

PERSPECTIVES

Beneath The Cross

www.ascensioncos.org



A Lenten Devotional - Week 6

April 9 – April 16, 2017

Luke 19:29-44

An excerpt from Pastor Dan Holt's Ash Wednesday message and what it means to be ***Beneath The Cross***:

Beneath the Cross is a place where you look up and realize Jesus is dying here. Death is close and we are from dust to dust. That is our existence. For us to be humble isn't for us to be grueling or something like that. It comes from seeing who we are honestly. Looking at reality. That we're limited. We don't have all gifts and abilities. That we're flawed at times. We make mistakes. We say things we shouldn't say. The hard stuff of life allows us to be open and walk together.

When Jesus did lay his life down on the cross it was this act not of weakness but of great faith. Faith that somehow in the torturous horror of the cross that God was going to hold him. He being up there would be a sign for us of what sacrificial loves look like for us. A sign for us that God would hold us. A sign for us that there is a way through death to life.

And so today we gather if you will, as we will this season *Beneath the Cross*. Beneath the cross of Jesus. It's a place of humility. And so we put that on our foreheads trusting that God will hold us through the worst of everything. The shape of the cross. Even when it comes to our time to return to dust and ashes. God has us, as He has his Son. Amen.

Through this Lenten season, you are invited to read reflections offered by members and friends of Ascension Lutheran Church. There will be six booklets printed from now until Easter Sunday. Each devotional booklet will focus on engaging Sunday's Scripture readings. Let Sunday be a time when you hear God's Word in worship together of our Lord and Savior. If you miss a Sunday's sermon, we invite you to check-it out at www.ascensioncos.org.

It is a gift to be brothers and sisters in Christ, walking together *Beneath The Cross*, in faith in Jesus Christ and we all have *perspectives* to offer one another along the way!

~Mary Stoneback
Diaconal Minister for Faith Formation

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Luke 19:29-44 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

²⁹ When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” ³² So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ They said, “The Lord needs it.” ³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power 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 heaven!”

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” ⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

⁴¹ As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in

on every side. ⁴⁴They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.”^[a]

Sunday, April 9

Today Pastor Dan preached on Luke 19:29-44. On this sixth Sunday of Lent, we invite you to spend time in God’s Word. Read through this passage, and consider Pastor Dan’s reflection on the text. If you missed today’s service, visit www.ascensioncos.org to hear the message.

Monday, April 10

A few weeks ago Ascension’s Artists were inspired to paint rocks. We went outside and gathered rocks from the church grounds. As we painted them, we thought it’d be fun to put them back out outside when we were finished and that we’d do this in time for Easter Week, just before Palm Sunday.

I have no doubt now that this was divine inspiration. This week when I read the gospel passage for Palm Sunday, I got goose bumps of pure joy, because I believe that we’ve been painting stones that shout out praises to our Savior and we didn’t know it until now.

Thank you and Amen, Jesus Christ, my Lord. It’s a privilege to serve you.

~Arlayne McKee

Tuesday, April 11

“*The Lord needs it.*” This phrase caught my attention as I read through the passage from Luke. Our prayers echo the various needs in our lives and those around us, but how often do we ponder

that the Lord had needs? It's an interesting question I think. God, Emmanuel was born into flesh. Jesus, fully God and fully man walked this earth and just like we experience, had needs too. Food, clothing, prayer and community to name a few were all a part of Jesus' life experience on this earth. In this Holy Week, I cherish the truth that "we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15). I am grateful that Jesus walked this earth in need, yet also modeled deep faith in His father, to sacrifice His life for me...for you...for the world.

Lord Jesus, thank you for being obedient to your Father on this earth so that we may live eternally in You when we breath our last breath in this place. We acknowledge we need you and are grateful you desire to be in relationship with us! Amen.

~Deacon Mary Stoneback

Wednesday, April 12

I had the privilege of visiting Jerusalem a number of years ago, and the vision of such a magnificent city rising up from the surrounding hills and valleys was something to inspire awe and wonder. It must have been similar in the time of Jesus. As I was thinking of this, I was reminded of a song from the movie Working Girl, sung by Carly Simon:" Let the River Run." It is sung as a young woman is on a ferry approaching downtown Manhattan in New York City. The refrain refers to the city as the "New Jerusalem." I often thought of how appropriate that was. New York as Jerusalem.

I grew up in the city, in one of the outer boroughs, so going to Manhattan was indeed a big deal. To see it rising ahead of you did inspire awe and wonder. It was the heart of entertainment, media, finance, art, fashion, etc. It was also home to many false gods: money, flesh, fame, drugs just to name a few. What if Jesus came to Manhattan today? How would he enter the city? How

would he be received? Would he even be recognized?

The story in Luke tells us that Jesus wept as he knew what would occur to Jerusalem in the future. Would he weep for New York? There are churches throughout New York City... but they are just buildings like the temple in Jerusalem. The real church is the faith community of believers. Ascension is such a community, and I believe Jesus has already come here. He can be seen in the faces of youth, adults, elders, pastors, deacons, lay leaders etc. He is here every day and did not need a triumphal entry. He is in our hearts and minds.

Jesus, keep our hearts as open to you as the gates of Jerusalem. Help us recognize you in our midst and help us turn away from the false gods that tempt us daily. Amen.

~Jim DeLoughry

Thursday, April 13 – Maundy Thursday

Prayer of the Day: *Holy God, source of all love, on the night of his betrayal, Jesus gave us a new commandment, to love one another as he loves us. Write this commandment in our hearts, and give us the will to serve others as he was servant of all, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Taken from the ELW)*

Friday, April 14 – Good Friday

Prayer of the Day: *Merciful God, your Son was lifted up on the cross to draw all people to himself. Grant that we who have been born out of his wounded side may at all times find mercy in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Taken from the ELW)*

Saturday, April 15 – Easter Vigil

Tonight at 6 pm – 7:15 pm, the HS youth will lead the congregation in an Easter Vigil service. This a unique service, rich in symbolic imagery of light and darkness and the waters of Baptism. The majority of the service is spent hearing God’s Word. This year, the youth have reflected on and will share their thoughts on various stories from the Gospel of Luke. We invite you to join us on this Holy Saturday and as we wait to celebrate Christ’s resurrection, proclaim together, *“the light of Christ, thanks be to God!”* Amen

Sunday, April 16 – Easter Sunday

The following reflection is taken from the April 5, 2012 Lenten Devotional on John 20:8, by Judy Heeren.

On the first day of the week, a distraught Mary Magdalene told the disciples that someone that taken Jesus’ body from the tomb where they had buried him just days before. Both Peter and John raced to the tomb. Breathing hard and heart-pounding, John stopped at the entrance of the tomb, while Peter hurried inside. Finally, John went inside. He saw exactly what Peter saw. The strips of linen cloth that had been used to wrap Jesus body were lying there and the napkin that had covered his head and face was folded, lying separate from the linen strips. The Scriptures say that John “saw and believed.”

Now centuries later I wonder, if I had followed Jesus for three years, listening to his teachings, seeing him heal the sick and even raise the dead, how would I have responded, if I had entered the tomb that morning? Would I have believed because of what I **saw** or what I **didn’t see**?

Like the disciples I would have seen him suffer and die on the cross. I would have seen that he was dead, when they placed

him in the tomb. I would have seen Jesus' body prepared for burial. I would have remembered all that he taught us. But, I would have believed, because of what I **didn't see** that morning: Jesus wasn't there. He had been raised from the dead! There was **nobody** there, because there was **no body** there. Praise the LORD he is risen! He is risen indeed!

Thank you, LORD, for allowing us to witness your resurrection power every day through the Holy Spirit who lives inside us. May we believe, because of what we don't see! Amen.

~Judy Heeren

Holy Week at Ascension

Sunday April 9 – Palm Sunday

Thursday April 13 – Maundy Thursday (7 pm)

Friday April 14 – Good Friday (12 pm & 7 pm)

Saturday April 15 – Easter Vigil, led by HS youth (6 pm)

Sunday April 16 – Easter Sunrise (6 am) & Easter Services (8 am & 10:30 am)

**A pancake breakfast will be served 7 am – 8 am & 9 am – 10 am in the basement. All proceeds go to support the youth!*



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