

March 24th 2024



**Matthew 21:1-3** As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. **For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.** (Ephesians 2: 1-10)

**Prayer:** Pray for the works that God has called you to do, in the mercy of His grace. The Lord needs you, not because He is dependent on you, but because in His love, He has invited you to participate in His works of salvation. Pray for the strength to work in the calling of the Lord, in the works that He has prepared for you.

March 25th 2024



**Matthew 21:4-5** This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:8-11)

“The more I learned about God, the more I had to admit just how little and insignificant I was next to this big God. While the culture told me that God was just a bigger, better version of ourselves, the God I was discovering was one nothing like humans. Like never before, I resonated with Calvin’s confession: ‘Man is never sufficiently touched and affected by the awareness of his lowly state until he has compared himself with God’s majesty.’ Much like Job, the more I fathomed ‘God’s wisdom, power and purity,’ the more overwhelmed I became, especially in light of my own ‘stupidity, impotence, and corruption.’ Once I was sobered by God’s majesty, his infinite glory, supremacy, and perfection suddenly beamed bright, like the sun’s warm rays after a merciless, icy winter. The brightness of his divinity had blinded me, yet ironically, I could now see his beauty better than before” (Matthew Barrett, None Greater, p. 3)

**Prayer:** Spend some time in awe of the majesty of God. Not that God is only greater than you, but He is immeasurably above all things and in control of all things. Pray that in your life, “God will continue to increase as we decrease” (John 3:30).

March 26th 2024



**Matthew 21:6-9** The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

“You call me Master and obey me not. You call me Light and see me not. You call me Way and follow me not. You call me Life and desire me not. You call me Wise and acknowledge me not. You call me Fair and love me not. You call me Rich and ask me not. You call me Eternal and seek me not. You call me Gracious and trust me not. You call me Noble and serve me not. You call me Mighty and honour me not. You call me Just and fear me not. If I condemn you, blame me not.” (Engraved on a slab in the cathedral of Lubeck, Germany)

“Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God” (John 12:42-43)

**Prayer:** It is easy to say things, when there are no consequences for our actions. Jesus entered into Jerusalem to the cheers & praise of a large crowd and yet when He was condemned to death, He was left alone. When the opportunity came to surrender everything, many people, including Peter, decided that the cost was too high. Spend some time in prayer reflecting on your walk with God - specifically how do you respond when you enter into moments that require surrender. Do you surrender all or do you surrender some?

March 27th 2024



## **Matthew 21:10-11** When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “God’s Messiah” (Luke 9:18-20).

About three years ago, soon after becoming lead pastor, I sat down with the media team at my church and told them I wanted to launch a marketing campaign in our city. My goal: to get Jesus on the mind of Seattle. I didn’t want to prompt our church, I didn’t want to promote a doctrine, I just wanted people to think more about Jesus. Out of that little meeting came the “Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_” campaign.... The premise of the campaign was simply to get people thinking about Jesus. We felt that indifference was our greatest enemy. If we could just get people to think about Jesus, we reasoned, Jesus was more than able to reveal himself to them. The response was overwhelming. People have visited different pages on our website over 1 ½ million times. Seventy-five thousand people and counting have submitted answers to the blank questions.... Apparently, Jesus gets a reaction out of people. (Judah Smith, *Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_*, pp. xvi-xvii)

**Prayer:** Among the most important questions in this life is the question of “Who is Jesus?” This begins as a personal question, but as Jesus is revealed to us, in joy and excitement, we begin to ask this question to others. Spend some time in prayer answering the question, “Who is Jesus,” and praising Jesus for all that He is. Additionally, as Alpha approaches, pray about who you could invite into this dialogue concerning “Who is Jesus?”

March 28th 2024



**Matthew 21:12-13** Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. “It is written,” he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer,’but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’”

When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it...Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me.” And all the Levites rallied to him. Then he said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.’” The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” So Moses went back to the Lord and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” (Exodus 32:19-20,25-27,30-32)

“What we need today is not anger but anguish, the kind of anguish that Moses displayed when he broke the two tablets of the law and then climbed the mountain to intercede for his people, or that Jesus displayed when He cleansed the temple and then wept over the city. The difference between anger and anguish is a broken heart. It's easy to get angry, especially at somebody else's sins; but it's not easy to look at sin, our own included, and weep over it.”- Warren W. Wiersbe.

**Prayer:** As we have discussed before, it is all too easy to look over the sins of this world and feel anger. And this is important because as Henry Ward Beecher writes, “A man that does not know how to be angry does not know how to be good. Now and then a man should be shaken to the core with indignation over things evil.” And yet this anger needs to be joined with a holy brokenness for those who remain in darkness. Spend some time lifting up the sins of the world and praying for freedom for those trapped in those sins.



**Matthew 21:14-15** The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53)

**Prayer:** Over 2000 years ago, on this day Jesus gave His life for the life of the world, to redeem those who confess Him as their Lord and Saviour. Rejected, and crushed, Jesus hung and died on the cross. Spend some time in prayer as you bow at the foot of the cross.

March 30th 2024

**Matthew 21:16-17** “Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him. “Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read, “From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise’?” And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. *Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.* When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8)

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)

**Prayer:** God is mighty to save, and He works through the weak to humble the proud. When Jesus was arrested and crucified, His disciples ran away - scared and defeated. And yet, God’s strength cannot be measured but even in death He claimed victory as sin was defeated and the ruler of this world was cast out. Therefore, who should you fear? The will of God cannot be thwarted, but God’s kingdom will reign no matter the deeds of Satan. Like the Disciples on the day after Jesus was crucified, we also wait for His return - often surrounded by doubt and confusion. And yet, will you trust God in the waiting? Will you obediently follow Jesus in the waiting? Spend some time in prayer submitting yourself to God’s victory.