 22. Because he first loved us we can love Him and others.

1 John 4:19-21 (NIV) ¹⁹ *We love because he first loved us.*

²⁰ *If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

C. S. Lewis wrote: "We can neither make, nor retain, one moment of time; it all comes to [us] by pure gift." So ask yourself this: Why am I alive this day? What does the risen Christ want to do with and through me today? It may be as simple as making a phone call or getting on your knees and praying for others. It could be bigger than that. It may be to give of your resources or give in service to others or even go into full time ministry.

Regardless, he will use you as you are, scars and all. Jesus is looking for availability not just ability. He redeems our struggles so that we can help others that are struggling. So we can love like He does.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (NIV)

³ *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,*

⁴ *who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

⁵ *For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.*

10) Prayer Concerns: Belcher Family, Linda Holson, Ann Keefer, Judy Draper, Brenda Stam, Ellis Hise, those suffering from the effects of the coronavirus, our nations' leaders, and that the church would rise up in

revival and be used powerfully by God to bring salvation and healing to our land.

Thursday, May 7 is the National Day of Prayer. We are already in the mode of praying nationally because of the coronavirus pandemic. So let's continue to pray for our country and leaders. The following scripture may help you pray for our current situation:

Ezekiel 36:24-27 (NIV) ²⁴ "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Prayer: Lord, God Almighty, we have been scattered from our churches and we ask you to have mercy on us and bring us back together and give us back the land you gave our forefathers. Sprinkle us with the clean water of the river of Life that flows from the throne and the Lamb.

Cleanse us from all impurities and idols. Let there be a great move of the Spirit of salvation so that the nation would get a new heart and pure spirit. Remove from us the heart of stone and give your church and this nation a soft, moldable heart that belongs to you. Do the same for us individually. Fill us with Your Spirit so that we will desire your Word and follow your commands to love you first and most, and then love others. We ask it in the name of the Messiah, Christ Jesus. Amen.

7) End with **The Lord's Prayer** and prayer for others/nation and a hymn or song.

8) **Benediction: Jude 1:24-25 (NIV)** ²⁴ *To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--* ²⁵ *to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.*

Pastor Tim Trimble