

March 11, 2015

Wednesday

Read Psalm 118: 19-24

We are approaching Jesus' rejection by his own people in his crucifixion. When we see it, it seems anything but marvelous. The death Jesus suffered was a terrible one. He was shamed and beaten and mocked, yet the Psalmist here prophesies that the rejection of the cornerstone will be marvelous in our eyes. Through this terrible rejection came the most beautiful acceptance that anyone could ever hope for, because through Jesus death, God gives you life. Though Jesus was rejected and killed, he rose again so that you could be accepted by the Father and have eternal life. Though the rejection was a terrible one, it truly is marvelous in our eyes, because by it we are saved.

Thursday

Read Matthew 7: 13-14

Jesus' own words once again warn us that the life of his followers will not be an easy one, but that it is the only road that leads to life. Looking at Christians around the world right now, we see terrible things. These things have not just started happening, but our world has finally become so plugged in that we are starting to hear about the persecution of Christians more and more from around the world. The information is readily available to us, and it is shocking. It makes preachers who portray Christianity like paradise on earth sound a little ridiculous. And, indeed you have to wonder if they have been paying



attention either to life in general or to the scriptures they claim to teach and preach.

As Christians we are not always given a blessedly easy road to walk. The gate to life is only through the gruesome Cross of Christ, it is not through glory or fame, but only through the gory shame that Jesus faced. It is not easy, but it is the only way. Because of this, we trust that the Christ, who faced the terrible cross, will bring us through whatever trials we might face whether big or small.

Friday

Read Psalm 100

Here is a happy note to dwell on this Lent. Most often we think, ponder and meditate on the hardships Jesus faced as he got closer and closer to his death, but here we think, ponder and meditate just for a moment on the joy his journey brings us. By his sacrifice we get to enter into God's courts with song and dance, praise and worship, joy and gladness. That is the beauty that awaits beyond the cross. That is the bright day waiting to break through the dark day of the Lord on Good Friday when the earth shook and the sun was dark. That is the glory that peeks through the tear in the veil. That is the gladness that this sober Lenten season brings us to.

Saturday

Read John 15: 1-5

What does it mean to abide in Jesus? What do we do as Christians to abide in Christ? Live good lives? Live by the commandments? Abiding in Jesus is like a grape branch in relation

to the grape vine. The branch relies totally on the vine. It's sustenance, it's life, it's fruit, everything that branch is depends on the vine. That is also what it means to abide in Jesus. It is trusting in him for everything. Depending on him for everything. It is knowing that apart from him we are nothing, but abiding in him we have everything and produce even more. It is a life lived by faith, total and utter trust and reliance in Christ, that abides in Jesus. That faith produces good fruit, and by its seed the world is planted that it too might learn to abide in our True Vine.

Sunday

Come to Church to receive Christ's blessings and strength.

Monday

Read Psalm 80

The psalmist cries in desperation in this song. We see him lament the destruction of the once great people of God. Now they eat bread of tears, and sorrow fills their cups. But, the psalmist still trusts in God. He knows that even though his people and he himself suffer sorrow at God's hand, that it is only God who can fix his situation. Only God can change what God has done.

From the psalmist, we learn to rely on God when God is at odds with us. When we suffer, when we mourn, when we eat and drink our own tears, there is only one place to turn. That is to God on the Cross, Jesus the Christ. He journeyed there for our sake that we might have relief from our own suffering and death. The God-Man Jesus hung on the cross to avert the wrath of God, who is the enemy of sinners. Jesus

went to the cross to reconcile, redeem and restore us to our proper place in God's creation. He came to turn our bread of tears and our cup of sorrow into the bread of life and the cup of everlasting joy. And so in place of our tears and sorrow, he gives us his body and blood to eat and drink for our life, for our forgiveness and for our joy.

Tuesday

Read Galatians 5: 22-24

Trusting in Christ, having faith in Jesus, relying on our savior produces something in our lives. By faith we obey, by our trust we bear the fruit we were created to bear. Our own desires and passions have been replaced by the faithful obedience of a life dependent on Christ. This means as we walk towards the cross we learn self-control, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, love, joy and peace. We learn them on the way, so that when we get to the foot of the cross we can lay our faults, our sins, our selfishness, our wonton desires and our worldly passions at its foot. Oh by the way, this is exactly why we journey to the cross every day, not just during lent. *Thank you Jesus for meeting us at your cross every day. Give us faith that we may learn to obey and bear the fruits of the Spirit. Amen.*

Pastor Carl Jh

