

FRIDAY

“THE DYING OF A LOVED ONE: HOW CAN WE ENDURE?”

Scripture: John 3:16-17; Mat 27:45-54

The story is told of a king many years ago, who, being too old himself, sent his only son into battle to lead his people. The prince was killed and the only thing that comforted the old man in his rage and grief was the account of God’s grief which we read above.

The king cried, “Had I the power, too, to shake the earth and shatter the tombs, I would, I would! My son, my son - his single life was worth more to me than all others in time put together!”

As we read this moving passage, we feel God’s grief and rage. In John Huston’s masterpiece, “The Bible,” he shows the anger and bewilderment of Abraham, too, as he climbs the hill with his son as a sacrifice--obedient but in agony. Isaac was spared to Abraham. Not so with God. His sacrifice was completed.

How often we read the passage, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,” and how seldom we take the time to comprehend the love that went into that! Not just from God the Father, but from the obedient Son.

It is difficult to believe God can identify with us, because sometimes it is hard to accept him as a personal, loving Spirit, rather than a nebulous universal force.

But it is at this point that we again turn to Jesus as our example: when Christ speaks of God or to God, it is *always* as a *personal, loving* Father. Let this give us joy!

Prayer: Dear Lord, when I lose one I love, and am overwhelmed with grief, help me to remember that you have been there before me, and have the power to comfort and heal and restore my soul. AMEN

SATURDAY

“WHEN YOU CAN’T FEEL GOD NEAR”

Scripture: Joshua 1:5; Mark 15:33-39
Luke 23:39-46

“When you think that you are far from me, I am often nearest to you.”

Fénelon

Our Lord in his last hour cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!”

And at that moment — in a way we will never comprehend — all sin in the world was resident in Jesus Christ, and for the first time, the Lord Jesus knew the feeling of being separated from God — terrifying, alien, unfamiliar isolation.

And yet while sin separated Jesus from God’s Presence *within him*, God was present *beside him*. Even in his anguish, Christ counted on this: notice how confidently the last words come — “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”

The ultimate faith: stepping into death, believing God the Father was able to do what he had promised — grant him and all who follow Christ, eternal life.

And Christ was vindicated. The third day he arose again and his followers had proof of God’s integrity and power and love!

We are so fortunate, because if we, like the thief on the cross next to Jesus, repent and believe, the very moment we die, we shall be in Paradise with him. (Luke 23:39-43)

Never take his death lightly. This one thing totally integrates us in earth with God’s Spirit once more, and the dying of our spirit is reversed; we shall live to see God in eternity. (Job 19:25, 26 — KJV)

Prayer: God, my Father, I kneel before you in humble thanks — thank you for reclaiming my spirit, thank you for giving me this second chance through the selfless love of your dear Son. AMEN

MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2025

“NO OTHER SIGN WILL BE GIVEN MEN.”

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 12:38-41; Acts 17:30, 31;
I John 4:9 (Job 19:25, 26;
Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:1-3)

If ever there was a time when men wanted to believe in a living God, it is now. Young people of this generation, with unprecedented candor, are openly searching for such a God, and in spite of the empty taunts that he is dead, men still go on searching for him, knowing deep in their souls that God, being God, has always been, is now, and always will be. No one can take away this tenacious search of the soul for its fulfillment.

Yet we seek proof, a sign. They did in Christ’s time, too. “Give us proof!” And he said, “Even if a man should rise from the dead, you would not believe!”* They didn’t; they still don’t.

However, if you do seek a personal God, look again at Easter. For the Christian and the skeptic, it is the yearly challenge and command to re-evaluate our faith. *Could* God care enough to do such a thing? This personalness, this divine concern is one of the most difficult things to accept: that the Creator of the world, Spirit of spirits. Life of life, functions on this uniquely personal level.

And yet unless our God is such a God, what need have we of him? Unless he is Love seeking and searching for every man’s heart, reaching out in forgiveness and love, offering power to be the people we long to be, why seek communication with him at all?

*Luke 16:31

Prayer: Father, I thank you for this day, this proof that you are a God for your people. AMEN

TUESDAY

“OUR SPIRITUAL HOUSECLEANING”

Scripture: Ps. 139:23, 24; Ps. 51:10-14
Prov. 4:23-27

Before the Hebrews celebrated the Passover, the women of the home meticulously cleaned every nook, cupboard, floor and wall; nothing was left untouched.

As we approach Easter — which is our High Holy Day of the spirit — let us prepare our inner “home” just as carefully.

Consider the habits you have formed that obstruct free movement in your life . . . hidden thoughts or actions that you keep out of sight . . . little resentments that gather in the corners because you have been careless . . . “a load of laundry,” soiled by words and conversations that should be washed and made clean again . . . stale air from your own thoughts . . . murky windows because you have forgotten to look for God each day.

And then embellish your heart with praise and joy. Find something new — not large — to brighten and bring joy to someone. Do the errand, or keep the hasty promise; write the note or send back the book . . . there is so much that clutters up our hearts and keeps us from enjoying the spirit which God has given back to us!

Let us open all the doors and welcome him into our lives without reservation this year. Our bodies are the “temples” of God and he will come into us, if we ask him. (Rev. 3:20; I Cor. 3:16)

Prayer: Dear God, I throw my heart open to you and ask you to come as my guest. Lord, I want to keep my heart always ready for you, so that in my praying and my living, all will be done in remembrance of what you have done for me. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

“WHY MUST THERE BE A SACRIFICE?”

Scripture: Hebrews 9:15-28; 10:11-18.

In order to understand blood sacrifice, we must go back to our first instance of sin and what it caused God to do: against his very nature, seeing we were stripped of our glory and naked, God took the life of an innocent animal to provide skins for our covering. (Gen 3:20)

From that time forward, in *remembrance of what God had done and as testimony of what he would do through a Son*, this act of sacrifice for sin would be the pattern we would be commanded to follow: innocent life to cover corruption — “without blood there is no remission of sin —” no atonement (at-one-ment) with God.

As we study the life of Christ, each facet of this mystery is explained and exemplified through him. It is so *thorough* and so beautifully complete, that every single aspect of our spiritual need is met in it! Nothing you have done, nothing you could desire, nothing needed for your facing death without fear, or seeing your God with anticipation, is omitted. (The book of Hebrews is a powerful, detailed account which Jew and Gentile alike should study. It traces the implication of that first sacrifice through the ancient Hebrew rituals up to the final sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.)

When we see Easter and the magnificent consummation of New Life, will we ever again take this gift for granted?

Prayer: I praise you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for your everlasting love and provision for me. I thank you that I now can be one with you and that my spirit shall live and never die because I believe what has been done through your Son. AMEN

THURSDAY

“WE ARE THE INHERITORS!”

Scripture: Mark 14:12-16; 22-25

Christian Communion, which is also called The Lord’s Supper, commemorates the Passover of the Jews on our Lord’s last night on earth before his death. That particular supper was called “The Last Supper.”

Many churches today incorporate the instruction of the Seder (the feast of the unleavened bread) which begins Passover — as a means by which we may truly understand the impact of what Jesus Christ did for us all that night!

It was not just the Lord’s last supper; it was also to be the last supper as the Jewish disciples knew it, for that night as he blessed the bread and wine, he initiated the New Covenant between God and his people.

Only as we understand the original Old Covenant between God and Abraham, can we appreciate the scope and majesty of this new one between him and Abraham’s “faith” descendants.

In this New Covenant, the Hebrew people were (1) given a high priest who would never have to be replaced, or offer sacrifices again; (2) given a sacrifice so perfect that it would suffice for all sin — for all people — forever; (3) given access into the Holy of Holies — the very presence of God, for the “veil” separating them from him would be ripped asunder; (4) given a mediator, in heaven to plead on their behalf; and (5) they were accepted as purified (righteous) and thereby granted once more eternal life, living forever to serve God and to share, as heirs with his Son, Jesus Christ.

How was this possible! If they believed in this Covenant and what God had done through Jesus Christ, they were “Inheritors”! (Gen 22:15-18; Mat 25:34)

Prayer: Dear Lord, I take so much for granted. Because of your Son, I pray to you now without fear, knowing you hear me and will bless me, too. Oh God, I do thank you and bow before you! AMEN