



COLLEGE HEIGHTS
BAPTIST CHURCH

Mother's Day (May 3-9)

The Lord's Supper

(May 10-16)

&

“We are Him, here!”

Part I

May 17 - June 6

CHBC Daily Scripture Readings

MOTHER'S DAY

Monday, May 3 - Proverbs 31:10-31

We find in Proverbs 31:10-31 an acrostic poem, each line starting with each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew Alphabet in order. The poem sings the praises of a virtuous and noble woman. A wife and mother who is “more precious than jewels” and raises her children with aplomb. She is a businesswoman who has the intelligence to make decisions which can help her family prosper. Above all, she is a woman who “fears the Lord.”

This Sunday will be Mother's Day. Mother's Day can be a mix of emotions for many people. This may be the first Mother's Day without your mother. It might be the first one without a child. It could be that your mother or children are far away, and you will not get to see them this year. It might be that you or someone in your family is dealing with infertility. There are lots of reasons why Mother's Day may not be the day of celebration it could be. Let's be cognizant of those who are hurting this week. Let us rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn.

Remember your mother with fondness this week. Thank God for the diligence with which she raised you. If you did not have a mother who you can remember with fondness, thank God for other women in your life who helped you. Pray for those who are hurting because of Mother's Day and celebrate the families in your life who are blessed with a virtuous mother.

Tuesday, May 4 - Genesis 25:21-28

Barrenness was a common theme in the Old Testament. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Hannah are examples just to name a few. The physical condition of these women make the work of God within the family of Israel that much more profound. Eventually, God will even go further by giving a child to not one who is barren, but one who is a virgin.

In Rebekah's pregnancy and motherhood, I see honesty. Isaac and Rebekah wanted children; then the pain of pregnancy made Rebekah wish to die. God consoled her and gave her answers when she needed them; but then Rebekah and Isaac play favorites. As parents, we have good days and bad days. Above all of our days is our God. We will make mistakes as parents, but our heavenly Father is perfect. This gives us the key to godly parenting. Trust in God. Go to God like Rebekah in days of pain and suffering, but also stay with God on the normal and good days. Don't fall into the trap of thinking you can parent without God's help. You surely cannot. Stay with God, the perfect parent, in the bad days and the good.

Wednesday, May 5 - Exodus 1:1-2:10

****Since we got a week behind, this is a repeat of last week's devotion. This will get us back on track as we begin Exodus tonight!****

Tonight, we will begin a study of Exodus. In our study, we will be unable to cover every single verse, but we will read most of the verses in our Daily Scripture Readings. Even the few verses we skip, I hope you will plan to read them in order to have the full picture of Exodus. Exodus is sometimes considered the first book of the Bible. The reason is that it is the origin of the nation of Israel. In that view, Genesis is the prequel to the story. Without the Exodus event, there is no Israel and in that case, Genesis is irrelevant. Of course, none of the Bible is irrelevant, so I hope you understand what I'm trying to say.

Tonight, we discuss in detail the work of the midwives to save Israelite babies from infanticide. These women endangered themselves to protect the vulnerable. In chapter 2, we see the birth of Moses and his mother's work to save him. How can we risk our safety to protect the most vulnerable in our society? I hope we can talk about this and more tonight as we begin to study Exodus.

Thursday, May 6 - 1 Samuel 1:4-8, 15-20, 26-28

As we celebrate mothers this week, we look at the story of Hannah over the next two days. In my opinion, Hannah is one of the most godly mothers of the Bible. She is the great example of how a mother (or father) should provide for her children and devote her children to God.

The three selections of Hannah's story today tell you what is happening. She is distraught that she cannot have children. Her husband tries to console her but to no avail. So she does what all of us should do when we are in grief; she prays. God hears her prayers, and Hannah devotes her child to the Lord. If you read a little further, you even see in 1 Sam. 2:19 that Hannah would bring Samuel clothing every year. What a devoted mother and worshipper of God.

Hannah is an example for all of us. She is a person who had a concern and she brought it before God. God heard her cry. God hears our cries too. When you face an issue, take it to God. Go to the Lord in prayer, asking for deliverance from your problem. The Bible says that God hears our requests and takes them into account. Does God always provide as he did for Hannah? No, he doesn't and I don't have a good answer why he chooses to grant some petitions and not grant others. But I can promise that God hears you. What needs prayer in your life today? Spend time praying to your Lord about your needs. Then, like Hannah, do not be sad any longer (1 Sam 1:18).

Friday, May 7 - 1 Samuel 2:1-10

Much like Mary did over 1000 years later, Hannah sings a song of praise about the miracle which God has given her. This is a song which shows us that God will take care of the hurting and the poor. Do you believe this?

What follows is the story found in the book *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. Brian was taking a sabbatical from his job at a university to teach business classes in Uganda. On one of the days, when he

was in one of the slums of Uganda, a witch doctor came into the church where the classes were being held to say that she wanted to become a Christian, what should she do next? The leader of the church told her to get her herbs and spices which she used to make potions so that they could burn them all up. She did so and when she came back, she told the people in the class that she had a demon living inside of her which made her drink all day every day. As they burned her herbs in the church, the pastor prayed for the demon to leave the woman. It did, the woman became a Christian businesswoman, gave up her lucrative (comparatively in the Ugandan slums) witch doctor practice, and no longer was a drunk.

This is an example of how God is taking care of the hurting and poor in the world. Whether you are poor and lowly because of illness, disease, financial strife, barrenness, or demons, God is a God who can lift you up out of the mire. He is a God who will guard the feet of his faithful and bring down the wicked. He is a mighty God who takes care of his children! Thank God for who He is!!

Saturday, May 8 - Joel 2:12-13

We know that God is referred to as Father throughout Scripture, but did you know that God has what can only be called motherly attributes as well? In the passage we read today, there is a repeating of the most common description of God in the Old Testament: “he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.”

The word mercy in Hebrew is *raham*. This is a word which is only used for the mercy or compassion of God. It is a higher degree of mercy than what humans can give to each other. It is very closely associated with the Hebrew word *rahem* which means womb. When we read that God is merciful or compassionate, the picture is God is one who has a “womb-love” for God’s children. It is the type of mercy and compassion which brings a mother to love a

child whom she has not yet seen, but she nurtures and cares for the child in her womb. This is the mercy that God gives us. Thanks be to God.

Sunday, May 9 - Psalm 35:5-6

Thank God for loving and saving our mothers. Happy Mother's Day!

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Monday, May 10 - 1 Corinthians 11:17-22

This Sunday we will be taking the Lord's Supper to remember what Jesus has done for us by sacrificing his life so that we may live forever in heaven. Over the next two days, we will read in 1 Cor. 11 what Paul writes concerning this important act we take to remember Jesus' love and sacrifice. As a reminder, there is nothing special about the juice and cracker we consume. There is nothing that happens when we pray over the elements before we eat. It is simply a time to reflect and remember Jesus who broke his body and spilled his blood for you and I.

The Corinthians were not consuming the Lord's Supper in the manner Jesus intended when he instituted it on the night he was arrested. It seems that instead of bringing people together, it was creating divisions. It seems that the home where the church was meeting was not large enough for all of the people to gather around one table in fellowship with the bread and cup. Some were being segregated in other parts of the outside or even outside the walls of the home. Divisions were being magnified during this important sacrament instead of promoting unity. Some were eating more than their share (it seems there was a full meal involved), while others left hungry.

What were the divisions? We don't know. It could have been economic, racial, generational, or even who baptized whom (1 Cor. 1:10-12). Whatever the case, the people were divided and this is not why Jesus instituted the Lord's

Supper. When we take the Lord's Supper, we are uniting ourselves with Christians of all walks of life, all around the world throughout the centuries. There is one Jesus who died for the sins of all of humankind. He is the one we gather around, the one we follow, the one who is the head of our body. And it is this Jesus who should unite us all.

Reflect on your Lord today. Remember his lordship unites all Christians under one banner. Pray for the Lord to break down earthly barriers so that the name of Jesus can be proclaimed to all people in all places. Jesus died for all and all Christians should have equal access to the table of the bread and cup.

Tuesday, May 11 - 1 Corinthians 11:23-34

"I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you..." The Christian faith is a faith that is passed from generation to generation. One of my earliest memories of church is taking the Lord's Supper. As far as memory serves, I was not a Christian yet so I was only observing my dad at this time. I don't remember where my mom was, but this particular memory only has my dad. I remember watching him with the cup in his hand with tears in his eyes. It's the first time I remember seeing my dad cry (though not the last time; us Breslaw men are criers for sure!). It was in that moment I knew and kept with me forever the gravity and importance of the Lord's Supper. I'm pretty sure it was not much longer after that, I became a Christian myself.

We don't take the Lord's Supper in order to be saved. We don't take the Lord's Supper because it is the actual blood and body of Jesus. We take it to remember what God has done and show others who we belong to.

We will take the Lord's Supper on Sunday. While at first you may think it is not an ideal Sunday to bring a non-Christian, it is actually a great Sunday to do so. You can show them how important Christ is to you. You can be an example as my dad was to me. You can be like Paul when he said "I received from the

Lord what I also handed on to you...” Who will you invite to see the Lord’s Supper on Sunday?

Wednesday, May 12 - Exodus 3:1-14 (Exodus 2:11-4:17)

Our main text tonight will be Exodus 3:1-14 when God visits Moses in the burning bush. The background of the text is what is in parentheses above. You can choose to read some or all of it.

Many of us would feel as Moses does when God calls him to the task at hand. “Who am I...?” Who am I to be the one to lead Israel out of Egypt? Who am I to tell Pharaoh what to do? Who am I to lead this Bible Study? Who am I to be on this committee? Who am I to disciple other disciples?

We respond with Who am I and God retorts the same way he does with Moses: “I will be with you.” Do you trust the Word of God? Because God continues to say throughout Scripture that he will be with you. Remember that promise as you go through your day. God is with you. And then let’s talk about Moses’ call and our call to do God’s work tonight.

Thursday, May 13 - Exodus 12:1-20

As you know, when Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, he connected elements of the Passover to himself. The unleavened bread on the Passover table became a symbol of Jesus’ body and the wine became a symbol of Jesus’ blood. Jesus was the perfect Passover lamb, sacrificed for the sins of all of mankind.

Notice verse 7. The people are supposed to put blood on the doorposts and the top beam of the door. If you imagine putting a spot of blood in those three places, you can imagine the outline of the cross which Jesus died on. There is no logical reason why the blood of the Lamb had to be put in those

specific places; could it be a foreshadowing of what God's Son will do 1500 years later?

The Jewish people celebrate Passover every year to remember what God did for them when escaping Egypt. Christians do the same (though more often than once a year) when it comes to the Lord's Supper. As it says in v. 14 and 17: "throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance." Let us slow down to reflect on what the Lord has done.

Friday, May 14 - 2 Chronicles 35:1-19

For many years, the people of Israel had fallen away from following the ordinances of God. They were led astray by bad kings who did not obey the voice of God. That all changed when Josiah became king. He renewed emphasis on worshipping God and following the Law of God as given in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Our passage today tells of the grand Passover celebration Israel had as a culmination of the reforms Josiah made.

It can be most impactful in our lives when we perform an act we haven't done in a long time. I know that when I am able to attend a Rangers game later this summer, there will be emotions considering the almost two years between attending games. In a much more serious and important way, the Lord's Supper is an act that some have not received in a long time. It could be an impactful and emotional opportunity to get those you love involved in church once again. Who do you know who is a Christian but has been out of church for a while? Invite them to come with you for the Lord's Supper on Sunday. God can use the Lord's Supper to remind them of what Jesus did for them and that can be the spark which they need to reignite the fire of God inside of them. Who can you call today to invite to church?

Saturday, May 15 - Joshua 5:10-12

On the day that Israel was able to eat the produce of the Promised Land, the manna from heaven ceased to fall. This occurred on the day after the Passover. For forty years, manna from heaven was what sustained Israel. This bread-like substance which came from heaven was the main food Israel ate (along with quail).

In John 6:32-35, Jesus makes the comparison between himself and manna. While the manna from heaven was temporary sustenance, Jesus is the bread from heaven who gives sustenance forever. The people of Israel still died even though they ate the manna from heaven, but if we partake in the bread of life, we will live forever.

God provided for Israel in the wilderness while they waited to enter the Promised Land; God provided for us Jesus, so we can enter the Kingdom of God. If you accept Jesus, he will sustain you and uphold you with his right hand. He is our strength and our Sustainer! Amen!

Sunday, May 16 - Luke 22:14-23

Read these words of the Lord's Supper today! Use it to prepare for worship or remember worship. May God bless you on this Lord's Day!

“WE ARE HIM, HERE!”

Week 1: Faith

Monday, May 17 - 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

“We are Him, here!” It’s a phrase which I read in the book *Pastoral Spirituality* by Ben Campbell Johnson. This phrase is based off of an idea expressed by 20th century theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer as “Christ existing as community.” The basic idea is that the church today is Jesus walking on this earth. With Jesus no longer physically on earth, “we are Him, here!”

This will be our sermon series for the next two months. We will be studying how Jesus lived while He was on this earth, how Jesus taught His disciples to live, and what we are to do because of Jesus’ actions and words. The simple fact is we are the body of Christ. While that is certainly only a metaphor, it is a metaphor which deserves some literal thought.

We often talk about our passage today in reference to Spiritual Gifts and it certainly is about that. The body works together with different functions to achieve the goal of living. As a church, we use our spiritual gifts to be a healthy church. To take that further, we use our gifts and function together in order to be the body of Christ. We all work together to be Christ on this earth. “We are Him, here!” How can we live like Jesus did? Stay with us over the next several weeks to see.

Tuesday, May 18 - Matthew 4:1-11

What is it like to have faith like Jesus? It is being to withstand the temptations of Satan when you are at your most vulnerable. Jesus had been in the desert for 40 days. He was hungry and Satan found that to be the opportune time to test him. Satan knows how to tempt people. He always goes after food

first it seems! First it was Adam and Eve in the garden and now it's the second Adam in the desert. When Jesus is tempted to eat when he is not allowed to, he passes the test. Now we know that this man will be different! Then Satan tries to convince Jesus to be popular. Be a celebrity. Show his power to the city of Jerusalem. It would be the top story on Jerusalem's 6 o'clock news! It would be the headline story, above the fold, in tomorrow's Jerusalem Times! Jesus withstands the temptation knowing that his status is in his relationship with God, not with being the latest Jerusalem craze. Then Satan tries to tempt Jesus with the easy way out. Jesus knows the ministry and death which lies before him. Satan tries to trick him by saying "I can take that all away. I'll give you this world if you bow to me now!" Jesus withstands again by knowing there is only one person to worship and that is God.

How can we live like this? It is knowing that God is in control and has more power than evil or the Evil One on this earth. We live in a post-resurrection world, meaning, we can confidently believe what Jesus says in Matthew 28:18: "ALL authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Do you believe that to be true? Whether it's food, prestige, laziness, idolatry, or many more temptations, our command is to have faith in God and not fall into the trap of Satan. If we are going to be Him, here, we will need to withstand temptation. We will need to stay strong when it would be easy to fall. If we are going to be a witness for Jesus to the world, then we will need to be different from the world.

We can do none of this on our own, but we can do it when we let Jesus lead our lives. "ALL authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Do you believe that? Have faith in God.

Wednesday, May 19 - Exodus 5:1-2; 7:14-18 (Exodus 5-11)

I won't remind you every week, but once again, the main focus tonight will be the Scripture outside the parentheses and the background text is inside the parentheses. You can choose to read either selection.

The Ten Plagues in Egypt show us the power of God and the lengths to which God will go to take care of his people. Each plague decimated a part of Egyptian life; these plagues were not just for show, but they truly hurt the Egyptian economy, food supply, and culture.

In our life, we can face great heartache when we choose to not listen to the voice of the Lord. Pharaoh decided that he was more important; Pharaoh decided God was unknown and possibly non-existent. When we live life as if God doesn't exist, we live a caricature of the life which God intends. Pharaoh chose to not know God and Egypt suffered the consequences. Let's learn more about the Ten Plagues tonight and how we can apply that to everyday life.

Thursday, May 20 - Matthew 8:18-22

Jesus is purposefully harsh in this passage. He wants to tell everyone how exclusive our allegiances must be when following Him. To have faith in God means to give up all other commitments. To have faith like Jesus did means to follow the Father wherever he goes even if that means persecution, ridicule, and death. Can you do that?

What about as it relates to our lives together? To make a decision to sacrifice your individual freedoms to follow God is one thing, but what about the church sacrificing as one body? Using our title phrase "We are Him, here," how can the church sacrifice as Jesus sacrificed for us? Imagine if a church was saving for a building project or other purchases. What if a mission opportunity halfway around the world (or close to home) came up? Would the church be willing to forego the project to give all of the saved money to someone else?

Do we have faith to give up everything when God requires that of us? Are we willing to disrupt our lives, be homeless, let the dead bury themselves because we trust, have faith in God that He was something better for us. I don't know if I can answer that the way I know God wants me to answer that. What about you? Let's pray for each other so that we can trust in God the way God requires of his followers.

Friday, May 21 - Matthew 8:23-27

Immediately after Jesus gives the instructions from yesterday's passage, the faith of the disciples is put to the test. They have heard the message Jesus gave about what it takes to follow Him and in verse 23, Matthew clearly says the disciples made the decision to follow Jesus. You know that experience when you ask God for patience and He gives you an opportunity to exhibit patience but not necessarily the supernatural calm we actually asked for? It almost seems this is what happened to the disciples. "You say, you are ready to lose everything to follow me? Well, what happens when your life is in danger? Do you still trust in me? Do you still have faith?"

For the disciples, the answer is their faith is not as strong as it needs to be. This story can serve as an example of the trust we need to exhibit in God. We must have the trust that Jesus had when He is faced with a storm; he's asleep because He knows that His Father will take care of it. To have faith in God as Jesus did means to make the decision to follow God and then when the storm rages against us, we continue to trust in God knowing He will take care of us.

I'm sure like you, I've been reminded of the classic hymn *Have Faith in God* this week. Focus on these words as a prayer to God today:

Have faith in God when your pathway
is lonely.

He sees and knows all the way you
have trod;

Never alone are the least of His
children;
Have faith in God, have faith in God.

Have faith in God when your prayers
are unanswered,
Your earnest plea He will never
forget;
Wait on the lord, trust His word and
be patient,
Have faith in God. He'll answer yet.

Have faith in God in your pain and
your sorrow,
His heart is touched with your grief
and despair;
Cast all your cares and your burdens
upon Him,

And leave them there, oh, leave them
there.

Have faith in God though all else fall
about you;
Have faith in God, He provides for
His own:
He cannot fail though all kingdoms
shall perish.
He rules. He reigns upon His throne.

Have faith in God, He's on His
throne,
Have faith in God, He watches over
His own;
He cannot fail, He must prevail,
Have faith in God, Have faith in God.

Saturday, May 22 - Matthew 26:36-39

The goal of having faith like Jesus is to be able to honestly pray the prayer which Jesus prays in our passage today: "I want this Lord, but I want to do what you desire more." Jesus did not want to die. He did not want to suffer in the way he knew he would suffer. And yet, he gave up his desires to do as the Father required.

Do you have the faith in God to live life like this? Have you absolutely surrendered to his will? Do you feel a "holy indifference" to where the only thing you care about is doing what God wants? Are you ready for the adjustments that

are necessary to do God's will? If "we are Him, here," we, as a church, need to pray the prayer Jesus prayed: "We want to do this, but we want to do your will more."

Sunday, May 23 - Psalm 92

Week 2: Teaching

Monday, May 24 - Matthew 11:25-30

What do the teachings of Jesus tell us about the burdens of following Jesus? While we might be overwhelmed by all of the information and instructions of the Bible, Jesus makes it clear in these verses of Matthew 11 that the burden of doing Jesus' work is light. Jesus later claims in Matthew 23:1-5 that it is the Pharisees and scribes who give a bigger burden to bear. Essentially, we are right to say that religion is hard to bear but a relationship with Jesus is easy.

This week, we will be learning about teaching others and learning as well. We know that Jesus taught his disciples and the crowds what was expected of them as his followers. He never minced words or made accommodations for people but he also said what he said in Matthew 11:25-30. If "we are Him, here!" then we must teach in the same way. We do not water down the teachings and commands of Jesus, but at the same time we recognize that it is the work of the Holy Spirit within each of us which leads us to following Jesus' commands and teachings. It is nothing that we can "force" others to do, but it is the person choosing to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance. When we choose to do that, and let God take the lead in our lives, it is then that the words of Matthew 11:30 become truth in our lives: my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Tuesday, May 25 - Hebrews 4:1-13

What is the point of the Bible? Have you ever asked yourself that question or thought about it? Not only that but what is *your* motivation for reading the Bible? I read a story a few months ago of a man who had just turned 104. He still lived on his own, cooked his own meals, and was fairly active. His family asked him the secret to his longevity. He told them that this was the wrong question; the right question is “why bother?” What is your motivation for eating healthy, exercising, and engaging your mind?

In our spiritual lives, the question is the same and that returns us to the original question of this devotion: what is the point of the Bible? The point of the Bible is to teach us about who God is and how to have a relationship with Him. The point of the Bible is to tell us about God’s love for the world. The point is to lead us to salvation for today and forever. Let none of us fail to hear the message that God has delivered through his word.

The Word of God, Hebrews 4:12-13 says, is a two edged dagger, piercing bone from marrow. The picture is a surgeon’s scalpel, being able to make a precision cut. This is what the teaching of the Bible does; it cuts us open, lays us bare, but for a purpose. Much like a surgeon who performs surgery to remove a cancerous tumor, the Word of God performs surgery opening our spiritual lives to remove the unwanted cancer of sin. In both cases, the goal is to heal the body. This is the point of the Bible. This is why we should “bother” to read God’s Word.

Wednesday, May 26 - Exodus 12:1-13:16

Why do the Jewish people celebrate Passover every year? Exodus 13:8-9 tells us that they are to celebrate the Passover every year in order to remember what God has done and to teach the next generation about God’s provision. Realizing that these special dates on the calendar help us to remember and teach others what the Lord has done, gives us the motivation to celebrate and

remember special days throughout the year. What special holy days could you celebrate with your family and friends? Christmas and Easter obviously. But what about the day you were saved or when you were baptized? What about celebrating the Lord's Supper as a family? There are many opportunities to remember what the Lord has done and teach the next generation how important God is in our lives. Let's talk about how to focus on these opportunities like the Israelites did with the Passover when we come together tonight.

Thursday, May 27 - Acts 18:24-28

If we want examples of Christians discipling other Christians, Priscilla and Aquila are the perfect example. What I imagine is that Apollos is a young go-getter without much direction. He knows that God has called him to do God's work and yet he's running around like his hair is on fire. Priscilla and Aquila see the need for mentors in Apollos' life, so they take him under their wings. He didn't know Jesus' teachings fully, so Priscilla and Aquila helped him to know how to preach and what to preach.

Too often in our churches, we don't take the time to work with young preachers in this way. Sometimes the young preacher does not want to learn also, but that's another story. Apollos did want to learn and Priscilla and Aquila wanted to help. When we hear somebody preach something that's theologically questionable or when the energy is higher than the understanding, we discard the new preacher without seeing an opportunity to help.

Part of the Christian life is to help other Christians grow in the faith. Priscilla and Aquila are great models for all of us in that regard. Apollos benefitted from their generosity. Who could benefit from your time in helping them to grow in their faith? Pray for God to lead you to someone who you can mentor like Priscilla and Aquila did for Apollos.

Friday, May 28 - 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Priscilla and Aquila must have done their job. While this passage's main emphasis of unity within the church is certainly worthwhile to consider, the reason we read this passage today is its reference to Apollos. We cannot be certain how much time has elapsed since Priscilla and Aquila started to mentor Apollos but it was likely 2-3 years based on when Paul's missionary journeys were. Paul founded the Corinthian church about 49 AD and wrote 1 Corinthians about 53-55 AD. Paul left Corinth 18 months after arriving (Acts 18:11) and Acts 19:1 tells us that Apollos was in Corinth when Paul was headed in Ephesus. All of this to say that Priscilla and Aquila mentored Apollos and then sent him on his way.

Apollos was such an effective minister that he is one of the people who factions were developing around. Some liked him more than Paul! While Paul is clear that this division should not be occurring and instead we should all be under one person, Jesus Christ, the fact of the matter is that Apollos is mentioned with Paul and Peter. This ministry would not have been possible without the mentoring of Priscilla and Aquila.

This is the teaching we can give to other Christians. When we notice that someone about their theology is off or if they don't know what they need to, we should commit to taking time to help them. Do you think you could do that? Who can you be a Priscilla or Aquila to?

Saturday, May 29 - Matthew 28:18-20

Take some time today to reflect on the Great Commission. Read these words aloud. Find different translations of the verses and notice differences. But above all recognize each step we are supposed to take in going and telling the world about Jesus. In a time of prayer, listen for God to tell you how He wants you to live out these words in your life.

Sunday, May 30 - Psalm 93

Week 3: Service

Monday, May 31 - John 13:1-5

There are a few symbols which associate with Jesus' act of service. The ultimate symbol of service and sacrifice is the cross; there is no more important symbol in the course of human history than the cross. While important for our salvation, the cross is not a symbol which we can really relate to. Sacrificing our lives in the way Jesus did is not something most of us will be asked to do, and we certainly cannot take upon the sins of another. Are we asked to "take up our cross daily?" Of course. Jesus' work on the cross cannot be replicated as "we are Him, here."

While we cannot emulate Jesus' actions on the cross, we can emulate Jesus' actions with the towel. The towel is the symbol of service. When Jesus disrobes and fills the basin with water, he is doing the work of a slave. The lowliest of the low would be the one to wash the feet of the others. Just a week earlier, we learn in Matthew 20:20-23, James and John's mother asks Jesus if her boys can be the best disciples. In Matt. 20:24, the other disciples are angry with James and John, somewhat because they asked and probably somewhat because they didn't think about getting their mothers involved!

Luke 22:24-27 records that *during* the Lord's Supper/Passover meal the disciples are still arguing who the greatest disciple is. We cannot know for certain the exact order of the events of the Passover meal, but the way I imagine it is the disciples are bickering about who the greatest is, telling each other "hey, you should wash feet," and "No way, you should do it!" As the disciples are arguing, Jesus quietly gets up from the table and starts to perform the task of washing feet. I wonder if the disciples felt guilty about their pettiness while watching the

Messiah humble himself to doing this task.

When “we are Him, here,” the symbol of the towel must be in the forefront of our minds. Let us not be like the disciples bickering about who must do this and that. We are on this earth to serve, not be served. Yes, we take up our cross and follow Jesus, but let us also take up the towel to serve others as well.

Tuesday, June 1 - John 17:1-26

Most of the time we think about service as actions which involve exhausting energy. But have you ever thought of intercessory prayer as an act of service? I think it is! When Jesus prays this final prayer before his arrest, he is praying for his disciples and he is praying for us! Praying for others is the most important act of service you can do for another. Does that mean we neglect any physical acts of service? Of course not! If you need guidance on this matter, see James 2:15-16 and 1 John 3:17-18.

With that said, prayer is asking God to intervene in ways humans cannot. Yes, “we are Him, here,” but there are ways in which only God in heaven can work. For that reason, it is our task and our obligation to pray for others. Let’s make this devotion short today, so you can spend the rest of your time in intercessory prayer for others. Go get our prayer request list or make your own. Take an extended amount of time to pray for those who need it. Maybe you don’t know the exact reason they need prayer. That’s ok! God knows. Praying for others is service. Serve others in this way today.

Wednesday, June 2 - Exodus 14:1-15:21

The two chapters we read in Exodus in preparation for tonight are very intense scenes. The people of God are leaving Egypt. It seems that God has indeed saved his people! But then, Pharaoh changes his mind to pursue the Israelites and recapture them. Israel is caught between a sea on one side and an

angry army on the other. They're stuck!

Sometimes we feel as if we are stuck between a rock and a hard place. We will drown if we go one way and we will be killed if we go another. Not very good options! What we need to do in these circumstances is trust in God. If God has led us to a place, God will make a way to lead us out. God confused the Egyptian army, and God let Israel walk on dry land. When we feel surrounded, God will make a way as well. Let's study what God did for Israel tonight and how we can have confidence God will do the same for us!

Thursday, June 3 - Isaiah 52:13-53:3

We will finish this week by spending three days covering the passage in Isaiah which is named as one of the "Suffering Servant" Passages. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the fourth servant song following Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; and 50:4-11. In this fourth servant song, there are five stanzas which gain steam by adding one line to each stanza starting with nine lines and concluding with thirteen. Overall, it is clear in this passage that the Suffering Servant is one who will die not only for Israel but for all the nations; it could not be clearer that this passage was fulfilled through Jesus the Messiah.

In the first two stanzas covered today, we see a couple of lines concerning the appearance of this servant. In the first stanza in verse 14, it says he was marred beyond human semblance. In the second stanza in Isa. 53:2, it tells us that his appearance was nothing exceptional. For the first expression, we know the suffering that Jesus endured while being beaten before being nailed to the cross. In the second expression, it speaks to the servant not looking like the savior that everyone expects. If you recall, when Saul became king, it was clear "he looked like a king" (1 Sam. 9:1-2). However, when David becomes king, the passage makes it clear he is not the first one chosen by Samuel and Jesse. He wasn't even invited to the initial meeting!

Jesus as the suffering servant is more like David and less like Saul (as you might expect). His appearance is nothing spectacular, but it is what happens in a relationship with Jesus where you see his exceptional features. His love, mercy, and grace give him beauty that comes from within. It is his inner qualities and his actions which make him the One.

In life, we still look for people “who look the part.” We discount people who don’t look like much. When we do this, we are like the people who heard Jesus and left. Those who didn’t think it was possible for this guy from Nazareth to be special. Let us not discount based on appearance alone, but let us look to the heart of others. And above all, let us believe in the servant who didn’t look like much, but was the Son of God.

Friday, June 4 - Isaiah 53:4-9

We cover two more stanzas of the Suffering Servant Song today. It is in these two stanzas where we see the action of the servant in its fullest form. The reason that the servant went through these horrific events is spelled out in verses 4-6: we are the reason. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. The imperfections, the transgressions which we have committed, have been taken on by the servant. Typically, the one who is suffering in some way deserves the punishment is the thought of the world. This was the understanding in the time of Isaiah, as well as what most people think today. However, this servant suffers because *we* sin. It says in verse 7 that he did not open his mouth, meaning that he did this work *willingly*.

It’s hard to read these passages of Scripture because we know how they were fulfilled 800 years later. We know the suffering that our Savior bore because of our sins. We know that because God loved us so much, He sent his Son to be this servant to save us all. I am in awe of what God has done for me when I don’t deserve it. The Perfect Lamb of God sacrificed Himself for you and me. He

sacrificed Himself for the entire world. Who can you share this message with today?

Saturday, June 5 - Isaiah 53:10-12

The servant song ends with a restatement of the same themes from the other four stanzas: the servant will be sacrificed for the good of everyone and this is God's will. He will be poured out, every last drop will be drained. There is no doubt that Jesus knew these passages and knew he was fulfilling these prophecies. Jesus was willingly taking the place and punishment for you and I so that we might return to God.

This servant song is within a section of Isaiah which begins in Isaiah 40:1 saying "comfort, O comfort my people, says your God..." It's a message of promise that the people will return from exile. It's a message that there is a pathway back from exile to God.

The end of the suffering servant passage is the same message: there is a way back to God from personal exile because of sin. Our sin is being forgiven because of the work of the Servant. "...he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." This is what Christ did on the cross for all of us. How will you respond in love and devotion today?

Sunday, June 6 - Psalm 94:16-23