

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

March 25-April 1, 2018

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

Death to Self, Our Flesh, and Ego

Palm Sunday Service: March 25 at 10:30 am

What's Left When the Parade is Over? – John 12:12-19

Pastor Gene Heacock

Ladies' Easter Tea: Monday, March 26 at 7:00 pm

Journey to the Cross – No Personal Ego – Philippians 2:5-7

Mrs. Penny Pullen and Miss Emily DeFeo

Maundy Thursday Communion Service: March 29 at 7:00 pm

The Betrayal of God – John 13:18-30

Pastor Gene Heacock

Good Friday Service: March 30 at 6:30 am

Surrendering to the Father's Will – Luke 23:46

Pastor Rick McDonnell

Good Friday Breakfast at 7:00 am

Easter Sunday Worship Service: April 1 at 9:30 am

The Power of Jesus' Resurrection

Pastor Gene Heacock

Holy Week Theme Introduction: ***Journey to the Cross***

Jesus' journey to the cross had been prepared as part of Divine intention before the creation of the world began. Jesus was the "lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). The plan was eternal and divine but the journey to the cross was temporal and human to its core. There were no shortcuts to the cross. The cross was terminal, it was a one-way trip and it was a lonely journey.

Although Jesus' death was preordained by the Fathers' plan and Jesus willingly went to the cross in perfect humility, Jesus learned obedience through His suffering. Have you?

"Although He was a son, He learned obedience through what He suffered." (Hebrews 5:8)

Many times we think that Jesus never needed to learn anything. We often think that He did everything in some type of rote mechanical fashion like a Cyborg or a Robotron as if He was programmed to do so. However, the Biblical picture of Jesus portrays another story. He was tempted by the Devil, frustrated by His disciples, rejected by His friends and often found solace in being alone. Jesus learned obedience through His suffering. The journey to the cross for Jesus required discovery, new growth, and death to self.

Please prepare yourself for Holy Week 2018 by reading the daily devotions provided in the upcoming All-Church emails, which you will receive every day during Holy Week. (Hard copies will be available at the church office.)

Our theme for Holy Week 2018 is *Journey to the Cross*. We will be comparing our journey to the cross with Jesus' journey to the cross.

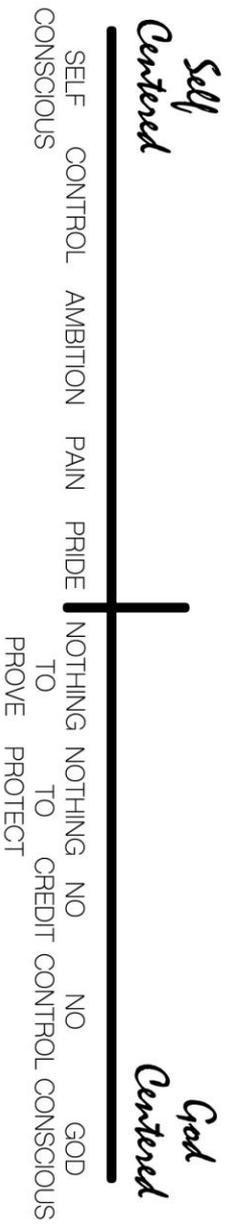
How are Jesus' journey and our journey similar? How are they different? We will focus on Jesus and His journey of suffering. Jesus learned obedience through His sufferings. Are you learning obedience through your sufferings? Jesus' sacrifice was complete. He was crucified. Am I truly crucified? Are you?

Does our need for control and for credit corrode our souls like winter salt impacts a car? Does your need for self-protection or the need to prove something rear its ugly head like the frost heaves hurl stones out of our New England roads and fields?

Take time to review the Journey to Humility guide and ask yourself: Where do I need to grow? How is my ego? It is hard to have my ego hurt if I have already been crucified with Christ! Take time to reflect on your journey to the cross. What is the greatest challenge on my journey to the cross in contrast to Jesus' journey to the Cross? Take time to share your greatest challenge as well as your greatest area of progress with someone else.

Growing in Christ,
Pastor Gene

Examining Our Own Journey to the Cross



My greatest challenge in my journey towards humility is?

Jesus' Journey to the Cross

CRUCIFIXION

God Centered

God Centered

GOD CONSCIOUS

CONTROL

AMBITION

PAIN

PRIDE

NOTHING TO PROVE

NOTHING TO PROTECT

NO CREDIT

NO CONTROL

GOD CONSCIOUS



SURRENDERED
CRUCIFIED

GOD'S
WILL
ABOVE

IN
GOD'S
HANDS

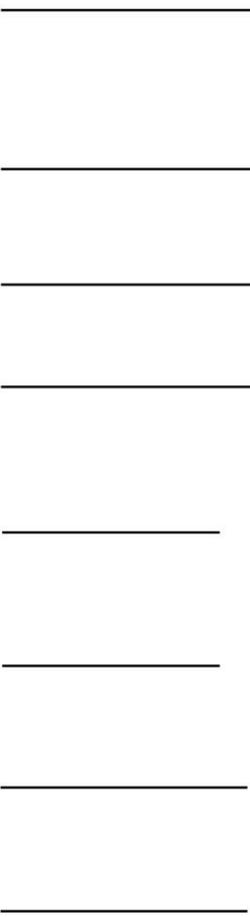
NO
PERSONAL
EGO

SECURE
IN
GOD

SAFE
IN
GOD

SEEKS
GOD'S
GLORY

TRUST
FATHER'S
PLAN



MARK
15:24

LUKE
22:42

LUKE
23:46

PHILIPPIANS
2:5-7

JOHN
10:25

MATTHEW
26:53

JOHN
8:54

JOHN
13:3

Monday's Devotional Reading:

Come Live Come Die

Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. – John 12:25

I confess I am a slow learner to even some of the most elementary teachings of Jesus. I had to learn a practical lesson regarding how many of life's greatest lessons are often counterintuitive. Counterintuitive simply means something that is contrary to common sense or expectations but is true. Jesus says the pathway to life is death to yourself.

Jesus Christ continually invites us to experience a fruitful life that is beyond our ability to create in our own strength. He says, *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit"* (John 15:5a).

Jesus also continually challenges the process of growth through human strength in that he reminds us that without him we can do nothing. (John 15:5b)

Jesus invites us to come live and to come and die simultaneously. Jesus contradicts human understanding of finding life by illustrating spiritual dependency with the simple metaphor of a grapevine. He asks us to do things he knows we cannot do (in our own strength) because he is God. If one is honest this seems so very strange, it's counterintuitive when you first hear it. To put it simply, death to oneself is a path to finding life as God has designed it to be. Jesus says, *"Come live, come die."*

As you read God's word and hear Jesus' call to do the impossible, like turning the other cheek, walking the second mile, loving one's enemies, having peace in the midst of the storms of life, hear Jesus say come to live, come die. Jesus promises to empower us to live in freedom from sin's power and from all the types of fears that plague us. Jesus calls us to come close to him and surrender our claim to control and self-sufficiency.

Jesus essentially says come live, come die to your own self-sufficiency, stay close to you and me will find the strength to live in a supernatural reality, that is real life.

Growing in Christ,
Pastor Gene

Tuesday's Devotional Reading: *Growing in Humility*

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

– Luke 9:23

Growing in Humility - it is a process

Jesus journey to the cross inspires humility and sacrificial love in us.

"How deep the Father's love for us

How vast beyond all measure

That He should give His only Son

To make a wreck His treasure"

- Stuart Townend, *"How Deep the Father's Love For Us"*

The words of this contemporary hymn describe the Father's love for you and me. It is beyond all measure. It transcends our mind's conception to fully describe. It often takes a lifetime to deeply process the cost paid for us by Jesus. The pain and the sacrifice of Jesus' death were rooted in his love and displayed in his humility. The cross paid our debt through Jesus' death. He atoned for our sins. The cross also bonded us to Christ. His crucifixion became the means of our salvation. The cross is also our identification with Jesus. He was broken for us. His sacrificial love is rooted in humility bonded us to him. Jesus suffering was linked to a greater purpose, so is yours and mine. It is a process of growing in humility.

In Ephesians 4:2, Paul writes *"be completely humble and gentle."* The tool that God often uses to build humility in people is pain, both physical and emotional. Paul experienced both types of pain in his process of growing in humility. He suffered the chaffing of chains and the death of a vision of how he had imagined his life would be. How about you? Are you experiencing pain of any kind right now? Is it physical, emotional, or even geographical? How do you interpret it and how do you process it? Look to Paul's example in Ephesus, in Ephesians 4:1-7.

As a prisoner for the Lord, “then I urge you.” Paul believed that his suffering had a purpose. It’s very interesting to see the link between glory to prison to humility, going from verse 1 to verse 2. That somehow, we are to grow in this understanding of maturity by going through adversity. God is in this process of growing us up. Humility is the foundation for almost all other Christian virtues. I cannot show mercy, give forgiveness, practice forbearance, grow in grace, and practice the fruit of the spirit or unconditional love without humility.

The pain of prison like experiences produces humility – “a prison, a place you did not choose to be in.” Could the pain you are experiencing be part of God’s plan for shaping you into the image of himself? Could the cross you have to bear today be directly linked to circumstances that are outside of your control? Can you look to the heavenly Father and cry out for strength to endure the pain, like Paul for a greater purpose? Can you cry out for complete humility, like Paul did in verse 2?

God is making me what I am, in ways I do not understand, in places, I did not choose. I understand the purpose but I need to learn to submit to the process. The process of growing in humility. I wrote this prayer some time ago when I was far from home and not hearing clearly from God what he was doing in my life at that time.

“God is making me what I am not, in ways that I do not understand, in places I did not choose, for a purpose I have yet to grasp, all for the glory of Christ. I submit to Him fully, at times fearfully and painfully, but say, Lord, whatever happens I am Yours.”

Growing in Christ,
Pastor Gene

Wednesday's Devotional Reading:

Learning to See

Jesus said, "For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." – John 9:39

Removing Obstacles

Isn't it interesting that Jesus sees things so differently than others around him? Jesus possessed incredible clarity of sight regarding spiritual growth and spiritual potential. He saw things differently than his followers did.

Listen to a few of his remarks to his followers:

"Do you see all these things?" he asked. - Matthew 24:2a

I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. - John 4:35

Though seeing, they do not see - Matthew 13:13a

For judgment, I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind. - John 9: 39

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, one of the greatest obstacles to growth are obstacles that we do not see. Growth often involves the removal of obstacles. This is because we often do not see things the way Jesus sees them. Spiritual growth does not always mean the addition of new things but may involve the removal of unwanted things. Removing obstacles allows more room so new growth can occur. In the parable of the sower and the seeds in Matthew 13 and Mark 4, Jesus teaches that the birds, the rocks, and the weeds are obstacles to growth. He then teaches that the good seed grew exponentially primarily because it has no obstacles.

In Jesus' teaching of the sower and the parable of the seeds, one thing becomes clear immediately, the removal of obstacles allow the seeds to grow. In fact, many commentators on the sower and the seeds suggest that the four seeds represent a model for receptivity and spiritual growth for all people throughout all of time. Jesus teaches that seventy-five percent of spiritual growth is the removal of internal or external negative forces or factors.

Before you decide to do something more for God perhaps it is time to ask the Lord of the harvest to give you His eyes to see any obstacles around you that are preventing exponential growth. Pray that you may have eyes to see what Jesus sees and the courage to remove any obstacles to your growth.

Growing in Christ,
Pastor Gene

Thursday's Reading:

Crucifying Our Flesh and Ego

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

– Galatians 2:20

How is your ego? How does it feel when it is bruised? How do you know?

“He was wounded (bruised) for our transgressions.” Isaiah 53:5

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

Ego has been defined as “edging God out.” (Ken Blanchard, Leading Like Jesus) Someone might ask, “How would I know if my ego is taking over?”

Do you pout or self-protect, protest interruptions you do not like or resist God’s invitation and try to find your identity in yourself and not in Christ? Are your happiness and your joy based on your external position, condition, circumstances or cash reserves? If any of these conditions describe you, be aware and be warned the ego is screaming out for control. If one has already been crucified with Christ, there is little chance of one’s ego to be severely bruised. Some of these conditions named above are based on old patterns, unsanctified areas of our souls or merely a temporary fit of egotism that rears its ugly head.

The remarkable fact is that death to self, our ego has already occurred with the death of Christ on the cross. “I have been crucified with Christ and I (my ego my paraphrase) no longer live.” Galatians 2:20 The scriptural truth is that a believer in Christ has already had their ego dethroned in their life when Jesus died on the cross for salvation and for the crucifixion of their flesh, their ego. The peevish conditions of self-focus, self-pity, self-righteousness, self-protection, self-consciousness, and

preoccupation with the natural comforts of this world point to the fact that their self-life, one's ego is still alive, your ego may be taking control. "The word of God says make no room for the flesh. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no room for the flesh." Romans 13:14

Here is a way to develop the strength to resist your ego. Imagine if your old boss starts calling you on the phone and demands that you go to work for them. Imagine them yelling at you for not showing up to a job and a boss that no longer employs you. Ask yourself this question: If your former employer called you on Monday morning of next week and in no uncertain terms demanded that you show up for work, how would you respond to them? You would not be controlled and you would not yield to your old boss's demands. Romans 6:14 *"For sin (your ego) shall no longer be your master."*

You would say I do not work for you any longer. I am no longer under your control or your demands or your requirements. I have a new contract and I have a new employer. I do not work for you any longer and I am no longer under your control. The same is true of the believer in Christ. We are no longer employed by the demands of our ego, our flesh. We have been set free in Jesus from the controlling demands of our egos, or more technically from scripture "the flesh." Be encouraged dear saint your ego is dead, your position is secure in Christ and you can say no to the old boss of ego who attempts to control your life. Let us prepare for the journey to the cross as Easter approaches.

Growing in Christ,
Pastor Gene

Friday's Devotional Reading: *Surrendering to the Father's Will*

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. - Luke 23:46

When you hear the word 'surrender' what comes to your mind?

In the context of war, it is when the defeated nation humbles itself to the might, control and dictates of the victorious nation formalized at a peace treaty.

Growing up I often got into fights with other kids and I would wrestle my opponent down until I heard him cry out, "*I give up, I give up, I surrender!*"

The essence of the term surrender is the idea of submission, acquiescing, giving up control of one party to another.

Please observe the order of events in our verse today. Jesus willingly committed His spirit to His Father and then he breathed his last breath.

What was the motivation of Jesus behind surrendering His will to the Father?

It was because Jesus believed and was committed to the Divine Plan of Redemption. His actions of full surrender to the Father were a Divine Necessity. All that Jesus came to this earth to accomplish was completed in this final act of surrender to the Father's will.

What was the Divine Necessity that I speak of?

The accomplishment of the plan of redemption planned and decreed in eternity past accomplished on earth in space and time by the perfect obedience of God, the Son.

Theologians often refer to the obedience of Jesus Christ in both an Active and Passive sense.

The Active obedience was Jesus coming to this earth in the Incarnation and fully obeying the Law of God perfectly both in motive and behavior. He did what Adam, Israel, and humanity

could not do. He satisfied all the demands of righteousness in the way He lived with the correct motive. He obeyed perfectly out of love for the Father. He fulfilled the demands of the Law.

The Passive obedience of Jesus is the suffering and death that He willingly endured as a substitutionary sacrifice, taking all the curses and penalties that sinners deserved for their sins, transgressions, and rebellion and falling short of the righteousness of God.

Paul states this so beautifully in **Romans 5:19** by contrasting the Fall of Adam with the obedience of Christ. ***“For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.”***

Jesus Christ accomplishing redemption for sinners would not have occurred if He did not surrender His will to the Father.

It is important to understand that when Jesus committed His spirit to the Father in **Luke 23:46** it was the culmination of a life of surrendering to the Father’s will. Not a onetime event.

The Chronology of Jesus’ Surrendering to the Father’s Will

- It Began in Eternity Past- There is a number of texts that give a clear teaching that in Eternity past once the Godhead decreed the plan of redemption. A plan that would satisfy all the demands of a holy and righteous God -- would warrant a perfect sacrifice. Thus Jesus determined to come to the earth and accomplish this plan of redemption on behalf of His people. (**Isaiah 53:10; John 17:1-5; Philippians 2:5-11**)

Point: For Jesus, the issues were so great, the redemption of His people, that it would require full surrender to the will of the Father.

- This surrendering of His will to the Father’s will continued throughout Jesus’ earthly life – there are also a group of passages that indicate Jesus at key points in His life required the surrendering of His will to the Father. (**Luke 2:49, 4:3-12; John 4:34, 6:37-40, 12:27, 49-50**)
- His surrendering to the will of the Father culminated in the battle of Gethsemane. (**Luke 22:41-46**)

- It was finalized on the cross (Luke 23:46)

My Point: The continuity and consistency of Jesus surrendering His will to the Father was predicated on Jesus' understanding and accepting the eternal significance of the issues:

- The plan of redemption decreed in eternity past had to be accomplished by Him.
- The salvation of the souls of His people was at stake.
- In order for God's holiness, righteousness, and justice to be perfectly satisfied; for God to be glorified; and for the plan of redemption to be accomplished in the souls of His people, Jesus had to surrender to the will of the Father.
- It was a divine and human necessity.

What Does God Desire to Accomplish Through You and Me?

He desires that we also follow the example of God the Son and continually surrender our wills to God. God desires that we bear spiritual fruit and thus glorify His name; this is how His kingdom is advanced in this world. **(John 15:1-11)**

- Do you and I want to glorify the Father?
- Do we want to hear "well done good and faithful servant"?
- The key is surrendering to the Father's Will.
- This means abiding, trusting, submitting to the Vine, Jesus Christ, for apart from Him we can do nothing. But if we abide we will bear fruit and thus glorify God.
- We are called to glorify God because of all that God has done for us in Christ.
- We are no longer our own but God's possession. **(Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20)**

Imagine what God could do through a person whose life is full surrendered to Him! **(Ephesians 3:20-21)**

I love you,
Pastor Rick