

March 24, 2024 - The Way of the Cross

The Triumphal Entry

Scripture Passage: John 12:12-16

See also: Zechariah 9:9

1. How busy is your life right now? Does busyness ever hinder your efforts to grow spiritually?
2. In what ways do you need to slow down?
3. In reading the story of Jesus' "triumphal" entry into Jerusalem, what stands out to you?
4. Roman rulers were known to put on military parades to convey their strength and victory in conquests. War horses were typically used in such displays. What is the significance of Jesus riding a donkey or colt? How does Zechariah 9:9 prepare people for this action?
5. Human crowds are often fickle. They can turn quickly. How are crowds portrayed in the story of Jesus' final days?
6. Where in our day have we seen crowds do harmful things?

7. How does Jesus go against the wishes of crowds or the approval of popular opinion?

Going Deeper (optional questions if time allows)

8. During this Holy Week, in the days leading up to Easter Sunday, what is God leading you to do?

9. Can you think of a way you can bring good news to someone this week? How can you bless someone else?

March 17, 2024 - The Way of the Cross

The Hour Has Come

Scripture Passage: John 12:20-33

1. What do you think Jesus meant by “my hour has come” in John 12:23? How does this statement relate to his overall mission and purpose?
2. Reflecting on Jesus’ journey to the cross, what emotions and challenges do you think he might have experienced as he approached “his hour”?
3. In what ways does Jesus’ statement about his “hour has come” challenge our understanding of greatness and glory? How does it contrast with worldly concepts of power and success?
4. How does Jesus’ hour of suffering and death ultimately lead to his exaltation and victory? What does this teach us about God’s redemptive plan and the nature of true greatness?
5. Reflecting on Jesus’ example, how should his statement, “my hour has come,” inspire and challenge us in our own lives? How can we embrace our own “hour” moments with faith and courage?

6. Jesus invites his followers to “follow him” in John 12:26. What does it mean to follow Jesus in light of his declaration about his hour? How can we follow Jesus faithfully in our daily lives?

Going Deeper (optional questions if time allows)

7. How does the concept of Jesus’ hour of sacrifice and glory deepen our understanding and appreciation for the Easter season?

8. How does it shape our perspective on the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection?

March 10, 2024 - The Way of the Cross

The One Lifted Up

Scripture Passage: John 3:(1-12)13-21

See also Numbers 21:4-9

1. John 3 begins with Jesus receiving a visitor named Nicodemus at night. As a religious leader of the Jews, why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night?
2. Nicodemus seeks to learn more from Jesus. Have you ever had a period in your life of intense seeking? If so, describe what happened.
3. Can you recite John 3:16 from memory? If so, when did you first learn it?
4. Some say that John 3:16 is a concise summary of the Christian faith. Do you agree? Why or why not?
5. Jesus references a story from the Old Testament book of Numbers (21:4-9) when Moses was instructed to make a bronze serpent to save people. Why do you think Jesus compared his ministry with this story? What connections do you see between Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:14-16?
6. In your understanding, what does it mean to *believe* in Jesus?

Going Deeper

7. How has your faith encouraged you to ask hard questions about your life or to examine your sinfulness more thoroughly?
8. In reading today's passage from John, what is most helpful to you? What is most challenging to you?
9. Do you recall a time when looking at an unsavory element of your life eventually led to better things?

March 3, 2024 - The Way of the Cross

The Cleansing of the Temple

Scripture Passage: John 2:13-22

1. Why did Jesus react so strongly to the activities taking place in the temple courts during Passover?
2. Should we be angry about injustice and oppression that we see prevalent in our society?
3. Is Jesus against church bazaars? Is Jesus against us raising money in the church for the church's mission and ministry?
4. What was the significance of Jesus referring to the temple as "my Father's house" during the cleansing?
5. How does the cleansing of the temple challenge our understanding of worship and reverence in our own lives?
6. What lessons can we learn from Jesus' actions about confronting injustice and corruption in religious institutions?
7. In what ways do we prioritize material concerns over spiritual matters in our churches and personal lives?

Going Deeper (Optional):

8. What steps can we take to ensure that our churches and Christian communities remain focused on true worship and service to God?

9. How does the concept of the temple being a place for prayer challenge us to prioritize prayer and intimacy with God in our daily lives?

February 25, 2024 - The Way of the Cross

Jesus and the Prediction of the Cross

Scripture Passage: Mark 8:31-38

1. This series is entitled, “The Way of the Cross.” Some of the earliest followers of Jesus referred to their faith as “the way” (see Acts 9:2). A way is a path, a journey, or an approach. How is your faith a *way*?
2. Has someone else in your life ever encouraged you to change your way, and you followed their advice?
3. Today’s passage is a key turning point in Mark’s gospel. From this point on, Jesus begins his journey to Jerusalem, to his passion, death, and resurrection. What is Peter’s response to the prediction Jesus gives?
4. Jesus teaches us to *deny* ourselves. What does that mean to you? What does it mean to take up your cross?
5. Jesus asks, “For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?” (Mark 8:36). How are people tempted to “gain the world”?
6. Is today’s passage one that you would prefer to avoid?

Going Deeper

7. How is your Lent journey going so far? What adjustments do you need to make?
8. What forms of self-denial do you need the most in your life right now?

February 18, 2024 - The Way of the Cross

This Lenten series will focus on the teachings and stories of Jesus that happened in preparation for his work on the cross. This week, we look at the temptation account of Jesus. This happens immediately after Jesus' baptism and at the beginning of his public ministry.

Scripture Passage: Matthew 4: 1-11

1. Why do you think that Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil? How do you think Jesus' experience of temptation in the wilderness relates to our own experiences of temptation in daily life?
2. Notice that the devil tested Jesus after he had fasted for 40 days. Does temptation seem to happen more frequently when we are engaged in spiritual practices such as fasting and prayer?
3. Reflect on the significance of each temptation: turning stones into bread, throwing himself from the temple, and bowing down to worship Satan. How do these temptations challenge our understanding of power, trust, and loyalty?
4. Consider the role of Scripture in Jesus' response to temptation. How can Scripture help us resist temptation and strengthen our faith?

5. Share about a time when you experienced a significant temptation and how you responded to it. What did you learn from that experience?
6. Temptation is not sin, but it can lead to sin. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
7. Are we led into temptation to test our faith? Or does our fallen, human nature lead us into temptation? Or could it be both?
8. How does the outcome of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness foreshadow his ultimate victory over sin and death on the cross?