

Monday, March 26 – Read John 4:4-26. Jesus was human. Walking through Samaria on a hot day no doubt made him tired and thirsty (verse 6). The woman he met at Jacob’s Well felt a much deeper inner thirst. She didn’t sense it (at first), but the rabbi who startled her by asking for a drink (from a Samaritan, whom most Jews shunned) was also the God who could eternally quench her spiritual thirst. Jews hated Samaritans, a mixed race born of the Assyrian’s policy of destroying the identity of conquered peoples (2 Kings 17:24). Samaritans hated Jews, who snubbed their offer to help rebuild the Temple (Ezra 4:1-4). What does it tell you about Jesus that, despite that history, he went out of his way to offer “living water” in Samaria?

Tuesday, March 27 – Read John 7:37-52. At the yearly Festival of Tabernacles, priests drew water daily at the Pool of Siloam, and poured it out in the Temple, reciting Isaiah 12:3: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” Jesus said, in effect, “This ceremony points to me. Come to me and quench your thirst.” The leaders’ only response was to try to silence Jesus, and any who supported him. Israel was keeping an annual public ritual, but Jesus made his call personal. “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me …” Are you personally drinking the water of eternal life Jesus offers? If yes, how does your church support your walk with Jesus? If no, what is blocking you from accepting Jesus’ offer? Of the religious leaders (verses 48-49) Pastor Roger Frederickson said, “What a paradox that these interpreters of the law, so certain of their own wisdom and expertise, are the ones who have misled the people.” How do you keep your faith strong and humble, so you can avoid the trap of the arrogant, contemptuous certainty the rulers showed?

Wednesday, March 28 – Read John 19:28-29. John packed so much meaning into these verses. Jesus thirsted—he was human and frail, as we are. Exodus 12:22 told Israel to use a hyssop branch to put the Passover lamb’s blood on the doorposts, so John was stressing Jesus’ identity as “our Passover lamb” (see also 2 Corinthians 5:7) by mentioning a hyssop branch. “So that Scripture would be fulfilled” referred to Psalm 22:15 (the psalm whose first verse Jesus quoted on the cross). And Jesus, who was the spring of living water, felt spiritual as well as physical thirst, and died in our place. Revelation 7:16-17 promises the redeemed that “‘Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them,’ nor any scorching heat.” For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; ‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’ ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’” How does your heart respond to Jesus’ willingness to thirst so that you might never again thirst?

Thursday, March 29 – Read Mark 15:37-39. The Temple curtain divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Exodus 26:31-33), the place of God’s presence. Only the high priest could ever enter the Most Holy Place. The torn curtain showed that Jesus removed the barrier between humans and God. Yet one of the first to “get it” was not a Temple theologian, but a Roman centurion supervising the crucifixion. In Luke’s parallel version of this story, the centurion said, “Surely this was a righteous man” (Luke 23:47). For a Roman to praise a crucified man was remarkable. But Mark preserved an even stronger statement from the centurion in verse 39: “Surely this man was the son of God!” What difference does it make in your life for your faith to reach beyond Jesus as a righteous man, and to trust him as the Son of God? Meditate prayerfully on the torn curtain’s import: there’s no longer any barrier between us and God. What barriers still feel like they cut you off from God? Ask Jesus for the same power that tore the curtain to strengthen you to break through your barriers

Friday, March 30 – Read John 19:30-37 “It is finished,” were Jesus’ final words on the cross. Not only was his life ending, but his living witness to God was ending as well. The prophecies concerning him had been fulfilled. His purpose in coming to earth had been accomplished. ‘It,’ all of it, was indeed ‘finished.’ At infinite cost, God’s great saving work for all humanity, for all of us, was finished. Jesus’ great ordeal was over. He gave his all, physically, emotionally and spiritually. He died in peace, even triumph, knowing he had finished God’s eternal plan to redeem the world. What work are you uniquely shaped to do for God that offers you meaning and peace? Open yourself to listen for God’s call in your life as you approach Easter. “Good Friday,” we call this day—not because the human race crucifying Jesus was in any way “good,” but because God’s transforming love brought eternal good out of that awful act. Let focused time with God make this a truly good Friday for you.

Saturday, March 31. Read John 19:38-42 The Romans usually put crucified criminals in a common grave or left corpses unburied as a public warning. But Jews saw being left unburied as too horrible even for criminals. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, secret followers of Jesus, boldly asked Pilate for Jesus’ body. Instead of a common grave, they tenderly placed Jesus in a garden tomb before the Sabbath began. Luke 23:52-56 said the women saw where Jesus was laid, and planned to complete the burial preparations on Sunday, after the Sabbath was over. Joseph of Arimathea had not followed Jesus in public, John said, because he feared the Jews. Nicodemus had only met with Jesus at night when they were less likely to be seen together. Are there times when you try to keep your faith in Christ a secret? Jesus’ death moved Nicodemus and Joseph to show their allegiance publicly. What moves you to express your trust in and allegiance to Jesus openly?