

SUNDAY

April 8, 2012

READ: Matthew 20: 1- 10

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS :

What day is it in this passage? What had just taken place prior to this scene? Who are the people involved in this passage? What do you think the state of mind of the two Marys is in verse 1? What happens to frighten the guards? What is the incredible news that the angel tells the women? How did this affect them?

KEY CONCEPT: Jesus conquered death. His resurrection is the key to our faith in Christ as our Savior

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Picture yourself as one of the women coming to the tomb. Earthquake. Angel. Rolls back stone. Guards frightened out of their wits. What would you be thinking at this point? What did both the angel and Jesus tell the women? Would you be prepared to believe, or would you still be skeptical of the resurrection?

If you are a believer in the resurrection, what was it that caused you to reach that conclusion? Why does our faith hinge on the truth of that occurrence? If you do not yet believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, what are the reasons you are still skeptical? Are you willing to keep an open mind about the possibility of it's truth?

PRAY: Easter! Celebrate the One who has overcome death to set you free from the eternal consequences of your own sin. Fill your prayers today with praise for who God is, and thanksgivings for what He has done. If you have not yet placed your trust in Jesus as your Savior, use your prayer time today to earnestly ask God to help you know what is true about the resurrection. Consider reading a book that can help you learn more, such as [The Case for Christ](#), by Lee Strobel.

MONDAY

April 9, 2012

READ: Matthew 28:1-15 (Focus: vss. 11-15)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: To whom did the guards go, and what did they do? What did the priests do after hearing this information? What did the guards then do? Was this plan successful?

KEY CONCEPT: Satan tries very hard to obscure the truth of Jesus' resurrection, as it is the key to the Gospel (which means "good news") message.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Have you ever been duped into believing something that turned out to be totally different than what you had been told? Why was the lie told to you? What difference did it make when you discovered the real truth?

Why was it so important to the chief priests and elders that the news of Jesus' resurrection be covered up with a lie (refer back to Matt. 27:62-65)? Why is it so important to humanity that the truth of the resurrection be widely known (See John 3:16-18 and 1 Cor. 15:14).

PRAY: Satan is still at work in this world, trying to deceive people and hinder the spread of the Gospel. Today, ask God for a blessing of discernment, which will help you to be able to sift out truth from falsehood in what you read, hear, and see in today's culture. This is important so that you will not be taken in by messages that would try to lead you astray from the truth of Jesus Christ.

TUESDAY

April 10, 2012

READ: Matthew 28: 16-20

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: Where were the disciples heading? What did they do when they got there? Were they in total unity? What did Jesus say to give Himself credibility? With His credibility established, what command did He give to the disciples? What did He promise them?

KEY CONCEPT: Jesus tells His followers to take the truth about Himself to those who have not yet heard. We are to teach obedience to His commandments.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: How do you understand your responsibilities as a Christian? Was what Jesus said to the disciples in this passage just for them, or was it a message to all who place their faith in Him...including you? As you read the Great Commission, are you convicted that you are not fully living out what Jesus asks of you? Do you know what the commands of Jesus are, so that you know if you are being obedient to them or not?

PRAY: Sharing the good news about Jesus has been likened to offering a drink of cold water to one who is parched, or giving food to someone that is starving. It restores life. In your prayer time, ask God to reveal to you today someone whom you can share that cup of cold water...offering them a word of encouragement that will bless them, and perhaps provide an opportunity at some point for you to share the reason for your faith in Jesus (see 1 Peter 3:15).

WEDNESDAY

April 11, 2012

READ: John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 3:23; 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; 10:13

EXPLANATION: These verses, while not all taken from the book of Romans, is collectively called "The Roman Road." They are some of the key texts that explain our condition apart from Jesus Christ, why He came, what He did, and what difference it makes in our life. It is good for everyone to review these verses from time to time, but especially if you have not yet placed your trust in Jesus for your salvation and as the leader of your life.

KEY CONCEPT*: The Bible clearly explains the purpose of Jesus' visitation on Earth, and the importance of our response to what He has done.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Before you made a decision to believe the Gospel message, what were your primary reasons for not doing so? What changed in your life that caused you to reconsider what you believed?

In light of the message of Easter just passed (Jesus' resurrection), what questions do you have about Jesus and why He came? Does the Roman Road help with answers to those questions?

PRAY: In your quiet time today, thank God for not just coming to Earth, but for providing a written message that lives throughout the ages - a message that gives hope and can change lives. If you are still not fully on board, ask God to help you to hear from Him through the Bible. Then start a reading plan (the church publishes on in each Weekender or you can pick up a [The Daily Bread](#) devotional at Guest Services) that will help you to begin that journey with Him.

THURSDAY

April 12, 2012

READ: Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 1:4-5; Acts 2:38; 8:35-38; 16:31, 33

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What unites all of the above Scripture passages? Who is to participate in this ritual?

KEY CONCEPT: Baptism is an outward and visible sign of an inward grace that proclaims our new life in Christ.

QUOTES: "Baptism separates the tire kickers from the car buyers." - Max Lucado; "Baptism is faith in action." Watchman Nee; "God's people should be baptized because God commanded it, not because some church requires it." John R. Rice

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: What is the purpose of baptism? What does your baptism mean to you personally? If you have placed your faith in Jesus as your forgiver and the leader of your life...but have not yet been baptized, it is appropriate that you do so as a public testimony to the decision you have made about Jesus Christ.

You may indicate your interest in being baptized on your Weekender communication card so that we can let you know when our next baptism service is scheduled.

PRAY: As you remember your baptism today, thank God anew for His amazing grace. You may want to take time for a moment of private worship, singing a song such as Amazing Grace, or another which is a personal favorite of yours and reflects your thanksgiving for Jesus' sacrificial love for you.

FRIDAY

April 13, 2012

READ: 2 Timothy 16-17

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What does Paul say about what Scripture is useful for? What is its ultimate purpose ("so that _____")

KEY CONCEPT: As believers, we need to read and understand the Bible to be fully equipped for living a life that honors God.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Have you ever wondered how reading, studying, and meditating on Scripture will actually change you--what effect will it have? On your relationships with family, neighbors, and co-workers? On your decision-making? The way you handle disappointments, challenges, and serious trials? Have you thought about the idea that the Bible can be this practical for you?

Do you have an interest in learning more about how to read the Bible? McLane Church will be starting our spring sermon series this weekend. It is titled "40 Days in the Word," and it is designed to help you understand how to read the Bible. Plan now to participate in this series!

PRAY: God desires us not only to own a Bible, but to actively read it and apply it's truths in our lives. Today, if you don't already have one, ask for God's help in finding a Bible that you can understand easily. (Feel free to visit the GroupLife Center as part of this process.) Also each time you are going to read Scripture, ask Him to help you understand it. That's one of the roles that the Holy Spirit can play in your life.

SATURDAY

April 14, 2012

READ: Ephesians 2:8-10

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: How is it that we have been saved? Who has created us, and for what purpose?

KEY CONCEPT: Our response to God's amazing grace and love is to honor Him by doing good works.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Have you ever wondered if people were doing good works to try to earn their place in heaven? How is that understanding different than from what today's Scripture passage tells us? In light of the cross of Jesus (His self-sacrifice for you), do you have a desire to do good works which God has prepared in advance for you to do? How are you living that out in your life? What opportunities for service are around you that perhaps you might participate in this spring?

PRAY: One who is thankful for God's love serves with a spirit of joy, not drudgery or obligation. Today, find some passages in Psalms that help you put words to the joy you have in your relationship with your Lord. Pray them to God with a grateful heart. If you are not already involved in serving somewhere, stop by the Service Outlet this weekend before or after worship and discover what opportunities exist for serving at McLane.

40 DAYS

Personal Devotional Guide :: April 8-14, 2012
McLane Church :: Erie County, PA