

**Love:** How do these devotions teach about the love of God and the love for one another?

**Learn:** What have you learned about where Jesus walked that helps you with where you walk?

**Share:** What key insights have you learned this week on how to share your faith with others?

**Serve:** Look at the prayer list. Who can you pray for? Who needs a little extra help in an area where you can make a difference?

**Healing Strength:** Rex Townsend, Stan Enschede, Wayne Lewis (friend of Mary Jo Enschede), Mallory Rack (friend of Hagans), Chris Osborn (Ken and Sandy Grubb's daughter), Janet Coons (Donna's daughter)

**Homebound:** Mary Hicks, Mary Schmidt, Joann Young, Jeanne Carman

**Military Personnel:** Adam Walters, Joseph Roberts, Lucas Lamkin, Adam Clark

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**MONDAY 3.21.16 Luke 19:28-20-8** Most of us see donkeys as nothing special, even a bit comical. In Jesus' day, a donkey was a royal mount. Kings or generals only rode horses in war; when they came in peace, they rode a donkey. Jesus' ride into Jerusalem used symbols from Israel's history (see 1 Kings 1:38-40, Psalm 118:19-29) and from prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures (see Zechariah 9:9-17). Jesus' followers rejoiced, but Luke wrote that Jesus (seeing further) wept for Jerusalem. He said the city's people were blind to what would bring them peace. The attitudes driving the leaders to plot his death would in the end lead to Rome's brutal destruction of the city. Like them, we live in a world of cause and effect. Open your heart to God and ask, "What attitudes do I have that will keep me from having your peace if I don't change them?"

**TUESDAY 3.22.16 Matthew 21:28-46** Jesus told two "vineyard" stories to challenge his listeners' thinking about their submission to God. In the first, a father told two sons to work in the vineyard. He got a "no" that became yes, and a "yes" that became no. In the second story, a vineyard owner rented his vineyard to tenants and took a trip. When it was time to pay what they owed, the tenants refused to submit to the owner's authority. They beat and killed his messengers—and finally the owner's son. Matthew said the religious leaders "knew Jesus was talking about them." Jesus' first story contrasted as on who talked a good game, saying he'd work but then not doing so, with a son who eventually did what his father asked. In what areas, if any, are you aware of a need to grow toward greater authenticity in your spiritual life? Ask God for the courage to be honest about your life with yourself, others, and God.

**WEDNESDAY 3.23.16 Mark 14:1-9, John 12:1-9** Though some details in these two stories differ, their essence is the same: in the last week of his life, a grateful woman anointed Jesus with very expensive perfume. Some criticized her extravagant act of gratitude, but Jesus staunchly defended her. He knew the cross waited at the end of

the week, and said Mary had anointed him in advance of his burial. Imagine the deep love and gratitude that led Mary to give Jesus this extravagant gift. What does Jesus' response tell you about how much her fervent love meant to him as he faced death? How can you show your love for Jesus, both in your inner "sacred space" and outwardly, with Mary's beautiful spontaneity and urgency?

**THURSDAY 3.24.16 Mark 14:10-50** As with his entry into Jerusalem, Jesus arranged in advance for a Passover meal. His hope-filled words changed that annual supper into the Lord's Supper we still observe. The meal over, Jesus prayed on the Mount of Olives. He had come to this moment by choice—but still he struggled with the awful suffering just ahead. Crucially, he prayed, "Not what I want but what you want." In the darkness, the rulers and Judas put their dark plot in motion. Sooner or later, we all face a situation in life that seems unbearable. What do Jesus' prayers as he faced the cross teach you about the value of honestly facing and voicing your feelings in those times of anguish? What is helping you learn to say, "Not what I want but what you want"? Join the Maundy Thursday worship service tonight at 8pm to explore some of these thoughts.

**FRIDAY 3.25.16 John 19:4-37** John said that, on the cross, Jesus tenderly gave his mother to the care of "the disciple whom he loved." He said he was thirsty, and John noted that a hyssop branch (a Passover symbol) carried the red sour wine (or vinegar) drink. Then, perhaps in the loud shout Mark recorded (see Mark 15:37), Jesus said, with spiritual as well as physical significance, "It is completed"—and it was. If a non-religious or nominally religious friend asked, "What was completed when Jesus died?" how would you answer? In what ways do you internalize the meaning of Jesus' death for you? If you can, join in the Good Friday Tenebrae service tonight at 8pm and spend some time reflecting on how Jesus' death on the cross affects your life today.

**SATURDAY 3.26.16 Matthew 27:57-66, John 19:38-42** Matthew and John both "set the stage" for the Easter story. Matthew listed the futile steps the religious leaders and Pilate took to keep Jesus in his tomb. John linked his story to Genesis in chapter 18 by focusing on the "garden" Jesus prayed in. Here he returned to the image. In the Genesis 2 story, human life began in a garden. John said Jesus' (and our) resurrection life would also begin in a garden—this was humanity made new, creation set to rights. Luke 23:50-52 named Joseph of Arimathea as one Jerusalem leader who did not agree to killing Jesus. John added a last glimpse of Nicodemus, who met Jesus in John 3. As you see how God used even the timid loyalty of Joseph and Nicodemus, can you trust that God can use whatever you have to offer to God's service? The men's fear looks very different to us than it did to them on that Saturday—because we know what came next. How can hope based on Jesus' resurrection alter your view of even the most heart-breaking situations?

