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A M E T H O D I S T C H U R C H

*Easter
2011*

TREEOLOGY

{Fig, Broom, Palm, Dogwood, The Cross}

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Monday 25 April 2011

Rejected so that I may never be forsaken

Scripture readings:

Matthew 21 vs 42-46

Mark 8 vs 31

Luke 17 vs 24-25

Mark 15 vs 32-34

Jesus experienced incredible rejection as He journeyed towards the cross. He was betrayed and abandoned by His disciples. He was denied by His closest friends. He was mocked and cursed by the soldiers and He was forced to die a criminal's death. Even as He hung on the cross, a criminal being crucified next to Him shouted insults at Him. The ultimate moment of rejection however, came just before Jesus died. As Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself, God could not look upon Him and Jesus cried out... "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken Me?"

In our darkest moments, even though God may feel a million miles away, He is there. He is always near; seeking and pursuing us... loving and holding us. In that moment of Jesus' death, however, He was utterly rejected and abandoned. He was entirely alone.

He took this agony and suffering on Himself so that we would never have to experience abandonment. He was truly forsaken so that we could be forever and eternally accepted in the Kingdom of God and be in relationship with Him.

He has promised us: "Not at all will I leave you, not at all will I forsake you, never!" (Hebrews 13 vs 5)

Tuesday 26 April 2011

Received into the Holy of Holies

Scripture reading:

Luke 23 vs 44-47

Hebrews 4 vs 15-16

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple was torn in two. This was the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies, in which the Ark of the Covenant was housed, from the rest of the temple. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies where God's presence dwelled in the ark, and only once a year on the Day of Atonement. Ordinary people did not have access into the most holy place where God's presence could be found.

When Jesus died however, the ripping of the curtain symbolised that because of His ultimate sacrifice on our behalf, we have access into the very throne room of God. We are welcomed into His presence and can be in an intimate, personal relationship with Him.

The author of Hebrews urges us to come boldly before the throne of grace to find help and mercy in time of need. You have unlimited, free access to God because of the sacrifice of Jesus. Being in a relationship with Him is a great and treasured gift, bought at an incredible price, that should never be taken for granted.

So, will you enter into the throne room of grace? Will you dare to draw near and experience more of God? There is always more of Himself and His love He is longing to show you.

Wednesday 27 April 2011

The two criminals at the cross

Scripture readings:

Luke 23 vs 33-43

John 1 vs 10-12

As Jesus was being crucified, two criminals were being crucified beside Him. Both wanted to be saved. The one cursed Jesus and demanded that if He really could do miracles and was Who He said He was, He should save himself and them. The other admonished the man and pleaded for a different kind of salvation. He asked Jesus to remember Him when His Kingdom came.

What is it that made these two men react so differently to Jesus? What made the one criminal angry and resentful and the other open to accepting the salvation God? Perhaps the second criminal was able to receive Jesus' forgiveness and redemption because he had an accurate understanding of who he was. He knew that he was a sinner and a criminal who was worthy of death. He did not demand to be saved, but simply pleaded for mercy he knew he did not deserve. He did not trust in himself and his goodness or power to save him, but trusted in the love and grace of God.

Have you really received Jesus and do you continue to do so day by day? Do you have an accurate understanding of yourself as a sinner who is in desperate need of the mercy of God? If so, know that His mercy and love will set you free. His grace is enough for you.

Thursday 28 April 2011

It is finished

Scripture readings:

John 19 vs 28-30

John 4 vs 34

Romans 10 vs 4

Jesus' last words on the cross were: "It is finished." Jesus was speaking about His life that was about to expire, but in these three words there is so much more. It was a declaration of ultimate victory, even in Jesus' moment of death and it is a promise that speaks over your life and mine today.

In that moment, Jesus completed the redemptive task for which God had sent Him into the world. The reconciliation between God and humanity had been accomplished. The prison of sin that held us was broken opened and declared forever closed down and our fruitless attempt at saving ourselves was finished once and for all. Jesus was speaking over our lives that the old has gone and the new has come because salvation is available and our sin is removed as far as the east is from the west.

"It is finished – It is as if he had said: "I have executed the great designs of the Almighty - I have satisfied the demands of his justice - I have accomplished all that was written in the prophets, and suffered the utmost malice of my enemies; and now the way to the holy of holies is made manifest through my blood." An awful, yet a glorious finish. Through this tragic death God is reconciled to man, and the kingdom of heaven opened to every believing soul." – Adam Clarke

Friday 29 April 2011

The empty tomb

Scripture readings:

Ephesians 1 vs 15-23

2 Corinthians 5 vs 17

Philippians 1 vs 6

Our Easter experience does not end at the cross. We know that although on Friday we mourn as we remember and repent, the glory of Sunday morning is on the horizon. Not only did Jesus accomplish the work of reconciling humanity to God, but He forever defeated death and spoke a promise of new life over us all.

Ephesians 1 reminds us that the very same power that raised Christ from the dead is at work in us. What power that is... and how often we take it for granted!

Do you see the resurrection power at work in you? When you visit the place at which you died to self and decided to follow Christ do you find an empty tomb because you are living the resurrection life and have moved onward and upward from there, or do you find yourself stuck in your old ways and habits, struggling just to get out of your burial clothes?

Know today, that God's power is at work within you and that He will complete the good work He has begun in you. Allow Him to transform and change you so that the old will truly be gone and you can live in the liberty of the new life He gives as you move forward with Him.

Saturday 30 April 2011

The resurrection life

Scripture readings:

John 11 vs 25-27

Romans 8 vs 31-39

Philippians 4 vs 13

The resurrection is perhaps the ultimate reminder that a life with Christ is one of victory. We are more than conquerors with Him who conquered all... even death.

Our journey with God is one of great sacrifice – of dying to self, of stepping out in faith when we do not see or understand and of trusting when we do not feel we can – but it is also a life of victory.

God has called us to a life of His power and glory. In this world we have the assurance that we can overcome all with Him, but ultimately our final hope is in the perfect assurance that our eternities are secure in Him and we will share in His triumph and victory forever.

"Immanuel, God with us in our nature, in our sorrow, in our lifework, in our punishment, in our grave, and now with us, or rather we with Him, in resurrection, ascension, triumph, and Second Advent splendour." –

Charles H. Spurgeon