

Prayer: Dear God, when Jesus lovingly washed his disciples' feet, he knew one of them would betray him to horrible suffering; one would deny even knowing him when he most needed a friend to be "there" for him; and all of them would forsake him and flee. Thank you for being "there" for me. Strengthen me each day so that more and more I can be "here" for you. Amen.

"Lift up your heads"

MONDAY Luke 21:5-28

The Jerusalem Temple was glorious. When his disciples mentioned that, Jesus replied with a shocking prophecy (which came true in 70 A.D.). Beyond the Temple's fall, he pointed to the day when God will bring history as we know it to an end. Still, he said, "do not be frightened... stand firm...lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

- Jesus warned his followers that they would face difficult times—and they did. Early church leader Tertullian wrote, "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." Did Jesus' promise that "not a hair of your head will perish" (verse 18) fail? If not, how do you understand his promise? What does it mean for your life?
- We don't respect people who refuse to face reality. We speak of "happy talk," "rose-colored glasses," a "Pollyanna approach," and the like. In what ways do you believe Jesus' words about not being frightened were (and are) different from denial, wishful thinking, or "whistling past the graveyard"?

Don't get weighed down—as Judas did

TUESDAY Luke 21:29-22:6

Sometimes churches urge people to "get ready" for Jesus' return. As Jesus looked ahead to the end of the age, he didn't describe frantic, last-minute preparation. He said, "Be ready," by living a faithful life every day. Luke records the somber story of Judas' deal to betray Jesus for money. And the final 24 hours of Jesus' life begin.

- In verse 34, Jesus lists three things that can "weigh down" our hearts: "dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life." (*The Message* says, "parties and drinking and shopping.") How can a Christian live a normal life without having it weigh you down spiritually? What helps you keep your heart always alert to God?
- We've seen scenes in which a struggling actor cries, "But what's my motivation?" Luke doesn't try to answer that for Judas. In verse 3, he simply (and starkly) describes the spiritual outcome of Judas' choice. Have you ever faced a choice that might have let evil control your life? What anchors you spiritually at times like that?

Preparing for the Meal

WEDNESDAY Luke 22:7-13

During Lent, which starts today, the GPS will use the daily Scriptures from Adam Hamilton's devotional book *24 Hours That Changed the World: 40 Days of Reflection*. Luke shows us how Jesus had planned for this vital Passover *seder* with his disciples. Come prepare your heart for Lent at Resurrection's Ash Wednesday service this evening.

- William Barclay notes that in Jesus' day, "A man carrying a jar of water would be as easy to pick out as, say, a man using a lady's umbrella on a wet day. This was a pre-arranged signal." This supper mattered a lot to Jesus. What heart preparation helps you get the most out of being with Jesus in worship, and at Communion?
- Pastor Hamilton's devotional book notes that an unnamed disciple, who owned a two-story house, blessed Jesus by letting him use the house for this supper

with the disciples. What resources do you have that God could use to bless others? Are those available for God's use, when needed?

Supper with Jesus

THURSDAY Luke 22:14-20

Jesus enlarged the meaning of Israel's celebration of release from Egypt. He made it a memorial of his action to free us from sin and death. This supper is one of only 7 or 8 events that all four gospels mention. It was so central that, even before the gospels were written, Paul told the story in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 11.

- Earlier in Luke, you may recall the Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:15-24). It echoed an image from Isaiah 25:6-10. In verses 16-18 of Luke 22, Jesus promised his disciples that he will be at that banquet. The question is, will we accept the call to be at Jesus' banquet? How does accepting that invitation shape your life?
- In today's devotional reading, Pastor Hamilton notes that there used to be a tradition of setting an extra place at the supper table as a way of inviting Jesus to be present. What do you do to remember and honor Jesus at your meals? How could you be more intentional about doing that?

The Measure of Greatness

FRIDAY Luke 22:24-26; John 13:2-5

In our modern phrase, Jesus not only talked the talk about service; he walked the walk. In those days of dirt roads and sandaled feet, it was usually a slave's task to wash the dust off guests' feet as they arrived. Jesus brought his teaching about true greatness to life by washing the disciples' feet himself.

- We've seen how often Luke points to the "status inversion" Jesus' ministry brought. Still, at the end of Jesus' ministry, the disciples were struggling to grasp the idea. To what extent does your maturing sense of self allow you to intentionally set aside "self" for the benefit of others? What steps help you cultivate a servant's heart?
- Robert Greenleaf, Max DePree, James Autry and other business leaders have books about "servant leadership." Do you believe a leader can be effective from a servant stance? Do you find "servant leadership" an oxymoron? A nice ideal, but often not practical? A life-giving alternative to the usual views of leadership?

One of You Will Betray Me

SATURDAY Mark 14:18

We're so used to Jesus' story that we sometimes take Judas' betrayal "for granted." It's just part of the story. But imagine how stunning Jesus' words sounded to the disciples, who didn't know the story in advance. Imagine how you'd feel if someone you've worked closely with for three years betrayed you and your group.

- Jesus, who knew what was going on, included Judas in the Last Supper. He washed Peter's feet after predicting that Peter would deny knowing him. What does that tell you about how Jesus responds to you when you fail him? How can you let Jesus heal your wounds, so that you can show grace to those who have let you down?

Family Activity: The Bible tells many stories of Jesus eating with others. Has your family ever imagined Jesus sitting with you at your dinner table? During this season of Lent, set an extra place at each meal. Picture Jesus dining with your family. (You might want to place a picture of Jesus at the table.) What questions would you ask Him? What would you want to tell Him about your day or your life? What would you serve to eat and why? Join together in the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest. May this food to us be blessed." How does having Jesus at your table influence your

words and actions today and everyday? Choose one way your family can grow closer to Jesus this season.