



REVEILLE'S GPS WEEKLY SCRIPTURE GUIDE

Explore scriptures and daily devotionals that reflect on this Sunday's sermon message.
Sign up to receive the daily devotional email at www.bit.ly/devotional-rumc.

March 18-24, 2024

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

Sermon Title: "Were You There?" by Pete Moon

**Use the space below to reflect on the questions in this week's devotionals,
make class and sermon notes, and write down prayers and concerns.**

Questions for small groups and individual reflections: (After Sermon):

1. Why do you think the crowds were so excited when Jesus came into Jerusalem? They saw him as the incoming king, but what kind of king do you think the crowds envisioned?
2. Scholars will say that the words of the Roman centurion in Mark 15:39 represent the key line in the book of Mark. The soldier names Jesus as the Son of God. Mark makes it absolutely clear who Jesus is, but only now, when Jesus is on the cross. When you picture Jesus, what does he look like? Do you see him, with Mark, through the lens of the cross?
3. The sermon tells the story of the church after World War I. After believing in the best of humanity, they were faced with the horrors of gas and trench warfare. Many were disillusioned, but this was also the beginning of a sort of reformation for the church. How does disillusionment with us as humans help us find renewed faith in the gospel story? Maybe you can share a personal story of finding hope in disillusionment.

Monday, March 18: Read Mark 11:1-11 (Palm Sunday Gospel Reading)

As we enter the final weeks of our Lenten journey to the cross, we are called to examine our answer to the question posed by the famous hymn, "Were You There?" Our answer is a resounding, "yes!" and sometimes not exactly in the way we'd first think. As we explore the dual scenes of Palm Sunday and the crucifixion in our readings and in our worship this Sunday, we will not only see ourselves at the foot of the cross as faithful followers of Jesus; we will also see ourselves in the crowd. Today's crowd is greeting Jesus, shouting "Hosanna!" and waving palm branches. How wonderful it would be if we always greeted Jesus this way as a unique individual AND as part of a community and "tribe." When are we most likely to follow Jesus – when we are alone or with others?

- **Relationship Opportunity:** *Discuss with your small group or family how much you see yourself as part of a community vs. as a unique individual. What difference does it make?*

Tuesday, March 19: Read Mark 14:1-72 (Passion Sunday Gospel Reading, Part 1)

Sometimes we do incredible things as individuals and as collective people. Then, seemingly turning on a dime, we can be capable of incredible weakness, evil, and betrayal. Mere days after Jesus's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, we read in today's single chapter how some of Jesus' closest friends disappoint, deny, and betray him. What is Jesus's response through all of this? Faithfulness and love. Today, let us see ourselves in the good, the bad, and the ugly as individual followers of Jesus. Where would we have been through this week with Jesus? Where are we with Jesus right now?

- **Relationship and Study Opportunity:** Name some of our best human accomplishments and some of our worst. Why are we capable of both?

Wednesday, March 20: Read Mark 15:1-39 (Passion Sunday Gospel Reading, Part 2)

Slow down and take time to read Mark's account of the passion of Christ today. Allow yourself to be with Jesus before Pilate. Watch the soldiers mock him. Walk with him and Simon as they take the last steps to Golgotha and you see Jesus being beaten, nailed, and slowly suffocated. Now also imagine yourself as part of the crowd that had the opportunity to exonerate Jesus, but instead shouted for the release of a violent revolutionary who had promised you swift revenge against your enemies and tangible, material action over self-sacrifice, love, and eternal rewards. Were you there? Are you there now?

- **Study and Discipleship Opportunity:** *Look up all of the words to the hymn, "Were You There?" What words resonate with you? Do you believe you can truly be there at the cross, 2000 years later?*

Thursday, March 21: Read Isaiah 50:4-9

As we read one of the four passages in the book of Isaiah sometimes known as the "Songs of the Suffering Servant," let us put ourselves there. Are we like the servant, faithfully offering our back to those who beat us, our face to those who mock us? Or do we identify more with the accuser? Is it possible to identify with both? Let us also examine how we as individuals and a culture celebrate and support "heroes." Do we applaud meekness, silence, and self-sacrifice over bravado, vengeance, and visual displays of power?

- **Relationship Opportunity:** *Discuss with your small group or family characteristics of a "hero". Are they aligned with what you believe our culture and crowds celebrate in a hero?*

Friday, March 22: Read Philippians 2:5-11

Paul's words today remind us that "being there" involves both recognizing and appreciating the sacrifice Jesus made for us as well as striving to have the "same mindset as Christ Jesus" (verse 5). Lest we believe this is too great a task, we can focus on the incredible grace and power the cross has given us. Through Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, we are granted the power of the Holy Spirit to become Christ-like.

- **Discipleship Opportunity:** *Choose one place in your life where you can more fully take "the very nature of a servant" and humble yourself for God's glory.*

Saturday, March 23: Read Psalm 31:9-16

"Being there" for someone in their time of need requires acknowledging their pain, and helping them through it. This is also how God is always with us. Today's psalm expresses pain, weakness, fear, sorrow, grief, anguish, and isolation. It also expresses faith in God's presence and love. Today, let us allow ourselves to feel the pain of others...and fully acknowledge our own. Let us recognize God's presence through it all and our ability to show God's love to others. We can be there for others, as Jesus was there at the cross, taking on all of our pain, sin, and even death.

- **Discipleship Opportunity:** *Be there for one person whose pain you have been avoiding.*

Sunday, March 24: Scripture Memorization: Philippians 2:5-8

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!"