



Devotional Guide for May 15-21, 2023

These devotions are prepared for you each week by Pastor Kevin to use for your own personal devotions with the Lord, and are designed to prepare you for the message next weekend.

Monday, May 15TH “He is not here; He has risen!”

Scripture: Luke 24:1-12 NIV

The empty tomb is the focus, as we end this worship series. Like the other Gospel writers, Luke begins with the loyal women discovering the empty tomb (v.1-3) and two angels’ surprise appearance (v.4-8). But the focus quickly shifts to how stubborn Jesus’ disciples and His followers are; they neither believe nor understand what they have heard (v.9-12). They fail to appreciate this most striking miracle. This ignorance motif paves the way for the rest of the chapter, which discusses the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Question: What reaction would you have had finding the empty tomb?

Tuesday, May 16TH “Come and see the place where He lay”

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10 NIV

In Matthew’s account of the resurrection, as the women arrive at the tomb, they encounter the guards passed out on the ground (v.4) and also an angel. Besides the news that Christ had risen, the angel also invited the women to “come and see the place where He lay” (v.6), which offered empirical proof of the empty tomb. This was not just some ‘spiritual’ resurrection that leaves the corpse in the grave, as some skeptics have claimed. The resurrection of Christ was physical, where He could be seen (“There you will see Him” ~v.7) and felt (“They came to Him, clasped His feet, and worshiped Him” ~v.9).

Question: How was the women’s fear mixed with joy?

Wednesday, May 17TH “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb”

Scripture: John 20:1-18 NIV

In John’s account of the resurrection, others are added to the number of those who saw the empty tomb—namely Peter and John (referred to as the “other disciple, the one Jesus loved” ~v.2). Then John tells how Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, and how He told her to go tell the disciples that He is alive and would be ascending to the Heavenly Father. Thus, Mary was the first evangelist who shared the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ’s resurrection!

Question: Why do you think Mary didn’t recognize Jesus at first?

Thursday, May 18TH “Christ emptied Himself, becoming nothing”

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-8 NRSV

As the apostle Paul wrote that Jesus had “emptied Himself, it means that Jesus did this not by giving up His deity, but rather by laying aside His glory (see John 17:5) and submitting to the humiliation of becoming a man (see II Corinthians 8:9). Jesus is truly God and truly human, so another view is that He emptied Himself not of being the Lord, but of its prerogative—the high position and glory of deity. Taking on the “form of a slave” (v.7) or also translated as “servant,” this emphasizes the full reality of His servant identity. As a servant, Jesus was always submissive to the will of His Heavenly Father.

Question: Can you envision the Almighty God truly making Himself nothing so that we could actually know and relate to Him?

Friday, May 19TH “They saw the stone had been rolled away”

Scripture: Mark 16:1-8 NIV

Compared to the events attending Jesus’ death, the discovery of the empty tomb is remarkably devoid of spectacle. What is rather extraordinary, however—given male dominance in both the Jewish and Roman societies—is that with the ‘strong’ males having fled and remained in hiding, the only eyewitnesses who can testify to Jesus’ death, burial, and empty tomb are these women disciples. At that time in history, women were on a very low rung of the social ladder in first-century Palestine. There are old rabbinical sayings that said, ‘Let the words of the Law be burned rather than delivered to women’ and ‘Blessed is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female.’ Women’s testimony was regarded as so worthless that they weren’t even allowed to serve as legal witnesses in a Jewish court of law. In light of this, it’s absolutely remarkable that the chief witnesses to the empty tomb are these women who were friends of Jesus. Any later legendary account would have most certainly portrayed male disciples as discovering the tomb—Peter or John, for example. The fact that women are the first witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly explained by the reality that—like it or not—they were the discoverers of the empty tomb! This shows that the Gospel writers faithfully recorded what happened, even if it was embarrassing.

Question: What do you fear about death? Remember that Jesus did the impossible by rising from the dead. One day, your body and spirit will rise from the dead. What do you imagine that day will be like for you?

Sunday, May 21, 2023

8:30 and 10:45 am (Livestream @10:45 am)

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-8 NRSV, **Mark 16:1-8** NIV

Pastor’s message: “Going, Going, Gone!”

Theme: “Empty Tomb=No More Empty Life!”

