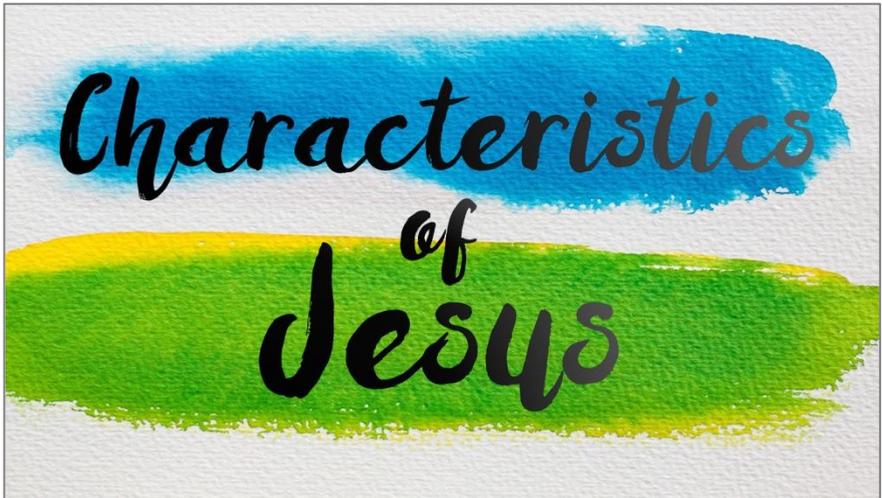


# Daily Devotional

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## Booklet



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This booklet can be used as a stand-alone daily devotional. Or, if you would like to follow the sermons, they can be downloaded from our website at [www.northfield.co.za](http://www.northfield.co.za) or a cd-set of the sermon series is available for sale in our bookshop, and can be used as an accompaniment for this booklet. If you are using the devotions together with the sermon series at Northfield Methodist Church, then the readings start the day AFTER the sermon is preached, and the start date for each reading is:

## HOLY WEEK: The Characteristics of Jesus

PEACE IN THE FACE OF POWER	page 1	29 March 2021
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HUMILITY IN THE FACE OF BETRAYAL	page 3	31 March 2021
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These devotions are written by a team of writers and ministers from Northfield Methodist Church. An electronic version of this booklet that is formatted for easy reading on your tablet or phone, can be downloaded from our website, or you can request to be added to the email list.

These daily devotions booklets are free of charge. They go to our congregation, and they are used for personal devotions and by Bible study and cell groups. Our visitations teams also take them to people who are in hospitals and who are home-bound, and to aged-care facilities and prisons. To keep these booklets free, and to be able to print as many as possible to spread them far and wide, we really need your help! To make any contribution towards our costs, please use the banking details:

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**HOLY WEEK – Day One - Monday 29 March 2021**  
**PEACE IN THE FACE OF POWER – RIDING INTO JERUSALEM**

***Read Matthew 21:1-11 and Luke 19:28-44***

Growing up my siblings and I were taught that it is not a shame to say sorry first even if you were not wrong because it brings peace.

Reading this passage was a reminder of God's will. The people wanted a powerful leader, to free them from political struggles and they thought that Jesus was going to be that powerful leader. But instead Jesus arrives in Jerusalem for different reason, to fulfil God's will. The will of love, unity, and peace.

Jesus comes in riding on a donkey, one of the least animals, a sign of humbleness and riding as the King of peace. What is amazing is that the crowds were waving the palm leaves and shouting praises. They didn't see a man coming on the donkey but they were just happy and excited to receive some sort of Messiah even though they thought wrong but it was to bring peace.

The words in Matthew 21:9 "Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord.", remind me of the times that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to his disciples and He says in John 14:27

He was coming in peace, and the peace that he has given us the world cannot offer. The same peace that Jesus offered and still offers today. We need to live with and let that peace be our way of living.

Sharing the peace with our loved ones.

Sharing peace with our friends.

Sharing peace with the co-workers.

Sharing peace with the world.

Clearly peace is greater than power/winning

How are you sharing your peace today?

***Prayer: Dear Lord, teach me to live in your peace and to sharing the peace with the world around me.***

**HOLY WEEK – Day Two - Tuesday 30 March 2021**  
**DEFENCE IN THE FACE OF INJUSTICE**

**Read: Mat 21:12-17, Mat 19:14, John 8:7, Mat 23:23**

One of the pinnacle things Jesus did as He journeyed towards the cross that week is found in today's reading. "Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves." Mat 21:12.

At face value this story provides me with a picture of Jesus that is difficult to reconcile, but I have discovered that the profound significance of this story is hidden in its context. It was the time of Passover and customary for Jews to bring a sacrifice to the temple. This sacrifice signified atonement to God. Many came far distances to the temple so they would have to buy their sacrificial animals in Jerusalem as well as change their money to pay the temple tax. The sellers and money changers used this opportunity by hiking prices! Pilgrims would have to pay exorbitant rates making it nearly impossible for them. The money changers and sellers were using religion to exploit the poor! They were using the very thing created to enrich people's lives and distorting it to make them poorer. Jesus turned those tables that day as an act of defiance and defence! Defying a system that placed obstacles in people's way of coming near to Him, and, defending the poor and the marginalised.

This isn't the first time in Jesus' ministry that He reveals himself as the great defender. We see it as he defends the women caught in adultery, "Let anyone who is without sin cast the first stone"- John 8:7, We see it as He reprimands His disciples trying to stop the children from getting close to him, "let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them"- Mat 19:14, and, we see it as He rises up against the Pharisees who cared more about appearing religious than mercy, "woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites..." Mat 23:23

***Prayer: Lord Jesus, when I see exploitation around me, may I have the courage to act as you did.***

**HOLY WEEK – Day Three - Wednesday 31 March 2021**  
**HUMILITY IN THE FACE OF BETRAYAL**

**READ: John 13: 1-17, verse 5**

This act of humility and servanthood occurred in the upper room during the last supper, even though Jesus knew that Judas would betray him, He washed his feet and the feet of the other disciples gathered there. As most people walked in sandals on the dusty roads it would be customary for people to wash their feet before having a meal together with a group of people. It was the job of the servant or the head of the household to do this lowly and menial task, yet Jesus chose to demonstrate His love and humility through this act.

One is reminded in Matthew 20: 28 that Jesus came to earth to be a servant to us all, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.", this act of humility provides us with a pre-emptive glimpse of Christ's coming crucifixion.

Jesus had washed away the dirt from the disciple's feet and now they were clean. Jesus would soon die on the cross as a ransom for all so that we may be righteous (clean) in His sight and so that we may have an eternal life (walk)through Him.

Jesus has chosen us, just as He chose His beloved disciples to walk a life of service and humility, to wash others feet so that they may come to know the purity (cleanliness) of God's amazing love for them.

What acts of service can you do for others?

***Prayer: Dear father help us to learn from your servant heart. Thank you for your humility and your selfless act of love. We are not worthy of your forgiveness, yet you died on the cross for the sake of our sins so that we may have an eternal life through you. Help us to demonstrate that humility and service to others in need. Amen.***

**HOLY WEEK – Day Four - Thursday 1 April 2021**  
**HEALING IN THE FACE OF VIOLENCE**

***Read: Luke 22:39-53***

It is generally known that when we are under threat our natural response is fight or flight. In the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus and His disciples are under threat we see this natural response in some of the disciples. One disciple fights and cuts off someone's ear, and another according to Mark's Gospel runs away naked. Although these responses seem extreme to us now as we read a story that we know so well, the reality is that most of us, if not all of us, would have had one of these two responses. It is part of our natural self-protection response. The man cutting of the others ear, responding to violence with violence, responded in what we could term a 'natural response'.

The response of Jesus is the profound response. To remain calm and collected and think of all those around Him instead of Himself, that is the miracle in this story. The characteristic we notice in Jesus within this story is that He never thought of Himself. Jesus never acted in self-preservation, but rather with a mindset of self-giving. Jesus remained calm and offered healing even when surrounded with violence because Jesus wasn't thinking about Himself. Jesus remained calm, offering healing even in the face of violence because Jesus knew who He was in God, as well as what God had called Him to do. Jesus remained calm and offered healing even to the 'enemy' because in the eyes of Jesus even the 'enemy' is loved.

I don't know if we would ever be able to offer this kind of healing in the face of violence. However, I do believe that if each of us had to live in a manner that was more self-giving and less about self-preservation, violence would decrease and healing would increase. Remember violence is also found in our words and thoughts.

***Prayer: Loving Father, please teach us to be more like You. Help us to offer healing in a violent world. Teach us to live for others instead of always for ourselves. Thank You Jesus that You lived your life and gave Your life for us. Amen.***

**HOLY WEEK – Day Five - Friday 2 April 2021**

**HOLY THURSDAY – TENEBRAE**

**Reading:** Luke 22: 54 – 62 (NIV)

“Then seizing him, they led him away and took Him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with him.” But he denied it. “Woman, I don’t know him,” he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” “Man, I am not!” Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.” Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.”

How could Peter do it? How do you and I do it?.....denying Jesus!

When we walk closely with Jesus we make promises with every good intention of keeping them, but what is it that makes us weak? How and why do we deny Jesus? I believe, for Peter it was fear. Three times Peter denied Jesus. He denied knowing Jesus, he denied being one of His followers and eventually swore and denied even knowing what they were talking about. Total denial! Why? Because Peter was afraid of the crowd turning against him.

Are we that different? We live in a culture that is becoming more and more hostile to Christianity and I must confess that I don’t always talk openly about my faith in Jesus, because I am afraid that I will not be able to articulate what I believe and practice what I preach.

Every time we are disobedient and fall into temptation, are proud and lean on our own strength we deny Christ, just like Peter did on the night that Jesus was arrested, but notice what it says in Luke 22:54: “..... *And Peter followed at a distance!*” Perhaps Peter was so weak because he wasn’t following close enough!

***Prayer: Forgive us O God when we follow you from a distance and deny you!***

**HOLY WEEK – Day Six - Saturday 3 April 2021**  
**FORGIVENESS IN THE FACE OF HATE – THE CROSS**

**Reading: Luke 23:32-35 (NIV)**

“Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

Who do you pray for most? What do you pray for in the face of hate?

Jesus’ life is almost at an end, with the pain at its worst, He doesn’t pray for His mother Mary watching nearby, He doesn’t pray for his friends Peter James and John. Instead at that moment of agony, in the face of hate, we find Jesus praying for His enemies. Not praying in revenge that God’s judgement and punishment would fall on those who were torturing and executing Him, but rather praying for their forgiveness! “Father forgive them. They don’t know what they are doing.”

Praying for His enemies! We have a lot to learn from our Lord Jesus Christ about praying for our enemies. And it all comes from this:- God changes enemies into friends. This is what the cross is all about. One man who was innocent dying in the place of those who were guilty.

Everybody who puts their trust in Jesus’ death and resurrection can know the victory of the cross and death overcome. We can share in that wonderful promise, “Today you will be with me in Paradise.”

It is therefore no coincidence that the place where we find Jesus praying for His enemies is indeed the cross. We serve the God who changes enemies into friends. This is the Good News God who chose us before we chose Him, who made a way for each of us!

***Prayer: Jesus the Christ, in the midst of hate you responded with unconditional love. On the cross you gave your life for me. What love is this! Amen.***