



Worship & Weekly Devotional Notes

**St Luke's - Albury
Home of FRONTIER**

Ps. David Grulke

Mr Malcolm Hall

(The Great) Timothy Edwards

PALM SUNDAY / SUNDAY OF PASSION

(Purple)

Empty and Full

March 25, 2018

Whether you're a visitor or have been with us for a long time, it is exciting for us to gather together as one in the presence of the Lord to Worship and be fed by him.

These Devotional Notes are for your spiritual journey. We encourage you to re-read this week's readings, say the gathering and missional prayer daily, reflect on the sermon, read the coming lessons, and work through the study guide.



As Disciples we need to pray daily, read our Bibles, worship weekly, serve others, develop spiritual friendships, and give generously.



This Sunday often seems caught between two poles. On one hand, we recall Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem to the shouts of hosanna. On the other hand, the Gospel seems to jump the gun at Holy Week and tell the whole story nearly a week ahead. The Epistle forms a bridge between the two, reminding us that Jesus did not enter for the accolades of the crowd but to be obedient unto death, even death on a cross, to save us. The crowd's welcome was prophetic in this regard—calling on Him who would save them, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." Today we add our voices in welcome, knowing that in order to save us from sin and its death, our Lord had to suffer in our place on the cross and die in our place to set us free from sin and its death. What a great entrance into Holy Week!

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GATHERING PRAYER:

Almighty Father, You sent Your Son not for the accolades of the crowd but for the suffering of the cross. Give us faith so that we may recognize what He came to accomplish, rejoice in what His obedient love has done for our salvation, and acclaim Him Lord with hosannas without end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK: (PAGE REFERENCE ESV)

OLD TESTAMENT READING Zechariah 9:9–12 (The prophet foretells of the humble King.) (p797)



HOLY GOSPEL Mark 14 - 15 ("READING OF THE PASSION.") (p850)

MISSION PRAYER

While we pray the Lord's Prayer as a gift from Jesus teaching us how to pray, there is only one prayer our Lord has commanded his church to actually pray. *37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:35-38)*

Together, let us ask the Lord of the harvest to send us out to be his people to the world in which we live.

Stop & Pray twice each day:

Lord of The Harvest, we know the need is great and there are too few to pursue the task we face. Move us by your Holy Spirit and Jesus' compassion and love towards those we know who are open to you. Send workers, yes even us, into your harvest field. Amen

(Imagine what could happen if every congregational member set an alarm to pray this every day at a specific time??)

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: He lent his donkey

One day two disciples of the master turned up, untied the donkey and began to lead it away. The owner was reassured "The master has need of it." Bible scholars tell us that Jesus had a special reason to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. But for the owner it was good enough, it was reason enough, that Jesus simply needed the donkey.

How would you respond to a request from your pastor for the use of your motor car? Would you let him or her say "I need it" and leave it at that? Or would you negotiate carefully the terms of the loan? Or would you feel affronted that they even asked? In stewardship, we hold all that we are and all that we have at the disposal of our Lord. This, in a small way, is the way of the cross - which is the ultimate stewardship.



Mark 14 & 15 (The Passion of Christ) - Empty and Full.

Preparing for a trip away is both exciting and draining. There's so often so much to do, depending on the trip of course. One must get the tickets, make sure the travel documents you need are correct, pack the right sort of clothes for the destination, secure the house for your absence, and so the list continues. It's almost exhausting just preparing for the trip, much less the challenge of travelling. But whenever we do plan and prepare we always have the destination in mind. We are confident that the destination is worth all the time and effort to prepare.

Today we begin our Easter journey. People miss the significance of Easter by taking pieces of it and just being part of that. It's like going on a trip and only coming out of your hotel to see one thing rather than embrace the entire experience. Who does that? Who plans a trip to an exotic and fascinating destination, and then spends all their time in the motel room, only coming out for the one activity? Such a thing seems bizarre. If you go on such a trip, you want to take the opportunities to experience all the other things as well as the one single activity you hoped to see. The amazing thing is that many people talk more about these other things they saw than about the actual single event they went there for in the first place.

The journey of the disciples with Jesus must have been a roller coaster of emotions, doubts, fears, anxiety, hope and joy. They must have felt their very life being squeezed out of them as they watched their hopes of the messiah shatter around them. There must have been an unsettled emptiness consuming their very beings as they watched Jesus talk about his pending death, and then witness the tragic events that made this a reality for them. One can hear the despair in Peter's denial. One can hear the cries of anguish of Mary and the other women. Amidst the changing tide of a fickle crowd, one can hear the void of emptiness consume Jesus' followers.

To only hear this, to stop the journey at the cross, misses the entire point. If all we have is a Christ crucified, then we are people who have nothing. We are people empty and full of despair. Our journey has been without meaning, as if we shouldn't have left home in the first place. But the power of the cross for salvation is found in the life of the resurrection. The journey is not one that leaves us empty, but one that finally, when we truly arrive at the destination, fills us beyond anything we can imagine. The cross wins the battle in which the resurrection claims the victory.

As we begin this Holy Week, I encourage you to take every aspect of the journey and participate in all of it. Don't be like the moping tourist who attends one thing, and then wonders why the experience was empty. Travel the entire journey, experience every moment, and arrive fulfilled and blessed that you have a Lord who carried you through despair into hope. The opportunities to experience the journey is far more important than any single moment along the way. As an entire journey, you gain the real joy. Come and walk the path of Jesus and find his blessing for your life this Easter.



Preparing for next Week

THE RESSURECTION OF OUR LORD—EASTER DAY (Gold)

Of First Importance

April 1, 2018

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK: (PAGE REFERENCE ESV)

OLD TESTAMENT READING Isaiah 25:6–9 (The long-awaited Saviour will come and make a feast for all nations on His holy mountain.) (p586)

EPISTLE 1 Corinthians 15:1–11 (Paul delivers to the Corinthians the things of first importance: that Christ died and was raised for our sins.) (p961)

HOLY GOSPEL Mark 16:1–8 (Women come to Jesus' tomb on Easter morning to anoint Him with spices, but when they arrive, Jesus is not in the tomb.) (p853)



⇒ **Easter Service Times:**

- ✦ **Maundy Thursday** – 29 March, 7.00pm
- ✦ **Good Friday** – 30 March, 9.30am
- ✦ **Easter Vigil (Saturday)** – 31 March, 6.00pm
- ✦ **Easter Sunday (Dawn)** - 1 April, 6.00am
- (community Breakfast)
- **Easter Sunday** – 1 April, 9.30am.
- Easter Breakfast – we need volunteers to assist in putting together our Easter breakfast. Please see Dorothy Dunkerton, or a Pastoral Carer, if you can help.

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