

Day One



The Celebration of the King John 12:12-19

Have you ever seen a championship parade? Think back to this year's Super Bowl champions. On the Wednesday following the game, the entire city of Philadelphia came out to celebrate the victorious team. There had been so much anticipation leading up to the Super Bowl, and finally these athletes were crowned champions. The excitement was contagious, and the crowd couldn't wait to witness this monumental event.

In a similar way, we see the "great multitude" that gathered when they heard Jesus was entering Jerusalem. The excitement and mystery surrounding this man from Nazareth was at an all-time high. News of His miracles had spread, including the astounding report that Lazarus had been raised from the dead. The energy was palpable.

Isn't it easy to praise Jesus when we see His hand at work? When we witness His power on display, it feels natural for us to praise God and give Him the glory in those victorious moments when His presence is undeniable. And make no mistake, He deserves ALL the glory. Every good thing we experience comes from Him!

But what happened with this same crowd just days later? The people who were singing, "Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," would soon be the ones calling for His crucifixion. The same voices that declared Him "King of Israel" would cry out for Jesus' death. Because in the darker moments of life, when all hope seems lost... we find where our faith truly lies. We tend to grow far more in the valleys of life than during those mountain-top experiences.

The reality is, Jesus was King as He entered town with waving palm branches, and He was King as He was nailed to the cross. The question is not about His identity or title, but rather, our response despite our situation. Who do you say that He is?

REFLECTION / PRAYER

As we enter this Holy season, take some time to reflect. Do we give Christ His due adoration and praise even when we don't see His hand at work? True worship isn't just about recognizing Jesus as a miracle worker or problem solver – it's about acknowledging Him as our Savior, King, and Lord!!

Day Two

SW

Death Brings Life John 12:20-50

Death is promised to all of us, yet it is also one of our greatest fears. When faced with a life-threatening disease, we often find ourselves frantic, searching for a cure. Trillions of dollars are spent on healthcare annually. Yet, in John 12:25, Jesus says, *'He who loves his life will lose it; and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life'*. Jesus paints death in a surprising light, comparing it to "a grain of wheat that produces much fruit". Right after sharing this analogy, He immediately backs it up with action by predicting His own death. His death would be excruciating, but it would also bear abundant fruit: it would save the world by forgiving sins, defeating death, and offering eternal life with the Creator. What a future! What a promise!

If this gift is so simple, then why do people reject it and continue to deny Jesus today? And why are Christians so often silent about Jesus? Because we love our lives. Physical death is scary, but so the death of our old self (2 Cor. 5:17). I remember a time when my flesh craved a drink of alcohol, even though God had called me out of drinking. The enemy whispered *"No one will ever know. You'll feel better. It's just one drink"* but the truth was that these were lies. My desires needed to die. My flesh had to die because it was slowly starving my faith. This was an opportunity: glorify self or glorify God. We must choose. In John 12:27-28 Jesus says, *"But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name."* Jesus knew His assignment.

What is your life's purpose? If you claim to follow Christ, the answer is simple: it's to glorify the Father. This means your old self must die. In my experience, this is a daily practice. Every morning - sometimes every hour - asking the Lord to prune me of pride and selfish ambition, giving Him permission to take control. While this is difficult, something beautiful happens in the process. Addictions are healed, relationships are renewed, lives are changed, and souls are saved.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Lord, help me to love You more than my own life. Show me how to trust You. There are times I want to take control because it makes me feel safe. Forgive me for doubting You. You created me, You know my name, You love me, and You know what's best for me. Thank you, Lord. I surrender all my fears to You. My life belongs to You. I give it to You. I love You, Jesus.

Amen.

Day Three



True Humility John 13:1-17

Scripture is filled with numerous examples of how Christ chose to be a servant, teaching us as Christians to care for the welfare of those around us. One of the clearest and most profound examples is found in John 13:1-17, where Jesus washes His disciples' feet. Although Jesus possessed all power and glory, He chose to display His great love for them one more time before His death, by stooping low to serve them. This act revealed Christ's humility, which stemmed from a deep confidence in His identity and sacred mission.

In Jesus' time, the lowest servant in a household would wash the feet of those entering the home. The disciples were horrified that Jesus, their Lord, was going to wash their feet. Peter, in particular, voiced his concern in verses 6-9.

The simple act of serving others out of our love for the Lord often speaks to the hearts of non-believers in profound ways. This act can plant a seed in their lives, serving as one of the strongest testimonies of what God is truly like, in stark contrast to today's culture. True servanthood is not a popular subject, as many see it as beneath them. But God calls us to see ourselves as living sacrifices, willing to do whatever He asks, for whomever He asks. Our Christlikeness is evident when we love God and others so deeply that we willingly humble ourselves for their sake.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Jesus performed one of the lowliest tasks of His day to demonstrate His servanthood. What are you willing to do for Him?

Day Four



The New Commandment: Love One Another John 13:18-34

When Judas went out into the darkness to set his betrayal into motion, Jesus turned His focus on the divine mission ahead. He spoke tenderly to His disciples, preparing them for His departure and the challenges they would soon face. He gave them a new command: “*As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*” Why did Jesus call this a new command? After all, the command to love is found in the Old Testament, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Lev. 19:18). And in the Sermon on the Mount, we see Jesus take this command even further, telling us to love our enemies (Matt 5:43-44). So, what makes Jesus’ command “new”?

Two things stand out. First, Jesus says, “*As I have loved you.*” For three years He modeled perfect love toward His disciples in countless ways. His love was never based on their worthiness. He never turned His back on them; He was patient, persevering through their mistakes. He continually taught them through highs and lows, victories and failures. He fed them, both physically and spiritually. In humility, He modeled servant love by washing their feet. And as they were about to witness, He would carry out the ultimate act of love by sacrificing His life on the cross, paying the penalty for sin once and for all in order to restore our relationship with the Father and give us the most valuable gift, eternal life.

Secondly, we ask, “*How?*” How do we actually live out this kind of love? Doesn’t Jesus command something impossible from us? Yes, and I believe this is what makes His command new. Jesus didn’t just pay the debt for our sins - He also sent His Holy Spirit to live in us. This is the difference. This is the answer to the *how* of His command. We may be able to imitate a few random acts of love, but without the Holy Spirit, we cannot love others with the same depth of love that Jesus demonstrates. His love is different. Jesus *is* love, and He is the power by which we love. We are simply His vessels.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Take time to sit quietly and ask the Lord to remind you of ways He has modeled love to you. Write out what He shows you and then thank Him for each one and for the person through whom His love came to you. And then in response pray, “Here I am Lord, use me today. Give me eyes to recognize the opportunities You bring that I may be the vessel to carry your love to someone who needs You.”

Day Five



Empowered for Greater Things John 14: 1-14

In these verses lies one of the most well-known quotes of Jesus in Scripture. If you've spent any time in church, you're likely familiar with it. In verse 6, Jesus says to His disciples, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* This verse highlights a foundational truth of the Gospel: Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. He alone possesses the power to save us - those who could never save ourselves. But he doesn't keep that power to Himself. He shares it with all who believe in Him, through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In verses 12-13, Jesus continues, *"whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."*

Jesus, who walked on water and raised the dead, just promised that if those who believe in Him have the power to do the very things He did - and even greater things. We are empowered to do incredible things because Jesus Himself said so.

But verse 13 holds the key. The works that God calls us to do are not accomplished by our own strength. Rather these works are carried out through us by the power we have received from Jesus, if we submit to His will and follow His calling. And while these works aren't meant for our own glory, they are meant to glorify the Father through the Son, we do get to experience the blessings that come with them.

What would it look like if we all asked, in Jesus' name, for God to use us to accomplish great things for His glory? What impact could we have on the Roanoke Valley and beyond?

REFLECTION / PRAYER

God, what new areas of my life do You want to use for Your glory? Thank you for giving me Your power in Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

The Peace Jesus Promises John 14:15–31

Maybe you remember the scene from *Miss Congeniality* where the pageant contestants are asked, “What is the one most important thing our society needs?” All the contestants, except for the main character, answer with the same response: *world peace*. It’s a comical moment, but it also makes you think. As believers, what is our understanding of that phrase? What does world peace really mean?

In this passage of Scripture, Jesus promises believers several things. He promises a Helper, the Holy Spirit, to be with us and help us. He also promises peace. After Jesus was born, the shepherds were visited by angels who praised God, saying, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.” This peace doesn’t mean the absence of conflict on earth, rather it is peace between God and humanity. The relationship between God and man was broken by sin, and this peace is the restoration of that relationship.

In John 14:27, Jesus is essentially saying good-bye to His disciples, but He’s taking a normal good-bye and filling it with deep strength and meaning. He is letting them know that not only is He sending the Holy Spirit, He’s also offering them supernatural peace. Often, we try to find peace through distraction or by avoiding our struggles. But Jesus offers something so much better – real, lasting peace. When we turn to God, listen to Him, and read His word, He works in us. The result? Joy and peace, regardless of our circumstances.

But this doesn’t mean it’s easy. Choosing to focus on God and His peace, rather than fear or distraction, is not a passive act. It’s an intentional choice. If you keep your eyes on Him, He will give you the peace you need.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Lord, Today help me to choose You and the peace that only You can give.
Amen.

Day Seven



Abiding in the Master Gardener John 15:1-17

I love the imagery of the farmer or vineyard keeper in this message. If you have a houseplant, you treasure and need someone to care for it while you're away, don't ask me to do the job! By the time you return, it might be dead. Enter Jesus' powerful words in John 15:5, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."* When we begin a relationship with Him, we find a master gardener who knows precisely what each plant needs. He knows precisely how to nourish us so we can thrive - exactly how much water, light, and care we need. He understands the proper balance of soil and nutrients to help us grow to our full potential. I don't know the difference between phosphorus and nitrogen, let alone how much each plant needs.

Perhaps you do have a green thumb and can make things grow, even bringing back plants that seem to be on the verge of death. But even with a wealth of knowledge as a gardener or farmer, there's always an x-factor—external circumstances we can't control. We can't prevent flooding or pestilence. We can't fully protect our crops from the invasive forces of life that come to destroy what we've worked for. There's too much beyond our control or understanding. Enter God. He knows. He knows exactly what his creation needs to thrive. Not that, but He longs for nothing more than for his prized creation - us - to thrive. We are His workmanship. There's no joy or glory in a crop that produces no fruit, no blessings in a rose bush that never blooms. Jesus wants us to blossom and flourish.

So what is our part in all of this? What does it require of us? To remain. To stay close to Him. To abide in the Word every day and walk with Him every step of the way. He does the work, and we simply draw near, allowing Him to work in us.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Ask God to teach you how to abide in Him. Confess those things that keep you from remaining close. Ask Him to give you a hunger for the Word, prayer, and obedience to Him. Tell Him you love Him and need the Holy Spirit to help you abide every moment of the day!

Day Eight



Out of This World John 15:18-27

Ever felt like an alien in this world? Do you ever look around and realize you don't quite fit in with society? That's not a bad thing. In fact, Jesus indicated this truth to His disciples in some of His final words. He never promised us that following Him would be easy (2 Tim 3:12). Jesus didn't promise us lives of comfort or popularity (Luke 6:26). In fact, it's quite the opposite. He assured us that, as His followers, we would face persecution, division, and rejection. Yet in the midst of it all, He would remain worthy.

It's crucial to remember that when we face these struggles, the persecution is not personal. Ultimately, it's a rejection of Christ, not of us. When confronted with their sin, many will push back and become defensive. It is a natural response, as accountability is tough, and truth can be hard to accept. What they reject is not us, but Christ. Yet, even knowing this, it can still be hard not to feel hurt or isolated when others dismiss our faith.

But here's the good news! Jesus did not leave us to face these struggles alone. One of the most encouraging promises in all the Bible comes right after these warnings. In John 15:26-27, Jesus says:

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

We are never truly alone! We are given and indwelt with the Helper, the Holy Spirit of the Living God.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Have you felt like an outsider recently? Have you experienced moments of loneliness or alienation because of your faith? Remember this truth: the same power that raised Christ from the dead lives within you. Jesus did not leave us to walk this life of devotion in our own strength. He is with us in both the valleys and the mountaintops, leading and guiding us until the day we meet Him face to face!

Day Nine



A Needed Helper John 16:1-15

Have you ever accomplished a task that you didn't think possible? Maybe because a friend helped unexpectedly, a deadline was extended, or your ability outperformed your own expectation? Regardless of the specifics, we usually begin big tasks with nervousness, anxiety, and even frustration only to reach the end with the realization that what often seemed impossible was very much achievable.

At the beginning of John 16 we find Jesus speaking to His disciples, explaining the cost of following Him. Imagine this ... being told that the same people who would soon crucify and kill Christ would also hate and kill you. Sign me up, right? Honestly, we struggle to follow Jesus in things as simple as reading his Word, much less following His example in the face of real danger. When we are asked to sacrifice our time, money, preferences, or sin ... are we obedient? Or does the anxiety of what others may think, and frustration over the inconvenience it may cause, dictate our response?

In John 16:1-15, Jesus promises the disciples the Holy Spirit, "a helper," as they face a likely death sentence for following Jesus. There they stood, facing a monumental task. Can you imagine the emotions flooding through them? Jesus would soon leave their presence, and they would be left to face the world seemingly alone. In that moment they had a choice, the same choice we have, to turn to their own feelings or to trust that He has given someone even better, an "advocate" and "comforter", to be with us and to offer the strength and support needed to walk out our faith in a world that will surely mock our teachings, despise our ways, and even challenge the Truth we hold. In the end, the Holy Spirit is available to each of us when we choose to follow Jesus and by doing so, we allow this "advocate" to bring progressive changes in our lives that lead others to that same Truth. The needed Helper ... are you trusting in Him daily?

REFLECTION / PRAYER

As I seek Your face today, Lord, I praise you because you _____.
Father, help me stay confident despite my circumstances knowing that you always provide the Holy Spirit as my Helper. May I not be worried when the world opposes me but instead trust in Your power for the victory.

Day Ten



Peekaboo Jesus John 16:16-33

Most everyone has experienced the joy of playing peekaboo with a baby. You can play it over and over again, and each time the baby will giggle and laugh. But why? Well, it turns out that before age two, babies have not yet learned the concept of object permanence. They don't realize that an object (or person) still exists, even if they cannot see it.

In a similar way, it seems as if Jesus is playing a game of peekaboo with his disciples. He says, *"In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."* Jesus is preparing them for His upcoming death (now you don't see me), His resurrection (now you see me), and His departure to return to the Father (now you don't see me). Elsewhere, Jesus makes it clear that He will come back again (now you see me).

At first, the disciples don't understand what He means. They eventually claim to understand. But do they? Jesus' question, "Do you now believe?" reveals His frustration with their slowness to understand. It also shows His awareness that they don't fully comprehend the depth of what's coming. Did they miss the part about the pain of a woman giving birth? It's not going to be an easy road. They're about to be scattered. They will face hardships and trouble in this world.

A baby laughs when playing peekaboo because they're surprised when you show your face again. They weren't expecting it. The purpose of Jesus' message here is for the disciples (and us) to know that we should be expecting to see Him. It shouldn't be a surprise when He returns.

Jesus' final point is the most critical: This last peekaboo is not just a few seconds or a few days. It's a few millennia. There's some 'stuff' we will have to endure in the meantime – difficult, painful stuff. But we can take heart because Jesus has overcome the world.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

How do we understand this? The word translated 'take heart' means 1) to be of good courage, and 2) to be of good cheer. Are we to be happy about the difficult, painful stuff? Not necessarily. Jesus used the example of the woman giving birth not to suggest that the pain of childbirth is enjoyable, but to show that the joy of having a child makes her forget the pain. Whatever 'stuff' we are facing, we can endure it with courage because we know Jesus is coming back. When we see Him, all the bad stuff will be gone, and the new stuff will be so great we will forget the hardships we faced before. And all of this is possible because of Easter.

Peekaboo. I see you.

Day Eleven



A Prayer for You John 17:1-19

I pray that you may know God as your Heavenly Father and come to know His Son, Jesus – whose life was lived to glorify His Father (v.1). I pray that you will know that you have the assurance of eternal life, knowing this is eternal life: to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent (v. 3). I pray that you will know with confidence that Jesus is the Word of God, who was with God and is God. He was in the beginning with God and now is with God in glory (v. 5, John 1:1-2).

I pray that you will receive the words of Jesus and come to understand in truth that He came from God, believing God sent Him (v. 8). I pray that you will grasp the amazing reality that Jesus specifically prayed for you, and that you are His (v. 9). May the Lord Jesus be glorified in you through the Holy Spirit (v. 10). I pray that you will feel the security and joy of unity with fellow believers through Jesus's name (v. 11-12).

I pray that the joy of the Lord may be fulfilled in you as you keep His Word (v. 13-14). I pray that God will protect you and keep you from the evil one (v. 15) and sanctify you in the truth, for God's Word is truth (v. 17). May you continue to be sanctified by the Lord as you live in the truth of God's Word, our standard for which everything else must be tested (v.19). May you be empowered and encouraged as you are daily sent into the world, representing God as His ambassador to His glory forever (vs. 18). In Jesus's name, Amen.

Through Jesus's example of prayer, we see His power as God's Son and His design for believers to have spiritual union with God and personal fellowship that comes from that union. As we are sent into the world to share the good news of Jesus, we can rest in knowing that He is praying for us, and God, who knows us by name, will provide the power and protection we need.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

- Read John 17:1-19. Take time to pray this scripture over those that God puts on your heart.
- Ask the Lord to reveal any areas where you may be struggling to trust His Word and give you renewed hope in His grace, power and love.

Day Twelve



Prayer for Unity John 17:20-26

I enjoy most sports, but nothing compares to my love for baseball. From Little League all the way up to the MLB, I excitedly await opening day for each level of the game and enjoy the entire season. My younger brother has played since he was old enough to hold a bat, and I can still distinctly remember his high school years and the fascinating process of recruitment. Coaches, players, and alumni would show up at his tournaments, sharing stories about how this school or that school had changed their lives, the amount of scholarship money offered, or the upgraded facilities.

Ultimately, he chose to play at James Madison University, and for the next five years, I spent one weekend each fall and every free weekend from February to May at his home games. His teammates had been complete strangers to us before, but they quickly became like family. Each player had their own past, varying levels of experience, different strengths, and weaknesses, but on that field, they were united, as one team.

It may seem juvenile to relate a baseball team to the body of Christ, but there's an important connection when it comes recruitment and unity. Jesus spent His final night not just praying for future believers, but specifically that we would be one. As we read this prayer, it's important to remember that "oneness" does not mean "sameness". Jesus knew that each of us would have our flaws, but He intended for our differences to be brought together in harmony under God's guidance.

The word "one" is used five times within just four verses of His prayer. But perhaps the greatest evidence that God desires unity is that He sent His Son to be one of us. Jesus references this in verse 23. Our biblical unity is centered on God's love for us, demonstrated through His Son, Jesus Christ. As we enter this Easter season, I pray that you are not only focused on the "one" God is calling you to disciple, but also spend some time in prayer about your unity within the body of Christ.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Lord, we come to you today with thankful hearts. Thank you for loving us, thank you for dying for us, and thank you for praying for us. Lord, help us not to let our differences create discord but rather with your help live in the oneness of your love. Thank you for sending your son to be one of us and demonstrate how great your love truly is. It is in Christ name we pray today.

Amen.

Day Thirteen



Will You Drink from The Cup?

John 18:1-27

This chapter in John marks the beginning of Jesus' last days on earth. The Romans have come to arrest Jesus, who has been betrayed by Judas. Notably, Jesus is detained at night, which was unusual for Jewish culture at the time. Arrests and trials typically took place during the day. This detail makes this event even more significant, as these events unfold in secret. Throughout this passage, we see the religious leaders making decisions, but who is really in control here? We know it's God, yet they think they are orchestrating the perfect plan.

Jesus does not run away or defend himself. As a result, Peter decides to act. In John 18:10-11, it says, *"Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. But Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?'"*

In this moment, Peter's actions seem admirable. It's understandable – Jesus was being arrested, and Peter wanted to defend Him. But what Peter didn't fully understand was that he was trying to control a situation instead trusting that God was in control. Peter acted impulsively, out of emotion – does that sound familiar to anyone? At times, we all struggle with reacting before thinking and trying to control things ourselves. But Jesus was not doing that. Instead of retreating, he moved forward in confidence, knowing He had committed to drinking from the cup the Father had given Him.

The "cup" Jesus refers to has deep significance. In Jeremiah 25:15-16 and Isaiah 51:22, the cup symbolizes God's wrath – the judgement humanity deserves. But thanks to Jesus, we don't have to face that wrath. As Romans 5:9 says, *"And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation."* (Pause for praise dance!) Jesus drank that cup once and for all, bearing the penalty for our sins.

Jesus could have said no. Have you ever thought about that? Jesus could have told his Father, "I don't want to do this. Let's find another way." But He didn't. He drank the cup. As we read in Matthew 26:39b, *"My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."* He took the weight of all sin upon Himself and died a sinner's death. Why? Because He loves us. This was God's plan all along.

Has God ever asked you to drink from a cup that seemed overwhelming or difficult? Is He calling you to step forward and face a situation rather than running in the other direction? Let's take a moment to pray and ask God to help us get out of the way - so that instead of our plans unfolding, we can watch Him move through us to fulfill His design for our lives.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Lord, thank you for drinking from the cup of suffering for me. I want to live a life that honors you, so I ask that you help me get out of the way of your will for my life. Just like Jesus, I want your will to be done and not mine. Give me your wisdom and discernment to know the difference between being led by my emotions or The Holy Spirit. Not my will but yours be done, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Day Fourteen



Red Flags John 17:20-26

People often talk about “red flags” - indicators that something is not right. While the phrase may be new, the concept is as old as time. Throughout this passage there are several examples of red flags to consider ...

In Jesus’ final days, He was put on trial before the Romans in the palace of the governor, Pilate. “What charges are you bringing against this man?” Pilate asked, wanting the Jews to judge Jesus themselves. However, they were not permitted to put anyone to death, so they brought Him to the governor.

Red Flag 1: Seeking Your Plans Above All Else

The Jews needed a loophole, a way around the system to accomplish their goals. When you reach the end of your own resources, stop and seek the Lord. He is always able to make a way, but ensure it aligns with His will.

Pilate asked, “Are you the king of the Jews?” To which Jesus responded, “Is that your own idea or did others talk to you about me?” Pilate was relying on what others said about Jesus instead of figuring out who Jesus was to him.

Red Flag 2: Relying on the Opinions of Others

Stay grounded in Scripture and let that guide your thoughts. Jesus reveals the truth with humility and grace, explaining who He is in a way only He can. Don’t solely rely on the opinions of others, as it can lead to costly mistakes, as we will soon see.

After hearing this testimony, Pilate could find no basis for a charge against Jesus, but he refused to go against the crowd. As was custom during Passover, he offered to release one criminal. He asked the crowd if they wanted him to release Jesus. “Not him,” they shouted. “Give us Barabbas!” Pilate relented.

Red Flag 3: Acting out of Fear of Others

Pilate acted out of his fear of the people, despite knowing what was true. He had no charges against Jesus, but to appease the crowd, he released a criminal and ordered the crucifixion of Jesus.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Red flags are often seen as bad things, but they don’t always have to be. Sometimes they are a reminder to turn and follow the one who made us. In today’s world, we often see red flags as distractions or schemes of the enemy. But this Easter season, let’s allow the red flags in our lives to point us back to the One who is good and perfect – the One who uses everything, even the red flags, to achieve His purposes (Romans 8:28).

Day Fifteen



Obedience to Truth Over Pressure John 19:1-16

Hours before His death, Jesus endured intense humiliation and suffering. The Roman soldiers, under Pilate's orders, flogged and mocked Him, placing a crown of thorns on His head and draping Him in a purple robe to ridicule His claim as "King of the Jews." Pilate, seeking to pacify the Jewish leaders without executing Jesus, found himself trapped between their demands and his duty to maintain Roman order. Despite his efforts to satisfy the crowd without taking a definitive stance, the mob's cries grew louder: "Crucify, crucify!"

One statement from the Jewish leaders shook Pilate deeply: "He claimed to be the Son of God" (v. 7). Suddenly, Pilate realized the gravity of the situation. His fear intensified as he faced the possibility that Jesus was more than just an ordinary man. Pilate questioned Jesus, seeking clarity and perhaps reassurance. Yet Jesus' calm, unshaken response revealed the truth: "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (v. 11). This statement highlighted a profound reality—God's sovereignty is over all earthly authority.

Pilate's indecision ultimately led him to surrender to the crowd's demands. He prioritized the approval of others over the Truth that stood before him. This moment invites us to reflect on our own lives. Are there situations where we, like Pilate, feel torn between external pressures and obedience to God?

The call to action is clear: we must recognize that our power and authority come from God, not others' opinions or worldly systems. When faced with difficult decisions, pausing and seeking God's guidance is essential. What challenges in your life feel overwhelming right now? Is there a decision you are wrestling with because of competing voices? Take time right now to stop, quiet the noise, and listen for God's still, small voice.

REFLECTION / PRAYER

Today, consider handing over your worries to God and trusting in His sovereignty. Ask Him to give you clarity and courage to follow His will, even when it's challenging. As you reflect, remember Jesus' example of peace and submission to the Father's plan, even amidst suffering. May this truth encourage you to draw closer to Him and trust His ultimate authority over your life.