

Lenten Devotions

Reading through Luke with the members of
St Stephen's Lutheran Church

Printed as an aid for members and friends of St Stephen's: February 2010

Cover Painting: *Entry into Jerusalem* from Giotto de Borgone's fresco cycle in the *Capella degli Scrovegni* (1304-1306).

Introduction

Our Lord speaks these words to us in Matthew:

*One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of
God.*

He gave us these words, quoting Deuteronomy, after he had fasted for forty days in the wilderness—the very fast that is the basis for our season of Lent today.

Lent is a time of repentance and preparation. As Christ is mindful of us in our suffering, Lent is a time to be mindful of Christ in his suffering for our sake. And as we remember his passion and death, God reorients our lives. No longer do we see ourselves as people who deserve luxury and honour but with our eyes on Christ we discover anew where we stand—as beggars at the foot of his cross, begging not for bread alone, but for the words that come from the mouth of God. These are the words that nourished Jesus during his forty days in the wilderness and so he gives them to us for our nourishment this Lent. They are the words of repentance and forgiveness, of direction and of grace, of healing and of comfort.

We hope that you find these short reflections useful for your Lenten devotion, as you feast on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

A special thank you to all the members of St Stephens who took the time to contribute to this booklet.

In Christ,

Vicar Tom Pietsch

February 17th

FORETOLD

BIRTHS

Today's Reading

Luke 1:1-38

The announcement to a woman that she is pregnant can bring joy or despair. 'The Dear and Glorious Physician', as one writer called Luke, tells us of two women who were told they would be expecting babies. The birth of a male child to a Jewish family brought great elation to the parents. Both of these children were to be important to God's purpose. The angel Gabriel was even sent to announce the news to the future parents.

'How can I be sure of this?' was Zechariah's response. 'How will this be?' was Mary's response. Zechariah and Elizabeth were elderly. Mary was a virgin. Luke, in his work as a physician, probably told a number of his female patients they were pregnant. Some, just as it is today, would have been overjoyed at the news and others concerned.

Often when we hear from God, via Scripture, prayer, or a sermon we can take the information as bad news. We can learn from Elizabeth and Mary that what was initially bad news, even unbelievable news, became good news, in fact, part of God's plan to redeem humankind.

Prayer

Dear Lord, when I don't want to accept bad news for my life give me the faith to know that you only want The Good News of Your saving grace for my life, through Jesus my Saviour. Amen.

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

18th

February

Today's Reading

Mary had already been visited by an angel and the realisation that she had been chosen to bear Jesus, plus the very dramatic way in which the message was delivered must have been quite frightening to say the least. The child's name had even been chosen, she was to find the conception was to be immaculate as well Mary must have wondered how..but then to go on and be told that her son was to be the Son of the Highest (Son of God) and that he will also take over the throne of David and his kingdom was to last forever was just incredible. Yet she managed the news so well.

Mary visited Elizabeth her cousin, in Judah for 3 months. Elizabeth previously could not have children and now was very old, but with God's help she had now been carrying a baby for 6 months. When Mary greeted Elizabeth her unborn son jumped inside his mother and Elizabeth was blessed. Obviously in this context, a sign that Mary was chosen to bear Jesus.

Interestingly for me, in this part of the Gospel, we hear Mary quoted as she speaks; for the rest of the New Testament she moves through with hardly a word. What she has to say clearly reflects her piety, belief and trust in God.

The subsequent birth of John was also special and his father knew that he would become a powerful prophet.

Prayer

O Lord, we praise you for the gift of your Son our Savior, through whom you have made known your will and grace. Amen.

February 19th

JESUS

THE BIRTH OF

Today's Reading

Luke 2:1-21
Last year, I became a grandmother to the most beautiful baby girl. There were no angel choruses when Hannah was born, no shepherds, no inn. But I looked at her with awe – this tiny little person, new to the world.

We watch with amazement and pride as she grows and marvel at each new achievement: the first smile, the sounds that she is making, starting solids. Everything that she does is a miracle it seems.

I wonder what it was like for Mary as she contemplated her newborn babe, as she listened to the angels singing, accepted the shepherds' homage and the gifts of the wise men. We read that she 'treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart' (v19). Did these events provide comfort for her as she stood by the cross and on Good Friday?

And how was it for Joseph? What emotions did he feel as he saw the tiny babe?

The gift of family can be complex and interwoven with joy and delight as well as frustration and despair. Yet it is that gift that forms us and makes us who we are.

Prayer

Thank you loving God for the family that you have given to us. Thank you even more for the people that you give who are there when we have no family around. Amen.

February 21st

JESUS

JOHN BAPTIZES

Today's Reading

Luke 3:1-38

Often as a new course is about to begin some preparation is likely to precede it. So too, preparation was entailed prior to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. John the Baptist carried out this role with his bold and forceful preaching, even rebuking Herod. He stressed the necessity of repentance and a change of heart, plus a willingness to acknowledge this repentance by being publicly baptized. It is noteworthy that John also indicated many practical changes people would need to make to show that their repentance was really genuine.

The baptism of Jesus by John was, however, a baptism with a difference as Jesus had no sin to repent of. Luke's account highlights other differences too. As Jesus was praying, the Holy Spirit came down and rested on him in the bodily form of a dove and a voice from heaven was heard. Thus Father, Son and Holy Spirit were all present at his baptism, which took place just before his three year ministry began.

The significance of the listing of Jesus' genealogy is to show that Jesus was truly the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Prayer

Thank you God for the Bible, which has been preserved over the centuries. As I read it increase my faith and trust in you. Amen.

February 23rd

MINISTRY

JESUS BEGINS HIS

Today's Reading

Luke 4:14-14
Jesus returns to Nazareth, his home town, to preach in the synagogue from a scroll by Isaiah. He began *'The spirit of the Lord is upon me...to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour'* and he was glorified by all. Jesus' teachings rely on the Holy Spirit and are in obedience to his Father. However the Israelites were enraged by Jesus words— *'many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Isaiah were not cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.'* Here Jesus subtly includes the Gentiles in salvation, showing the Lord's mercy to all who come to him.

Even though they wanted to throw him over the cliff he later said to the man who had a demon, *'Be silent and come out of him!'* He then healed Simon's mother in law who immediately began to serve the Lord. He also healed many others from the demons who knew him and cried out *'You are the Son of God!'* Jesus then said to his followers, *'I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns as well.'*

We learn many things from Jesus initial ministry:

The power of the Holy Spirit and how we are to trust.

God chooses his time

Jesus obedience to the Father shows us how we must obey

We gentiles are saved

Jesus victory over satan relates to our lives of rejection and success

Jesus words show authority

Even the demons know *"The Holy One of God"*

Jesus heals our sins

We are to tell others about the gospel

We are to serve the Lord faithfully

Prayer

Holy Spirit, bless our speech. Jesus Christ, deliver us from evil and protect us from the effects of sin. Heavenly Father, forgive us and restore us into fellowship with you; so that by your grace, and through our precious Saviour, we may serve you faithfully. Amen.

Paul Bohlmann

February 25th

JESUS

HEALS

Today's Reading

Jesus often went to a 'lonely', quiet place to pray to His Father, who gave Him the strength to fulfil His mission and to understand some critical and hostile people who gathered to hear and see Him, maybe even trap Him.

Jesus' teaching and healing powers had become known far and wide. Faith drove 'some men', we presume at least four, to go to any lengths to have their paralysed friend brought close to Jesus, maybe even against his wishes. Jesus, seeing their faith, hit the nerve by saying to the man 'Friend, your sins are forgiven' - not what was expected by the onlookers! Unbeknown to those who mumbled their objection, they were "dead right": 'Only God can forgive sins'. Then came the healing words from Jesus. Everyone was completely amazed and praised God. Jesus loves the sinner!

Levi, the renowned tax collector, was enlisted by Jesus. You and I are enlisted and used in special ways to further His kingdom work. No specific qualifications—just faith and empathy.

Jesus' stories that follow clearly point out that we should be unrestrained in love. The use of new wine bottles is clear. They stretch with need. Can we be stretched or extended to see the needs of those who 'want to see Jesus'? Keep trying!

Prayer

Lord, give us that faith that assures us that we are forgiven sinners saved by the blood of our Saviour and Redeemer, shed for us. Amen.

February 27th THE SERMON ON THE PLAIN, PART 1

Today's Reading

Luke 6.17-36

During my long ministry the worshippers did not ordinarily comment on my sermons. But the day came when a farmer and his wife objected strongly to what I had preached on the basis of Luke 6.17-36. They declared it to be “utter rubbish” to do good to those who hate you, to love your enemies, to lend without hope of being repaid. Who, they asked, would be so stupid as to live that kind of life?

All that I could do was to point out that these were not my fancy ideas, but the teaching of our Lord. Perhaps for the first time in their lives my critics realized that to be a Christian requires a great deal of us.

What our Lord proclaims in his Sermon on the Plain is, humanly speaking, quite unreasonable, quite shocking. His message is a series of bomb-shells. To be a Christian means to take up our cross and follow Jesus—wherever that may lead us and **COST WHAT IT MAY**.

However, a great reward awaits those who live that kind of life.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach me to take up my cross and follow you, cost what it may. Amen.

March 1st

JESUS IN CAPERNAUM AND NAIN

Today's Reading

Luke 7.1-35

It is the *miracles* which “jump out” from these passages. We read of a servant being healed, a widow's son being raised from the dead, and the ailments that Jesus healed are listed in the John the Baptist section.

Jesus came as preacher, teacher, and healer. His healings are mighty works, but his mightiest work is when he heals the world by bearing its sin. His healings are a sign that salvation is now fulfilled. God has come to earth in his son, Jesus. We find that God's kingdom is a kingdom of grace for all: sinners, Jews, Gentiles, outcasts, the “underdog”, a centurian and his servant, poor widows, etc. The miracle accounts in the Gospel of Luke show God's great love for ALL. The ultimate healing occurs for all humankind when Jesus suffers, dies and rises for ALL, at Easter. The cross is therefore THE great miracle of healing, for it is through the cross that Jesus saves us from our sin. Sin, death and Satan are conquered.

As we reflect on Jesus' approaching death on Good Friday and resurrection on Easter Day, may we think of his many healing miracles which are part of his earthly journey towards our salvation.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, help the miracle accounts open our hearts and eyes to see the fullness of your Son's sacrificing love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

March 3rd

STORM

PARABLES AND A

Today's Reading

Five years ago when I travelled to the Middle East I visited the Sea of Galilee. It was very misty over the lake that day and when I touched the water I had a vivid sense of the real presence of Jesus.

In flesh and blood as a man, he set out on this lake, falling asleep on the boat, when a strong wind blew down on the lake. As I looked over the lake, I could imagine the peril that the disciples must have felt. And yet Jesus' assurance that he is in control is the strong message to the disciples, and the strong message to me.

When I face storms in life, I'm tempted to cry out, like the disciples, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" and forget that Jesus is in control.

As Jesus showed his control on the Sea of Galilee all of those years ago, so too He is in control today, in his love and concern for us.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, strengthen our faith in you. When we are faced with storms and cry out for help, assist us to do it in faith, knowing that you are in control. Amen.

March 5th

APOSTLES

JESUS AND THE

Today's Reading

Luke 9:1-27

Luke describes the mission on which the apostles are sent out. Jesus had referred to himself as a missionary. 'People must hear the good news about God's kingdom. That's why I was sent' (Luke 4:43). Now the apostles who are part of the new people of God are commissioned for the same kind of work. They live in a world that is desperately in need of the good news.

We as God's people at St Stephens are called to faithfully share Jesus keeping our focus on growing our faith in him whilst caring for those within our community.

Luke reminds us that sharing Jesus is not easy. Jesus was rejected and suffered death on a cross. He doesn't promise that it will now be easy for us. We have to hand our lives over to Jesus. For most of us suffering will come before the glory of heaven. The apostles reminded the followers of Jesus that 'we have to suffer a lot before we can get into God's kingdom' (Acts 14:22).

They begged them to remain faithful reminding them that after the cross comes the crown.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, give us courage to share your love with others and help us cling to the promise of eternal life with you. Amen.

March 7th

TWO

JESUS AND THE SEVENTY-

Today's Reading

How often these days don't we wave good bye to our friends, children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces – so many people seem to set off travelling. Thanks to Samsonite and a few others, it is a slightly more complicated process than taking a clean pair of undies and an extra jumper which seems to me to be the modern equivalent of Jesus' direction.

Travelling is commonplace for us. We love to travel. We love to share travel stories and hear stories from others.

Jesus sent the 72 out to share his message with very clear instructions as we read today. However, things may be a little different for us. In this day and age, we don't even have to leave our home church to find people coming to us to find out more about God.

They are coming to us from around the city and from around the globe. And in an interesting twist to the story, if they are not welcomed, they will shake the dust of our church off their feet and move on.

Prayer

Dear God, please help us to open our hearts and our minds so that we can welcome those who come searching to learn about You. Amen.

March 9th

PRAYER

THE LORD'S

Today's Reading

Luke 11:1-26

Prayer can be hard sometimes. We might say this is because we lack the time, but how often do we lack the time to eat or sleep? Perhaps it's more honest for us to say that we sometimes lack the desire to pray. And even when we do have the desire to pray, maybe we struggle with prayer because we don't know where to start or what words to use. Perhaps we doubt whether God can hear our prayers, or in the darkest moments, whether He is there at all.

In times like these, Jesus helps us to pray. By teaching us the Lord's Prayer, Jesus puts a prayer on our lips. He gives us words when we cannot muster up for words ourselves. And when we pray this prayer, we join with Jesus in praying the same prayer he prays to his Heavenly Father. Surely our prayer must be heard!

Jesus gives us confidence that God does hear our prayers: "I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you." But God doesn't just listen to us when we speak to Him; He gives us good things in return. He doesn't just give but he wants to give; He wants to bless us with His eternal source of generosity.

In the following passages, Jesus gives us further reassurance that when we gather with Him we are safe. There is nothing stronger than Him. This is good news at the best of times, but especially in light of the spiritual battles that Luke describes in chapter eleven. But when we remain in Him and pray to Him, He will remain in us and with us as our protector.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for teaching us to pray. Help us to come to You in prayer and to remain always in You. Amen.

March 11th

CHRIST

ACKNOWLEDGE

Today's Reading

Many of us worry about building money and possessions up for ourselves and our children, the newest car, the most beautiful house, the latest technological gadget.

In this reading, Jesus points out that these worries and quests for worldly benefits are futile and that we should not worry about them. He who knows all the hairs on our heads will not forget us and will look after us and our every need.

How much effort do we put into worrying about planning for our future needs? The message to the rich fool (v.20) is appropriate to us:

'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'

We need to strive for God's kingdom and these things will be given to us as well (v.31). This does not necessarily mean in an earthly material sense.

If we let him, Jesus takes care of our worries as he does our needs.

Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for taking care of us. Amen.

March 13th

PERISH

REPENT OR

Today's Reading

Questions about the afterlife are always cropping up. In Jesus' day the rabbis debated whether any gentiles would get to heaven (most doubted it), and whether some Jews after death might have to spend some time in Gehenna before arriving in heaven (certainly all Jews would make it eventually, it was said). But Jesus had no time for such speculative questions. In these verses he uses a mixture of images to speak about the afterlife. He speaks of striving to enter, using a word for the tough training required before competing in the athletic games of ancient Greece. He speaks of a narrow door, suggesting a squeeze to get through. He speaks of a door being closed, suggesting a time when it is too late to gain entry. He speaks of weeping with grief and gnashing teeth in anger, as those who thought they were a shoe-in are compelled to watch all those who do enter—the faithful believers of ancient Israel and countless gentiles streaming in from the four corners of the earth.

What glue holds these mixed images together? Jesus is appealing to those most regular in worship, those who say, 'we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets', to give Jesus such access to their (our) hearts, that he becomes not simply a nodding acquaintance, but a life-giving and life-changing friend.

Prayer

Lord God, giver of all grace, have mercy on your world-wide church. Renew its life, restore its unity, bless its worship, empower its witness, so that it may continually grow in its role of extending Christ's reign on earth, to the glory of his great name. Amen.

Peter Lockwood

March 15th

DISCIPLESHIP

THE COST OF

Today's Reading

Luke 14:25-34
Discipleship. A big word. For us as Christians, it means we are believers and followers of the teachings of Christ. It is a big responsibility, but why is there a cost?

We all know that the higher the cost of something, the more valuable it is. The value doesn't necessarily come from having paid a high monetary cost; it could also be the cost of your time or personal resources. I think Jesus is asking us to put a high cost on being active disciples, in going out in our everyday lives and sharing Jesus with others who don't yet believe, because it is a valuable thing to do. It's not easy, but then nothing of great value is come by easily.

We can follow Jesus' example of being a disciple. The price He paid to be faithful to the teachings of His Father was huge – He voluntarily gave up His life to save each and every one of us. Because of this most valuable and precious gift freely given to us, we can respond by voluntarily being committed disciples for Christ.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, as we go about our day, empower us to be good disciples to those around us. Amen.

March 17th PARABLE OF THE DISHONEST MANAGER

Today's Reading

Luke 16.1-17

When I read this passage, it didn't seem to make sense. I expected Jesus to say, 'Be faithful with earthly wealth and I will give you heavenly wealth'. He did this in verses 10 to 13, but verses 1 to 9 were unexpected. Here in the Bible, a dishonest manager was praised, who swindled his boss of his due takings. And verse 9 says, 'Make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth, so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.'

Dishonest wealth appears to be wealth accumulated due to inequalities in the world, which sin creates and sustains. Heavenly wealth in action is people showing the fruits of the spirit. Jesus wants us to value, cherish and accumulate this heavenly wealth which lasts for all eternity.

So Jesus encourages us not only to be honest in our dealings, but also be mindful that the ultimate goal is not to accumulate earthly wealth, but rather to use the earthly "dishonest" wealth we obtain, to gain heavenly wealth through bringing our friends to heaven with us, by living out the fruits of the spirit.

Prayer

Dear God, help us to understand your ways and to let others know your love, so that we may all celebrate as friends in heaven. Amen.

March 19th

SIN

TEMPTATIONS TO

Today's Reading

~~Luke 17:1-10~~
We are to be alert to temptations that await us. Our faith has to be strong so that we can help others from falling into sin, particularly the young and vulnerable.

If we encourage anyone, intentionally or unintentionally, to sin, it will rest heavily on us. Repent and ask for forgiveness. God will forgive us so we must be prepared to also forgive willingly. Infants trust their parents so we must trust Our Father.

Bible studies help to strengthen our faith and our love for Christ.

We are to treat everyone lovingly regardless of who they are and not put our selves above anyone else. Those in the workforce, perhaps under your control, treat with respect and in a caring manner, setting an example. Believers serve in the community as well as the church. We do our duty serving our Lord without looking for rewards, being humble.

Faith accomplishes remarkable things. We may feel weak in our faith but by praying to our Lord asking for strength to fight the challenges, we will undoubtedly be answered. We can even pray 'I believe, help my unbelief, O Lord, and increase my faith in You.'

Jesus laid down His life for us, so we must be prepared to walk in the way.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for dying on the cross for us, so that we could be saved. Help us to serve you joyfully and willingly. Amen.

March 21st TWO PARABLES AND THE CHILDREN

Today's Reading

Luke 18.1-17

Can we really wear God down?

It seems as if Jesus is saying we can – or that we ought to act as if we can. He certainly says that he wants us to pray... and pray... and pray... and not lose heart when things don't happen as we would like.

That's a hard thing to do – at least, so I find. I know others find it hard, too. It's hard, sometimes almost impossible, to keep on praying when you are confronted with the silence of God, even with the apparent cruel indifference of God, in the face of overwhelming need.

Yet, Jesus urges us to persist in coming to God with our needs. And when we do so, not to think that we can bring any kind of leverage to some kind of divine bargaining table (as the Pharisee seems to think he can do). Before God we in fact have no more bargaining power than a child or a beggar, the bargaining power of being totally dependent upon God who in Christ loves us so much that he died for us. And the bargaining power of that love dares us to believe that God hears and cares and acts.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach us to pray, and having prayed, to pray yet again. In your name. Amen.

March 23rd

MINAS

ZACCHEUS AND THE TEN

Today's Reading

Luke 19:1-27
Zacchaeus was a hated man. Not only was he a tax collector, but he was a Jew by birth and therefore his fellow Jews considered him a cheater, a traitor and a turncoat - totally unloved and very unpopular. The city of Jericho was a city of priests – Jesus had many “appropriate” places to eat a meal, indeed it would have been expected of Him to have chosen to eat with them, BUT he chose to eat with Zacchaeus.

Jesus loved him. Jesus wanted to save him. This is the message for us sinners today too. We put ourselves in Zacchaeus’ place and know we are saved because of what Jesus did for us. In return we can show our faith and thankfulness by changing our behaviour, just as Zacchaeus did. We are neither saved nor condemned by who or what we are, or who or what we were. Jesus on the cross is all we need to focus on.

The decision to follow Jesus counts for little if our lives are not backed up by action. The servant who did nothing with the money he was given, demonstrates a lack of interest in his masters vision for the future. The same could be said about us, if we do not use what we have to actively work for God’s Kingdom. We can all contribute something, no matter whether we have one or ten talents – God has a place for us to serve, to help and to encourage. When we truly appreciate what Jesus did for us, then we will joyfully and willingly want to serve wherever God leads us.

Prayer

Dear Lord, help us to appreciate what you did for us and to share the Good News of salvation with others. Amen.

March 25th

JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

Today's Reading

Luke 20.1-26

They are out to catch him. The teachers of the law and the chief priests are determined to trap Jesus into saying something that will bring him down. But the snare quickly tangles around their own feet as Jesus slips through their game of “laws” with his game of grace. It’s no match.

Throughout this reading, beginning with the chief priests and teachers indignantly questioning Jesus’ authority, they inadvertently destroy their own. ***They are afraid of the people. They don’t acknowledge what is from God. They are reactive and angry. They identify with the villains*** in Jesus’ parable of the tenants in the vineyard. Finally, these religious legal experts ***clearly break the law***. To trap Jesus with a question on paying taxes, they pay bribes! What irony.

The really amazing twist in this account is when Jesus hands them exactly what they want (assurance of his downfall). But they are too busy being offended to see it! Jesus’ parable clearly identifies who he is and what will happen to him. The son would be killed. His demise was certain, but his self-centred enemies missed the punch line. They still wanted to steal what Jesus wanted to give.

Jesus says in John 10:18, ‘No one takes my life away from me. I give it up of my own free will.’ Somewhere in these profound words lies an ultimate authority. By the close of the reading people have stopped questioning him, but has Jesus won? We are left suspecting that Jesus will concede the game.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, give us the Spirit of Jesus to put aside our right to be right; may we touch everyone we meet with grace, even when it isn’t fair and when we have to choose to lose. Amen.

March 27th

TEMPLE

JESUS AND THE

Today's Reading

How generous and selfless the woman at the temple was. It was only two coins that she gave, but she left nothing for herself to live on. How many of us are so generous to those in need?

Jesus spoke of the temple falling down, of wars between nations, of earthquakes, famine and pestilence, of persecution, betrayal and intolerance. He was talking about the end of the world, but this description sounds a bit like the world we live in today, or the worst aspects of it anyway. There are so many people trying to live in terrible situations, with no food or shelter, without freedom and safety. Equally there are many who have far more than they need, but often choose not to share it. More of the kind of generosity and compassion shown by the poor woman at the temple is needed. Events like the recent earthquake in Haiti make this especially true right now.

The turmoil in the world at the moment may be minor compared to the times ahead that Jesus speaks of. However, Jesus reminds us that the only true constant is God, whose love will save and protect us. No matter what the world throws at us, we can take comfort from this.

Prayer

Lord, let your grace be an example to us to help us show compassion to those in need, and let us remember that the only true path ahead is through You. Amen.

March 29th

SUPPER

THE LORD'S

Today's Reading

The Lord's Supper is a continual reminder of God's incredible gift of grace.

Every time we partake of His body and His blood through the Lord's supper we are reminded of God's incredible gift of grace and that he has a place for each one of us in heaven. No if's, no but's - it is there for us as a free gift in spite of our failings.

Nevertheless, it should also be a reminder to us that we are special in the eyes of God and therefore it should be our aim to live lives worthy of Him and be a "Christ" to those around us. This is our opportunity to witness to others.

Therefore, the Lord's Supper is also a challenge and encouragement to us to share the gift we know about with those who are not yet aware that there is a free gift for them also. How special is that? What a task we have? What joy we should receive from carrying out that challenge?

Go and share the Good News with those around you. You are special and God will be with you.

Prayer

For your continual reminder of your free gift of grace, we thank you, Lord. Instill in us a real desire for you and give us confidence to share that Good News with others. Amen.

Richard Bartholomaeus

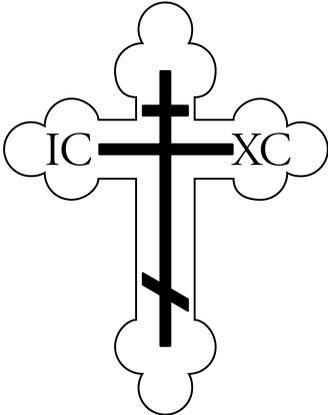
Luke 22.54-71

This must be One of the_saddest events reCorded in the life **Of** Jesus. Jesus certainly knew What it was to be lonely having spent forty days in the deSert Where He was sorely tempted by **Satan**. NOW, only a few hours earlier than these events, **He** asked His discipleS to watch and wait with Him while **He** prayed - agoniSing prayerS to His **Father**. But the discipleS slept. **Jesus** is taken to the house of the high prieSt. When **Peter** was challenged in the courtyard he denied **three** times

Prayer

Loving Saviour, thank you for paying the price of my salvation by undergoing the suffering that should have been mine. Forgive me for the many times I fail to acknowledge you, and give me the desire and courage to live a life that is more worthy of your gift of eternal life. Amen.

Des Borgelt





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