

Passion Week

By Pastor Andy Straubel

March 25 commemorates the beginning of Passion Week, or so it is called by Christians around the world. It begins on the Palm Sunday and ends with Resurrection Sunday. This article concerns itself with a summary of Jesus' last week of the ministry. What happened? What can be learned?

On Sunday Jesus leaves Bethany, a small village just over the Mount of Olives, and rides into Jerusalem on a donkey to fulfill the ancient prophesy of Zechariah 9:9. The crowd welcomes Him into the city with shouts of "Hosanna" and lay down cloaks and palms in celebration (Matthew 23:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19). The long promised Messianic King had arrived (Psalm 118:25-28). Ironically, within days, the same crowds would gather to condemn Jesus and call for his crucifixion.

On Monday Jesus goes to the temple and finds the court of the Gentiles filled with money changers and religious profiteers. Sacrifices and offerings could only be purchased with Jewish coinage and anything else was considered "pagan" and therefore unacceptable. Seeing how business was conducted, Jesus turned the tables over and chased the violators away (Matthew 21:10-17; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-48). Many believe this was not the first time Jesus had done this. It is interesting that one of the first teachings Jesus gave, the parable of the sower and the seed, warns of the deceitfulness of riches (Mark 4:19), a lesson not learned in the Temple.

On Tuesday Jesus spends the day on the Mount of Olives teaching parables to the people who had gathered to hear him (Matthew 21:23-24:51). Jesus also warns the people of the Pharisees and successfully evades the

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The Children's Palm Sunday Procession of Praise



“Passion Week,” continued...

traps set for him. Interestingly Jesus predicts of the famed Temple being destroyed and tells his disciples of future events including His return. Ironically, the people didn't realize the Temple He spoke of was a reference to His own body; when destroyed (crucified), God would raise it up in three days (John 2:19).

On Wednesday, the Scriptures are silent on specifics. It appears to be a day of rest for Jesus. It is thought by some that Jesus visits friends on this day and is anointed with oil by Mary (Mark 14:1; John 12:1). References to the Passover put these events in close proximity. What is clear from the context is that enemies of Jesus are gathering behind the scenes to kill Him.

On Thursday, the most significant of the days, Jesus celebrates the Passover with His disciples in the upper room (Matthew 28:7-30; Mark 14:12-28; Luke 22:7-23; John 13:1-30). All four Gospels record the event. Preparations had been made not only for Passover but for Jesus' death. The loaf of bread and the cup of wine present at every Passover celebration would now be understood to represent the broken body of Christ and His shed blood on the cross. It is at this supper Judas leaves the group and betrays the Lord. Then Jesus and his disciples retreat to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives where Jesus prays into the night. It is during this “dark night of the soul” that Jesus is betrayed, unlawfully arrested, cruelly treated, and tried in hastily gathered civil and religious “courts.” In the case of Jesus, only one outcome was being pursued, death!

On Friday, Jesus is taken and crucified outside the city walls on a hill called Golgotha (the Place of the Skull). (Matthew 27:1-68; Mark 15:1-47; Luke 22; John 18-19). Naked and broken, Jesus is forced to carry the instrument of his death, a cross. His body was unrecognizable. Considered to be the most inhumane way to die, Jesus is crucified on a cross along with two other prisoners. Mary and

John bear testimony to Jesus' final words, *“it is finished!”* By 6:00 pm, the start of the Sabbath, the body of Jesus is placed into the tomb. His body remains in the tomb throughout the Sabbath. For many the world seemed over! Their Lord was dead...or so they thought.

On Sunday, “toward dawn of the first day of the week,” Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb (Matthew 28:1-13; Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24; John 20). To their surprise an angel descends from heaven; the earth quakes and miracles begin to happen. Most spectacular is the announcement from the angel, *“He is not here, for he has risen, as he said”* (v.6). Jesus is alive! He has resurrected from the grave. In obedience to the angel's charge, the women go and tell the disciples (and Peter) the good news.

The story of Jesus' final week only reveals it was the “final” week. From then until now, Jesus has been alive! In Mark 16:19, it says that Jesus was taken into heaven and now sits at the right hand of God. As to what He is doing, we are told that Jesus is praying for you and for me. He knows all about our joys and our heartaches. He knows our temptations and doubts- and still, He is praying for us. It could be said His worst week makes for my best week. To know that Jesus, God's son, came into this world to die for my sins (and for yours) is the most selfless act recorded in human history. If that is true, what should our response be?

Simply come to Jesus! Surrender to Him! Learn from Him! Follow Him! Hear His kind invitation when He writes, *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* (Matthew 11:28-29). Easter is about new beginnings. Why not come to Jesus. He will not turn you away. If you have questions, give me a call or send me an email or just talk to me. I would be honored to introduce you to my friend Jesus.

Fiesta Time!



Save the Date



Ladies Evening Out

Saturday, April 21, at 7:00 pm!

Let's get together to craft, chat and enjoy a cup of tea and dessert!

Everyone will make a super cute, colorful, paper wreath like the one shown here (all materials provided, and no experience required). Just come and enjoy spending time with your Windsor chapel friends and go home with a wreath ready to display or give away as a gift.

Feel free to invite your friends to join us! It will be fun!

Who: Windsor chapel women and their friends

When: April 21, at 7:00 pm

Cost: \$5/person

RSVP: Lisa Yamamoto or Lorraine Brown by Sunday, April 15

Wreath colors will vary. Each one is unique and your own special creation.

Elder's Corner

By Tom Taylor

Yes! Spring is here and with it comes new life, new sounds, fresh colors and new mysteries to explore. The wonders of creation reflect the wonder and glory of the Creator. Certainly, one way we know the splendor and majesty of our God is studying and enjoying His creation. Thankfully, it does not stop there. God has given us His written Word, the Bible. Not only is it written, it is living, active and sharper than any laser (two-edged sword). Separating our soul and spirit, bringing light and truth, judging our thoughts and motives. Oh, how we need it!

I recently purchased a new Bible that caught my attention. It is called the "Illuminated Bible." It is a modern-day version of a Middle Age Bible where scribes, monks and artists spent their lifetimes reproducing the Scriptures. Not only is it beautifully designed with lovely artwork and symbols, it is also very enjoyable to read. The verse on the back cover says it best: *"The unfolding of Your Words gives light"* (Psalm 119:130). I encourage you to get a copy and be refreshed in your spirit. Let it cleanse, strengthen and equip you.

*"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of
God!*

*How unsearchable are His judgments and how
Unfathomable His ways*

For who has known the mind of the Lord

Or who has been His counselor?

Or who has given a gift to Him

That He might be repaid?

*For from Him, and through Him and to Him are
all things.*

To Him be glory forever. Amen"

(Romans 11:33-36)



Perisseia

Godliness: The Bible exhorts us to pursue Godliness, but what does that look like in today's culture? Is Godliness the same as righteousness?

Is Godliness defined by performance? How do we know if we are Godly, or Godly enough? All women are invited as we take a closer look at Godliness and encourage one another in the outworking of our faith relationship with Christ. Perisseia begins a six-week series on Godliness on Thursday evening, April 12, 7:00-8:30. No commitment or preparation is required. For more information, please contact Cindy Bills (clbills@verizon.net; 609-275-8557).

11th Hour Classes

Epistles of John - All women are invited downstairs in Fellowship Hall for an informal inductive Bible study of John's Epistles. John's desire to share his personal experience with the incarnate Christ to subsequent generations of believers gives us a wonderful opportunity to learn from the Apostle whom Jesus loved. Teachers: Janet Berrill and Cindy Bills.

Discipleship Essentials - Men will study, "Discipleship Essentials," by Greg Ogden downstairs in Fellowship Hall. Through this study we will deepen our knowledge of essential Christian teaching and strengthen our faith. Teacher: Pastor Andy Straubel.

Prime Timers

Watch the bulletin for fellowship dinners and faith-inspiring videos. Prime Timers is open to all adults. Please contact Charlie Muldrow (609) 448-8910 for additional information.

Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

For the Joy Set Before Him

I maintain a commitment to regular exercise: six days a week, every week. This commitment started over 30 years ago when I wanted to reclaim my body after our son Daniel was born; it grew stronger as I began to appreciate the broader benefits of exercise—increased energy, positive mood, deeper and more efficient sleep, and a boosted immune system. But even with this history, it is more common than not that when I get up in the morning, I don't feel like exercising. I am tired, and I would prefer to sit at my computer with a cat in my lap and check the morning news. And, sometimes I do. But then, invariably, I put my running shoes on and get the dog ready for a jog, or I get the kettle bells out of the closet. I still don't feel like exercising. My choice to do it anyway doesn't deny my feelings; rather, it represents my understanding that exercise is the most effective way to resolve my feelings of fatigue and lethargy.

As we move from the season of Lent through Good Friday, and into Easter, it is a good time to consider Jesus. His prayer to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane reveals that He didn't feel like going to the cross. Those feelings were far from unreasonable: bearing the sins of the whole world for all time, compounded by the tortured death of crucifixion, was not something anyone would feel like doing. But Jesus went beyond His emotions and made a determined choice to go to the cross for the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). He wanted a reconciled and restored relationship with us so truly and so deeply that He accepted the emotional and physical agony necessary to get there.

So what do we do with this? First and foremost, the Easter season is an ideal opportunity to meditate on and praise God for His sacrifice for us. We can thank Jesus for moving beyond His feelings and making the choice to die for us. We can gratefully marvel that God loves and values us so much that He sent His son to die to restore our relationship with Him. I recently encountered a sign that read, "I may not be perfect but Jesus thinks I'm to die for." As we internalize this glorious truth, we, too, can follow Jesus as our Savior, Lord, and Model. We, too, can choose to accept sacrifice as we are called to participate in God's work of redemption, of calling people to Himself. Is my daily choice to exercise emotional agony? Of course not. But it is a most helpful reminder to not take Jesus' choice for granted, but rather to walk in grateful wonder before Him.

Please feel free to contact Cindy (609-275-8557 or clbills@verizon.net) to continue the dialogue....

On the first full day of spring, the fourth Nor'easter of March arrived...



A View of the Empire State Building

By Janet Berrill

The skyline of New York City is impressive. When viewed from New Jersey, it is easy to pick out familiar buildings: the new World Trade Center Building, the Chrysler Building, Citigroup Center, Woolworth Building and, of course the Empire State Building. Completed in 1931, for nearly forty-one years the Empire State Building stood as the world's tallest building until it was surpassed by the original World Trade Center North Tower which was completed in 1972. The familiar building shape makes the Empire State Building easy to pick out as you drive by New York City.

A couple of weeks ago I was in New York City with my husband, Larry. Larry was driving the car, and I was looking out the window when I noticed we were driving past the Macy's store on 34th Street. I knew the Empire State Building was very close to Macy's, so I started looking around to see if I could find it. Even though the two buildings are just a block apart, I was unable to locate the Empire State Building, the third tallest building in the city. When I looked around, because I was on the street surrounded by other buildings, all I could see was them. From a distance, the Empire State Building stands out and is easily recognizable, but when on the street in the area, you cannot see its great height or familiar shape due to it being obscured by the shorter buildings around it.

A little more than four and a half years ago, I began working at the GEICO Local Office in Hamilton. I thought I was being hired to be a receptionist, but I wound up doing support work for the sales agents. Because I was not a licensed agent, I was somewhat limited as to what I could do. Just over two years ago I felt God calling me to get my insurance license, so I studied, took the exams, and became a licensed agent which enabled me to do more in the area of support. Unfortunately, getting my license also had a negative effect – since I was now authorized to sell insurance policies, my boss decided he wanted me to do some selling which I was not interested in doing.

Last May I went on vacation, and when I came back there were many changes at my job. Most of the support tasks I was doing were taken away from me, and I was told I should work on selling home insurance policies. There were other things going on which all contributed to my being fairly unhappy at work for several months. Although I had loved working at GEICO for four years, I was at the point where I decided maybe it was time to look elsewhere for a job. I reached out to Kevin Simme who is starting a non-profit company called Wise Up to help at-risk high school students to both get into and succeed in college. I asked Kevin if he was looking for employees and he said yes, but not right away, sometime in early 2018. On March 5, I began my new job at Wise Up.

Throughout the summer and fall when things were not going well at work, I could not understand what was going on. I knew God had provided that job for me and I knew He called me to get my license, but I was not happy. I did not know if I was supposed to adjust to my new responsibilities or do something different. When the opportunity to work at Wise Up presented itself, I knew God had called me there.

When I was in the middle of all the unhappiness at work, I could not see the big picture, just like I could not see the Empire State Building when I was only a block away. It was only after starting at Wise Up that I looked back and saw how God had prepared me for this position over the years. If I had not gotten my license, my boss would not have pushed me to get into sales, which would not have made me unhappy, which would not have led me to look for another job. Throughout this entire time, God was guiding my steps, but I had no idea where they were leading. I feel now as if I am looking at the New York City skyline from New Jersey and seeing the Empire State Building.

If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter please e-mail:

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