

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 13 (March 20-26, 2016)

We will study miscellaneous Scriptures relating to the cross as we enter the celebration of the last week Jesus would spend on earth.

Sunday, March 20 (read Isaiah 52:13-15)

See, my Servant will act wisely; He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. (Isaiah 52:13)

The amazing passages of Scripture from Isaiah 52:13-53:12 contain the most vivid picture found anywhere of our Lord's death and resurrection. They were written 700 years before they found fulfillment during Holy Week. The printed verse above predicts the event you are celebrating today on Palm Sunday. Jesus rode victoriously and triumphantly into Jerusalem on a donkey amidst the cheering of the crowds (see John 12:12-19). These same crowds would be shouting, "crucify Him" on Friday. Verses 14-15 reveal that His death on the cross was brutal, unlike the pictures you may have seen. This was necessary because, "so will He sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of Him" (v. 15a). Take the time to read chapter 53 as well so that you can fully appreciate the gift of eternal life through the cross of Jesus Christ. See week 14, 2015 devotions if you need help in your study.

Monday, March 21 (read Colossians 2:9-15)

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. (Colossians 2:9-10)

Read and study this text carefully, and you'll never take communion again without realizing the power of the cross. If you have been buried with Christ and raised with Him (v. 12), you now have power over the old sin nature that once controlled your actions (v. 11-13). This victory will not come in an instant, but Jesus will continue to work out on the outside what He has already done on the inside. All of your sins are forgiven (past, present, future, v. 13), and the written code (Thou shall not) has been cancelled (v. 14; see also Romans 10:4). All the powers of Satan and his demons have been defeated by the death and resurrection of our Lord (v. 15). Rejoice as you celebrate Holy Week!

Tuesday, March 22 (read Ephesians 2:11-13)

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:13)

Every time I see the words, "but now," I get excited. Each of us should have a long list of things that fall under the category of "I used to, but now." Paul tells us Gentiles that we were at one time separated from the Jews and the Jewish God. We were uncircumcised (v. 11), excluded, foreigners, without hope, without God (v. 12), and far away (v. 13). "But now," because of Calvary and the empty tomb, we who believe in Him, have been brought into the presence of almighty God, alongside all Jews who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. "This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:6). Rejoice in what this week means to you and your faith!

Wednesday, March 23 (read Ephesians 2:14-18)

For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. (Ephesians 2:14-15a)

We were helpless to keep the Ten Commandments, not to mention the other 600 or so laws found in the Old Testament. Since Jesus was born into the Jewish nation, it stands to reason that other nationalities and races would be jealous of the Jews (v. 11-13). The cross, however, changes everything! "Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for **everyone** who believes" (Romans 10:4, emphasis mine). Jesus establishes peace for all nations and races by one sacrifice, His death on the cross; therefore, "He Himself is our peace" (v. 14). Through Jesus Christ, we are equal and have equal access to the Father because of the Holy Spirit (v. 18). During this Holy Week, praise Him for what He has accomplished by His death and resurrection!

Thursday, March 24 (read Ephesians 2:19-22)

And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit. (Ephesians 2:22)

The faith of the Jews is built on the Old Testament. Their story begins with Abram in Genesis, chapter 12, and continues through Malachi. Our story begins with Matthew and continues through Revelation. However, Jesus has become the Cornerstone of our faith, having brought together the old and the new. We are all "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" alike (v. 20). Gentiles "are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household" (v. 19). Together, we make up the new temple of the Lord (v. 21). "And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit" (v. 22). Allow His Spirit to empower you to live for His glory alone!

Friday, March 25 (read Philippians 2:5-11)

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. (2 Corinthians 1:18)

This is the first time I have printed a verse that is not in the reading text, but I want you to see the true meaning of the cross and exactly why the message is foolishness to non-believers. Jesus wants us to come to the cross with the same **attitude** He has. Throughout eternity, He has been one with His Father, but He willingly laid aside His Deity to come to earth as a man (v. 6-7). Here He became a servant of all mankind, even to the point of dying like a criminal for the sins of humanity (v. 7-8). From God to man to servant to criminal, Jesus gave Himself up so that we could be saved. That's why we call Him our Lord (v. 9-11)! That's why we call Him our Savior! That's why, today on Good Friday we celebrate **His death** and **our life**! That's why we should love Him with all our heart!

Saturday, March 26 (read Philippians 3:17-21)

For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. (Philippians 3:18)

The message of the cross calls us to a sacrificial life (as we learned from yesterday's devotion). Many, even in the church, are selfish in their prayers and actions. Because their "mind is on earthly things," the prayer list of the church is often filled with demands for health and wealth while lost folks hardly get a mention (v. 17-19). Jesus could have healed our bodies **without** going to the cross, just as the gospels record that He did so many times; therefore, we need to focus our prayers and actions on **heavenly** things where, as Christians, we are already citizens (v. 20) The Lord is in the process of transforming our earthly bodies into the image of His glorious body (v. 21). Rejoice! You're a child of the King!