

April 8– Read John 12. The act by this woman and Jesus’ response to it does not teach us to ignore the poor so we can spend money extravagantly ‘for Christ.’ This was a unique act for a specific occasion – an anointing that anticipated Jesus’ burial and a public declaration of faith in him as Messiah. As Jesus rides a donkey into Jerusalem, the crowd shouted and praised him. But some in the crowd refused to believe and some believed but refused to admit it. Jesus had some strong words for these people. People who will not take a stand for Jesus are afraid of rejection and ridicule. Many Jewish leaders wouldn’t admit to faith in Jesus because they feared excommunication from the synagogue and loss of their prestigious place in the community. But the praise of others is fickle and short-lived. We should be much more concerned about God’s eternal acceptance than about the temporary approval of people. Reflect on these questions: How does Jesus describe what will happen to him and how it affects those listening? How will the death of Jesus glorify the Father? As you reflect on how Jesus approached his own death, how does that challenge you or encourage you?

April 9. Read John 13. To love others was not a new commandment, but to love others as much as Christ loved others was revolutionary. Now we are to love others based on Jesus’ sacrificial love for us. Such love will not only bring unbelievers to Christ, it will also keep believers strong and united in a world hostile to God. Jesus was a living example of God’s love, as we are to be living examples of Jesus’ love. Jesus says that our Christ-like love will show we are his disciples. Do people see petty bickering, jealousy, and division in your church? Or do they know you are Jesus’ followers by your love for one another? After reading this chapter, What does Jesus do that sets an example for his disciples to imitate? What enables Jesus to serve with such humility? Who is someone you can serve this week?

April 10. Read John 14. Verse 6 is one of the most basic and important passages in Scripture. How can we know the way to God? Only through Jesus. Jesus is the way because he is both God and man. By uniting our lives with his, we are united with God. Trust Jesus to take you to the Father, and all the benefits of being God’s child will be yours. Jesus says he is the ONLY way to God the Father. Some people may argue that this way is too narrow. In reality, it is wide enough for the whole world, if the world chooses to accept it. Instead of worrying about how limited it sounds to have only one way, we should be saying, “Thank you, God, for providing a sure way to get to you! What promises and instructions does Jesus give in this chapter? Where do you see evidence of Jesus’ affection for his disciples? How does Jesus describe the role of the Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit’s role relate to love and obedience?

April 11. Read John 15. Christ is the vine, and God is the gardener who cares for the branches to make them fruitful. The branches are all those who claim to be followers of Christ. The fruitful branches are true believers who by their living union with Christ produce much fruit. But those who become unproductive – those who turn back from following Christ after making a superficial commitment – will be separated from the vine. Unproductive followers are as good as dead and will be cut off and tossed aside. What words or phrases are repeated in this chapter? What is the significance of remaining in Jesus? Why does “the world” hate Jesus and his disciples? How do these words bring comfort to the disciples later on in their lives?

April 12. Read John 16. In these last moments with his disciples, Jesus (1) warned them about further persecution, (2) told them where, when, and why he was going, and (3) assured them that they would not be left alone, but that the Spirit would come. Jesus knew what lay ahead, and he did not want his disciples' faith shaken or destroyed. God wants you to know that you are not alone. You have the Holy Spirit to comfort you, teach you truth, and help you. What are the names and actions of the Holy Spirit as described in this chapter? Why is it so important to Jesus that his disciples know about the Holy Spirit? What is Jesus telling them will happen? How will the words Jesus shares here result in his disciples' peace? How might these words help us to find peace in Jesus?

April 13. Read John 17. This entire chapter is Jesus' prayer. (So, literally THIS is the 'Lord's Prayer'). From it, we learn that the world is a tremendous battleground where the forces under Satan's power and those under God's authority are at war. Satan and his forces are motivated by bitter hatred for Christ and his forces. Jesus prayed for his disciples, including those of us who follow him today. He prayed that God would keep his chosen believers safe from Satan's powers, setting them apart and making them pure and holy, uniting them through his truth. What does Jesus want his followers to have in common with him? Why has Jesus sent his disciples into the world? How does it affect you to know that Jesus did and is praying these things for us?

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