**Introduction: A Cry for a Christ-Awakening**

On April 19th 1775the famous ‘shot heard’ round the world,’ launched the Revolutionary War. The Massachusetts Colony was poised for massive conflict. The atmosphere had intensified. It appeared that all-out war loomed on the horizon. Paul Revere had set up a lantern, a burning and shining lamp on the steeple of North Church that would alert the troops if any ‘red-coats’ were advancing. On the night of April 18, 1775 the lamps blazed forth and sent messengers Paul Revere, and William Dawes and other riders to spread the news…***awakening*** every house, warning about the approach of British troops to Lexington. It was a call to warn of ensuing danger and a call to action. A new day was about to dawn over the horizon. As 60-70 militiamen gathered at the green at Lexington, the British troops cried out, “Lay down your arms, you damned rebels, or you are all dead men. Fire!” The war for freedom had officially exploded in the New World!

I believe that we are on the brink of another massive revolution, a spiritual revolution in our day called a Christ-awakening! A cry to awaken a nation must be heard again in our land. When our forefathers stood against injustice, a nation of awakening was birthed. The Pilgrims set out for the new world to establish a land of religious freedom. On November 11, 1620, they signed the Mayflower Compact, entering into covenant with Jesus Christ by dedicating our land and government to "the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian Faith." We are in need of a great awakening in America today, a Christ-Awakening, “where God’s Spirit uses God’s Word to Re-awaken God’s people back to God’s Son for all that He is!”

“Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”(Eph. 5:14)

“And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”(Rom. 13:11)

Jesus taught us that at the end of the age, there will be a cry that would go forth,

Matthew 25:5-6, “The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

We must proclaim, “Here’s the Bridegroom.” We must invite all to “Come out and meet Him.” This bridegroom is the Lamb of Glory. He is awakening his bride to be watching and ready for his return, ushering us one day to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

One of the keys that God will use to unlock the hearts of his people is the revelation of the cross of Christ! In the contemplation of the cross, there is a profound revelation of the love of God. This disclosure comes to the hearts of those who desire to understand this pivotal point in human history. Beyond the mere facts and basic statements of the cross that we often repeat in rote fashion is a well-spring of extravagant love that awaits the seeker who will linger at the foot of the cross long enough with an open and expectant heart. It is given to all who seek Him with a whole heart, and whose desire is accompanied by a measure of determination.

As the apostle Paul wrote,

1 Corinthians 2:2, “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

Galatians 6:14, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

1 Corinthians 1:17-18, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

It is the cross of Christ that brings down all barriers, and unites us together in love, for His Glory! As Jesus said, “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” 33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.”(John 12:32-33)

I believe it is time for the church to return to Christ as the Lamb of Love, the Lamb of Glory! As we approach the end of the age, we must see and encounter the face of Jesus as the Lamb! Twenty-eight times in the book of revelation, Jesus is revealed as the Worthy Lamb! We need to bury our hearts in his wounds until our lives are transformed from glory to glory, for indeed ‘every wound bleeds glory!’

A story is told about a young soldier’s passion,

“Soldiers watch in solemn respect as a long line of United Nations prisoners of war stagger across, “Freedom Bridge” at the end of the Korean War. One young man, his eyes dull and his face gray, drags his emaciated body over the bridge. At one point, he stumbles into the railing of the bridge. Every eye focuses on the bony-armed, stick-like figure of a man, now with lines of suffering scribbled across his face. Rushing to his side, an MP major tries to help, but the gallant soldier waves him away. The soldier’s eyes are focused on something ahead. He wants no one to help him. There it is just across the bridge—held high as a valiant symbol of freedom—the American Flag. The young soldier fixes his eyes on the Stars and Stripes, unfurled and lifted on a pole. With every ounce of strength in his body, he hobbles toward the flag. He shuffles faster now, finally reaching it. Suddenly, he falls to his knees, trembling. He reaches up and tugs at the flag. The flag bearer lowers it, and the soldier buries his face in the red and white stripes, sobbing and shaking uncontrollably.”[[1]](#endnote-1)

Like that soldier we need to fall on our knees and bury our face in the ‘Scars and Stripes’ of the Worthy Lamb! America needs a piercing revelation of the Lamb!

When Jesus died, a centurion took a spear and pierced his side. Out of the riven side of the Passover Lamb flowed forth blood and water. It was a physical sign that his heart had ruptured. His heart was so full of love that it literally burst open, both in the natural and in the spiritual. Jesus died of a broken heart! And out of his heart flowed forth a river of God’s love for you and I. His love was so strong, that even the grave couldn’t hold him back. On the third day he rose again, and burst forth from the grave alive forevermore!

When we behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, out of his side wound flows forth a ‘River of Glory,’ a ‘River of Revival’ across the nations of the earth. The crimson blood of the Lamb washes away our sin and makes us whiter than snow.

*“The Lord bless you and keep you; 25 the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”*

**Day 1: Meditating on the Cross of Christ through the Word of God**

Just before Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, he commissioned his disciples,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”(Matt. 28:16-20)

Jesus commanded his disciples to go and make disciples, baptizing, and teaching them to obey everything that he had commanded them, wrapped in the promise that he would be ‘with them’ even to the end of the age. The vision of Jesus calling and equipping disciples to go and make a difference in their world offers as much hope and meaning to modern men and women as it did to the people of the first century. Jesus still beckons as the Master who offers guidance through the realities of common human experience. The biblical teaching of discipleship offers the bridge from Jesus’ world to our own.”[[2]](#endnote-2) The Greek word for disciple is ‘mathetes’ and literally means ‘follower of a master’[[3]](#endnote-3) In the gospels we see Jesus personally inviting future apprentices of the kingdom who would do what he was doing, say what he was saying, pray what he was praying, love what he was loving, and hate what he was hating. The cost was an all-consuming renouncing of all things, and following a new master, the Lord Jesus!

Jesus said to the disciples, “As the father has sent me so I send you,’ and then commissioned the disciples to go make disciples of nations.

“By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”(I John 2:6)

We must learn to walk as Jesus walked the earth! Jesus came to seek and save the lost. (Mark 10:45) Jesus came to ‘testify to the truth.’(John 18:37) Jesus came to reveal the Father and make his Name known.(John 17:6) Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. (I John 3:8) Jesus came to preach the gospel of the kingdom and demonstrate the reign of God on the earth. (Matthew 4:19, 9:35) We must grow in these things as we walk with Him on a day to day basis. Our hearts should blaze to see the greatest number of people from every tribe, tongue, nation, and language come to Christ, with the greatest depth of mature love possible before His return!

According to Paul the ultimate goal of discipleship is to be ‘conformed to the image of Jesus.’ Romans 8:29, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Paul cried out for this night and day, “my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.” (Gal 4:19). It is God’s desire that His Son would be formed and fashioned within us to such a degree that we would become living epistles, image-bearers of the person of Christ.

We were created by him and for Him, to glorify God and enjoy Him Forever! Isaiah 43:7 (NIV) says, “everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” When Jesus becomes our all-encompassing, all-consuming passion, He is glorified, and we are filled with inexhaustible, all-satisfying joy! As John Piper writes, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him!”

Jesus said in John 17:17-19, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.” God’s Word is the primary vehicle that God uses to transform us into the likeness of his Son. As we behold the Glory of Christ revealed in the Word of God we are transformed from Glory to Glory. When Jesus says, “I consecrate myself, so that they may be sanctified in truth,” he is referring to his death on the cross in humble submission and obedience to the Father’s will. As Jesus shows us, our ultimate act of worship is simple obedience.

Jesus said in Luke 6:40 (ESV), “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.” This word trained or equipped, is also used in 2 Timothy 3:16-17,

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, ***equipped*** for every good work.”

We become fully equipped and trained as disciples of Jesus, as we behold the Glory of Christ revealed in the written Scriptures. Paul says,

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”(Rom. 12:1-2)

God’s Word sanctifies or renews our minds in truth, truth that sets us free and proves that we are disciples! Jesus shared in John 8:31-32, “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’”

God’s word feeds and nourishes us. Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, “man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” His words are spirit and life.(John 6:63) It is alive and imparts Life to us. (Heb. 4:12-13)

It should be the desire of our hearts to treasure the word of God more than even food itself. As Job writes, “I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.”(Job 23:12)

God’s Word nourishes our souls like water quenches a thirsty soul in the desert. Jesus said to the woman at the well, “Jesus answered her,

“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water…Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”(John 4:10, 4:13-14)

Jesus is the giver of Living Water which is God’s Spirit poured out upon us. And again John 7:37-39,

“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ” 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

How does this Living Water come from the Lord Jesus? It is through believing in Jesus as revealed in the Scriptures. Jesus’ voice is indeed like the sound of rushing waters.(Rev. 1:15)

As we come with hungry and thirsty hearts, recognizing our need for a Savior, God speaks to us. He calls us to incline our ears towards him, to hear him. Isaiah 55:1-2 says,

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3 Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live…For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; 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.”

He sends his Word like rain(water), accomplishing all that he purposes including our sanctification and transformation into likeness of Christ! Paul declares in Ephesians concerning the Lord Jesus who sanctifies his bride, “to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” (Eph. 5:26-27)

The psalmist calls us to delight in the laws of God(God’s Word) night and day.

“But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season.” (Psalm 1:2-3)

The Hebrew word for meditate in this text is *haga* and means to mumble, speak, chew on, etc. It is a spoken or ‘outloud word.’ We need to speak and hear the word of God each day. When we do this we become like trees planted by streams of living water, bearing fruit in good season. This fruit is most certainly the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, marking us as true disciples of Jesus. As Jesus says in John 15:7-8,

“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

Therefore, in light of these key texts, I believe it would be important for us to spend time meditating on Scriptures related to the cross of Christ! In this way we learn to daily abide in Christ and his word in us. As Jesus said,

John 6:55, “For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.”

John 6:56, “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.”

If we want to learn to truly abide in him, we must learn to meditate on the cross of Christ!

**Prayer Focus: Spend time committing your heart to the Lord over these next 40days.**

**Day 2 The Supremacy of Christ and Centrality of the Cross**

Jesus is the Light-bearing, the out-raying or radiance of God’s divine nature, God a very God! As the author of Hebrews states,

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.” (Heb. 1:1-3)

According to Colossians 1:15-18, it is the Father's desire to exalt and glorify his Son above all things,

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the ***supremacy.***”

Jesus calls us in our personal discipleship, to follow him in all things and all ways, growing in daily cooperation with his perfect leadership. The first commandment must take first place in our lives, loving God with everything in our being. Love for Jesus must be a supreme love or an above all love, that trumps all other loves. It means that I admire Jesus more than any other human, I want his approval more than anyone else. It means that I want to be with him first in my life. I will choose to trust his words more than anyone else!

It’s the Father’s dream to see all things summed up in His Son! Gods’ preordained plan and purpose is that Christ would have full supremacy or preeminence in all things. Paul declares,

“making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things ***in him,*** things in heaven and things on earth.”(Eph. 1:9-10)

As Augustine says,

“The one who has Christ has everything. The one who has everything except for Christ really has nothing. And the one who has Christ plus everything else does not have any more than the one who has Christ alone”[[4]](#endnote-4)

He is the All-Consuming One, the All-Sufficient One, the All-Satisfying One. As David Bryant writes in his book Christ is All,

“He defies all human categories; there is no language that can adequately describe Him. He is the incomparable One! He remains in a class by himself…no duplicates, no clones. His importance eclipses all others. He outranks every other being in Heaven, earth, or hell. He is the exalted One; for all eternity he holds the primary focus of our praises. He holds a position of unrivaled distinction, prestige, and majesty. He will be the joy of all peoples, the desire of all nations. He is the Victorious One. None of his enemies will prevail, he will defeat all of his foes unconditionally-both human and demonic and will emerge forever unthreatened, unhindered, and victorious over all opposition, permanently and forever. He is the Preeminent and Supreme One…in time and space and history he lays claim to the universe, it all belongs to Him. He is the all sufficient One. Nothing can exhaust his power or resources. He will forever prove totally adequate for all of our longings, fears, needs or heart cries. He is faithful and true!”[[5]](#endnote-5)

As disciples of Jesus, we join with the chorus of heaven crying out night and day,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing!” (Rev. 5:12)

If Christ is the all-deserving One, then we must respond to His call, “Come Follow Me,” with our whole lives, our whole hearts, and our whole beings! It’s God’s desire that our lives become increasingly Christ-dominated, Christ-saturated, and Christ-exalting to the Glory of God the Father!

It should be the longing of our hearts to see a Christ-awakening erupt in our lives, our homes, and churches. We want to see God’s Spirit using God’s Word to re-introduce the people of God back to God’s Son for all that He is! Our prayer each day should be, “Conquer me Lord Jesus!”

As Evan Roberts, the great revivalist of Wales in 1904 cried out, “Bend Me O God, and save a nation!”

When Jesus becomes our All, then we can walk as Leonard Ravenhill exhorted us,

“The Christian who knows he is crucified with Christ, has no ambition and so has nothing to be jealous about; has no reputation and so has nothing to fight about; has no possessions and so has nothing to worry about, has no rights and therefore cannot suffer wrong. He is already dead.”[[6]](#endnote-6)

Our hope increases with a greater vision of Christ as Paul declares in Col. 1:26, “Christ in you, the Hope of Glory!” As Christ becomes our treasure, then we will begin to speak about him to everyone we meet, for out of the overflow of our hearts we speak. As messengers of hope we want to, “Proclaim HIM, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.” (Col. 1:26-27). With burning zeal let’s

“Connect Christians more fully to the person of Christ by increasing our conversations about the supremacy of Christ.”

**Prayer Focus: Ask the Father of Glory for greater revelation of the Supremacy of Jesus!**

“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,” (Eph. 1:17-19)

**Day 3-The Greatest One!**

The greatest man who ever lived was Jesus Christ! The greatest man who ever died was Jesus Christ! His life was simple; he never wrote a book, he never became rich, didn’t own a house, he never married, and didn’t have children. He died at age 33, homeless and broke. Yet in his wake he leaves the greatest legacy of any man who has ever walked the earth. More songs have been sung about him, more paintings have been painted of him, and more books have been written about this man than any other man in all of human history! And today millions on the planet worship Jesus Christ alone as God!

From the outset of his ministry Jesus was born to die! His finest hour, was his death on a cruel cross where he hung in agonizing, excruciating pain dealing a death blow to death itself! Strapped to a wooden beam, he crushes death, the evil one, and the power of sin. He fooled everyone! It was like he was playing chess on twenty different levels. He mapped it out, and with one glorious move: Checkmate, game over!

There was a knight of Bethlehem,

His wealth was tears and sorrow;

His men at arms were little lambs;

His trumpeters were sparrows.

His castle was a wooden cross.

On which He hung on high;

His helmet was crown of thorns

Whose crest did touch the sky?*[[7]](#endnote-7)*

—Samuel Zwemmer

God sent His Son to the cross to bear his wrath for sinners like you and me. I believe the greatest and most glorious of all subjects is the cross of Christ! It is the subject of worship in this age and in the age to come. We will stare at nail-pierced hands and weep with gratitude forever…seeing and savoring the glory of God in the face of Jesus of nazareth! This is the subject that baffles men, shuts king’s mouths, and dumbfounds the human race! Imagine the Highest stoops to become the lowest, the Greatest becomes the least, the King becomes a criminal! The Lord of all because the servant of all, The Creator becomes the Crucified, the Powerful one becomes the Pierced One. This place called Golgotha was not a place of mercy yet the most merciful act in history was being accomplished. The sinless and guiltless One was dying as one guilty. The perfect One was being spoiled by the perverse. The wicked had released their hatred upon the Wonderful one. The righteous One, ravaged by the cruel cross, was dying for the rebellious. Yet now he sits enthroned as the Worthy Lamb at the right hand of the Father!

“And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.”

This blood-stained King, forever the Crucified Christ, is exalted as the Lamb of Glory! Indeed, we cry with the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!”

**Prayer Focus: Spend time meditating on Isaiah 6:1-8 and then reflect on what Jesus endured at the cross.**

Isaiah 6:1-8 (ESV), “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” 4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for. 8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

**Day 4- Glory**

God’s greatest passion is to manifest his Glory! The Word Glory means brightness or weightiness. In the most simple terms, Glory is ‘what makes God, God.’ It is the Godness of God, or the very essence of His being. We can think of it in terms of God’s manifold perfections or infinite moral Excellencies. If we were to consider all of the attributes or characteristics of who God is, put them together into one glorious whole, we would declare, “Glory!” When the otherness of God, his Holiness, blazes forth the Bible calls this the Glory of God! ! When the Otherness of God goes Public, we say Glory! Its’ the beauty of God unveiled, or God’s ‘Revealed Excellence!’

I am convinced that the greatest display of the Glory of God in all of human history is the cross of Christ, the very culmination of the attributes of God put on display, blazing forth throughout all eternity!

Just before the cross, Jesus is praying in John 12:27-28, “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name.” This hour that Jesus is referring to is the hour of the cross, when Jesus would bring great glory to the Father. It would be an hour when Jesus would show forth, advertise, and reveal His Father like never before! Jesus came to glorify the Father’s name, making much of His renown, his fame, and his reputation! This was the moment when the goodness of God passed before humanity,

“The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”(Ex. 34:6-7)

John Piper writes, “The Cross is the blazing center of the glory of God!” The cross is the apex, or climax and culmination of the all the attributes of God coming together in one moment! God sets a scenario where his loving compassion, his unrelenting mercy, his justice, and his righteous indignation against sin meet head on! It was a deafening moment as the full display of God’s passions raged forth. Six grueling hours on a cruel cross where his consummate splendor breaks forth, shattering demonic strongholds, setting men free, destroying sin, and forgiving weak and broken sinners.

If God’s greatest passion is to manifest his Glory then our greatest need is to Behold Glory, or to gaze upon Glory. As Paul says,

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.”(2 Cor. 3:18)

This must be our constant remembrance, to do this one thing, to stare and marvel at the ever increasing, ever flowing, ever expanding revelation of the glory of God in the face of Christ. It is essential for us to ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.’ As Jesus was presented with a purple robe, we hear Pilates prophetic words striking our hearts, “Behold the Man.”(John 19:5) As we behold the Glory of God in the face of Christ, and remember all that he did on our behalf we become like Him. That’s’ why Jesus commanded us at the Last supper to, ‘do this in remembrance of me.’

There is no reality more breathtaking than Jesus Christ! This is our great and glorious duty to delight in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It is our privilege to ‘see and savor’ His stunning glory unveiled to us at the cross, relishing in the excellencies of Christ, and feasting on all that he is to us and has done for us!

**Prayer Focus: Look at the Lamb! Look until you can see with the eyes of your heart, the crimson streams draining from his wounds, until you can feel the tears dripping from his eyes, until you experience the power streaming out from the wounds of the Lamb.**[[8]](#endnote-8)

**Day 5-Father I Desire!**

Jesus lifts his eyes to his Father in prayer and declares his most holy intentions.

“Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me may be with me where I am” ([John 17:24](http://bible.logos.com/passage/nkjv/John%252017.24)).

Jesus strikes at the heart of our greatest longing to know that we are desired and loved by God. Jesus was telling the Father that He desires us to be near Him, not at a distance, but close like a bridegroom and a bride. The Bible begins and ends with a wedding. Our relationship with Jesus goes beyond contractual agreement and faithful obedience. It is to be typified by fervent, ardent love and longing like a bridegroom and a bride have for one another.  We are the object of his affections. He longs for a partner not a mere subject in His kingdom. In fact, at the end of the book of Revelation the Bride of Christ is crying out, “Come, Lord Jesus!” We are certainly the children of God, but we are also the Bride of Christ, betrothed to Him in love. The covenant from heaven’s perspective between God and man is not defined as a service agreement but as a marriage covenant.

We love a king who will not sell out his people for wealth and power but who will humbly serve the people even unto death. The movie Brave heart is a great example of this. We love a husband who fights for the heart, honor, and nobility of his bride, even to the point of death. Many times we push him away, but the statement of the cross is, “You’re the one I want.” There is something about a husband who speaks forth that which his wife is not, but that which she shall be. In Jesus we have an unwavering King and companion who will give up His life for love.   We are the one creature made in the image of God for God, created to be an eternal companion and co-heir with Christ forever. Beloved, even now, Jesus maintains a resurrected human body forever. He has forever joined himself to us in love!   
  
The Father and Son are in agreement. The Father wants to give his Son a bride and the Son desires to have a bride, an eternal companion and voluntary lover! She would be in full partnership with his leadership, adorned with His beauty, and seated with him in heavenly places! As Jesus stared at the criminal, with eyes stinging from blood, sweat and tears, a river of desire flowed from his heart, “today you will be with me in paradise.” Do you see him today?

**Prayer Focus:**

**Focus on his eyes looking towards you. Look into his eyes like a flame of fire…the irresistible blaze of his gaze! It’s a look of love! His eyes are towards you today…his arms wide open, his heart exposed…bleeding…and hear him say, ‘Come near!”**

**Day 6-The Glory of the Lamb!**

Jesus still bears the scars and marks from the cross on his glorified body in heaven! He stands as a Lamb as though it had been slain. Charles Spurgeon said that these wounds are “lustrous with supernatural splendor.” These are more than mere scars. They are like medals of Glory, still embedded in His body and announcing the message of His grand sacrifice on the cross!”[[9]](#endnote-9)

Jesus went from wearing a cruel crown of thorns to wearing a golden crown of Glory, from Robes dipped in blood to a Kingly Robe of Splendor, from a mock scepter in his hand to a scepter of authority, from the insults of men to the worship of angels, from the filth of sin to the beauty of holiness…

See his head and hair, once soaked in blood, now dazzling white as snow…See the One whose eyes stung and dripped blood, tears of sorrow, now Blazing Like Fire, like Flames of torches, See the Face, once swollen and raw from patches of His beard torn out, Now his face shines brighter than the Sun in all its brilliance…See his body, once stripped naked, now clothed in Eternal majesty…see his hands pierced, now bleeding infinite splendor, feet once spiked to a stake of timber, now gleaming like burnished bronze…his side once pierced and now Hear HIM SAY, “This Wound in my Heart is For YOU!

“Every Wound Bleeds Glory”

From Victim to Victor, from worm to Warrior, from humiliation to glorification, from tortured to Triumphant, from degradation to exaltation, from a lowly bleeding Lamb to a glorified Lion-Lamb!

He’s the One from Whom Glory flows! Glory that flows from Him, and through Him, and Back to Him!

He’s the Central Sun in the universe,

He’s the Dazzling One,

He’s the Outstanding One,

He’s the Chandelier of Heaven,

He’s the Well Spring of Eternity,

He’s the Fountainhead of Glory,

He’s the Worthy Lamb of all Glory![[10]](#endnote-10)

**Prayer Focus: Reflect and pray through Revelation 1:12-18**

“In the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.”

**Day 7-The Theater of God’s Glory**

John’s Purpose in writing, was that his readers might believe, “That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, they may have life in his name”(John 20:31) From the opening verses he declares that Jesus is God, stressing his unique relationship with God the Father. John begins his gospel declaring Christ as the word made flesh and dwelling among us! Theword ‘dwelt’ translates skēnoō, meaning ‘tent’ or ‘taber­nacle.’  The point is not that the Word appeared only temporarily, but that his coming corresponds to His dwelling with his people in the Tent of Meeting in the wilder­ness in Ex 25:8, “And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.”

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”

Once Jesus appears on the scene, He - not the temple (successor to the tabernacle) is the place of God’s glory.

John continues in his prologue to describe Jesus in terms of glory,

“And we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth,’ (John 1:14b)

The background of this statement is the experience of Moses recorded in Exodus 33. Moses, despite his leadership and fellowship with I AM, he was not allowed to look on I AM in his full glory,

‘Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” And he [the LORD, v 17] said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” But, he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”’

However, John, and the apostles, now become eye witnesses of Jesus, beholding the glory of God in face of Christ. Paul speaks of the same context in 2 Corinthians 3:18, comparing Moses having to wear a veil over his face to conceal the radiant glory of God from the people, to new covenant believers who by the Spirit can gaze upon the glory of the Lord with an unveiled face,

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

John 1:1-18 shows that the divine glory is disclosed in lowliness, first being revealed through the glory of the incarnation, the Word becoming flesh! However it is most fully seen - in his death on the cross.(Phil 2:6-8). God the Father gives his only Son (in incarnation and death), showing his love for the world. (John 3:16)

The testimony ‘We have seen his glory,’ certainly refers to the fullness of the person and work of Christ witnessed by the apostles. Yet when we view 1:14 in light of John as a whole, it appears that John has one place of disclosure especially in mind, the cross!  As the ‘Book of Signs,’ draws to a close, Jesus declares, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified,’ John 12:23. (Of the 23 instances of the verb doxazō, ‘glorify,’ in John, 18 occur in 12:23-21:19.) The following verses make it plain that the hour of his glorification is the hour of his Death, not his resurrection. John strategically uses the word hour 7 specific times in his gospel each pointing to the cross as the hour of His Glory or glorification. (John 2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 27, 13:1, 17:1)

This certainly does not mean that glory disappears after the cross, but rather streams forth from the risen Christ, the ascended Christ, the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ, and the Second Coming of Christ. Even the first miracle of water being turned to wine(blood) is evidence of a forward glance to the passion narrative.

John declares Jesus the Lamb of God reminding us of Passover,

“The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

According to John’s account of holy week, Jesus is crucified at the very time the Passover victims are being slain in the temple. Through this event, victory is achieved over the powers of darkness. ‘Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.’(John 12:31).  Jesus is crowned king at the moment he is ‘lifted up from the earth’ on the cross. John speaks of Christ being ***lifted up*** three times each referring to the cross.

**Prayer Focus: Reflect and pray John 12:27-32 using the same words of Jesus in your own life circumstance where you must bear the cross. Ask the Father to lift up the Son in your life and family and draw them to Him!**

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” 29 The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” 30 Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.”

**Day 8- Jesus Christ Crucified**

Paul’s primary passion was preaching Christ and Him Crucified. John Piper writes of the apostle,

“Paul was utterly mastered, held captive, by one great scene in history; a cross on Golgotha and on it the Son of God who gave himself for us.”

Paul writes, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified,”(I Cor. 2:2) and again, “we preach Christ crucified.”(I Cor. 1:23) In both cases the word crucified is used in the perfect tense, meaning he is forever the crucified Christ! As Knox Chamblin writes,

As with Paul, our resounding cry ought to be,

“Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”(Gal 6:14).

After the resurrection, Christ still bears the scars and marks of the cross as evidence of his love towards us! When Jesus appears to them he shows them his hands and his side (John 20:20). He says to Thomas, “

“Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.’Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”

John continues his revelation of Christ as the risen Lamb in the book of Revelation. John describes Jesus as a Lamb 28x in the book of Revelation. John sees this Worthy Lamb standing in the center of the throne looking as though he had been slain. John declares the Lamb as the Lamp of the eternal city. In Revelation 4 the Holy Spirit is described as 7 lamps of fire, illuminating the Lamb who was slain standing in the center of the throne!

**Prayer Focus:**

**I invite you to come and look with all your heart and soul. Look until the message of the cross burns into the tablet of your weak heart, causing it to melt under the bonfire of his love. Come look up at Jesus until you see the tears pooling in His eyes and swimming down His cheeks. Gaze at Him until you can almost reach up and touch the wet drops of blood spilling from open wounds. Come draw near this blazing bush until you can feel the heat flickering against your face. Come look until you can feel the presence of God breathing down upon you. Breathe in the richness of His presence until you are, filled and flooded with God himself. Let Jesus heal the deep, hurting, hungry places in your soul.[[11]](#endnote-11)**

**Day 9: Mary of Bethany**

Luke 10:38-42, “Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” 41 But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

Just days before the cross Jesus desired to be with his friends that he loved. John 11:5 states, “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” Mary and Martha were sisters and their brother was Lazarus. Most scholars believe that the parents passed away and Martha was left with the house, Mary was given an alabaster jar of costly perfume. We are not sure if Lazarus was given anything. He certainly was given a three day all expense paid trip to heaven and back. Mary of Bethany was truly a remarkable woman of unparalleled devotion in her day. Mary longed to be at the feet of Jesus and desired to cultivate personal, secret history with Jesus.

I believe a cry is going forth today, ‘Who has history in God?’ ‘Who has really been with Jesus?’ When we finally see Jesus face to face, when the curtain moves, and we see his eyes for the first time, will there be a memory in that gaze? Will we be able to say, “I know you already…we have been through so much…we have walked together so closely, O Jesus, I remember!” When we see the Glory of the Lamb, will we remember weeping over his nail-scared hands while during our days on the earth?

Mary of Bethany was one of those who had cultivated intimacy with Jesus. She had learned to set her heart, to set her gaze before God! I think one of the reasons this story in Luke is significant is that it illustrates to us that it’s not just the apostles, or anointed church leaders that are important to the Lord’s heart in shaping history. Everyone can relate to Mary and Martha and Lazarus. The Scripture sets them forth as having no special gifting, impact, mission, or leadership but they captured the heart of Jesus like we can!

We see Mary doing 3 things. First she posturing her heart at the feet of Jesus. All three times that we see Mary of Bethany in Scripture the Holy Spirit highlights that she is sitting at the feet of Jesus and making the choice to hear his words! Two of the three occasions Mary is criticized by others and yet she is never described as defending herself. Her heart attitude is worship, and submission to the leadership of Jesus. We learn from Mary that worship must precede petition, and intimacy with Jesus must precede intercession. Mary had learned to position her heart before the bonfire of his outrageous love! The second thing we see Mary doing is gazing on his beauty! Mary was single-hearted, looking into his eyes of love towards her. She had developed the paradigm of living before an Audience of One! She was deeply connected to one Man, Jesus Christ. Mary had a confident vision to be an extravagant worshipper of God, unmoved by the criticism of others! Like Mary we are made to enjoy the glory of Jesus, his dynamic personality throughout all eternity! Mary understood that God’s aim is to ravish the affections of the human race with irresistible displays of His Glory, that the earth would reverberate with the infinite and eternal being of God! God commands us to KNOW his glory with our minds and treasure his glory with our hearts! To enjoy his glory as our highest and most superior treasure! The Glory of God is the supreme JOY of His People! God created us to Know and Enjoy His Glory, and in this way, display its supreme value! Do we truly value the Blazing Glory of the Cross of Christ?

The third thing we see Mary engaged in is listening to every word that Jesus says! She desired to hear the word in such a way that would cause her to receive his Love and empower her to love him in return!

“ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me. 41 But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things…”

How familiar is that statement? How many of us are worried, troubled, and anxious in our lives? One of the primary barriers in our relationship with Jesus, in our connection with him, is that we are anxious and worried and many of us distracted with much serving. Paul spoke to us in2 Corinthians 11:3, (NIV), “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.” The enemy’s strategy is to distract us, and cause us to worry and be anxious. O if we could only rest in the finished work of the cross? As Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30,

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Anxiety is a subtle form of pride. Anxiety is not trusting in the Lord, but trusting in self. We say things like, “I’ve got to do this,” or “I’ve got to bring it to pass.” Taking his yoke and entering into his rest simply means abandoning outcomes to God, accepting that we do not have it in ourselves. We give up our rights, and rest in God’s leadership in our lives as Jesus showed us, embracing the cross!

Jesus wraps us this story with this last statement,

“but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

Jesus the Son of God steps out of heaven and declares, “One Thing” is necessary! He doesn’t say the only thing, but the One Thing! Like Mary he calls us to sit at his feet, gaze on his Glory and hang on every word that says to us. The wisest thing that we could ever do is develop this kind of secret personal history with Jesus. This one activity is most needed, most important in our lives. And Jesus declares that it will not be taken away from her! He will remember and reward every movement of our hearts toward him, not matter how weak it appears to you. He forgets our sin, but remembers every choice we make to pursue him, to respond to His love, lavished on us through his shed blood!

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV), “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

**Prayer Focus:**

**Place yourself before the cross and pray through Psalm 27:4 making it your own prayer.**

“One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.”

**Day 10-Mary of Bethany Part 2**

Just days before the cross we read about Mary of Bethany again in John 12:1-3 (ESV),

“Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at the table. 3 Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”

Six days before the cross, Jesus enters the town of Bethany, to the home of Simon who had been healed of leprosy. It was probable that the town was hosting a customary banquet in honor of Jesus who had done miraculous signs in their town. Martha was cooking a meal again, probably to thank Jesus for his incredible ministry to their precious family! And in that moment as many came to marvel at the deeds of Jesus, Mary brings her alabaster jar of costly ointment. This pure nard was worth a year’s wages. Most certainly this was Mary’s dowry, representing her only hope for marriage. In this culture if she wastes this or uses this on something other than her future spouse she would have only two options, to either take care of Lazarus her brother, or beg and prostitute herself to survive. When she looks at these two choices, she understands the worth of Jesus! It is as if she was saying, “You are the priceless Son of God, worthy of all I have! I can risk and throw myself into your hands” When she looks at him she knows her choice. Those present at the meal wanted Jesus to minister to them, but Mary wanted to minister to Jesus! She pours out the ointment onto the head and feet of Jesus and then washes his feet, assuming the posture of servant. Only servants in this culture wash feet! Everyone thought this was crazy. She let her hair down, which respectable women did not do, only prostitutes did this in public. She was willing to suffer her reputation. She wasted her entire inheritance, her future, her livelihood, and her reputation on Him! It was her offering and gift of worship to the One she loved! The fragrance of this worship filled the whole house, and prepared him for his burial.

This pound of costly ointment was so pungent, and fragrant that it would stay on the body for up to week later. As Jesus hung on the cross, in the midst of terrible anguish, he could still breath in the glorious fragrance of worship of this woman, Mary of Bethany! Gasping, “its worth it Father!” Like Mary of Bethany let’s waste our lives on Him. He is worth it! He is All-Deserving! He has the right to all of me! Let’s anoint him with the oil of our treasures, and pour out our lives like a drink offering upon the one that we love!

**Prayer Focus:**

**Ask yourself what do I need to pour out on Jesus, dreams, future, relationships, reputation, comforts, etc. By name place the things that you value most at the feet of Jesus. Tell him he is worth it all!**

**Day 11-Lamb Selection Day**

Palm Sunday was called Lamb selection day. Jewish families would choose a 1yr old male lamb, bring it home and examine it. Exodus 12:2-6 says,

“Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household…5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old… 6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.”

Jesus and the disciples were approaching Jerusalem from the east as they came up the road from Jericho, until they reached the town of Bethpage on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives. Luke tells us,

“As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38 saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” 40 He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.” 41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Lamb selection day. Israel wanted a king to free them from the oppression of the Romans, to give them their land back, and bring to fulfillment the Davidic covenant. However this DAY, Jesus came to them as a Passover Lamb. For many in Israel, they missed the day of their visitation.

God gave Israel special celebrations called ‘Feasts’ when he brought the Hebrews out of Egypt. God spoke to Moses, saying,

“Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘the feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts…These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.’”(Lev. 23:2,4)

The biblical word for holy convocation describes a ‘dress rehearsal.’ The Jews would act out these visual aids, or pictures through the festivals as a dress rehearsal for the purpose of revealing the Messiah and learning God’s plan of salvation through history! God appointed 3 primary feast seasons, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. They represented three major encounters with God in the lives of His covenant people. Passover was the first feast as a memorial to the Hebrews deliverance from Egypt. This deliverance occurred during the month of Nisan and represented God’s first encounter with His covenant people.

“On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight(evening) is the Lord’s Passover”(Lev. 23:4-5)”

The Hebrew day begins on the evening of the 14th(twilight) at approximately 6:00pm. Jesus fulfilled this feast at every point. The Hebrews killed the lambs at the three o’clock in the afternoon on the 14th in order to eat the meal by six. When three o’clock arrived, they slaughtered the Lamb and applied the blood to their doorstep. The family then entered their house through the blood-stained door where they were protected from the plague of death that was to move through the land. According to the instructions, the entire Lamb was to be roasted and consumed. Nothing could be left over for the next day. In preparing the meal, not one bone of the lamb could be broken which required that the lamb be roasted on a spit shaped like a crossbar so that its body could be spread open. This was the Lord’s Passover. We see that He used the blood of the lamb to save His people from death. The blood of the lamb was their covering and protection. Therefore Passover was actually a crossing over or a Threshold covenant!

When the temple was built, instead of killing the lambs at the doorpost, the people would bring their lambs to Jerusalem and kill them at the temple. The entire Jewish nation would come to Jerusalem each year. It was time of great celebration, as the Levites would lead in the singing of Psalm of David, especially Psalm 113-118.

As time passed, it became difficult for people to bring their sacrifice to Jerusalem, so the Levites began raising lambs without spot or blemish for Passover and sold them at the temple. The Jewish historian Josephus reported there were more than 250,000 of these Passover lambs killed in Jerusalem in the first century.

In John 12:1, we read that Jesus came to the town of Bethany six days before Passover, which would be the ninth of Nisan. Jesus enters into Jerusalem on the tenth of Nisan set aside as the human lamb on lamb selection day! For the next five days, Jesus was examined, questioned, and interrogated to see if spot or blemish might be found. They wanted to discredit him so that he would not be an acceptable sacrifice. After interrogating and beating Jesus, Pilate said of Him, “I find no fault in him.”(John 19:4) Finally Jesus was crucified on the 14th on the same day and same time the lambs were killed. Jesus was placed on the cross at 9:00am. And then at twilight, 3:00pm he was slain. And in that moment, none were crying out, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” The only echo in the ears of the King of Kings was, ‘Crucify Him! Crucify Him!’

“And the earth shook and the rocks were split!” The rocks were indeed crying out, convulsing under the weight of the King of Glory and his ‘Revealed Excellence”

**Prayer Focus: Read through John 18:1-19:37 and focus on Jesus your Passover Lamb!**

**Day 12-The Garden**

The night before the cross, Jesus led the disciples from the upper room out of the city and across the Brook Kidron, which at this point from was blood red-from the thousands of lambs that had been slaughtered. The stage was set, Jesus is about to spill royal blood as the Passover Lamb set for slaughter. The crimson blood of the Lamb would soon flow forth like a river to human race for the forgiveness of sins.

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As they entered the garden called Gethsemane, Jesus began to be greatly distressed and troubled(deep alarm, anguish and dismay). When we look at Jesus throughout the gospels we see 3 exciting years of ministry. Words like authoritative, assured, and fearless describe him. He is steady and controlled. However there comes a moment when we follow Jesus under the trees to a place called Gethsemane, when we encounter a savior that we are unfamiliar with. Jesus uttered,

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and watch with me.”

What was it that caused him to be at this point, near death itself? Was he thinking about the nails? Was he thinking about the unbearable shame that he would have to endure? What would the Father’s anger and wrath against sin look like?

“My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

As Jesus stared into this Cup, it was a crushing, agony for our savior. As C.J. Mahaney writes,

“Isaiah 57 shows us that this cup is God’s extended hand—it’s the ‘cup of wrath’, and for those who drink it, it’s’ the ‘cup of staggering.’ This cup contains the full vehemence and fierceness of God’s holy wrath poured out against all sin, and we discover in Scripture that it’s’ intended for all of sinful humanity to drink. It’s your cup…it’s mine. In vivid imagery of the Old Testament, this cup is filled with ‘fire and sulfur and a scorching wind, like some volcanic firestorm, like all the fury of the Mt. St. Helens, eruption concentrated in a coffee mug. No wonder Scripture says that tasting from this cup causes the drinker to ‘stagger and be crazed.” No wonder when Jesus stared into this detestable vessel, He stumbles to ground. In this dark hour, do you see your Savior’s love for you![[12]](#endnote-12)

Jesus had entered the garden for a brief interlude before the hour of the cross, but found hell thrust in his face. Jesus had every right to turn his tearful eyes towards you and me and thrust this cup into our hands, shouting “you drink it…this is your cup, you are responsible for this?” And yet instead he takes it freely for you and I. Wow…!

Luke the doctor says, “And being anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.”(Luke 22:44) Though extremely rare, the phenomenon of hematydrosis, or bloody sweat, is well documented. Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. The Greek word for drops is Thrombos meaning, ‘Large thick drops of clotted blood.’ When blood hit the cool night air it congealed, and thickened.

Rich, red human blood issuing from the veins of the Lamb—Selah

**Prayer Focus: Find a place to bow down before the Lord or lay prostrate before him. In this posture, spend some time focusing on the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane. Recommit your heart to the Lord, “Father your will be done”**

**Day 13-Peace!**

John 14:27 (NKJV) “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Most of us long to find peace and rest in the midst of our hurried and anxious world. I believe this is one of the greatest longings of the human race, and yet it truly is one of the rarest experiences for most. The word peace in Scripture is fleshed out best with the Hebrew word Shalom. It can mean prosperity, completeness, wholeness, or well-being. The cross has made a way for us to have true fellowship and communion with God and one another. There can be no true peace without first achieving true rest. The Lord Jesus died to give us victory over sin and death! He is Christ the Victor! And our only response is Praise, acknowledging the goodness of God in our lives! When praise goes up, His Glory comes down![[13]](#endnote-13)

“having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”(Col. 2:4-5)

“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”(I John 3:8)

Three times in Scripture satan is called the ‘ruler of this world.’ Jesus says about the hour of his glory, the cross of Christ, “Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out!”(John 12:31) As John Piper says, “the death of Jesus was the decisive defeat of ‘the ruler of this world.’---the devil. And as satan goes, so go all his fallen angels. All of them were dealt a decisive blow of defeat when Christ died!”

Horatio Spafford’s hymn, “It is well with my soul,” had an incredible story behind it. Born in 1828, Spafford became a successful lawyer and businessman in Chicago. He was a deeply religious man, active in the Presbyterian Church as a Sunday school teacher and lay leader. Beginning in the 1870’s, Spafford’s faith was tested by a chain of tragic events. In 1871, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed a huge portion of the Spafford’s real estate investments. In 1873, a physician counseled the Spafford’s to take an extended vacation for the sake of Mrs. Spafford’s health and families well-being. Knowing their dear friend Dwight L. Moody would be preaching in an evangelistic tour in England, the Spafford's decided to vacation there. Spafford’s wife, Anna, and their four daughters—Maggie, Tanetta, Annie, and Bessie—boarded an American ship named the S.S. Ville du Havre. Detained due to business, Mr. Spafford stayed behind but intended to follow his family in a few days. On November 22, 1873, the Ville du Havre, sailing off the coast of Newfoundland, was struck by an English ship, the Lochearn, and sank in 12 minutes. Two hundred and twenty-six lives were lost, including the Spafford’s four daughters. After hours of floating in the chilly waters, Mrs. Spafford was rescued. Arriving in Wales, she called her husband with the short message, “saved alone.” Receiving the horrifying news, Spafford left immediately by ship to join his wife. Spafford asked the captain of the ship to notify him when they approached the approximate area where the Ville du Havre went down. Notified that they were nearing the scene of his daughters’ tragic deaths, Spafford went down into his cabin and penned the words to “It is well with my Soul.” When the Spafford's eventually met up with Dwight L. Moody, Mr. Spafford told him quietly, “It is well. The will of God is done!” Look at the incredible words of this hymn:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, it is well with my soul

It is well with my soul

It is well, it is well with my soul.

Tho’ satan should buffet, tho’ trials should come,

Let this blest assurance control,

That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,

And hath shed his own blood for my soul

It is well with my soul

It is well, it is well with my soul.

My sin…O, the bliss of this glorious thought,

My sin, not in part but the whole,

Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

It is well with my soul

It is well, it is well with my soul.

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall sight,

The clouds be rolled back as a scroll

The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,

“Even so”—it is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul

It is well, it is well with my soul.[[14]](#endnote-14)

As Paul exhorts us,

“And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen!”

**Prayer Focus: Spend time singing this hymn several times if you know the music, or pray read the words several times focusing and pausing on a particular phrase or word that sticks out to you.**

**Day 14: Dealing with Idolatry**

Idolatry is the most discussed problem in the Bible of the human condition. It is anything that we love and pursue in place of God. In biblical terms, an idol is something other than

God that we set our hearts on ( Luke 12:29;1 Cor. 10:6), that motivates us (1 Cor. 4:5), that masters or rules us (Ps. 119:133), or that we serve (Matt. 6:24).” --*Ken Sande*

Idolatry is anything I look at and say, “If I have that, my life has value.” If there is anything in my life that is so central that I feel like I can’t live without then it is an idol. For us as believers idolatry is often making a good thing into an ultimate thing.[[15]](#endnote-15) The evil in our desires typically does not lie in what we want but that we want it too much. So an Idol is something other than God that we set our hearts on. Whenever we make something more important than God we are committing idolatry. There is always a reason for sin. Under our sins are idolatrous desires. Sin isn’t only doing bad things, it is often making good things into ultimate things. Whatever we build our life on will drive us or enslave us. Whenever you build your self-worth or happiness on anything other than on God you have idols in your life. It’s not just that you are sinning when you are sleeping with your girlfriend or looking at pornography or getting wasted on the weekends, you are sinning because you are looking to those things to save you and give you what you should be looking for in God. At the core of all our idolatry is pride. As C.J. Mahaney writes, “Pride is when sinful human beings aspire to the status and position of God and refuse to acknowledge their dependence on him.” We cannot save ourselves. A divine rescue is needed and thanks be to Jesus Christ who has made a way through the glory of the cross!

The best way to confront and deal with the idols in our lives is to come humbly before the foot of the cross. When we are exposed to the Humble God, we fall prostrate and cast out crowns down before the Worthy One! As John Stott writes,

“Every time we look at the cross, Christ seems to be saying to us, ‘I am here because of you. It is your sin I am bearing, your curse I am suffering, your debt I am paying, your death I am dying.’ Nothing in history or in the universe cuts us down to size like the cross. All of us have inflated views of ourselves, especially in self-righteousness, until we have visited a place called Calvary. It is there, at the foot of the cross, that we shrink to our true size.”

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. In light of God’s awesome holiness, and our utter depravity, we must cling to the cross of Christ as our only hope. As C.J. Mahaney writes, “Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God’s Holiness and our Sinfulness.” God calls us to set our minds on the glory of the Humble God,

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”(Phil. 2:5-8)

The ultimate revelation of the humility of Christ is found at the cross and this is where we must go as well. As we look to the cross, let’s ask God for the grace to humbly serve one another to the Glory of God, like Christ did for us!

**Prayer Focus:**

**Ask the Lord to reveal to you any known or hidden idols in your life. Write them down and then lay them down at the foot of the cross.**

**Day 15-Absolute surrender, Absolute delight!**

Leviticus 1:3-9 (ESV), “If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord. 4 He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him...6 Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces...And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.”

Jesus became our burnt offering sacrifice. He was without sin, a male without blemish. He offered his all in complete and total surrender to the will of the Father. He became our burnt offering on the cross so that we might become his living sacrifice. To have an obedient heart in total submission to the will of the Father is our highest act of worship. The leadership of Jesus consumes all of us with Holy Fire, so that nothing remains that is not subject to his authority. His jealous love removes everything that hinders his love from increasing in our lives! Jesus sacrificed his all at the cross--his struggle in the garden, his sacrificial life, his obedience unto death! His dedication and unwavering commitment to ‘set his face’ like flint and go to Jerusalem in total submission to the Father! And Jesus made a voluntary choice of love. Jesus made it clear that no one was able to take His life from him. Rather, He laid his life down of his own accord![[16]](#endnote-16)

John 10:17-18 (ESV), “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

The agony of Jesus is revealed in Lev. 1:6, “And he shall flay(skin) the burnt offering and cut it into pieces.” The word ‘flay’ means to be skinned, to tear or strip away. The scourging he took for us literally laid his flesh open like strips of ribbon off his back. He was skinned for you and I. He was stripped of all his possessions and hung naked on a cross. He was despised and rejected by men, ridiculed, scorned, and scolded on our behalf, all in absolute surrender. And we must realize that at times the Lord will allow our flesh to be flayed in order to expose who we really are. Before all can be given to him, all must be exposed.

**Prayer Focus: Let’s pray this prayer in absolute surrender and absolute delight, and then put on a God-exalting worship cd, and spend some time in praise and worship before the Lord.**

**“Lord, I surrender every part o my life to you. I lie before you open and exposed. You have the right to be Lord of every part of my life.”**

**Day 16-Fire of God’s Glory**

One of the primary metaphors for the Glory of God in Scripture is Fire. God is an all consuming Fire, a jealous God. His jealousy removes everything that hinders his love from increasing in our lives. His eyes are a flame of fire, consumed with love for his people! Ezekiel 1:27 (ESV), “And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him.” His words are like fire, his feet are like burnished bronze in a furnace. And his face shines like the sun in all its brilliance. His throne is ablaze with fire, and its wheels are full of fire! A river of fire comes out from before him! The Holy Spirit is described as the 7 blazing torches or lamps of fire! He truly is an all-consuming fire. All that is around him is set on fire. The Seraphim or 4 Living Creatures have eyes all around and as they gaze on the Fiery One, they are set ablaze. A seraph literally means, “a burning one.”

Several times throughout the Old Testament, the priests would lay before the Lord an offering, and God would consume it with the Glory of His Fire! Leviticus 9:22-24 (ESV), “Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. 23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. 24 And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.” Again when Solomon was dedicating the temple, “As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord’s house. 3 When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.”(2 Chron. 7:1-3).

God often answers by fire! Jesus said, “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!(Luke 12:49-50). In the garden, as Jesus is gazing intently into the cup of wrath, he understands that he is about to experience the full and eternal wrath of God against your sin and mine. He is about face the reality of bearing our sins and becoming the object of God’s full and furious wrath on our behalf.

He is about to be totally abandoned by his Father…all because of the totality of sin resting upon one man…therefore that Man must be utterly removed from the presence of a Holy God, utterly separated as far as the east is from the west. Breaking forth from the blood-stained lips of our savior, He uttered in the most terrible words “My God my God why have you forsaken me.”

As R.C. Sproul writes, “This cry represents the most agonizing protest ever uttered on this planet. It burst forth in a moment of unparalleled pain. It is the scream of the damned for us.”[[17]](#endnote-17) Literally for the first time in history Jesus is ripped from His Father’s embrace. Jesus understands the pain of abandonment, and that’s why now, he can promise, “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. I was abandoned so you will never have to be abandoned ever again. I heard your cries, when they left you…I hear the cries of this fatherless generation and that’s why I came to this earth to be utterly forsaken by my Father, so that you would never have to be forsaken ever again.” Amen!

Not only was he ripped away from the loving embrace of his father for you, but he also endured the eternal wrath of the fiery flames of hell on your behalf. What is our penalty for sin? It is eternal separation from God, weeping and gnashing of teeth forever. It is the pain and agony of enduring the fiery flames of hell forever. Jesus experienced the hell that we were supposed to endure for our sin. God took His eternal wrath, condensed it, and emptied it into His cup. He distilled eternal judgment, the very lake of fire, and poured it into His cup, hell’s blazing fury and then asked His Son to drink it. The fiery flames of wrath blazed forth and consumed this burnt offering, this once and for all sacrifice!

It’s like the true story of the mother who awakened one night smelling smoke. She shook her husband and raced upstairs to the baby, but a wall of flames drove her back. Outside the neighbors and firemen fought the blaze. But the mother kept hearing the cry of her baby from the upstairs window. Her husband held her back, knowing that there was nothing to do. Finally she broke from his grip and tore into the house. Covering her face with her hands, she charged up through the wall of flames into her baby’s room. Gathering her little one in her arms, she pressed back through the flames. IN a crumpled heap of charred flesh, she fell to the grass outside. And though she was disfigured for life, she had saved her baby….

Just like that story Jesus heard your cries, he felt your pain, he saw you heading toward the eternal flames of hell…so he LEFT Heaven, charged through the flames of wrath to rescue you…he took your hell and drank your cup on the cross, he swept you into his embrace and brought you through to safety, though He too was disfigured, he still bears the scars and marks on his body to show what he did for you….He took your Hell, so you could have His Heaven!

**Prayer Focus: Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 17: The Atonement**

Romans 3:25-26 (ESV), “whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

God is both loving and just! His love is willing to meet the massive demands of his justice against our sins. God does not sweep our sins under the carpet of the universe and ignore our hatred and wickedness against him. We deserve to be punished. All have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God. As John Piper writes, “the seriousness of an insult rises with the dignity of the one insulted. The creator of the universe is infinitely worthy of respect, and admiration, and loyalty. Therefore failure to love him is not trivial-it is treason! It defames God and destroys human happiness.”

Therefore as Paul says “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of Law, and do them.”(Deut. 27:26, Galatians 3:10). There is a holy curse upon all humanity. However Hope is found, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.”(Gal. 3:13)

As Romans 3:25 says God put forward Christ as a propitiation or atonement by his blood. This word refers to the removal of God’s wrath by providing a substitute, namely Himself. Jesus Christ took our wrath, and satisfied the demands of God’s justice against our sin. He became our wrath-quencher! For Paul, this substitution, Christ bearing our penalty in our place, is the essence of atonement. He absorbed the wrath of God that we deserved, and the Righteousness of God was displayed and shown forth to the human race! In the very courtroom of God, God declares us Justified, ‘NOT GUILTY.’ This divine declaration writ in ‘Holy Blood.’

“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”(I John 4:10)

The measure of God’s holy love towards us was revealed in the cross that, “while we were still sinners Christ died for us.” God ‘set aside’ the record of debt that stood against us…nailing it to the cross.”(Col. 2:14)

J.I. Packer gives us nine glorious truths for us to meditate upon:[[18]](#endnote-18)

1. God, “condones nothing” but judges all sin as it deserves: which Scripture affirms, and my conscience confirms, to be right.
2. My sins merit ultimate penal suffering and rejection from God’s presence (conscience also confirms this), and nothing I do can blot them out.
3. The penalty due to my sins, whatever it was, was paid for me by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in his death on the cross.
4. Because this is so, I through faith in him am made “the righteousness of God in him,” i.e. I am justified; pardon, acceptance, and sonship(to God) become mine.
5. Christ’s death for me is my sole ground of hope before God. “if he fulfilled not justice, I must; if he underwent not wrath, I must to eternity”(John Owen)
6. My faith in Christ is God’s own gift to me, given in virtue of Christ’s death for me; i.e., the cross procured it.
7. Christ’s death for me guarantees my preservation to glory.
8. Christ’s death for me is the measure and pledge of the love of the Father and the Son to me.
9. Christ’s death for me calls and constrains me to trust, to worship, to love, and to serve.

In the words of the P.P. Bliss’s famous hymn,

Bearing shame and scoffing rude

In my place condemned he stood,

Sealed my pardon with his blood—

Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

**Prayer Focus:**

**Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 18: The Blood of Jesus**

The death of Jesus is the epicenter of God's glorious revelation of triumph over the march of death in the course of human history. In one movement in His own body, Jesus halted the cosmos' spiral into chaos and eternal oblivion. He turned it around. As His flesh was torn open and His Blood was loosed, the power of its perfection entered the cosmos and brought the gears of sin and cursing grinding to a halt. The way to the Father was torn and now, Blood-bathed, no man can shut it anymore!

Hearts transformed by the power of His Blood join into the epic chain and emit an ever-increasing wave of His power. The Blood breaks open the bars of sin's prison and sets the captive free. With it explosive power is multiplied and loosed in testimony of what He has done. This perpetual motion—the release of the light and heat of Calvary—is living and unfolding in increasing glory down through every succeeding generation. It is the assurance that the whole earth shall be filled with His glory. The Cross remains. It is not a onetime event of history that has ceased to surround us in its efficacy. It suffuses the very atmosphere of invisible and visible realms with the power of salvation and the treasure of resurrection from the dead! The Cross is the epicenter of glory from before the foundations of this world and the creation of the human race until the Lamb appears. If a man should glory let him glory in the Cross. If a man should find himself and be able to say, "I am," let him say, "I am crucified with Christ!"

Are you downcast? Look to the Cross. Are you rejoicing? Look to the Cross. Do you seek a compass? The Cross points the way. Are you weighed down? Let the Cross lift you up: A yoke that breaks every other yoke. A bond that looses every bondage. An ensign that rises above the highest mountain of opposition and is planted immovable in grace in the miry depth of the lowest chasm of suffering. Let us say with the hymnist, "In the Cross, in the Cross, be my glory ever."[[19]](#endnote-19)

Edith Stein, a modern saint who voluntarily revealed her Jewish identity in order to share the love of Christ in the midst of the horrors of the Holocaust concentration camps, writes in her meditation, The Love of the Cross,

“The sight of the world in which we live, the need and misery, and an abyss of human malice, again and again dampens jubilation over the victory of light. The world is still deluged by mire, and still but a small flock has escaped from it to the highest mountain peaks. The battle between Christ and the Antichrist is not yet over. The followers of Christ have their place in this battle, and their chief weapon is the Cross. The lovers of the Cross, whom He has awakened and will always continue to awaken anew in the changeable history of the struggling church, these are His allies at the end of time.” —Edith Stein, "LOVE OF THE Cross: Some Thoughts for the Feast of St. John of the Cross"

**Prayer Focus: Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 19: The Blood of Jesus Part II**

God commanded the priests of Israel to sacrifice two offerings daily, one in the morning, at the 3rd hour which was 9:00am and one at the ninth hour of the day which was 3:00pm. Jesus was hung on the cross at the exact time the priests were sacrificing the morning burnt offering. At 3:00pm the Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus was slain, as Jesus breathed his last! On Day of Atonement, the high priest would declare after the evening sacrifice, “It is finished!” Jesus our High Priest, roars forth with every ounce left in his physical being, “It is finished!” This statement literally meant, “Paid in full!” Jesus purchased us and brought us into his glorious inheritance! Through the shed blood of the Lamb, we now have these precious promises that are 'Yes and Amen' in Christ!

1. **We have protection under the covering of the blood.**

Exodus 12:13 (ESV), “The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.”

1. **We have salvation, forgiveness and redemption in the blood.**

Hebrews 9:22 (ESV), “Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”

Matthew 26:28 (ESV), “for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Ephesians 1:7 (NIV), “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.”

1. **There is life, healing, and provision in the blood.**

Isaiah 53:5 (NIV), “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

Psalm 105:37 (NKJV), “He also brought them out with silver and gold, And *there was* none feeble(sick) among His tribes.”

1. **There is cleansing in the blood.**

1 John 1:7 (NKJV), “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

1. **There is justification.**

Romans 5:9 (NKJV), “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

1. **There is sanctification in the blood.**

Hebrews 13:12 (NKJV), “Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”

1. **There is peace under the covering of the blood.**

Colossians 1:19-20 (NKJV), “For it pleased *the Father that* in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

1. **There is washing in the blood.**

Revelation 1:5 (NKJV), “and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,”

1. **There is overcoming in the power of the blood of the Lamb.**

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV), “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

1. **There is accessibility in the blood, allowing us into the presence of God.**

Hebrews 10:19 (NKJV), “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,”

**Prayer Focus: Let’s Declare by Faith these glorious promises today:**

Today I testify personally to what the Blood of Jesus does for me.

Through the Blood of Jesus I am redeemed out of the hand of the devil.

Through the Blood of Jesus all my sins are forgiven.

Through the Blood of Jesus I am justified, made righteous, just as if I had never sinned.

Through the Blood of Jesus I am sanctified, made holy, set apart to God. My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, redeemed, cleansed, justified and sanctified by the Blood of Jesus.  
Through the Blood of Jesus every curse for disobedience is broken.

Through the Blood of Jesus every blessing of obedience is mine!

Through the Blood of Jesus the way to perpetual communion with the Father has been opened and no man can shut it.

Through the Blood of Jesus I am heir and possessor of all the riches of my Father's eternal Kingdom.

The Blood of Jesus speaks for me today from the mercy seat of God's throne in Heaven.

Therefore, the devil has no place in me, no power over me, no unsettled claims against me.

The song of the Lamb surrounds me today with eternal victory and joy.

I overcome the world, the flesh and the devil through the Blood of Jesus!

**Read each of the verses and decrees outloud on the blood of the Lamb in believing faith.**

**Day 20-Greater Love**

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

One of the primary marks of a disciple of Jesus is love! Scripture makes it abundantly clear that we love because he first loved us. The greatest love ever given was through Jesus at the cross.

“Greater love has none than this that someone lays down his life for his friends.”(John 15:13)

He loved us and gave himself up for us!(Gal 2:20, Eph. 5:2, 25, Rev. 1:5)

“but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”(Rom. 5:8)

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”(I John 4:9-10)

We can only love to the degree that we experience and receive his love. God desires that the first commandment to Love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength be restored to first place in our lives. We love God because he first loves us with his whole heart, mind, soul and strength, which he showed us at the cross. When we understand and experience this kind of committed love, we can then love like he loves, laying down our lives for all those around us, and showing ourselves to be his disciples. As John Stott writes,

“The Cross is the blazing fire at which the flame of our love is kindled, but we have to get near enough for its sparks to fall on us.”[[20]](#endnote-20)

**Prayer Focus: Meditate on God’s outrageous, crazy love that he has towards you. Tell him how much you love being loved by him, and love loving him. Spend time in listening prayer asking him to speak words of tender love to your heart.**

**Day 21-For Joy Over the Treasure**

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”(Matt. 13:44, NKJV)

Jesus gives the disciples a parable about treasure hidden in field. The field is the world. The man that found the treasure is the Lord Jesus, and the hidden treasure is you and I. Jesus left heaven, took on human flesh and became a man. He sold everything, and purchased you and I as his very own! “For you were bought with a price.”(I Cor. 6:20) As the author of Hebrews says,

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”(Heb. 12:2)

Jesus came seeking to save the lost. Looking down the corridors of human history, he saw us captive, bound in the chains of sin and idolatry. Yet his heart erupted with joy over the ones that the Father had given him. He sold all that he had for joy over the treasure. As Paul says,

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”(2 Cor. 8:9)

Jesus was indescribably wealthy, and yet he became poor, that we might receive the riches of his mercy! We certainly don’t deserve this kind of treatment and yet he loved us even while we were still sinners. He pursued us even unto death.

And yet we know that we love God because he first loved us. We pursue God because he first pursued us. We enjoy God because he first enjoys us!

This parable also points to us selling all that we have to find our treasure, the Lord Jesus! Because of his abundant grace, we long to give our all back to him for all that He is! Like King David we want to be men and women after God’s heart. Jesus said ‘where your treasure is there your heart will be also.’ Let’s value Christ above all else, until we can say with sincerity, “Jesus you are all deserving of all that we are!” May our lives be for the Spread of His Fame, for the Extension of His Reign, for the Increase of His Gain, and for the Honor of his Claim!

**Prayer Focus:**

**Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 22: Jesus the Worthy Bridegroom**

“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.”(Matt. 22:1-2)

I believe the great drama of all the ages, is the Father giving his Son a bride, an eternal companion. She would be a voluntary lover at his side to reign and rule with him forever! The Father desires a family, sons and daughters, and Jesus desires a bride, an equally-yoked partner in love! The Bible starts with a wedding and ends with a wedding! Ephesians 5:31-32 (NIV), “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.” At the beginning God created them male and female, as a living picture of the covenantal relationship that he desired to have with the human race. Just as a man is called to leave his father in heaven and cleave to his wife, Jesus left heaven, took on human flesh to be forever joined with his bride, the church! As the Father put the first Adam to sleep and brought forth a women out of his side, so Jesus was put to death. Out of the side wound of the Lamb, the second Adam, a bride was brought forth. We have been united with him in his death and resurrection(Rom. 6)! The marriage would be fully consummated at the end of the age,

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

It is clear that this is the marriage supper of the Lamb! The church is pictured at the end of the age, understanding her bridal identity and flowing in union with the Holy Spirit, as a praying bride with longing for the return of her bridegroom, Revelation 22:16-17 (NIV),

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” 17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.” It is clear that our identity at the end of the age is that of a bride who is longing for her Bridegroom!

Throughout the history of Israel it was always God’s intention to be her husband.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NIV), “The time is coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. 33 “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34

Isaiah 54:5, “For your Maker is your husband— the Lord Almighty is his name— the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.”

Isaiah 62:4-5 (NIV), “No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. 5 As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.”

And yet the people of God would continually be unfaithful to the marriage covenant, and commit spiritual adultery. Over and over again, He would call her home and pursue her with radical desire and unswerving commitment!

Jeremiah 3:14 (NIV), “Return, faithless people,” declares the Lord, “for I am your husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion.”

Hosea 2:14-16 (NIV), “Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. 15 There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. 16 “In that day,” declares the Lord, “you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master…19 I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. 20 I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord.”

**Prayer Focus:**

**Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 23-The Betrothal Part I**

On the night before the cross, Jesus had gathered his disciples in the Upper Room. Jesus had been preparing his disciples for his coming death, and speaks to them a tender word of promise and encouragement, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”(John 14:1-3)

Jesus was drawing from Jewish marriage customs. The Jewish understanding of betrothal has always been much stronger than our modern day understanding of engagement. The betrothal was a binding agreement, that would literally need a certificate of divorce to annul the contract(Deut. 24:1-4). This option was only available to the husband. The Hebrew word for betrothal, eyrusin, means sanctification, or the setting apart of an individual. It clearly defines the purpose of this period as a time in which a couple would consecrate themselves to prepare to enter into the covenant of marriage.

1. Jewish marriages were typically arranged. The Father would choose a bride for his Son.

Ephesians 1:4 (NIV), “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

1. The Father and Son would leave their home and travel to the girl’s home for the purpose of obtaining a wife through a marriage covenant called a ‘katubah.’

Genesis 2:24 (NIV), “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

1. The Bridal price was established. They would meet with the father of the chosen bride and negotiate the bridal price called the ‘mohar.’ The price was always a reflection of the value that the man had placed on his soon to be bride.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NIV), “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

1. The Betrothal date is set. The father and son will leave and the son returns to his home to sell whatever needs to be sold for the bride’s price(mohar)

Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV), “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NIV), “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

1. The Betrothal date arrives. The young man and his parents arrive to the girl’s house for the betrothal dinner. This was usually done publically-under the canopy(Huppah) where they declare their hearts to become betrothed to one another! And always a Cup is placed before them but no one can touch it until the appointed time.

Luke 22:14-15 (NIV), “When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15 And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”

1. The Marriage covenant is presented and offered! Jesus presented the covenant in the upper room saying,

Matthew 26:26-28 (NIV), “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

1. The Marriage covenant is called the Katubah and states the bridal price, the promise to support and care for her, and the terms of the marriage should she accept. It is a legal document and could only be broken by a divorce.

Ephesians 5:28-32 (NIV), “In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body.”

Romans 8:32 (NIV), “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

Hebrews 13:5 (NIV), “God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Matthew 6:33 (NIV), “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Luke 9:23 (NIV), “Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

1. The Father asks the bride if she will accept and then the Father offers the cup to his Son, the Groom. The young man drinks signifying his **willingness to sacrifice** in order to make her his wife!

Matthew 26:39 (NIV), “Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

1. The Groom then offers the cup to his bride signifying her willingness to enter into the marriage saying, “I accept your gift and your life and I offer you my life in return.”

Matthew 26:27-28 (NIV), “Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

1. Once they drink the young man hands over the bride price to the Father.

Luke 23:46 (NIV), “Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.”

1. The young man then presents his gifts to his bride called Matan, which means gift or pledge. This word is translated into Greek as ‘Charismata.’ This gift was considered a pledge of his love, and a deposit and promise of his return!

Ephesians 1:13-14 (NIV), “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

1. As she accepts these gifts of value, the betrothal is now complete and she enters into a time of sanctification, called the ‘kiddushin.’ She is now not only set apart(betrothed, but also entering into a time of ‘sanctification’ being made ready for the return of her tender bridegroom!

1 Corinthians 1:2 (NIV), “To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

1 Corinthians 6:11 (NIV), “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Hebrews 10:10 (NIV), “And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

1. At this point the bride promises to pay dowry. We pay our dowry as a yielded life set apart, holy, pure and belonging to another!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV), “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Romans 12:1 (NIV), “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

Romans 6:12-13 (NIV), “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”

**Prayer Focus: As a bride let’s awaken to Jesus our tender bridegroom! Ask him if there is anything that needs to be yielded to him to be ready for his Return!**

**Day 24: The Betrothal Part II**

After the promise of the dowry, the groom then makes a speech and says, “I go to prepare a place for you. I will come back when it is ready.” As she is waiting for his return, she is referred to as the one “bought with a price.” She will typically wear a veil signifying that she is now SET APART, SANCTIFIED, and belongs to another! She takes on his name and is considered his wife with all the rights and privileges.

John 14:2-3 (NIV), “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

Romans 8:17 (NIV), “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

The Groom returns to his Father’s house and begins building. The Father was the judge of when it was finished and when the young man could claim his bride—the son didn’t know when that day would come.

Matthew 24:36 (NIV), “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

During this season the bride prepares her wedding dress(garment) and consecrates herself. This was a time of preparation for the return of her bridegroom! She was to have an oil lamp always lit and extra oil on hand! As the time grew near she would gather her bridesmaids, and they would sleep in her room, and the bride would often sleep in her wedding gown!

Revelation 19:7-8 (NIV), “For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)”

Isaiah 61:10 (NIV), “I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”

When all was ready, the Father would give the command to go. Jewish brides were often stolen at night. The bride was always to be ‘watching and ready’ for his return! When close the grooms friend(the friend of the bridegroom) would run ahead and stand under the window and say, “Behold, the Bridegroom! The Bridegroom is coming! Blessed is he who comes!”

Matthew 25:1-6 (NIV), “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolis the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

1 Thessalonians 5:2 (NIV), “for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.”

Matthew 23:39 (NIV), “For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

The Trumpet(shofar) was then blown and the Bridegroom would charge in and take away his bride to his father’s house to celebrate the Marriage Feast![[21]](#endnote-21)

1 Corinthians 15:52 (NIV), “in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

Matthew 25:10 (NIV), “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.”

The Father and His Son met together before the foundation of the world and determined the bridal price—the most extravagant price that could ever be paid—the very life of His Son! The Father made the offer and his Son accepted. With this kind of outrageous love, this bridegroom can be trusted with everything—our lives, our weakness, our dreams, our finances, and all our relationships! We are who are we according the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Strength is not what qualifies us, weakness does. Jesus wants a bride who will depend on him for everything. A bride who is willing to say, ‘yes’ to an offer that we could never earn, that we will never deserve! Even when Jesus offered the cup to his disciples, he was fully aware that they would abandon him and even one would betray him. However he still invited them into his family, through his gracious affection towards us at the cross!

**Prayer Focus:**

**Spend time reflecting on Hosea 2:14-16 and picture yourself as the bride of Christ!**

Hosea 2:14-16 (ESV), “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. 15 And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. 16 “And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’

**Day 25: Remembering!**

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (ESV), “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

One of the best ways to truly experience and appropriate the cross in our lives is through taking communion and participating in the Lord’s supper on a regular basis. I believe celebrating communion can be done corporately together through the body of Christ, or privately in our homes. Through communion we proclaim the Lord’s death until he returns! It is important that we not only think about the cross, but that we appropriate it in our daily lives! It is a constant reminder of all that Christ has done for you and me! We are a forgetful people, and always need to set aside ‘Time to Remember.” In a concrete way eating and drinking helps us absorb the truth, “Christ in us, the Hope of Glory!”

The early church practiced communion on a much more regular basis.

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”(Acts 2:42-43)

They obeyed Jesus’ command in John 6:56, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.” Abiding in Christ and Christ in us, produces fruit in our lives. Jesus is telling us that the key to abiding in him is partaking in communion. His flesh is true food, and his blood is true drink.(John 6:55) In communion, we offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving. We enter his gates with thanksgiving, entering into his presence. We receive the spiritual body and blood of Christ as we partake in communion, which nourishes and feeds us.

“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.”(I Cor. 11:27-30)

This is a serious issue. We do not want to treat lightly the body and blood of our Savior. We do not want to eat in an unworthy manner, not rightly discerning the Lord’s body or many of us can become weak, sick or even die. However if we do eat this rightly then the opposite is true, many of us will be healthy, whole and have long life! Paul asks us to judge ourselves lest we be judged. It is important not only to discern the Lord’s physical body and what he endured on the cross for us, but also to rightly discern the Lord’s body, the body of Christ. It is good and proper for us to repent of any unforgiveness, wrong judgment or criticism of those in the body of Christ! If we judge ourselves first then we will not be judged. This is critical to protect the unity of the Spirit in the church today.

**Prayer Focus:**

Spend some time praying through this passage and then come to the table of the Lord and partake of communion. Try and spend some more time than usual lingering in God’s presence. Spend some time asking God to reveal any hidden sin of wrong judgment, criticism, gossip, slander or unforgiveness in our lives against our brothers and sisters in Christ. Confess, repent, and then take communion and proclaim the Lord’s death until he returns!

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” 52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” 53 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.”(John 6:51-55)

**Day 26: Cross Examination Part 1**

After the arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus exhausted from Gethsemane, was brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas, the high priest. A soldier struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiaphas. The palace guards then blindfolded Him and mockingly taunted Him to identify them as they passed, spat on Him, and struck Him in the face. In the early morning, Jesus battered and bruised, dehydrated and exhausted from a sleepless night, is taken across Jerusalem to the Praetorium of the fortress of Antonia. It was there, in response to the cries of the mob, that Pilate ordered Barnabas released and condemned Jesus to be scourged and crucified. Preparations for scourging are carried out. The prisoner is stripped of his clothing, and His hands tied to a post above his head. The Roman legionnaire steps forth with his flagrum(or flagellum) in his hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus’ shoulders, back and legs. At first, the thongs cut through the skin only, then as the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. The small balls of lead first produced deep bruises, which are broken open y the subsequent blows. Finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons, and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped. The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with his own blood.[[22]](#endnote-22)

Isaiah 50:6 says, “I gave my back to those who strike.” Jesus willing gave his back to be stricken and yet as we see the back of the Son of God, we are reminded when God’s goodness passed before Moses.

“And the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, 22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.”(Exo. 33:21-23)

By his stripes we are healed, physically, emotionally and spiritually! Indeed we can now hear the Lord proclaim his name before us as he Shows us but a glimpse of His Glory, his revealed excellence,

“The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,”(Ex. 34:6-7)

**Prayer Focus: Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 27: Cross Examination Part II**

The Romans soldiers see a great joke in the provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They throw a robe across his shoulders and place a stick in his hand for a scepter. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with 3 inch thorns is pressed into his scalp. And copious bleeding ensued, the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body. After mocking him and striking him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from his hand and strike Him across the head driving the thorns deeper into his scalp. Finally they tire of their sadistic sport, and the robe is torn from his back. This had already become adherent to the clots, to blood and serum in the wounds, and it’s removal—just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage—causing excruciating pain, almost as though He were again being whipped, and the wounds again begin to bleed.

He bled from his head taking on himself all the wicked thoughts of the human race. He took on the curse of the toil and hardship of working the ground (thorns). They beat his face causing it to become disfigured as Isaiah wrote, Isaiah 52:14 (ESV), “As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind.”

“He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”(Isa. 53:3)

Isaiah says they literally ripped out his beard,

“I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.”(Isa. 50:6)

However even as they hit, despised and rejected this man of sorrows, his face revealed the very Glory of LOVE! This piercing love caused them to turn away…they couldn’t continue to look upon and behold this Lord of Glory! Amen!

**Prayer Focus:**

**Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 28: Cross Examination Part III**

The heavy beam of the cross was tied across his shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves, and the execution detail begins its slow journey. The weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by the copious blood loss, is too much. He stumbles and falls. The rough wood of the beam gauges into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders. He tries to rise, but human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance. The dust from the hot ground latched onto his wounds, pasting and stinging. Imagine for a moment the smell of blood and bodily fluids, the nauseating aroma of liquor and cheap ale on the breath of the soldiers, and the evil excitement in the air of people all around crying out ‘Crucify him, crucify him!’ On arrival at Golgotha, the beam is placed on the ground. And Jesus is quickly thrown backward with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy square wooden iron nail through the wrist, through the median nerve, and deep into the wood. This would be like smashing the nerve in your elbow that hurts so badly when you hit it against something, yet in this case like racking your entire body in one moment! The pain from this was so severe that a new word was invented for this, EXCRUCIATING! Quickly he moves to the other side, and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexing and movement. The beam is roughly lifted. Imagine the unbearable pain as the weight of his body came crashing down upon his wrists. After this the left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended and toes down, a nail is driven into the arch of each, as He pushes Himself upward to avoid the stretching torment. He places his full weight on the nail through his feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

“For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet.”(Psalm 22:16)

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities”(Isa.53:5)

The doctors explain that nails were driven through the place where the median nerve runs.. Jesus took the wrath of God against the sin of our hands and feet. Think about the ways you have sinned against a brother or sister with your hands, or willingly walked into a place of sin or iniquity. He took it! He paid the price for it.

**Prayer Focus:**

**Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 29: Cross Examination Part IV**

“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.”(Psalm 22:14-15)

When Jesus said he would be poured out like water, it means that His body would dehydrate through the ordeal of the cross. Muscles and tendons are what hold our bones and joints in place. They are comprised of more than 70% water. When severe dehydration occurs, muscles and tendons break down, lose their elasticity, and are unable to properly support the skeletal structure. Hanging on the cross would cause even his bones to be exposed, ‘out of joint,' or 'divided and split.'

As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward, hanging by his arms. The pectoral muscles are paralyzed, and the intercostals muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the bloodstream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen. 6hrs of limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins a deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium, slowly filling serum, begins to compress the heart. The compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues. The tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to grasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain. Jesus gasps, “I thirst.” He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues. With one last surge of strength, he once again presses his torn feet against the nail, straightens his legs, takes a deep breath, and utters his seventh and last cry, “Father into your hands, I commit my spirit.” Apparently, to make sure of death, the legionnaire drives his lance through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the pericardium, and into the heart. Immediately, there came out blood and water. We therefore have rather conclusive post-mortem evidence that our Lord died not the usual crucifixion(death by suffocation) but of heart failure (a broken heart) due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.

Ye that pass by, behold the Man!

The Man of Grief condemned for you,

The Lamb of God for sinners slain,

Weeping to Calvary pursue.

His Sacred Limbs they stretch, they tear

With nails they fasten to the wood;

His sacred limbs exposed and bare,

Or only covered with His blood.”*[[23]](#endnote-23)*

**Day 30: All Creation Groaned…**

Matthew 27:51-54 (ESV), “And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared too many. 54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

By thy sweat bloody and clotted! Thy soul in agony,

Thy head crowned with thorns, bruised with staves,

Your eyes a fountain of tears,

Your mouth moistened with vinegar and gall,

Your face stained with spitting,

Your neck bowed down with burden of the cross,

Your back ploughed with the wheals and wounds of the scourge,

Your pierced hands and feet,

Your strong cry, Eli, Eli,

Your heart pierced with a spear,

The water and blood thence flowing,

Your body crushed, your blood poured out

Lord forgive the iniquity of your servant

And cover all his sin.”

--Lancelot Andrews(slightly revised)

The author of the book of Hebrews writes,

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.”

As Jesus hung on the cross, dripping blood, the weight of his glory literally shook the earth. Creation convulsed under the banner of the Son of God murdered! Ripped from his Father’s embrace, the sky drew dark at noon! As death ensued upon the Son of Man, the ‘earth shook, and the rocks split.’ It was as if the flesh of Jesus, was torn in two like a curtain from top to bottom! As Holy blood dripped to the ground, the graveyard burst open with resurrection power!

**Prayer Focus:**

**Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 31: ‘Father forgive them…’**

Luke 23:34, “And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” The form of the verb here ‘lego’(said), is very unique. It is ‘elegen’ which, in form, is an imperfect active indicative verb, implying repetitive action. Therefore he said and kept saying, “Father forgive them.” One could make a strong case that this was a repetitive prayer that Jesus prayed throughout the entire experience of the cross. The question we ask ourselves is who does ‘them’ refer too? The criminals? The Roman soldiers? The executioners? The people who mocked him?

In all likelihood he prayed this prayer with each strike of the hammer, each slash of the whip, each fist that landed on his swollen face, each mocking word of haterd… “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

And this prayer of forgiveness was towards such undeserving sinners. Therefore we are the perfect candidates to receive the Father’s answer to his Son’s request! Jesus exhibits to us his heartfelt nature of grace. As Tim Keller writes, “Here’s the Gospel – you’re more sinful than you ever dared to believe, but you’re more loved than you ever dared hope”

In forgiveness we are given a ‘clean slate.’ We are given right standing before God, dressed in his righteousness!

**Prayer Focus: Spend some time confessing known sin and ask for forgiveness. Hear Jesus say over every sin that you name, Father forgive (your name).**

**Day 32: The Cries of the cross**

Jesus cried out 7 times when he was on the cross. Spend some time meditating on what Jesus said while on the cross. The first three were during the first 3 hours, and the last 4 during the final three hours after it had grown dark. If you can, we encourage you to watch the *Passion of the Christ,* Mel Gibson before or after you pray through these cries of Christ. Just as they begin to lift him up on the cross...pause for a few minutes, meditate on these 7 cries. Cry them out yourself. Place yourself as it were directly at the foot of the cross and imagine what it would have been like to hear those words directly, hear them as Mary or John, hear them as a Roman soldier. Ask the Holy Spirit for greater revelation. And then finish watching the movie.

1. **A Cry of Pardon**

Luke 23:34 (ESV), “And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.”

1. **A Cry of Assurance**

Luke 23:43 (ESV), “And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

1. **A Cry of Compassion**

John 19:26-27 (ESV), “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.”

1. **A Cry of Anguish**

Matthew 27:46 (ESV), “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

1. **A Cry of Suffering**

John 19:28 (ESV), “After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”

1. **A Cry of Victory**

John 19:30 (ESV), “When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

1. **A Cry of Submission**

Luke 23:46 (ESV), “Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.

**Day 33: Quotes and Hymns**

"In the Cross is salvation, in the Cross is protection against our enemies, in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the Cross is strength of mind, in the Cross joy of spirit, in the Cross height of virtue, in the Cross the perfection of holiness. Behold! In the Cross all doth consist...Walk where you will, seek whatever you will, you shall not find a higher way above nor safer way below, than the holy way of the Cross...Turn thee above, turn thee below, turn thee without, turn thee within, and in all these places thou shalt find the Cross; and everywhere of necessity thou must hold fast patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and win an everlasting crown."—Thomas A' Kempis The Imitation of Christ, ch xii Of the Inward Life

In evil long I took delight

Unawed by shame or fear

Till a new object struck my sight

And stopped my wild career.

I saw one hanging on a tree

In agonies and blood;

Who fixed his languid eyes on me

As near his cross I stood.

Sure never till my latest breath

Can I forget to look;

It seemed to charge me with his death

Though not a word he spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt

And plunged me in despair

I saw my sins his blood had spilt

And helped to nail him there.

Alas I knew not what I did

But now my tears are vain;

Where shall my trembling soul be hid?

For I the Lord have slain.

A second look he gave which said

‘I freely all forgive;

This blood is for thy ransom paid

I died that thou mayst live.”

Thus while his death my sin displays

In all its blackest hue;

Such is the mystery of grace,

It seals my pardon too.

With pleasing grief and mournful joy

My spirit now is filled;

That I should such a life destroy

Yet live by him I killed.

-John Newton, In Evil Long I Took Delight

**Wondrous Cross**

When I survey the wondrous cross

On Which the Prince of Glory died

My richest gain I count but loss

And pour contempt on all my pride

Forbid it Lord that I should boast

Save in the cross of Christ my God

All the vain things that charm me most,

I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His feet,

Sorrow and love flow mingled down.

Did ever such love and sorrow meet,

Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Where the whole realm of nature mine,

Love so amazing, so divine,

Demands my soul, my life, my all.

**Prayer Focus:**

**Spend time singing Wondrous Cross several times through or read through each sentence lingering on phrases or words that stick out to you.**

**Day 34-No Condemnation**[[24]](#endnote-24)

Zechariah 3:1-5 (ESV), “Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?” 3 Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. 4 And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.” 5 And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord was standing by.”

In God’s gracious sovereignty, he placed a kind rule on the throne in Persia and brought back the Jews to the promised land at the time of Zechariah. In this fourth vision, God has to contend with the problem of Israel’s sin, symbolized by Joshua who was the high priest at the time. Israel had fallen into sin, and as such under the condemnation of satan, literally the adversary. Satan stands before God’s chosen people, who had led them into temptation and now is acting shocked, ‘how dare they…’ Accusation is one of his primary weapons, and can often derail us in our confidence in the grace of God He says to us, “you aren’t worthy? Look at your life…” However Jesus comes and says to him, “the Lord rebuke you, o satan!” He reminds satan that the Lord has chosen Jerusalem as His own and on that premise, Be Rebuked! God’s people belong to Him and no other! It is a glorious truth that Jesus Christ takes up our defense, not because we deserve it but because he has chosen us and has delivered us as a Brand plucked from the fire. We have all been plucked from the fires of hell, and delivered from the wrath of God against our sin all because of what he did for us on the cross! Amen!

So here is Joshua, representing the people of God, dressed in filthy garments.

“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”(Isa. 64:6)

And yet, Jesus comes and removes our stained clothes of sin. He comes and takes away our iniquity from us and then clothes us with the righteous and pure garments.

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”(2 Cor. 5:21)

A black spot on the wall of a castle in Germany bears eloquent testimony to this truth. Wartburg Castle is where Martin Luther was taken for refuge after his heroic stand at the council of Worms. Luther was immensely productive during this period, but he also felt himself suffering at the hands of the devil. He wrote to his friend Philipp Melanchthon on May 24, 1521, about a spiritual depression he had experienced, one in which he dreamed that satan had appeared with a long scroll on which his many sins were written with care, each of them read out one-by-one. All the while satan mocked his pathetic desire to serve God, assuring him that after all he would end up in hell. Luther writhed in spiritual agony until at last, he jumped up and cried: ‘it is true, satan, and many more sins which I have committed in my life which are known to God only; but write this at the bottom of your list, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin.’” Then gasping an inkwell from his table, Luther threw it at the devil who thus fled, leaving the black spot on the wall that bears testimony to his deliverance still(Baron, Zechariah 93-84)

Not only did God take away the iniquity and put on new garments of righteousness, but also a clean turban was placed on the head. This turban certainly referenced Exodus 28 which tells us the headpiece worn by the high priest, which was written, “Holy to the Lord.” God said, “It shall be regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”(Ex. 28:34) With this holy headpiece on Joshua and also on us, we are set apart as “holy to the Lord,” and can now offer spiritual sacrifices holy and acceptable the Lord!

Therefore this vision reveals to us satan as adversary and accuser, rebuked by Jesus, sin removed, and righteousness bestowed on the people of God!

So when satan comes and accuses us, telling us we are great sinners, we reply through faith in Christ, ‘yes I am a great sinner and yet Christ is a Great Savior! I direct you to the cross, where his precious blood was shed for me, and to his perfect life, which is credited to my account before God. And I thank you for reminding me that I should now live for Him who has loved me. For he has placed his name on me, and I am emblazoned in Christ, ‘Holy to the Lord!’

**Prayer Focus:**

**Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 35: Engraving**

Zechariah 3:9 (ESV), “For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.”

This stone set before Joshua is a reference to the rebuilding of the temple and reminds us of Isaiah’s prophecy of the coming priestly ministry of the Messiah, “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.”(Isa. 28:16) On this stone are seven eyes, which speak of the Holy Spirit rested upon the Lamb of Glory in Revelation 5:6, “And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” These seven eyes are described as seven lamps of fire in Revelation 4, and given clarification in Isaiah 11:1-2,

“And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”

As eyes they represent the one perfect and all-seeing Holy Spirit! As 7 lamps of fire, they are illuminating the slain Lamb, standing at the center of the throne!

The Lord also says here that he will engraven an inscription on the stone, showing us that God will magnify and beautify this stone in a similar way that an engraver would a stone. The fulfillment of this promise is most fully revealed at the cross when the marks, and deep cuts, nails and a spear-thrust were etched in Jesus’ flesh. David Baron writes,

“Beautiful were the gifts and graces which Christ received as a man; but beautiful beyond all beauty must be those glorious scars with which He allowed His whole body to be riven, that throughout the whole frame His love might be engraven!”(Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah, 117-18)

Perhaps this is why Moses was severely punished for ‘Striking’ the rock TWICE... Selah

Just as the Day of Atonement was a single day once a year when Israel’s sins were atoned for, “I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day!” As Jesus hung on that cruel cross, God’s servant unjustly murdered, and yet in that single day he took away our sins once and for all! The promised Stone laid a sure foundation for his glorious and eternal temple, through his shed blood!

Isaiah 49:15-16, “Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. 16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.”

As a token of his love, You were engraved on the nail-pierced hands of the Lamb. He will never forget you, and no one can snatch you out of his hands. Amen!

**Day 36: Blindfolded**

Luke 22:64 (NIV), “They blindfolded him and demanded, “Prophesy! Who hit you?”

I have always wondered why you never see this seen in the paintings of Jesus? This scene seems noticeably absent, yet it is so terribly tragic. It is incredibly telling as the ‘Blindfolded Christ’ is seated amongst a group filled with blind hatred. And this they did to Jesus of Nazareth who had healed a man born blind. As Samuel Zwemmer writes,

“Why did it occur to them to blindfold Jesus? Was it not because His eyes were filled with such a holy wonder at their unbelief, eyes full of compassion for their ignorance and yet flashing with a light that smote their consciences like a flame of fire. They could not bear to look Him in the face and so, as Mark says, “when some began to spit on him, others ‘covered his face and began to hit him” And certainly it was not just an individual that struck him, it was the race, it was humanity, it was you and I. “He was smitten of God, afflicted and we hid as it were our faces from Him”—or, when we could not hide our faces we covered His face and blindfolded him. They all agreed as did we, to hide His face before they struck his Glory…”

Even today men cannot leave Christ alone. His face is riveting! It is a magnetic pull as a flame of fire! Men are either drawn or repelled but there is no neutral ground when one looks at the glory of God in face of Christ!

Behold the Man! Bound, exhausted, bruised, insulted, and yet silent with the silence of suffering love. The Word of God who spoke creation into existence with mere sentences is now silent before the very ones he had created.

There was a true story of a father who got a call from the police one night that his son had been in an accident and he needed to come down as soon as possible. On his way to the accident, he wondered…he trembled…he groaned…he cried…if only…as he arrived at the accident the ambulances were blocking his way to the scene. Frantically he tried to weave his way through the myriads of people not able to contain his emotions. “Please get out of the way…I need to see my son. Looking ahead he saw the car and knew instantly that his son hadn’t made it…lying on a stretcher he saw his son, and embraced him…covered in blood…he looked up and saw his son’s blood all over the road…he obviously had been thrown from the car. But as he looked up…he saw cars coming quickly towards the scene…he jumped up and in anger, screaming at the cars streaming by, “STOP! Don’t you see it! You are driving over my son’s blood…STOP, don’t you care?

In the same way, I can imagine the Father saying to his church today, “STOP! Don’t you see it? Don’t you Care?

“How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”(Heb. 10:29)

By the grace of God let us never treat the Blood of the Son of God with contempt, trampling it under our feet. O God help us to never become desensitized or familiar to the reality of the cross! For indeed this is holy ground!

These things the angels long to see, but they cover their faces then they behold the mysteries and Excellencies of the grace…

“Crown Him the Lord of Love;

Behold his hands and side,

Rich wounds, yet visible above

In beauty glorified

No angel in the sky

Can fully bear that sight,

But downward bends his burning eye

At mysteries so bright!”*[[25]](#endnote-25)*

**Prayer Focus:**

**Speak and prayerfully meditate on the verses shared above. Ponder, personalize and pray the text back to him, entering into all that he endured on your behalf.**

**Day 37-Jesus the better way**

Jesus is the true and better Adam who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is imputed to us.  
  
Jesus is the true and better Abel who, though innocently slain, has blood now that cries out, not for our condemnation, but for acquittal.  
  
Jesus is the true and better Abraham who answered the call of God to leave all the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void not knowing wither he went to create a new people of God.  
  
Jesus is the true and better Isaac who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us. And when God said to Abraham, "Now I know you love me because you did not withhold your son, your only son whom you love from me," now we can look at God taking his son up the mountain and sacrificing him and say, "Now we know that you love us because you did not withhold your son, your only son, whom you love from us."  
  
Jesus is the true and better Jacob who wrestled and took the blow of justice we deserved, so we, like Jacob, only receive the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us.  
  
Jesus is the true and better Joseph who, at the right hand of the king, forgives those who betrayed and sold him and uses his new power to save them.  
  
Jesus is the true and better Moses who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant.  
  
Jesus is the true and better Rock of Moses who, struck with the rod of God's justice, now gives us water in the desert.  
  
Jesus is the true and better Job, the truly innocent sufferer, who then intercedes for and saves his stupid friends.  
  
Jesus is the true and better David whose victory becomes his people's victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves.  
  
Jesus is the true and better Jonah who was cast out into the storm so that we could be brought in.  
  
Jesus is the real Rock of Moses, the real Passover Lamb, innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so the angel of death will pass over us. He's the true temple, the true prophet, the true priest, the true king, the true sacrifice, the true lamb, the true light, the true bread.[[26]](#endnote-26)

**Prayer Focus:**

**Let’s declare these outloud by faith:**

**Through the cross:**

-Jesus was punished so we could be forgiven

-He was made sin with our sinfulness so we could be made the righteousness of God.

-He was rejected so we could be accepted in the Beloved

-He was cut off by sin so we could be joined to God.

-He bore our shame so we could share in His Glory

-He was wounded so we could be healed

-He became poor so we could share in His abundance

-He became a curse so we could receive the blessing of Abraham

-He died our death so we could share His life.

-He was buried so we could be raised to walk in newness of life.[[27]](#endnote-27)

**“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”(Gal. 6:14)**

**Day 38- “It is finished”**

(Note: Read and pray together with the CD, *Seven Last Words of Christ*, poetry by Gary Wiens, and music by Ruth Fazal)

I stand in anguished stupor now as here before your feet, my heart is filled with coercive fear. Silent, patent hatred and stark confusion comprise the order of the day, and dismal darkness, descended despite the cloudless day, increases now. You said that in your life was Light of men, but now that life drips at my feet, and now you die, and darkness reigns.

Beneath my arm, the shiv’ring form still stands…In the Father of the Living Word struck silent here. O lovely Lord, You stir again and lift Your head to stare upon the world with vacant eyes, no longer seeing, it seems, this wasted hill, but gazing instead on other realms, unknown to any mind, save Yours alone. What do you see, O precious Lamb, Whose Name was called the world’s own Light? I search your Face, but nothing shines, Your countenance now ruined, Your form now shattered.

And now, as though with horror flesh, I watch your eyes grow wide, Your face contorting with anguish new as some late loathing strikes your heart. I cannot bear the terror here, the crazed confusion as wave upon relentless wave of panic strikes my heart at evidence of Your dismay. And yet despite my fear, I cannot turn, but only stand before Your feet to wait in tortured grief for your demise.

And then, as with uncanny strength, You draw a breath that seems to capture death itself, and darkness grim begins to yield before Your dying and forsaken form. What do you see? Is some new understanding flowing back into your mind as darksome fear begins to flee Your stricken face? Does comprehension of a plan once stolen from Your heart because of pain now loose Your joy again?

What do you see here? Is blackness bowing even as Your life flows out? What is this thing that I behold? The sun, eclipsed in horrid night, begins to glance at me again tho’ shadowed still by rugged tree, And in that moment comes a cry that shatters gates on hell itself, and something older, something stronger than the devil’s plan asserts its will through tortured voice of God’s own Son:

***“It is finished”***

My soul is shaken at the sound, for in the midst of crushing loss I feel absurd and foolish things, that whatever it was that You call done, ‘tis not Your life that’s over now, regardless of the things our eyes will see. There’s something more, a dawning day that now will come, despite the things our eyes will see. There’s something more! A Dawning! Something more!

--Gary Wiens

**Day 39: They will look on him whom they have pierced**

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”(Zech. 12:10)

The prophet Zechariah speaks from the heart of the Lord, “when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him.” God says they will look on me, meaning God is the one who is pierced, and yet God speaks of ‘him,’ showing a unity of persons in the Triune God! Only man can fulfill this prophecy but we find that this glorious man is God! After Jesus cried out ‘It is finished,’ and committed his spirit to the Father, a Roman(gentile) centurion who in all likelihood had never heard Zechariah’s prophecy approached Jesus, took a sword and pierced his side. John the apostle tells us,

“these things took place that Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken.’ And again another Scripture says, ‘They will look on him whom they have pierced.’(John 19:36-37)

We see this being fulfilled at Pentecost, when Peter directs the Jews to look to the one whom they have pierced,

“this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”(Acts 2:23)

After God pours out His Spirit in Acts 2:1, they looked upon him, were cut to the heart, and mourned over him with godly sorrow! As Richard Phillips writes,

“The book of Zechariah began with a call to repentance: ‘return to me, says the Lord of hosts , and I will return to you.”(1:3) God similiarly calls every sinner to repent and turn to him. This is how Jesus began his preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’(Matt. 4:17) It is often pointed out that repentance means turning around. It means turning away from sin and turning toward Jesus Christ for new obedience. This describes the action of repentance. But, more centrally, what we find here is the heart of true repentance, a godly sorrow for our sin: ‘they shall mourn…and weep bitterly.”(Zech. 12:10)

Another way this will be fulfilled is with ethnic Israel. In Romans 11:26, Paul speaks of a future national revival, where ‘all Israel will be saved.’ This will have such global impact in scope that it will be like ‘Life from the dead.’(Rom. 11:15) Paul told us that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, first to the Jew. The word ‘first’ here is a priority word. It is important that in our evangelism efforts we do not neglect sharing the good news of the gospel with the Jew first! This was Paul’s pattern in the book of Acts and it must be ours as well.

We must preach Christ crucified, until God gives them enabling grace to see the slain Lamb. May the Lord of Harvest send forth laborers to preach Jesus and him crucified, like John the Baptist, saying ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.’ May the Lord pour out his Spirit of grace upon Israel, until she has a piercing revelation of the Lamb of Glory and falls weeping with godly repentance!

Indeed there is a coming a day when every eye will see him,

“Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.”(Rev. 1:7)

**Prayer Focus:**

**Spend time in intercession praying for Israel to have a piercing revelation of the Lamb of Glory! Ask the Father to pout out his Spirit upon them. (Acts 2)**

**Day 40 “May the Lamb receive the due reward for his sufferings”**

I had the privilege of traveling to Herrnhut, East Germany for 10 days. Herrnhut is the site where Count Nicholas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf and the Moravians established a community of believers in 1722. It is considered by many today to be the birthplace of Protestant missions. On August 13, 1727, the young community experienced a mighty outpouring of the Spirit of God during a communion service. An unction of the “Spirit of God” fell upon them to carry to the gospel to the ends of the earth. This has been referred to as the Moravian Pentecost. Over a period of approximately one hundred years, the Moravians launched 1000 missionaries to the nations of the earth to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. Some of these missionaries even sold themselves into slavery to reach the slaves with the gospel. Their mission was ‘one on the field, one at home,’ one to pray and one to go. They would not allow anyone to go to work unless someone was first praying!

After this outpouring of the Spirit of God, the Lord spoke to Zinzendorf from Leviticus 6:13 that the ‘fire should never go out on the altar.’ They began a prayer vigil that continued night and day, 24/7 for 100 years. Zinzendorf organized 24 men and 24 women who would each take one hour a day to pray for God’s people and the mission endeavors of the Moravians. As Jesus said, “my house shall be a house of prayer for all nations.”

At the heart of Zinzendorf’s leadership was the cross of Christ. Zinzendorf had a radical encounter with Jesus when he was young. As Sandy Kirk writes, “This young nobleman wandered into a cathedral in Europe to admire the architecture. Suddenly, he caught a glimpse of a powerful painting of the crucifixion. It struck him in the heart. He stood and gazed at it for it for hours. He saw blood dripping from every wound. He saw love glowing in every tear. He saw grace shining in every brushstroke. The artist had been saved by Jesus from a life of deep darkness and sin. Now he painted mercy in every line, forgiveness in every drop of blood.” Zinzendorf read the caption, “I did this for thee; what wilt thou do for me?” He fell to his knees sobbing. With all his heart he promised God that for the rest of his life he would glorify the Lamb for what he suffered on the cross.”

The most prominent theme in Zinzendorf’s sermons and letters was the Glory of the Lamb! The watchword of the Moravians was, “May the Lamb receive the due reward of his sufferings.” Let it be so today, that we would ‘Awake to Christ,’ for all that he is and return to the heartbeat of God for the nations of the earth (missions), ceaseless night and day prayer, and unity in spirit around the body and blood of our precious Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us sing with the Moravians as they still sing at funerals today:

My Saviors blood and righteousness

That beauty is my glorious dress.

Thus well arrayed, I need not fear

When in His presence I appear.

Let us agree with Zinzendorf when he said, “I have but one passion, and that is Jesus, only He.” The seal of the Moravian church has in its center the white Lamb of God. He holds a staff with a victory banner displaying the cross. In a circular band on the outer edge it says:

“Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him!”*[[28]](#endnote-28)*

Let’s ask God to give us a piercing revelation of the Lamb of God, until our hearts bleed for the one who bled for us! Let’s ask God to wound us with the wounded one, until we can truly join with the chorus of heaven and declare, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (Rev. 5:12, ESV)

***We Pledge our Allegiance to the Lamb of God!***

**End Notes**

1. “Freedom Village,” by James F. Murphy, Jr. 1993 cited in Jack Canfield, Mark V. Hansen and Sidney R. Slagter, Chicken Soup for the Veteran’s Soul, pg 2-4 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Michael J. Wilkins, Following the Master (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid, pg 26 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. David Bryant, Christ is All(New Providence: New Providence Publishers, 2005), pg 45 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid, pg 41-42 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid, pg 41-42 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Glory of the Cross, Samuel Zwemmer, Preface [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Revelation of the Lamb, Sandy Kirk, pg 21 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Charles Spurgeon, “Mourning at the Sight of the Crucified.” Pg. 190 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Glory of the Lamb, Sandra Kirk, paraphrased [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Revelation of the Lamb, Sandy Kirk, pg 24 [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. C.J. Mahaney, Cross-Centered Living, pg 80 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Doug Stringer, Born to Die, pg 67-68 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid, pg 60-61 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Tim Keller, Idol Factory, quoted from sermon by C.J. Mahaney [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Doug Stringer, Born to Die, pg 28-29 [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. CJ Mahaney, Cross-Centered Living, pg 88 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. JI Packer, and Mark Dever, “In my Place He Stood Condemned” pg 25-26 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Mahesh Chavda, The Blood of Jesus [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. CJ Mahaney, Living the Cross Centered Life(Sisters, Multnomah Publishers, 2006) , pg 13 [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Rhonda Calhoun, The Bride of Christ, paraphrased pg 123-130 [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Dr. C. Truman Thomas, paraphrased on Cross Examination I-IV, from Doug Stringer, Born to Die, pgs 2-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Samuel Zwemmer, Glory of the Cross, pg 63 [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Zechariah. Reformed Expository Commentary, paraphrased 62-73 [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Samuel Zwemmer, Glory of the Cross, pg 113 [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Sermon given by Sinclair Ferguson [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Terry Moore, The Cross is the Key, pg 147 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Paul Wemmer, Count Zinzendorf and the spirit of the Moravians, pg 185 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)