

Daily Thoughts for week beginning 25th March 2024

Holy Week 2024

Week 12

Monday 25th March

Reading: John 12.1-8

Thoughts: Jesus went to a place called Bethany where a friend of his called Lazarus lived. Jesus was a very special friend so Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha decided to have a party. At the party Martha was busy getting people food and drinks and Lazarus sat at the table talking to Jesus and some other people. Then Mary took a big bottle of very expensive perfume and poured it all over Jesus' feet and then wiped his feet with her very long hair. The perfume made the house smell really lovely. Some of the people who were at the party got very angry, especially Jesus' friend Judas, because he thought the perfume had been wasted. Jesus told Judas not to tell Mary off. She had done something really special to show how much she loved her friend Jesus. Mary had given Jesus a very precious present.

Think: Just imagine if someone had given you a very expensive present such as a new games console or latest mobile phone and you gave it away to somebody else. That would really show how much you cared and how much you loved them. That is what Mary did. She poured expensive perfume over Jesus. It was a very special thing to do. In those days the perfume would have cost a large amount of money. Mary was showing Jesus how much she loved and cared for him and how special he was.

Action: Show someone how special they are by filling a bowl with warm water and adding a small amount of bubble bath or perfume to it. This will make the water smell really sweet. Then gently wash the person's hands in the water. Or, invite and make a cup of coffee for someone, or bake some cakes - or other things that smell wonderful. Your act of kindness may make someone's day.

Pray : Lord Jesus, you did so many good things to help people, and Mary did a very special thing for you when she washed your feet with her precious perfume. Help me to do some nice things for my friends, at home and for people I don't like very much.

Amen.

Tuesday 26th March

Reading: John 12.23-24

Thoughts: Jesus told the people he was talking to that the time had now come for him to be glorified. What he said to them sounded a bit strange. He said that, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, then it remains a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

Think: What Jesus meant was that a seed has to be planted into the ground. For a while nothing seems to happen. It seems as if the seed has died. But then, after some time, it will grow. If you just leave the seed in the packet, it will not grow. It needs to be buried in the earth. Jesus was trying to explain to the people that he was about to die, but they shouldn't be sad because it was going to have a good result.

Action: If you were a seed, what sort of plant would you become, do you think? Try to draw a picture of the plant that you think God would like you to be. Would you be very bright like a daffodil, or would you be a flower that smells really nice, like a rose bush, or would you be a great big tree like you see in parks, which people can climb or sit in the shade?

Prayer: Thank you, God, that you grow tiny little seeds into big flowers and trees. Thank you that, even when it looks as though the seed has died and nothing is happening, you are helping the plant on its way. Help me to become the plant that you want me to be. Help me to grow stronger and stronger each day with your help. **Amen.**

Wednesday 27th March

Read: John 13.21-29

Thoughts: Jesus was having a special meal with his friends, the disciples. During the meal, he started looking very sad, and said, 'One of you is going to betray me.' That meant that one of them would start working with Jesus' enemies, the people who wanted to kill Jesus.

Jesus' friends were upset to think that one of them would let him down and tried to find out who Jesus was talking about. Jesus turned to Judas and said, 'Go and do what you have to do quickly.' The other disciples thought Jesus was sending Judas to do a job for him. They didn't realise that Judas was the one who would betray Jesus.

Think: Think about times when someone has let you down. Maybe when someone has not kept a secret safe, or when they have said horrid things about you to others. What did that feel like? Do you think Jesus felt really hurt by Judas? Was it hard to forgive those people?

Then think about times when you might have let someone else down. Have you upset somebody because you have not done what they asked you to do? Have you hurt a friend, or a teacher, or someone at home? Think of times when you might have let Jesus down.

Action: If you don't already, pray before you eat. Not just today but every day. Thank God for what you are about to eat. Spare a thought also for those whose hand has been involved in the growing; harvesting; packaging; travel; shop workers; preparer of the food in front of you.

Thursday 28th March Maundy Thursday

Read: John 13.1-17

Thoughts: In Bible times the roads were very dirty and dusty. The people didn't wear shoes or trainers that covered their feet, they wore sandals. This meant that as they walked along their feet would get really, really dirty. When you got to the house that you were going to, the servants would wash your feet, which meant you didn't get the houses all dirty too.

On Maundy Thursday we remember Jesus' command to love one another. Jesus showed his disciples how to love one another, by helping them, by being a servant. Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist and got a bowl of water and

he washed all the disciples' dirty feet. Even though Jesus knew that something bad was going to happen to him, he wanted to do something for his friends. Instead of being worried by his own problems, he just wanted to show his love for everyone else.

Think: Think about Jesus and how important he was. He had done miracles, and healed lots of people. Crowds of people had come to listen to his teaching, and everyone thought he was really important. Some had worshipped him.

Was it a strange thing for someone so important to wash the feet of his friends? What might he have done for his friends if he had lived in our time and our culture?

Action: Think of things that you could do today to help someone. Have you ever washed somebody else's feet? Has anyone ever washed your feet? Perhaps you could wash someone's feet today or ask them to wash your feet. Or speak to a friend and together wash your own hands and think about what it means to be washed free of all sins and wrong doings.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I'm sorry that I have been like one of your disciples and I have let you down. I am sorry also for the times when I have let other people down, my friends, my teachers and my family. Please help me to forgive the people who have let me down. Thank you that I can always make a new start with you. Amen.

Friday 29th March Good Friday

Read: John 18-19

Thoughts: What are the events of Good Friday? This is the day when we remember that Jesus died on the cross. It was a horrible way to die. We know now that Jesus amazingly came alive again, but his friends did not know that would happen. They were very sad about it all.

Think: Today, the cross is one of the world's most famous symbols - perhaps the most well-known. You can find the cross on flags and badges, in schools, museums, on clothes and jewellery. When you see a cross, what does it make you think of?

The day on which Jesus died has been called 'Good Friday' by Christians for nearly 2,000 years. It seems a bit strange to call the day when God's son was horribly killed 'good'. Perhaps Bad Friday or Sad Friday seems more suitable. What would you call it?

The reason it is called 'Good' Friday is because of the meaning of Jesus' death. He died to set us free from all that is bad in the world, our own badness, and that of other people. Think for a moment of things that you have done that are bad, and things in the world that are bad. These are the things that Jesus can make better because he died and rose again.

Action: Consider for yourself the different parts of this event from history:-

A cock - that crowed after Peter denied knowing Jesus three times (John 18.27).

A hammer and nails - used to hold Jesus to the cross (John 19.18).

A crown – the sign on Jesus' cross said 'King of the Jews' (John 19.19).

A die – used by the soldiers to see who would 'win' Jesus' clothes (John 19.24).

A sponge on a stick – used to give Jesus a drink of wine vinegar (John 19.29).

A spear – used to pierce the side of Jesus to check whether he was dead (John 19.34).

Prayer: Lord, help me to look at your world, and the people in it, in the right way. Whenever possible help me to see goodness and make good what is bad. Amen.

If you haven't yet become a child of God by praying this prayer or if you want to recommit your life to Jesus – use this prayer.

Dear Jesus, thank you for dying for me, and thank you for loving me even though I do wrong things. Act my life and prompt me to follow you more closely and to follow the guidance you gave us through your teaching and the teaching of the disciples. Be with me now. Amen.

Saturday 30th March Holy Saturday

Read: John 19.38-42 The burial of Jesus

Thoughts: A man called Joseph, who had become a disciple of Jesus, asked Pilate (the Roman leader) for Jesus' body so that he could bury it. Pilate told some of his soldiers to take Jesus' body off the cross and give it to Joseph. A man called Nicodemus was helping Joseph. They wrapped strips of material and special spices around Jesus' body. Then they placed it in a tomb in the garden near to where Jesus had been crucified.



Think: Try staying really still and quiet for as long as possible. Empty your mind of all your current thoughts: How long did you manage? Was it difficult or easy?

Now focus on all that has happened this week beginning with the triumphant entry on Psalm Sunday.

Prayer: Lord God, thank you that when things look dull, dark and ordinary – even dead like earth – that you are still there, and things are alive. Thank you for looking after Jesus' body in the tomb. Thank you for looking after me wherever I am. Amen.

Take time to go to church tomorrow (Easter Sunday) and share with your Christian neighbours and friends. If it has been a long time since you went to church, ask God to help you to make the first step.

May God be with you and bless you this Easter.