



Daily Devotionals – March 27 to April 2, 2021
To Encourage Franklin in Such a Time As This
By Dr. Charles Qualls and Rev. Steve Gibson-- Franklin Baptist Church

This brief series of daily devotionals are designed to speak into the days in which we live. But we frame that sacred time in the challenging days of the Covid-19 or Novel CoronaVirus that is spreading across our globe. Take in these daily words of devotion. We hope you will experience wisdom, perspective and yes even hope!

They draw from the Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings by date.
(All scriptures will use the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted)

Saturday, March 27 - Mark 10:46-52
by Dr. Charles Qualls
The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

46 They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

49 Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." 50 So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51 Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." 52 Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Devotion:

Anytime a passage like this one begins so far into a chapter, I almost always loop back to the beginning of that chapter. I want to know what has been happening, where they've been before and to see if the episode fits into a larger set of lessons. Actually as far as the Jesus story arc, the place and action starts a new thing in v46. But, we dare not forget that every teaching in ch10 leading up to this has made a strong statement about how much "faith" life in Christ would demand.

Want some examples?

- Ch 10 begins with Jesus teaching on Divorce and remarriage. Though seemingly unrelated, adhering to God's greater intent for healthy and giving relationships was an act of faith.
- Soon, the little children are being brought to him. Jesus admonishes the disciples to turn them loose and uses them as an object lesson on the type of faith that will be required in order to enter God's kingdom.

- Immediately, it seems, the Rich Young Man (or “Ruler”) asks Jesus what will be required to inherit eternal life. They talk about “commandments,” but each of us living by God’s ways will eventually (and often) test our faith.
- Jesus no sooner than tells of his impending Crucifixion than James and John begin to jockey for position in God’s kingdom with Jesus when he comes into his “glory.” Jesus’ answer tells of the self-sacrifice needed to live as God intends.

Now, we have “Blind Bartimaeus” who makes one of the humblest requests of Jesus found in the Bible. As a crowd collects and Jesus’ entourage -- including these 2 ambitious insider disciples -- comes along, Bartimaeus simply cries out for Jesus to “have mercy” upon him. Others try to shush him, like one would do when the black sheep of the family draws too much attention. But Jesus hears his humble voice and asks for him.

Notice that those around Bartimaeus suddenly snap to life! They are “somebody” because the celebrity (Jesus) recognizes the guy they are standing around with. “Hey...get up there. He’s calling for YOU!” What does he ask for? “Son of David, have mercy on me!” That’s it. No cry for healing. Nothing else. Mercy. His faith has made Bartimaeus well, according to Jesus! Because of that, Jesus asks him what he might do for him. This is a beautiful story of powerful faith.

Prayer:

God who shapes each one of us, nudge us to learn from Bartimaeus’ humility. May we see your mercy and grace as sufficient rather than always unloading the wish-lists of our lives. Amen.

Sunday, March 28 - Mark 11:1-11

by Dr. Charles Qualls

The Humble King

1 When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples 2 and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. 3 If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'"

4 They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, 5 some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. 7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it.

8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields.9 Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" 11 Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Devotion:

Today is Palm Sunday. A humble king is about to set everything in motion, and to even his closest followers it will look like a triumphal entry. A really fun parade is set before us.

Now, I resist a “Debbie Downer” just like the rest of you do. But we know this is not all it appears to be. That’s because we know the end of the story. This parade will be thrown by some of the very people who will turn on Jesus soon and yell out, “Crucify him... Crucify him! Give us Barabas!” We can’t un-know what we know as we study this lesson.

I love the energy and vibe of Palm Sundays. It's cute watching the children parade down the aisle waving palm branches. But once in a while, I ponder what it might have been like knowing what I am convinced Jesus already knew. The showdown had been building toward this week in his life. More drama and confrontation will unfold, leading to a crescendo with the arrest, trial, torture and crucifixion. Now, I probably would have chosen to ride in regal style. You know, stick a finger in their eye so to speak. Because I'm not Jesus. He chose to do things differently.

I wonder what we'll learn today from a humble king? Jesus' posture, stance and chosen transportation all speak to peace and goodwill. Later, he'll have a place at the table right next to him for the one who will betray him. He'll wash Judas' feet. We have much to learn from Jesus about loving our enemies. But why did he choose to do things in this way? That is the beginning of gleaning all that we could from this lesson text. How would you have done things? What are we supposed to learn from Jesus' grace and inner peace? What might his grasp of the far bigger picture have lent him...and consequently could instruct us?

Prayer:

God of our living, and Lord of our hearts, challenge us with the example of Jesus. Let us look upon him and see a model for our living rather than a biblical hero. Amen.

Monday, March 29 - Hebrews 9:11-15

by Dr. Charles Qualls

How Much More?

11 But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation),¹² he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

15 For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.

Devotion:

Our online Wednesday School Bible Study just focused on a text from Hebrews 5, as I write. Those of you who were with us may well remember that the writer of Hebrews (we don't know who that was) made a case that Jesus was the ultimate high priest. We hear that theme continue here.

In v11, these "good things that have come" could be a lot of things. However, other manuscripts read here "good things to come." So, there is some source variance on this phrase. This could be the eternal salvation and access to God we have been given respectively through Christ and the Holy Spirit. However, that could refer to eternal matters only.

In any event, our hope is pinned to such things. Jesus Christ is the One who has brought us the Good News that pertains to right now and to later. The "tent" of worship he has provided spans time from now until eternity. It has made possible our own entry to God's presence someday. It has given us the accompaniment for our living by the Holy Spirit. This great high priest, Jesus Christ, has done what the ancient ones could not.

That is what v15 suggests by saying that he is, "the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant." We'll let God work out what happened(s) for those still operating under previous covenants.

Meanwhile, ours is to be grateful and relieved that under Jesus that grace has been given.

Prayer:

God of our days, we give thanks during this Holy Week for the risen Christ. He is our mediator, our high priest. Our hope has been delivered in him. Amen.

Tuesday, March 30 - John 12:20-36

by Dr. Charles Qualls

The Light is With You

20 Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. 21 They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

22 Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. 27 "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say -- 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

29 The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." 30 Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

34 The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" 35 Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light." After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

Devotion:

Because I just preached on a portion of this passage, I am going to trust that you were with us on that Sunday (or later online) and have heard what I said. That pertained to v20-32 of our text today. But this ending in v34-36 gives us plenty to consider.

Jesus has made the case that he soon will be "lifted up," and that likewise, those who intend to follow him in a Christlike life will ultimately have opportunities to "lose" their lives. By doing so, though, we'll also gain life as God has intended. Well, that just wasn't good enough for the crowd with whom Jesus was speaking. They pushed back.

"We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?"

On what basis were they under the impression that the Messiah would live and reign forever? In the Old Testament, there is no such overt statement actually. That promise is not there. But as I am sure I would have done, they have read into what was there to fit what they wanted. Brief parts of Ps 89:4; 110:4; Ezek 37:25 and Dan 7:14 are likely to have fueled their misunderstanding.

I love Jesus' focus here. He practically ignores the assumptions they have made and stays on his message. He has said what he has said, and he stands by it. Here is our charge -- "The light is with you for a little longer.

Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light."

Prayer:

God, help us to stay focused as Jesus does. Affirm not our assumptions nor our agenda. Instead, may we ground ourselves in your teachings and in your plans. Amen.

Wednesday, March 31 - John 13:21-32

by Rev. Steven R. Gibson

Jesus Foretells His Betrayal

21 After saying this, Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me."

22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking.

23 One of his disciples -- the one whom Jesus loved -- was reclining next to him; 24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

25 So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

26 Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot.

27 After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do."

28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.

29 Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or, that he should give something to the poor.

30 So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.

32 If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

Devotion:

Holy Week is packed full of drama and perhaps none as stark as the drama that unfolds in today's passage. Ambiguity is a word that most people do not like, yet it plays a prominent role in this passage. We find the Beloved Disciple side by side with Judas, who would betray Jesus. This contrast, this tension is inescapable. On the one hand, we have the Disciple whom Jesus loved, who has not been mentioned before this passage. On the other hand, we have Judas, the one who reveals his personal darkness that would manifest itself in the betrayal of Jesus. This passage couples the reality of abiding and abandonment, of dedication and departure, and of relationship and reality.

The Beloved Disciple can be found in each and every one of us. Like him, we have heard the message of Jesus. We have the capacity to hear, to read, to study and to encounter the Christ. Conversely, we also have the capacity to become like Judas, who was overtaken by unbelief.

In this brief passage, we have a quandary -- how could Judas, who was an insider in the Jesus movement, not understand? If Judas could not understand the message of Jesus, can you and I not understand? We learn that to betray Jesus is the same as unbelief. How can this be? Betrayal as unbelief equates to not having a relationship with Jesus. The contrast between the Beloved Disciple and Judas is a study on extreme opposites with the relationship between the Beloved Disciple and Jesus described as intimate and personal; while Judas represents separation from and his ultimate profound absence of relationship by exiting into the night.

The contrast between light and dark plays an important role throughout John's Gospel. Either you believe in Jesus, the light of the world, or you do not. If you do not, you find yourself aligned with Judas on the dark side.

This important passage reveals so much more, but for our purposes, this is where I will end the devotion. One important lesson jumps off the page -- we can either believe and follow Jesus, the light of the world, or we do not believe. "I believe, help my unbelief." (Mark 9:24)

Prayer:

Holy Lord of life, increase our faith that we may draw closer to you and be called your Beloved Disciple. Amen.

Thursday, April 1 - John 13:1-17, 31b-35

by Rev. Steven R. Gibson

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

1 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray him. And during supper 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4 got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself.

5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me."

9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

10 Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you."

11 For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"

13 You call me Teacher and Lord -- and you are right, for that is what I am.

14 So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

16 Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.

17 If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

The New Commandment

31b When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him.

32 If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

33 Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'

34 I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Devotion:

Today is Holy Thursday or Maundy Thursday. Today is the day when Jesus eats with his disciples and institutes the Lord's Supper, Eucharist, Communion, and the last chance for an intimate conversation with his disciples. Because this narrative is very familiar to all of us, we might believe that there is nothing new to learn...

Jesus pivots from being the one who heals, saves, teaches and loves. At this point in the narrative, Jesus is focused on the needs of his disciples. Because there is much to be taught, Jesus attempts to pack a lot of teaching in a compact period of time.

In verse 2, we learn that the devil had placed in the heart of Judas Iscariot the thought to betray Jesus. Even before dinner, the devil had begun his work. During the meal, Jesus does something radical, he washes his disciples' feet. In the best of times washing feet is not pleasant, but in the middle of a meal?

During this portion of Holy Thursday, we have the second indication that the devil was at work in verse 10, when Jesus says "you are clean, though not all of you."

This act of love and service to his disciples was not completely understood, even by impulsive Peter. Remember that it was Peter who at first did not want anything to do with the ritual washing, but then quickly reversed his course and even asked that his entire body be washed. Even in his service to the disciples, Jesus was very much aware of the events that lay ahead, but his disciples did not have any inkling of what was about to happen.

The actions of that night speaks volumes, an intimate meal in the upper room, washing the disciples' feet, revealing that one of his own handpicked disciples would deny him, the movement to the outside where Jesus would spend time alone in prayer.

Then the scene moves once again to you and I. How would we react to Jesus's actions of love? How would we react to Jesus telling that one of us would betray him? How would we react to the washing of our smelly, dirty feet? How could we continue with our lives as if nothing happened? What could we give to Jesus, the one who endured mammoth suffering for me? For you? How can our actions point others to Jesus?

Jesus' actions still perplex us. His actions at the table, where he took common elements such as bread and wine. He took them and lifted them up to ask God to bless them. After blessing, he broke and gave the

instructions that we hear each Communion Sunday -- take and eat all of this because it represents my very body which will be broken, battered and crushed for you; take this cup and drink all of it because it represents my very life's blood which will be shed for the remission of your sins.

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts, 1707

Celebrating Grace Hymnal, # 186

Prayer:

Lord of all, please accept our feeble attempts to praise you. Never let us forget or minimize your amazing acts of love that we celebrate each Communion Sunday. Amen.

Friday, April 2 - John 18:1-19:42

by Rev. Steven R. Gibson

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

18:1 After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

18:2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples.

18:3 So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

18:4 Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?"

18:5 They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.

18:6 When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground.

18:7 Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

18:8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go."

18:9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."

18:10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus.

18:11 Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

Jesus Before the High Priest

18:12 So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.

18:13 First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.

18:14 Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

18:15 Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, 18:16 but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in.

18:17 The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."

18:18 Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

18:19 Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.

18:20 Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret.

18:21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said."

18:22 When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

18:23 Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

18:24 Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter Denies Jesus Again

18:25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not."

18:26 One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?"

18:27 Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Jesus Before Pilate

18:28 Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.

18:29 So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?"

18:30 They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

18:31 Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." 18:32 (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

18:33 Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

18:34 Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

18:35 Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

18:37 Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

18:38 Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him."

Jesus Sentenced to Death

18:39 But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?"

18:40 They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

19:1 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.

19:2 And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe.

19:3 They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face.

19:4 Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him."

19:5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

19:6 When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him."

19:7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

19:8 Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever.

19:9 He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

19:10 Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?"

19:11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

19:12 From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

19:13 When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha.

19:14 Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!"

19:15 They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor."

19:16 Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

19:17 So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

19:18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

19:19 Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

19:20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.

19:21 Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'"

19:22 Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

19:23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.

19:24 So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."

19:25 And that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

19:26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son."

19:27 Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

19:28 After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty."

19:29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

19:30 When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Jesus' Side is Pierced

19:31 Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed.

19:32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him.

19:33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

19:34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. 19:35 (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.)

19:36 These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken."

19:37 And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

The Burial of Jesus

19:38 After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body.

19:39 Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds.

19:40 They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.

19:41 Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid.

19:42 And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Devotion:

Years ago, many churches held Good Friday services in which people would come to worship, to silence themselves before God and to relive the awful moments of Calvary. Today, many churches combine Palm Sunday with the Passion of Jesus into a single service. Franklin Baptist has held Tenebrae Services for many years, with this year being the exception because of Covid.

Good Friday is a day of mourning, mourning for the Savior who gave up his life that we may live. Good Friday is the day that Jesus shed his blood for the remission of our sins. Good Friday is a day that we are not quite sure how to behave. On one hand, we know how the story ends with Christ rising from the dead, but yet, Good Friday has to happen. The suffering and death of Jesus has to occur before the victory of Easter could be celebrated.

What are you doing this Good Friday? How do you worship on Good Friday? How will you greet others? But most of all, what personal preparations occur on Good Friday that will enhance our Easter Worship?

Prayer:

We stand near the cross, O God -- disturbed, distraught, discouraged. Yet we gather as disciples, those whom Jesus loves. On this day of great solemnity, let us stand as witnesses to your great love for all the world, revealed in the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From Feasting on the Word Worship Companion, p 140).