

MARCH 2016

TODAY IN THE WORD™



The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Luke 19:10

PROMISES KEPT:
Luke's Witness to God's Faithfulness

A devotional from



MOODY
GLOBAL MINISTRIES™

SHAREHOPE[↑]

MARCH 14-18, 2016

Have you ever given up hope?

We all face difficult times. You or someone you know may be struggling with loneliness, illness, a troubled relationship, or financial distress.

But the Bible tells us that—even during our darkest days—we can be certain of the hope we have through a relationship with Christ!

In Jesus, we find healing, forgiveness, guidance, and a certain future. This hope is not just wishful thinking. Our hope is based on the solid truth of God's Word.

The Bible, in 1 Peter 3:15, tells us that this hope is meant to be shared.

TOGETHER, WE CAN SHARE HOPE!

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God uses Moody Radio to share hope with Clay throughout his day so he in turn will be prepared to share it:

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from the
WORD to **LIFE.**

TODAY WITH DR. PAUL NYQUIST

President of Moody Global Ministries

Who Do You Say That I Am?



In Luke 9, we read about Jesus feeding a crowd of five thousand. This meal was a jaw-dropping miracle; thousands of hungry people

were fed from five small loaves of bread and two fish. After the crowds finally dispersed, though, the story really gets interesting. Jesus had been praying, and He turned to His disciples and asked a question: “Who do the people say that I am?” (v. 18).

They shared responses they had heard from the multitude—some think John the Baptist, others say Elijah or a prophet risen from the dead.

But Jesus pressed further, “But who do you say that I am?”

Peter was first to answer, “The Christ [Messiah] of God” (v. 20).

In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis says Jesus’ question demands from us an answer, a choice. Lewis argues that you cannot say Jesus was just a great moral teacher and reject Him as God: “That is the one thing we must not say. . . . You must make your choice. Either this

man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

In the Gospel of Luke, we follow the details of Jesus’ life from His birth to His baptism through His public ministry. We see our Lord and Savior stand trial and endure crucifixion. We witness His resurrection. Luke says he wrote this account of Jesus so that “you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught” (1:4).

Reading the Gospels allows us to know Jesus through the facts presented by Luke. He spoke to eyewitnesses and investigated the stories of Christ. Those who love God know that Jesus’ question in Luke 9:20 is the most important question ever asked. We know without a doubt that Jesus was much more than an extraordinary person and a profound teacher. He was the Son of God, our Redeemer, and the Messiah. ■

THEOLOGY MATTERS

by Dr. John Koessler

The Two Natures of Scripture

The Bible has its origin in God. Those who wrote the words of the Scripture did not write of their own accord; the impulse to write came from the Holy Spirit who also superintended the process. According to 2 Peter 1:21, these writers “spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” We describe this quality of the Bible as inspired or “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16). What the Bible asserts, God asserts. What it commands, God commands. To reject its promises is to reject God.

The Bible also has a human dimension: the Holy Spirit utilized the humanity of the biblical authors. Although the Bible is God’s Word, it speaks with a human voice. The writers who penned the books of the Bible used ordinary human language, their own particular vocabulary, and distinctive writing styles. Many clearly thought about how to organize their material to emphasize certain points. Some relied on other sources to inform what they wrote.

The Gospel of Luke is a good example of this. In the first four verses Luke tells how he came to write this book. First, he says that he investigated his subject before writing. This research included already existing accounts and eyewitness testimony. Luke also thought about how he should organize his material. He might have arranged it

according to theme, or he could have produced a random collection of Jesus’ sayings and actions. Instead, he chose to write “an orderly account” (1:3). All of this was shaped by his purpose in writing, which was “so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught” (1:4).

The involvement of the Holy Spirit in this process guaranteed that the result would be the Gospel that God wanted Luke to write. This Gospel is part of Scripture, which is without error in all that it affirms and teaches. It is completely trustworthy. We can have confidence in Luke’s account of the life and ministry of Jesus because we know it is inspired by God Himself.

Because God used human voices to write the books of the Bible, its message is also conveyed in a way that we can understand. This does not mean that everything the Bible teaches is easy to grasp—some things in the Bible are “hard to understand” (2 Peter 3:16). But its essential message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ is plainly taught. God inspired the Bible so that we would know His great love for us. ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY

To learn more, read *Seven Reasons You Can Trust the Bible* by Erwin Lutzer (Moody Publishers).

FROM THE EDITORS

by Heather Moffitt

This Changes Everything

In 2003, *TIME* magazine ran a feature titled “80 Days That Changed the World.” The list included such notable historical events as Hitler’s invasion of Poland and the first motion picture. In 2013, *The Atlantic* polled a handful of scholars and writers with a similar question: What day most changed the course of history? Answers ranged from the invention of the microscope to the Gutenberg printing press to the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

All of these days and events represent important turning points or milestones that changed the course of history, but none of them correctly answer the question about the most important day that changed the world. The day that changed everything was the day that God raised Jesus to eternal life after He had been crucified and buried for three days. The day of Jesus’ resurrection is the pivotal moment in all of history.

This month Christians around the world will celebrate Easter—Resurrection Day—to commemorate the day that changed the world. The resurrection of Jesus meant that God had signaled the final defeat of sin and death. Their power to claim humanity and separate us from God was broken through Jesus’ death and resurrection. The resurrection set the stage for the final

victory of God to come at the end of history, when Satan is defeated forever and God’s people dwell with Him (see Revelation 19–22).

The resurrection was a historical event, not just a mythical wish or an emotional comfort. Because Jesus was raised from death to life, His resurrection not only changes history—it changes our lives. We have hope for eternal life with God, and this hope is not based on a wish but on historical truth. We are able to receive salvation from sin because of the work of Jesus. We are able to fellowship with God because Jesus made a way for us to know Him (see Phil. 3:10, Heb. 4:14–16).

The resurrection of Jesus is the day that changes everything. This month, as we prepare to celebrate Easter, may it continue to change our lives in order to bring glory to God. ■

This month the student music ensembles from Moody Bible Institute are touring in the United States and Canada. Women’s Concert Choir, Men’s Collegiate Choir, Moody Chorale, and Moody Symphonic Band lead listeners in inspired worship through excellence in music. To see if they will be in your area, check their touring calendar online: www.moody.edu/concert-calendar.

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TODAY IN THE WORD™

Promises Kept: Luke's Witness to God's Faithfulness

Sherlock Holmes, Elizabeth Bennett, Atticus Finch, Huckleberry Finn, Uncle Tom—when we hear these names we immediately know who they are, where they lived, and what they did. The writers who brought these characters into our lives knew how to describe them to make them live in our imagination.

The Gospel of Luke introduces us to the life and work of Jesus. But unlike the novelists, Luke tells us about a real person who is alive today, inviting us to know Him. As we study the Gospel of Luke, we'll see Jesus as the Healer, the Defender of the poor, the righteous Judge, and the King of the Jews. He is the Son of God and the Son of Man, the Savior and the eternal Word.

We pray that our study this month will help deepen your relationship with Christ. We hope the Person of Jesus not only will appeal to your imagination but also will capture your heart.

Thank you for your journey with us at *Today in the Word*. We are grateful for your partnership in reading the Bible and for your financial support that makes this ministry possible. We are grateful for you! ■

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TUESDAY
MARCH

1

Blessed is [the one] who has believed that the LORD would fulfill his promises!

Luke 1:45

Jesus, Son of David

Biographers often approach their subject from a particular angle. For instance, the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher David Hume has been the subject of several recent biographies: one focused on his intellectual history, another focused on his work as a historian, and a third devoted more attention to his childhood and early life.

Historians and biographers try to be objective in their presentation of the material, even when they have chosen a particular focus. This is no less true in the four biographical accounts of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. But like other biographers, the Gospel writers do arrange their material in a purposeful way, each striving to emphasize certain elements in the story of Jesus. Luke, writing to Theophilus, determined that he would write an “orderly account” to encourage faith in the truth about Jesus (vv. 3–4). Luke would bring his own (Gentile)

perspective and research to bear on the history of Jesus’ life.

Curiously, Luke uses a generic word to refer to the content of his book: he will write of “things” that have been fulfilled, witnessed, and taught to Theophilus. These “things” are historical events, which Luke had meticulously researched and intended to draw into a coherent whole. And the whole, as can be deduced from the opening narratives of the book, is this: God keeps His promises.

Luke underscores that this history is a continuation of Israel’s story. The son promised to Zechariah and Elizabeth, John, would assume the ministry of Elijah and turn the hearts of Israel back to God. The promised Son, Jesus, will assume the throne of David and rule forever. Blessed are the men and women who continue believing in the faithfulness of the promise-keeping God.

APPLY THE WORD

Luke situates his story historically (“in the time of Herod king of Judea,” v. 5) to remind us of the dark historical moment into which the gospel arrived. Rome was in power; some wondered if God had forgotten His people—but Mary embraced the good news of God’s faithfulness. May we follow her example and trust the Word of the Lord.

PRAY WITH US

Please remember in prayer Moody’s Board of Trustees today. We are grateful for the time, talents, and leadership they give to Moody Global Ministries, and we pray for God’s protection and guidance for them.

I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. . . . I have sworn by my holiness.

Psalms 89:34–35

WEDNESDAY
MARCH

2

Jesus, Son of Abraham

In the United States, perjury is considered a felony and is punishable by prison. In the State of California, perjury can even be a capital offense if the false testimony contributes to a wrongful conviction and execution. These penalties for perjury affirm our conviction as Americans, that justice depends on determining the truth of a case.

Scripture portrays God as a God who always tells the truth. When He swears an oath or binds Himself to a promise, He can be trusted to follow through. Consider, for example, the promises God made to Abraham in Genesis 12. *I will bless you. I will make you great. You will inherit this land and become the father of many multitudes. All people on earth will be blessed through you. As Luke begins his “orderly account” of the historical events concerning Jesus, a promised Son of Abraham, he wants us to remember that God is a promise-keeper. God always makes good on His word.*

In these opening narratives, Gabriel announces the impending births of both John and Jesus to their respective parents. Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary are filled with God’s Spirit and proclaim words of prophecy and praise. Zechariah praises God for an anticipated redemption (vv. 67–79); Elizabeth blesses the fruit of Mary’s womb (vv. 41–45); Mary announces the reversal of Israel’s fortunes (vv. 46–55). In chorus, these three announce the faithfulness of God to Israel, which the prophets of old had always proclaimed.

Interestingly, only when Zechariah writes the God-given name of his son on his tablet is his tongue loosed (v. 64). God keeps the specific promise He made to Zechariah (v. 20) as a reminder that He is faithful to keep all His promises, including His covenant with Abraham. Zechariah’s life was proof that God can be trusted in everything He says and does.

APPLY THE WORD

As a historian, Luke takes a particular interest in the people on the periphery of society, including the barren woman Elizabeth. Have you wondered whether God hears your prayers or cares about your situation? He does! Just as He was faithful to His promise to Abraham and blessed Elizabeth with a son and song of praise, He will be faithful to you.

PRAY WITH US

Today is the Day of Prayer at Moody, and we are thankful for the freedom and the privilege to pray at our workplace. Dr. Paul Nyquist, Moody’s president, invites you to join us in prayer with our students, faculty, and employees.

THURSDAY
MARCH

3

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news . . . who bring good tidings.

Isaiah 52:7

Jesus, Son of God

In a twist on the traditional baby shower, gender-reveal parties are the newest trend in gathering friends and family before the birth of the baby. Portable ultrasound machines can be wheeled into the room. Cakes (with blue or pink inside) deliver the awaited news.

Mary had one of the most amazing gender-reveal moments of all time when the angel Gabriel told her that she would have a son (1:31)! That news was delivered to an audience of one; the birth announcement for Jesus, however, was delivered with celestial pageantry by the angelic hosts of heaven to the shepherds. The angels proclaimed the jubilant news of the Son of God's arrival in Bethlehem, the royal city of David. This news was not a private celebration; the birth of Jesus was good news for the entire world.

In his book *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, Kenneth Bailey says Mary

and Joseph most probably had family connections in Bethlehem, since that was where they were going to register for the census. Bailey describes the construction of a typical village home at that time, which sometimes included a guest room. With the guest room already occupied, the homeowners likely welcomed Mary and Joseph into the area of their home designated for sheltering animals at night. Under that roof, the newborn Son of God was laid in a manger.

Whatever the specific surroundings, Scripture makes clear that Jesus' birth did not occur in a palace or regal setting. The Son of God, the promised King, had humble beginnings; the shepherds were unlikely prophetic bearers of the good tidings. Though they belonged to one of the lowest social classes, the shepherds were dignified by the news they received, and they responded with an outpouring of praise to God!

APPLY THE WORD

Caesar Augustus's birth in 31 B.C. was described as the birth of a political savior. Luke records better tidings of a greater birth. Jesus, the Son of God, is Lord—not Caesar! He delivers peace that no political ruler can bring. Thank God for the good news that Jesus transforms lives and brings peace to troubled hearts.

PRAY WITH US

Moody is blessed with an excellent Food Service team. Please pray for Louis Ballasch and Todd Sacco, as well as part-time and student workers, as they provide nutritious meals in The Commons, our cafeteria on the Chicago campus.

My eyes have seen your salvation.

Luke 2:30

FRIDAY
MARCH

4

Jesus, Son of God

The theological debate over how to understand the relationship between the Old Testament Law and the new covenant in Christ has raged for centuries. Many sixteenth-century reformers, eager to distance themselves from the Roman church (and its emphasis on self-righteousness), diminished the Law. Martin Luther, for example, exaggerated, “Moses knows nothing of Christ.”

Scripture testifies that Jesus Christ was not a Law-breaker but a Law-keeper. As we see in our reading today, Jesus’ parents were devout Jews and obeyed the requirements of the Law of Moses (v. 22; see Ex. 13:2; Lev. 12:6). Jesus grew up in a religiously faithful household. He was a religiously faithful Jew. His family regularly attended the three pilgrim feasts in Jerusalem, and at the age of twelve, when his parents lost track of him after the Passover feast, Jesus was found quizzing the religious leaders

in the temple courts and audaciously calling the temple His Father’s house.

As a human being, Jesus had to fulfill the duty that Israel had failed. He had to obey the Law and restore the true worship of God. Though He was sinless and needed no redemption, He came to save humanity from the curse of sinfulness and death. Mary and Joseph had to bring two pigeons (or doves) as a sacrifice of atonement and a rite of purification forty days after Jesus’ birth. But Simeon anticipated the final penalty that Jesus would pay, and he warned Mary, “A sword will pierce your own soul too” (v. 35).

What is immensely good news for everyone—Zechariah and Elizabeth, the shepherds, Simeon and Anna—will require Jesus’ death in order to defeat death. He will sacrifice His life in order to make eternal life possible for all. Jesus, the Lamb of God, will take away the sins of the world.

APPLY THE WORD

We can cherish the hope of knowing that God keeps His promises, even in dark seasons of despair. Verse 38 shows us what faith does in response to God’s promises: it looks forward to redemption. It hopes. It anticipates. It sets holy expectation. Can you do that today by faith, trusting God for your tomorrows?

PRAY WITH US

Janet Stiven, VP and general counsel, serves Moody with her expertise in the legal field. We thank God for her exceptional ministry helping other departments and leading her team in the Legal department.

SATURDAY
MARCH

5

The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all people will see God's salvation.

Luke 3:5–6

Jesus, Son of Adam

Many readers skim over the word *famine* in the Bible. Few of us have any real experience of hunger. We might complain of “starving” when our blood sugar crashes, but this is not the desperate condition of mothers and fathers around the world before whose eyes children languish and die.

The Bible describes two kinds of famine: one is physical, and the other is spiritual. We can be famished for lack of food, and we can also be hungry for a word from God, especially when He seems to have long been silent.

Spiritual famine was the context for the nation of Israel when John the Baptist and Jesus arrived on the scene. It had been 400 years since a prophet of God had spoken words of hope, and hope was exactly what God's people needed in their political wilderness. No Son of David ruled on the throne. Instead Caesar, Pilate, Herod, and Philip had

consolidated political power, ruling the Jewish land and people to further their own interests. Had Israel, because of sin, been forgotten by God?

Into this wilderness and famine a prophetic voice cried out, and it belonged to the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, who was now an adult. John the Baptist preached repentance, and it is clear that he aimed at more than making his Jewish compatriots so-called good people. John wasn't preaching morality for its own sake—he was preparing for the Messiah (v. 15). John's words anticipated the ministry and baptism of the Messiah, whose sandals he was not worthy to untie.

John was a faithful servant, preparing the way for the Lord. But he was not the Son. Jesus is the Son of Adam and Son of God who has come to bring salvation (vv. 22, 38).

APPLY THE WORD

John the Baptist wasn't afraid to “tell it like it is.” Do we share his boldness in proclaiming the good news about Jesus? Do you have loved ones who suffer from a spiritual famine and need to hear the Word of the Lord? Consider how you can be a messenger of good news: sharing your testimony, inviting them to church, or giving them a Bible.

PRAY WITH US

Many students will begin touring the country with Moody student ensembles during spring break. Would you pray for the Music department faculty who lead and coordinate these tours? Today we pray for Xiangtang Hong, David Gauger, and H. E. Singley.

*Do not get drunk on wine. . . .
Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

Ephesians 5:18

SUNDAY
MARCH

6

Jesus, Son of Joseph

For four years, Rob Ford was the scandal of the city of Toronto. Ford was caught texting while driving. He associated with people of ill repute, including drug dealers and convicted criminals. Ford often showed up drunk to public festivals and city events. What made Ford's actions even more unconscionable was this: he was the city's mayor.

Our key verse today reminds us why Scripture forbids drunkenness. We must be filled—not with wine but with the Holy Spirit. In his biographical record, Luke often emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in the unfolding good news of Jesus: the angel promises Zechariah that John will be filled with the Holy Spirit; Mary will conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit; Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit when she greets Mary and the holy baby in her womb (1:41); Zechariah, Simeon, Anna, and John the Baptist are all filled with the Spirit as

part of the long line of prophetic heralds of good tidings.

Jesus, Son of Joseph, is no exception to the witness of the Holy Spirit's role in the plan of salvation. Filled with the Holy Spirit, He was led into the wilderness. Forty days later, this seemingly ordinary carpenter's son returned in the power of the Holy Spirit and preached to the gathered crowd at the Nazareth synagogue.

As His ministry began, Jesus was empowered by the Spirit in two important ways. First, though He was weakened by hunger, He resisted the Devil's temptation and did not seek to prove His identity as God's Son (vv. 4, 8, 12); second, He resisted the temptation to please the crowd by preaching a gospel other than the one with which He had been entrusted (vv. 24–27). Jesus, the Spirit-filled son of Joseph, was faithful to His heavenly Father.

APPLY THE WORD

Being filled with God's Holy Spirit makes us stronger to resist temptation and braver to follow God's calling. We will cherish obedience over personal comfort. May this Puritan prayer be ours: "Raise me above the smiles and frowns of this world, regarding it as a light thing to be judged by men. May thy approbation be my only aim."

PRAY WITH US

As we continue in prayer for the Music department professors, please uphold Betty-Ann Lynerd, Cynthia Uitermarkt, Desiree Hassler, Elizabeth Naegele, and Gary Rownd. Thank the Lord for their dedication to music ministry!

Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives your sins and heals all your diseases.

Psalm 103:2–3

Jesus, the Healer

In her mid-thirties, author Theresa Brown left her career as a writing professor at Tufts University and became a trained nurse, first in oncology then in palliative care. She has written several books describing the difficult—though at times, blessed—task of preparing patients (and patients’ families) for death.

The good news of God’s kingdom is a proclamation of healing and deliverance from death—both physical and spiritual. Today’s reading marks the end of Luke’s long introduction to Jesus’ ministry: the angelic visits, birth narratives, ministry of John the Baptist, and wilderness temptation. Now we begin to study Jesus’ life of ministry, and we see Jesus traveling throughout Galilee with crowds flocking to the Miracle Worker. The news was spreading quickly that Jesus of Nazareth was doing extraordinary things.

When Jesus preached, His words had the weight of surprising authority. Before

a single miracle was performed, the people were stunned by the power of His teaching. Then, Jesus’ words were authenticated by His miracles: Jesus healed a feverish woman and a man possessed by a demon. As the chapter ends, Jesus touches many sick and suffering; when He laid His hands on them, they were healed.

In a great irony, it is not Jesus who announces His identity to the crowds but the demons. “I know who you are—the Holy One of God! (v. 34); “You are the Son of God!” (v. 41). The Devil had tempted Jesus to prove His identity; he knew that this Great Healer is the Son of God. Even the demons cannot help but proclaim His name.

Much like God created the universe by verbal command, in this passage Jesus also exercised the power of His voice to cure the physically ill and to deliver the spiritually oppressed.

APPLY THE WORD

God’s kingdom will heal the world both spiritually and physically. Creation groans, and we groan in the frailty of our bodies (see Rom. 8:22; 7:24). Today, pray that Jesus the Healer will work in the lives of people suffering from chronic disease and terminal illness, and thank Him for the ultimate healing we will have in the resurrection.

PRAY WITH US

As they share the gospel through music, please add to your prayer list professors Jae Hyeok Jang, Jori Jennings, Terry Strand, and Un-Young Whang, as well as the Music department’s staff, Chris Wheeler and Lauren Kaniarz.

I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 5:32

TUESDAY
MARCH

8

Jesus, the Great Physician

General George Washington was not keen on becoming the first American president. Just as he served his new country militarily in the Revolutionary War, however, he also chose to serve politically. Nevertheless, after two presidential terms, Washington humbly retired to his country estate, refusing what could have easily become unilateral power.

Jesus was a humble man, living among common people. In a single chapter of Luke's Gospel, we see the variety of settings for His ministry and the diversity of people with whom He interacted. From a boat, He taught a gathered crowd on the shore of the Lake of Gennesaret. He helped a group of fishermen make a surprise catch. He attended a banquet hosted by an unseemly group of tax collectors. Jesus' good-news campaign wasn't launched from afar. He walked among people and touched even the most untouchable.

The crowds continued to flock to hear Jesus' authoritative teaching and be healed, and Jesus, eager to perform physical and spiritual miracles, did both—albeit in unexpected ways. For example, when a paralyzed man was lowered from the roof by faithful friends, Jesus first pronounced the forgiveness of his sins. Then, when the Pharisees accused Him of blasphemy, He demonstrated His authority to forgive sin by exercising His power to heal.

Though we often have separate categories for spiritual and physical healing, Jesus' understanding of human personhood is more integrated. He recognizes that our greatest problems are spiritual, but He also acknowledges our need for physical healing. Bodies matter to God as much as souls. In fact, as Scripture reminds us, sin often acts like sickness (see Psalm 32; James 5). Jesus is the Great Physician sent for healing—both the sick and the sinner.

APPLY THE WORD

The leper acknowledged Jesus' power to heal, but he was uncertain about His willingness. We often trust God's power but mistrust God's goodness. Let's remember what the psalmist has said about God's character: "You are good, and what you do is good" (Ps. 119:68). Trust God's generosity in your life. He is willing to hear your prayer.

PRAY WITH US

Please support in prayer Jim Elliott, Moody's vice president of Stewardship, that his ministry would bless our donors across the country and around the world. Pray that we will always honor God with the resources He provides.

WEDNESDAY
MARCH

9

You hypocrites! . . . You have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Matthew 23:23

Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath

In the centuries before the birth of Christ, faithful Jews were known by their pagan neighbors for three strange practices: they circumcised their infant sons, they ate a restricted diet, and they took one day of rest each week.

Keeping the Mosaic Law wasn't just a sign of religious devotion for ancient Jews. They believed that strictly keeping the Law would hasten the coming of the Messiah, which explains the Pharisees' rigor in both keeping the Law and policing others. In our passage today, the Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking Sabbath law. Why would He allow His disciples to harvest the fields when such work had been strictly forbidden—and even penalized by death (Num. 15:32–36)? Why would Jesus Himself choose to do healing work on the Sabbath when there were six other days of the week to heal? They wanted to position Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker, which they thought

would discredit any religious claim to power He might make.

Jesus defended Himself not by making exegetical arguments but by asserting His identity: "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (v. 5). Jesus is the greater David, the one sent by God to inherit a permanent throne and exercise eternal rule. The Sabbath, as all of the Mosaic Law, has pointed forward to His coming. If David had profaned the sacred space of the tabernacle by eating and sharing with his companions the consecrated bread, Jesus could profane the sacred time of the Sabbath by doing work, which was of course not simply the act of catching up on domestic chores but the work of restoring the world to rights.

In this new kingdom, which Jesus is inaugurating, hungry people will eat and the infirm will be healed. The real essence of the law will be fulfilled: God's justice, mercy and faithfulness.

APPLY THE WORD

The Pharisees fastidiously obeyed the rules but forgot the purposes of God's law, which instructed God's people "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with [their] God" (Micah 6:8). How are you tempted to obey the "rules" of Christian morality but forget justice, mercy, and faithfulness?

PRAY WITH US

Today, please include in prayer Dr. Junias Venugopal, provost and dean of Education. May God encourage him as he oversees one of our key ministries—equipping people with the Word of God to reach out across the globe, cultures, and generations.

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6:36

THURSDAY
MARCH

10

Jesus, the Greater Moses

In 1949, one of the leading scholars of Christian liturgy, Gregory Dix, quipped to a colleague, “Our understanding of our forms of worship underwent a radical transformation when it finally occurred to someone that Jesus was a Jew.” Until the middle of the twentieth century, the Jewish context for early Christianity’s faith and practice went largely understudied and underemphasized.

Luke uses his Gospel to situate the biographical details of Jesus’ life and ministry in their Jewish context. In this record of Jesus’ famous sermon, Luke intentionally recalls the Jewish Exodus from Egypt and Moses’ famous final sermon in the book of Deuteronomy. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, Moses stood before the ancient Israelites and renewed the covenant. He announced blessings and curses, assuring them that if God’s people obeyed His laws they would inherit and live long in the Promised

Land. If they did not, God would exile them from the land and scatter them among the nations (Deuteronomy 6–8).

Like Moses, Jesus also stood before a large crowd, pronouncing blessings and woes. This time the promised inheritance isn’t a land flowing with milk and honey: it’s the promise of the “kingdom of God” (v. 20) and reward from God in heaven. There are still covenant responsibilities, of course. Jesus’ words are authoritative and must be obeyed. Nevertheless, in this new kingdom of God, obedience is summed up as acts that imitate the good and gracious Father, who shows kindness to the ungrateful and wicked.

Throughout their history, the people of Israel had been the ungrateful and wicked people whom Jesus referenced. Imagine their relief that Jesus had come to announce the Father’s mercy (v. 36). What good news!

APPLY THE WORD

We often think our greatest faith responsibility is *belief*: belief in the Bible and God’s revealed plan of salvation. And of course we should believe those things! But Jesus’ sermon makes clear that a truly Christian life is one of obedience. We are blessed when we hear God’s words and put them into practice.

PRAY WITH US

Please join us as we lift up in prayer our students on Moody’s three campuses. When praying for the students on our Spokane, WA, campus, please mention their Founder’s Conference, which starts today.

FRIDAY
MARCH

11

There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.

Revelation 21:4

Jesus, the Greater Elijah

Before his death, Steve Jobs was known both inside and outside of Apple for his exacting standards. He involved himself in the design details of Apple products and frequently lambasted employees when their vision and execution fell short of his genius. Jobs may have been a brilliant CEO, but he was also a difficult boss.

As a boss himself, the Roman centurion in today's story understood the dynamics of power. When he told his servants to come or to go, they obeyed him immediately for fear of reprisal. Strangely, however, though the centurion noted that he had the ability to give orders to his servants, he described himself as "under authority" (v. 8). He seemed to understand his authority less as self-derived power and more as delegated power. Others with greater authority (namely, the emperor) had invested him with his authority to command others.

Jesus is also invested with power. In some of the stories included in today's reading, it's clear that Jesus has been sent to fulfill prophetic responsibilities as the greater Elijah. Recall that in our reading from Luke 4, Jesus infuriated the crowds when He reminded them that a Gentile widow, not a Jewish one, had fed Elijah during the time of famine. In that same story, Elijah had raised to life the widow's son when he had suddenly died. Here, in Luke's Gospel, Jesus assumes an Elijah-like role, ministering to a Gentile (the Roman centurion) and also raising a widow's son, just as Elijah had once done in the village of Zarephath (vv. 9, 16).

Both acts are radical claims to power. Jesus is introducing a new regime and affirming that Gentiles will be included in God's kingdom. Furthermore, He is introducing new economics: the poor (in this case the widow) will indeed celebrate the good news He brings.

APPLY THE WORD

In recent centuries, we have tended to think of salvation in individual terms, a private affair between us and God. In Luke's Gospel Jesus isn't just saving people to get them into heaven. He is reversing the fallen fortunes of creation: sin and sickness and sadness are dealt an eternal blow by Christ's death and resurrection. What great news!

PRAY WITH US

Paul Santhouse, vice president of Publications, welcomes the prayers of the Moody community for the ministry of Moody Publishers. We praise God for sustaining and increasing Moody's outreach with books in print and online.

*Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers
and sisters.*

Hebrews 2:11

SATURDAY
MARCH

12

Jesus, Our Brother

At a tennis tournament in Cincinnati in the summer of 2015, top-ranked tennis star Andy Murray donned a disguise and served ice cream to the crowds. “Are you Andy Murray?” a number of people asked. “Do I look like him?” Murray responded coyly, agreeing to pose for pictures.

“Who is this?” the disciples asked one another when they saw Jesus’ astonishing display of authority over the winds and waves (v. 25). Despite having witnessed Jesus heal the sick, deliver the demon-possessed, and forgive sins, the disciples struggled to grasp the nature of Jesus’ identity. The mystery was unfolding before them, and they didn’t immediately understand the cosmic implications of Jesus’ claim to power. As we will later learn, it’s not until days after Jesus’ crucifixion that they make sense of the embodied good news of God’s kingdom. Initially, they were among those about whom

Isaiah prophesied—people who see but don’t perceive, who hear but don’t understand (v. 10; Isa. 6:9).

One radically new dimension of this kingdom that Jesus promises is the announcement that God is making for Himself a new family that won’t be limited by genealogy. Instead, God’s family includes all of His obedient children—those who hear God’s word and put it into practice. Examples of these new daughters and sons of God are the formerly demon-possessed man, who, after his deliverance, became a bold witness to God’s power through Jesus; a Jewish household whose daughter was raised from the dead; and a bleeding woman, who dared to reach for Jesus’ robe (vv. 35, 48, 55). For each of these, a miracle was performed and they were converted to trust and belief in Jesus. As Jesus’ sisters and brothers, they demonstrated their obedience in radical generosity, witness, and faith.

APPLY THE WORD

Jesus’ parable of the sower illustrates the perils that threaten obedience. First, the Devil is our enemy, trying to prevent God’s Word from taking root. Second, we experience suffering, which often prevents us from persisting in obedience. Third, we face daily distractions and lose focus. Which most troubles you: the Devil, despair, or the daily grind?

PRAY WITH US

We are grateful for Christ-exalting literature printed at Moody Publishers and we value the contribution of its staff. Please include in your praise the Moody Publishers acquisition team: Duane Sherman, Judith Dunagan, and Randall Payleitner.

SUNDAY
MARCH

13

*You prepare a table before me in the presence
of my enemies . . . my cup overflows.*

Psalm 23:5

Jesus, the Christ

David Brooks, columnist for *The New York Times*, published a book on character in 2015. Many who regularly read Brooks have noted the Jewish writer's growing interest in Christian faith. Some have even suggested that he has privately converted, although Brooks hasn't substantiated the speculation.

A considerable gap lies between curiosity about Jesus and faith in Him. In our reading today, Herod proved he was as curious as the crowds about the preacher-healer, Jesus of Nazareth. Herod wanted to see Jesus for himself. (Notably, he didn't succeed until Jesus was arrested and falsely accused.) Rumors had been swirling about Jesus' identity: maybe He was John the Baptist resurrected, or a reincarnated Elijah, or another martyred prophet brought back from the dead (v. 19). The crescendo of curiosity finally reached Peter, whom Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?" (v. 20).

In this ninth chapter of Luke, if any confusion remains about who Jesus is, it is explicitly dissolved in the climactic moments of Peter's confession and the Transfiguration. Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ—the promised Messiah to fulfill Jewish hopes and expectations. Then God Himself affirms Jesus' identity, thundering from the cloud, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him" (v. 35).

Before this important scene, Jesus stood before the crowd, praying over the meal He intended to serve from five bread loaves and two fish. He adopted the divine role of host that God has always played and to which our key verse refers. God fed Adam and Eve in the Garden, giving them every tree from the Garden from which to eat. God fed Israel in the wilderness, raining manna from heaven. And now God incarnate prepares another meal, and all eat and are satisfied.

APPLY THE WORD

Perhaps you're reading today and are beginning to recognize that while you've been curious about Jesus, you haven't really entrusted your life to Him fully. You can do that today by a prayer as simple as Peter's confession: *Jesus, I believe that you are God's Son, sent for the forgiveness and healing of the world. By faith, I want to follow you.*

PRAY WITH US

The annual Share event at Moody Radio begins tomorrow, an important fund raiser for our radio stations across the country. Greg Thornton, senior VP of Media, invites you to pray for the radio staff, volunteers, and listeners who will participate.

Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD.

Isaiah 50:10

MONDAY
MARCH

14

Jesus, the Suffering Servant

When the United States became a democratic republic, Vice President John Adams suggested a title for George Washington with pomp and circumstance: “His Highness, the President of the United States of America, and Protector of the Rights of the Same.” The U.S. Senate instead chose the more humble title, “President of the United States.”

The disciples also had grandiose notions for God’s kingdom, all of them mistaken. Despite having experienced the climactic moments of revelation described in the earlier portions of Luke 9, they continued to misunderstand the nature of God’s kingdom. Jesus called them an “unbelieving and perverse generation,” scolding them harshly for their spiritual obtuseness (v. 41).

Luke returns to themes of hiddenness in this narrative. Jesus’ identity had been revealed to the disciples, but a shroud

of fog envelops them once again. What they had failed to understand, of course, is that Jesus is not only a prophet, priest and king—He is the suffering Servant of Isaiah’s prophecies, come to be delivered into the hands of men and die (v. 44; see Isaiah 53).

The ministry of Jesus, from this point on in Luke’s narrative, marches toward death. The story pivots in verse 51: “Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” Jesus knew that the kingdom of God isn’t about achieving greatness, not in the way the disciples envisioned it. It’s not about status, nor is it an exclusive club to which only a select few are allowed admittance. The kingdom of God does not come like a raging vengeful fire, falling on God’s enemies. Jesus ushers in a kingdom as a willing, humble servant who will not clamor for the power that is rightfully His but will surrender it in order to heal the world’s brokenness.

APPLY THE WORD

“Nobody aspires to be a servant,” writes Eugene Peterson. “We have a higher opinion of ourselves.” Four Servant Songs in the book of Isaiah (42:1–9; 49:1–7, 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12) anticipate that God intends to send a *servant* to restore His people and renew His creation. Jesus was a willing servant; how can we serve someone this week in humility?

PRAY WITH US

On the first day of Share we ask the Lord to strengthen the staff who work hard during this busy week—specifically, Moody Radio’s Marketing team, George Economos, Cody Fraser, David Woodworth, Hannah LaMaster, and Michael Chapin.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

by Mike Kellogg, Moody Radio Host

Q I've been a born-again believer for a couple of years. Recently I was asked if I was an evangelical, and I had no idea what they were talking about. It's a little bit confusing. I go to a Baptist church—does that mean I'm evangelical?

A If you are born-again believer in Jesus Christ, you could also be described as evangelical.

The word *evangelical* comes from a Greek word that means “good news.” Being evangelical means that you are telling others the good news that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to die for sinful people. It means that when you became a Christian you wanted others to know that good news too, so you told others about it. An evangelical is a Christian who proclaims, shouts out, and rejoices in the news that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to know God the Father except through Him (see John 14:6).

Sometimes the word is used to differentiate between different Christian denominations or theologies, such as Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical. I don't think this attempt to pigeonhole Christians is always helpful. It's more important to focus on what beliefs are meant by the term *evangelical*. Evangelicals—no matter what denomination they are

in—believe in the fundamentals of the faith. God's Word is inspired by the Holy Spirit, without error, and is the only authority for faith and practice. We believe in one God in three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, and it is only through Him that we can be saved and have life with God.

In addition to these beliefs, the term *evangelical* means that if we are truly born again, we ought to tell others about it. I'm always overwhelmed and blessed by the reaction of so many who come to Christ and just naturally want to tell everybody what happened to them. It's a thrilling thing to experience. We receive the good news, we tell the good news, and as we mature in Christ our lives increasingly bear witness to the wonderful and marvelous good news of what Jesus has done for each one of us.

Q An old man once told me about how people have two natures. One is represented as a good dog and the other as a bad dog. The good dog fights to protect what is good in our lives, but the bad dog only wants to see the person's life filled with things that displease God. The winner in this particular dogfight is the dog you feed the most—do you feed the good dog or the bad dog?

Our lives increasingly bear witness to the wonderful and marvelous good news of what Jesus has done for each one of us.

Is this true—does everyone have two natures warring inside us?

A No, not everyone. Only those who are born again have two natures. People who have not trusted in Jesus Christ have only one nature, which seeks to put everything that it desires first and refuses to submit itself to God. People without Christ make decisions that mostly benefit themselves. They do not try to please God; they just pursue their own wants and desires (see Isa. 53:6). This describes all of us before our conversion by faith in Jesus. As Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

But those who have trusted in Christ and become children of God do have two natures. Our sin nature remains present within us, until one day we will be finally transformed to live with God forever. But when we are born again, we are given a new nature, which is an instantaneous miracle of God’s grace. We also have the Holy Spirit who shapes our desires to please God. As the apostle Paul described in Romans 7, this can lead to frustration as the two natures battle for control: “Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war. . . . Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to

death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (vv. 21–25).

This battle happens only within believers. Sometimes our sin nature will prevail and we will say or do things that do not please God. In those situations, we can be thankful for the forgiveness found through Jesus (see 1 John 1:9). And we can be thankful that God provides deliverance from our sinful temptations through the work of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 7:25; 1 Cor. 10:13).

The process of becoming people who please God is called sanctification. God works in each of us to make us do His great pleasure (Phil. 2:13). The process of sanctification continues until we are absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6–8). Then we will be fully and finally free from our sin nature and be glorified.

I am saved—redeemed from the penalty of sin in the instant when I trust Christ; I am now at this very moment being saved—the process of sanctification that frees me from the power of sin; and I will be saved—the future glorification when I will be free from the presence of sin, standing in the presence of God for all eternity.

TUESDAY
MARCH

15

The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world.

Colossians 1:6

Jesus, the Lord of the Harvest

Most corporations devote considerable energy and strategic planning to a succession strategy: they must develop and prepare employees to assume important leadership roles. Without a succession strategy, if a company suddenly loses an important leader, it will face an unexpected vacuum of power.

As Luke's Gospel turns to focus on Jesus' resolute march toward Jerusalem, it's clear that Jesus is thinking about His own succession planning. In Luke 9, Jesus sent out His twelve disciples, investing them with His power and authority to heal broken bodies and suffering souls. In today's reading, the circle of 12 expands to 72, and Jesus indicates that even more workers will be needed for the tasks of ministry.

Jesus illuminates the chain of command that exists in God's kingdom: God the Father has invested His authority in Jesus, and Jesus has come as His

chosen Son and Servant. Now Jesus invests His authority in His disciples, and they will serve as His representatives and ambassadors. The disciples are surprised by the effectiveness of the strategy, returning from ministry with sudden joy that "the demons submit to us in your name" (v. 17)! It's working!

As Jesus marches toward His death in Jerusalem, He was preparing His disciples for that departure. They must minister as He has ministered, preaching good news and doing miracles. Jesus offers other examples for imitation. The Samaritan man interrupts a busy day to tend to a wounded man by the roadside, spending his own resources for this man's healing. Show that kind of mercy, Jesus says (v. 37). And then there is the example of Mary, who sits at Jesus' feet to listen and learn (despite her sister's critique). Go and do likewise, says Jesus (v. 42). Commit to becoming that kind of student.

APPLY THE WORD

Jesus commands us to pray to the Lord of the harvest, asking for workers to be sent into the fields (v. 2). Pray for God to raise up Christians in the world's largest cities whose cultural influence will advance the gospel, and pray for God to raise up missionaries whose witness across the globe will persuade many to trust Christ.

PRAY WITH US

Include in your prayers today Dr. James Spencer, VP and dean of Moody Distance Learning. The Lord is blessing his service at Moody, and we thank God for the global reach of our distance education, for new online courses, and regional classrooms.

You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love.

Jonah 4:2

WEDNESDAY
MARCH

16

Jesus, the Greater Jonah

In his sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” Jonathan Edwards soberly warned people of the reality of hell. One congregant later recorded in his journal that before Edwards had finished, “There was a great moaning and crying went out through ye whole House . . . ‘What shall I do to be saved?’”

The prophet Jonah is another preacher whose words caused people to turn to God in repentance and faith. Though Jonah initially ran from the call to go to Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian empire, he eventually obeyed. “Forty more days, and Nineveh will be overthrown!” he called out in her streets (Jonah 3:4). The king of Nineveh heard Jonah’s warning, repented, and proclaimed a fast for the entire city. The city of Nineveh was spared God’s judgment.

In our reading today, Jesus claims that He is a greater Jonah. Like Jonah, He is preaching a message of sin,

repentance, and salvation. Unlike Jonah, however, He isn’t preaching to a foreign Gentile city; He is preaching to Israel, God’s chosen people. Moreover, He is preaching to God’s chosen religious leaders: Woe to you, you, Pharisees! Woe to you, experts in the Law! (vv. 42–52).

Jesus’ preaching is accompanied by miraculous signs, including the deliverance of the demon-possessed—but even this did not convince Israel. They accused Him of colluding with the Devil, driving out demons *by* demons, a suggestion that Jesus finds ridiculous (v. 17). What kingdom survives when it is divided against itself?

Jonah grudgingly preached repentance to Nineveh; he preferred to see the fire of God’s judgment to fall. But Jesus, on the other hand, is the greater Jonah. He preaches for Israel’s repentance—and willingly gives His life when she refuses.

APPLY THE WORD

Hebrews 4:7 includes an important warning: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” When God’s Holy Spirit, through the preaching of His Word, convicts us of sin, we should not delay repentance. Today is the day of salvation and forgiveness. God is gracious, and today is the day for admitting, confessing, and being healed of sin.

PRAY WITH US

Will you pray for Ken Heulitt, chief financial officer, and his teams? They work diligently at keeping Moody’s budget on track through Donor Resource Management, Treasury Operations, and Investments. We are grateful for their service!

THURSDAY
MARCH

17

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Luke 12:32

Jesus, the Master

A fencing match begins when someone calls, “En garde, prêts, allez!” The first French term, *en garde*, literally means, “On your guard,” and it warns participants to take a defensive position.

In Luke 12, Jesus warns His followers to be on guard against four spiritual perils. We must take a defensive position in a world where God’s enemies and our own flesh would entice, entrap, and destroy us. First, be on guard against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (v. 1). The Pharisees kept God’s rules diligently. By every appearance, they seemed to be extremely devoted to God. But Jesus warns against admiring and following them. They prioritized rules over mercy and love, focusing on outward deeds instead of inward hearts.

Second, be on guard against the wrong kinds of fear (vv. 4–7). Don’t fear physical harm. Don’t cower before violent men. Instead, fear the judgment of God, who,

by righteous decree, can choose to punish you eternally for your sins yet loves and provides for your needs.

Third, be on guard against greed (v. 15). Don’t misunderstand the purpose of life and think it can be acquired by stuff. Physical wealth lasts only for a moment. And finally, be on guard against worry (v. 22). If God feeds the birds, why should you worry about food? And if God clothes the flowers, why should you worry about clothing?

Jesus’ warnings may seem difficult to heed. How do we rid ourselves of sinful attitudes like hypocrisy, fear, greed, and worry that rise up in us almost against our will? The answer is in verse 32: “Your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.” As we remember God’s generous love toward us, we can learn to trust Him more fully. And trust in the Lord is the antidote for our fears, worries, greed, and hypocrisy.

APPLY THE WORD

In addition to the threat of attack from God’s enemies, another reason for taking an *en garde* position in your spiritual life is the imminent return of Jesus. We are servants of God left in charge of the lamps, waiting for our Master’s return (v. 48). Those who have longed for His coming and resisted temptations as they’ve waited will be blessed.

PRAY WITH US

As we pray for good stewardship of all the resources coming to Moody through God’s provision, your prayers are important for the Investment Accounting staff: Andrea Palmer-Reed, Daphne Hussey, Marilou Logan, Rohan McLachlan, and Tonya Reed.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.

John 15:5

FRIDAY
MARCH

18

Jesus, the Vine

Whenever a tragedy causes the deaths of many people—a natural disaster, a terrorist attack, a building or bridge collapse—some people speculate about the deeper causes. Is it God’s punishment? Did sin cause this suffering?

When we try to determine the meaning of historical calamity, at best we can usually offer only guesses. In today’s reading, Jesus rebukes those in His day who would blame all suffering on sin (vv. 2–4). We can’t assume a mechanistic connection between sin and tragedy, although it’s true that without repentance, everyone will die. But those who are victims of tragic events are not inherently more sinful. Indeed, as Jesus reminds us, every human life, like a fig tree, will be uprooted when it fails to produce the fruit of repentance (v. 7).

No doubt the Jews of Jesus’ day couldn’t help but think of the many

Old Testament writings that referred to Israel as a vine. The psalmist had characterized Israel as a vine that God had transplanted out of Egypt (Psalm 80). The prophet Jeremiah had called Israel a “corrupt, wild vine” that grew up in rebellion to the Lord, her vinedresser (Jer. 2:21). Ezekiel had compared the Babylonian exile in which Israel was cast out of the Promised Land to the violent uprooting of a vine from the vineyard (Ezek. 19:10–14). Clearly, Jesus is confronting the Jews with their sin and its consequences when He talks about the fig tree given one last season to yield fruit.

To round out the agricultural imagery in today’s reading, if Israel is a vine growing wild fruit, the kingdom of God is like two things: a tiny mustard seed and a small amount of yeast. Both begin as impossibly small and nearly invisible but grow to great proportion (vv. 18–21).

APPLY THE WORD

Jesus is the true and faithful vine who has never grown corrupt and wild; only when branches remain in Him do they thrive! When Jesus was betrayed, He lifted His glass, filled with the fruit of the vine, and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20). Are you deriving strength and identity from your relationship with Him?

PRAY WITH US

We invite you to uphold in prayer the employees of our Operations teams headed by Steven Mogck, executive VP and chief operating officer. Their faithful service at Moody supports the work of other departments and encourages all of us.

SATURDAY
MARCH

19

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.

Hebrews 1:3

Jesus, the Lamb of God

Two father-son duos have served as U.S. president: the Adamsons (John and John Quincy) and the Bushes (George H. W. and George W.) The Canadians have their own notable political family; last October, Justin Trudeau followed the steps of his father, Pierre, and was elected prime minister. Observers of political dynasties love to see whether the governing style will be “like father, like son.”

The Godhead is definitely “like Father, like Son”: Jesus is the exact representation of God’s being and character. What angers God, angers Jesus; what delights God, delights Jesus. In His ministry and teaching, we see an outworking of God’s preoccupations for broken people and this broken world.

Jesus reminded the Pharisees that God isn’t nitpicky about the rules simply for the sake of keeping a moral checklist. All God’s rules are for human flourishing,

which is why Jesus healed on the Sabbath though rabbinic law forbade medical treatment (vv. 2–4). If an ox or child can be pulled from a pit on the Sabbath, a sick man can be made well!

Jesus also reminded the Pharisees that God’s priorities are not like those of aspirational, ambitious men and women who vainly pursue the honor of their own name (vv. 7–14). These people want the best seat in the house; they grant favors in order to gain recognition. They are nothing like the heavenly Father who desires humility from His children. God cares for the lowly and humble, and the eternal banquet He is preparing will include an unlikely guest list of the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind (v. 21).

This chapter ends with the call to carry a cross, sacrificing personal ambition for godly devotion (v. 27). God hasn’t promised any of us our best life now.

APPLY THE WORD

The Lamb of God will preside over a great feast (see Rev. 19:7–9). From today’s reading, it’s clear that God extends a gracious invitation to all of humanity, through Jesus, to join Him at that table: “My house will be full!” (v. 23). How can we mirror God’s generosity by telling others about Jesus and the great banquet to come?

PRAY WITH US

Various departments contribute to Moody’s ministries, and we’d like to acknowledge the service of our custodians who work behind the scenes. Today, please pray for Cathy Sywulka, Danielle Hooper, Danny Hutcherson, and David Boskovic.

There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Luke 15:10

SUNDAY
MARCH

20

Jesus, the Brother

When William Penn designed Philadelphia, the “City of Brotherly Love,” he envisioned a more humane setting than the overcrowded streets of London. Penn wanted every family to have room for a garden, and he widened city thoroughfares and promoted religious freedom. No doubt he would be disappointed by the homicide rate, which is hardly evidence of “brotherly love”; in 2014, Philadelphia counted 248 murders.

The parable of the prodigal son depicts little brotherly love between the two sons, despite the gifts of a loving father and stable home. The younger brother demands a share in the family estate before his father’s death. The older brother labors for his father and yet resents that his hard work isn’t sufficiently repaid. The younger brother leaves the family estate for a “distant country,” where he squanders his inheritance (v. 13).

The older brother remains dutifully at home—although he is no less estranged from his father than his younger brother. He may not be corrupted by parties and prostitutes, but his sins of bitterness and self-righteousness are no less scandalous. He resents that his father would generously forgive his younger brother, whom he has regarded as unworthy (vv. 28–30).

Jesus told this parable in order to teach His listeners about the nature of God as our Father, who is amazingly generous, beyond comprehension, with each of us, giving us gifts we haven’t deserved. Jesus had often been accused of fraternizing with sinners (“This man welcomes sinners and eats with them,” v. 2), and this parable demonstrates God’s extravagant love for His sons and daughters who leave home. Of course Jesus would take special interest in the moral dregs of society. Those are exactly the people He has come to save.

APPLY THE WORD

The Pharisees were like the older brother—they believed their service merited notice from God. It’s easy to see our relationship with God in transactional terms. If we’re “good,” we feel deserving; if we’re “bad,” we feel unworthy. The gospel proclaims the scandal of grace: Christ got the wages of sin so that we could get His reward (see Rom. 6:23).

PRAY WITH US

On Palm Sunday, as we remember God’s faithfulness, we continue to thank the Lord for our custodial team—Dean Gentry, Do Tran, Paul Henle, Ernest Brown, and Jessica Manning—and their faithfulness in making Moody a great place for students and staff.

MONDAY
MARCH

21

*For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.*

Matthew 6:21

Jesus, the Defender of the Poor

The love of money—and all the comfort, status, and stuff it can bring—thrives in our culture. It can trick us into believing that our value is equated with a healthy 401K or the job title on our office door. As John Piper writes, “The issue is not how much a person makes. . . . The evil is in being deceived into thinking a six-digit salary must be accompanied by a six-digit lifestyle.”

The Pharisees loved money (v. 14). And while the first parable of today’s reading is difficult to interpret, it’s clear that the dishonest manager has been fired from his job because he wasted the rich man’s possessions. “Give an account of your management,” his boss demands (v. 2), signaling the accountability each of us will have before God for the stewardship of every earthly resource given to us—time, talents, money, energy, or education. Did we use them for our fame or selfish pleasure, or for God’s glory and His holy purposes?

Jesus talked so often about money because it’s indisputable evidence of our heart’s allegiance. What we love, we buy. What we delight in, we spend on. And the Pharisees were like the rich man described at the end of the chapter. They lived in luxury and disregard for the poor, forgetting the essential nature of godly stewardship.

Godly stewardship answers two essential questions: Who owns my stuff? And how long will it last? A faithful steward understands that he does not own his things. God owns everything and *lends* it graciously to His people. A faithful steward also understands the temporary nature of houses and cars, clothes and vacations. Every luxury has limited worth compared to the eternal riches Christ’s followers will inherit. To live in right relationship to God demands that we live in right relationship to money.

APPLY THE WORD

Take time to inventory your spending. Are you giving sacrificially to your local church and others that help the poor and powerless? Or are you spending more on a lifestyle of comfort and convenience? Consider Jesus’ words, *Give an account of your management*, as well as the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

PRAY WITH US

To conclude our prayer time for the Custodial Services on our Chicago campus, please add John Pettett, John Williams, Oakley Smith, Edgardo Bartolome, and Thomas Pizano to your prayer list. May God give them energy and strength as they work for Him!

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

1 Peter 1:24–25

TUESDAY
MARCH

22

Jesus, the Greater Noah

Author Lesley Leyland Fields writes about the journey of learning to forgive her absent, abusive father. Though she had long held against him his litany of sins, in later adulthood she moved toward him in forgiveness. With sympathy, she recognized the brokenness of her father's past, and this fueled new compassion and greater willingness to forgive.

Forgiveness is just one manifestation of the faith that Jesus says will be required to enter the kingdom of heaven. Humility is another evidence of kingdom faith, in which we count our work for God the Master not as some extraordinary achievement of our own doing but as something necessary that flows from His work for us (v. 10).

Kingdom faith must also be grateful, giving thanks as the healed Samaritan leper did (v. 16). And finally, by faith in Jesus our perspective is transformed,

allowing us to see beyond the banality of the everyday to a greater spiritual reality—both of our sin and of the gospel (vv. 20–21).

In the days of Noah and of Lot, they lacked the last element of faith. As Jesus details, people were caught up in the busyness of life (v. 27). They were eating and drinking, celebrating life events, planning for their cities and farms. They didn't heed the warnings of God's coming wrath, and suddenly their earthly lives were irreversibly disrupted when God held them to account for their sin.

We must always remember the invisible reality of God's kingdom. Having faith in Jesus reorients our thinking about everyday worries of home maintenance and car repairs and job loss. Longings for luxury and comfort wane as we remember Jesus' words: In order to keep our lives for eternity, we must lose them today (Luke 9:24).

APPLY THE WORD

In Psalm 90 the psalmist wrote about keeping heavenly time. Read Psalm 90 this week and ask God to teach you to number your days so that you may gain a heart of wisdom (Ps. 90:12). And thank God for Jesus, who is the greater Noah. He has warned us of God's coming wrath, and He has also provided a means of rescue.

PRAY WITH US

Dr. John Jelinek, VP and dean of Moody Theological Seminary, and his executive assistant Angela Edwards welcome your prayers for the seminary's mission of training Christian leaders. May the students gain knowledge that will help them reach others for Christ.

WEDNESDAY
MARCH

23

*Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones,
who cry out to him day and night?*

Luke 18:7

Jesus, the Righteous Judge

In ancient society, a widow was one of the most powerless members of society. Without a man to speak for her in the public square, she had no voice and no recourse against injustice. When her husband died, his property passed to the nearest male relative. Apart from family charity, the widow was almost assuredly cast into poverty.

Jesus tells a story about a widow pleading her case before an unjust judge (vv. 1–8). It's likely that this judge had refused to grant the widow justice in her case because she was too poor to pay the necessary bribe. Because of her persistence, however, he finally ensured that justice was done, and the case was resolved. If even a corrupt, unjust judge would eventually do the right thing, how much more will our perfect Judge, who hears our cry and delivers us.

God's speedy execution of justice points to the nature of His kingdom. He

protects the poor and the powerless. He defends the innocent. Further, the kingdom of God has a wide embrace. God, in His mercy, gathers all kinds of unlikely people to know and serve Him: the tax collector—and all who would openly confess their guilt and seek forgiveness; the child—and all who would willingly submit to God's authority and depend wholly on Him; the disciples—and all who would forsake earthly wealth for the promise of future inheritance; the blind beggar—and all who would seek the healing of their sight at the touch of Jesus (vv. 14, 17, 29, 42).

But let us not forget that the kingdom of God comes not just to the strangest of people but also in the strangest of ways. It comes by mockery and insult, even death. Jesus is headed to Jerusalem to inherit the kingdom of heaven, but the reward will come with a cross.

APPLY THE WORD

This entire chapter teaches us how to pray. The widow models perseverance. The tax collector models humble confession. The children model tender trust. The disciples model unqualified obedience and self-sacrifice. The beggar models dependence and need. Let us pray as these men and women teach us to pray in this Scripture text.

PRAY WITH US

Lift up to God in prayer Student Services staff at Moody Theological Seminary in Michigan. Thank the Lord for Paul Wilson and Amber Tucker as they guide and serve students throughout their education in Plymouth, MI.

*For the Son of Man came to seek
and to save the lost.*

Luke 19:10

THURSDAY
MARCH

24

Jesus, the Guest

During the 2014 Commonwealth Games, two Australian field hockey players captured a celebrity in the background of their selfie photo. The two women are smiling at the camera—and right behind them, also smiling at the camera, is Queen Elizabeth III! The queen was making her way over to greet the team during an unscheduled visit to the games.

Jesus was an unexpected guest at the home of an unsuspecting host. He invited Himself to the house of Zacchaeus, a well-known tax collector (v. 5). Tax collectors had the reputation for collecting more from the Jewish people than required by the Romans, and they were despised as greedy collaborators. Jesus' decision to share a meal with Zacchaeus caused no small stir among the people.

The Gospel of Luke emphasizes the theme of “feast.” Luke records nineteen

feasts, thirteen of which are mentioned only in this Gospel. Jesus was criticized for the company He kept at mealtime. As we saw in Luke 15, Jesus frequently hosted meals for sinners. The Pharisees were indignant about this; from their perspective, Jesus was demonstrating licentious behavior. For Jews, table purity was of utmost importance. Both ritualistically pure food and ritualistically pure company mattered.

But in this text, Zacchaeus is the host, not Jesus. And this presents a surprising side of grace—a grace willing to receive as well as to give. Jesus ate the food that Zacchaeus prepared. Jesus took the chair that Zacchaeus offered. That grace affirmed Zacchaeus's dignity as a person and moved him to immediate repentance. He promised to repay those whom he had cheated. As evidence of his life changed by grace, he would become a generous giver to the poor (v. 8)!

APPLY THE WORD

We recognize the dignity of another person not simply by meeting their needs but also by allowing them to help themselves—and even to give to us! Consider reading *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, which explores this idea. Jesus showed grace as Zacchaeus's guest; how might we show grace to others?

PRAY WITH US

Dr. Tim Arens, VP and dean of Student Life, comes to the top of our prayer list today. Thank the Lord for his dedicated service on Moody's Chicago campus and ask God to bless his interactions with students and staff.

FRIDAY
MARCH

25

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies
proclaim the work of his hands.*

Psalm 19:1

Hosanna in the Highest

At the Berlin Conference in 1884–1885, the continent of Africa was carved up between European colonial powers. The new arbitrary boundaries did not reflect natural tribal divisions. When African nations began achieving independence in the 1950s and 60s, long-simmering tribal and ethnic conflicts often erupted, destabilizing the new governments with military coups, civil wars, and ethnic genocide.

Since Luke 9:51, Luke’s narrative has described Jesus’ resolute march toward Jerusalem—and some still expected that He would lead a violent coup and take political power. Jesus had often told His disciples that He expected to suffer and die in Jerusalem, but they did not grasp the significance of His words. And no doubt Jesus’ words were often strangely confusing—even in the closing of yesterday’s reading, we read the politically charged story of the king who intends to slaughter his enemies.

Luke builds a framework for describing Jesus’ return to Jerusalem. As we might remember, Luke 2 describes the twelve-year-old Jesus left behind in Jerusalem and found days later at the temple, sitting among the rabbis and asking questions. Here, as Jesus returns to Jerusalem, we find Him once again in His Father’s house. But this time He isn’t sitting at the feet of the rabbis. He is overturning the tables of the moneychangers, cleansing the temple of corruption (v. 45). When the news of Jesus’ birth was proclaimed to the shepherds in Luke 2, the angels sang of glory and peace. In today’s reading, as the crowds greet the coming king, they also sing of glory and peace (v. 38).

Their shouts of praise will soon turn murderous. But as Jesus reminds the Pharisees, God’s glory will be proclaimed nonetheless. Should humans fail to praise Him, the stones will become the praise band (v. 40).

APPLY THE WORD

Read Psalm 19 to see three important witnesses to God’s glory. First, creation testifies to the glory of the Creator. Second, Scripture bears witness to His nature. Finally, human beings are tasked with testimony of the divine (even if we often fail our job). Despite our imperfect worship, God will be praised and proclaimed!

PRAY WITH US

As we continue in prayer for student services, please put on your list those who work with Dean Arens to serve our undergraduate and seminary students in Chicago: Nok Prukpitikul, Joe Gonzales, Cherie Carson, and Julia Rogers.

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the LORD has done this.

Psalm 118:22–23

SATURDAY
MARCH

26

Jesus, the Cornerstone

Students of American history know John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Abraham Lincoln. They may not be as familiar with George Azterodt, who was part of Wilkes's conspiracy. Wilkes had instructed Azterodt to kill Vice President Andrew Johnson—but Azterodt lost his nerve and went out drinking instead. He was still convicted as an accomplice of Wilkes and executed by hanging in July 1865.

In our text today, Jesus had entered Jerusalem and the plot to kill Him intensified. The Pharisees and religious leaders were looking for a way to accuse Him; they were afraid of the crowd's reaction if it seemed they were attacking Jesus for no reason. First, they tried to entrap Him on religious grounds: By what authority did He teach in the temple (v. 2)? Second, they tried to entrap Him on political grounds: Should faithful Jews pay taxes to the Romans (v. 22)?

Jesus demonstrated His discretion and wisdom by avoiding debate and instead answering questions with questions. He asked them to describe the nature of John's baptism—was it earthly or was it heavenly (v. 4)? When questioned about taxes, He showed the interlocutors a denarius: whose inscription was on the coin (v. 23)? Jesus knew the questions posed by the Pharisees were attempted tricks, so He put them on the hot seat.

Jesus avoided pointless debate, but He didn't hesitate to confront the Pharisees. He named their lust for power and riches (vv. 46–47). He told a parable about a vineyard, and they knew it was an indictment of them. They were tenants of the vineyard (which we have already seen is a metaphor for the people of Israel), and like these tenants, they have conspired to kill the son of the landowner (vv. 9–19). As God's enemies, they will suffer severe punishment for rejecting the Cornerstone (v. 17).

APPLY THE WORD

We learn a lot about handling criticism and accusation from Jesus' interaction with Pharisees. Those who are interested in defaming and harming us will not respond to our reasoning. We may need to confront them with the truth, but ultimately we must recognize that hatred is a heart issue that arguments alone can't change.

PRAY WITH US

Today, would you join us in prayer for the Student Accounts staff? Pray that for Catrina Weinum, David Crail, Janet Mitchell, and Paulette Phillips this Easter weekend will be a wonderful time with friends and family, in God's unfailing love.

SUNDAY
MARCH

27

There before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man.

Revelation 14:14

Jesus, the Son of Man

Warehouses and restaurants require workers to wear closed-toe shoes. Some human-resources policies prohibit coworkers from dating one another. Other businesses restrict employee access to websites like Facebook or Twitter during the work day. Few would argue that dating or open-toe shoes or social media sites are always to be avoided. These rules are intended to guide behavior and promote wellbeing in a specific context for a specific time.

In Jesus' day, the Pharisees had issued their own standards for behavior, which were supplemental rules to the Mosaic Law. They wanted to use this strict code of conduct for everyone as the standard of morality that pleased God. As Jesus often pointed out, they did more harm than good. For example, in Matthew 15 Jesus criticized the Pharisees' teaching about temple offerings. They had persuaded people that money otherwise meant for helping one's parents could

instead be dedicated to God. They enriched the temple coffers but were in flagrant violation of the commandment to honor one's parents.

The Pharisees' greed was likely in His mind when Jesus pointed out the widow dropping her two pennies into the temple treasury (see Luke 20:46–47). This widow was giving sacrificially, but Jesus also describes her as a victim of the Pharisees' flawed theology, an example of how they devour widows' houses.

Jesus describes an apocalyptic vision in this chapter—a time when the temple will be destroyed, natural disaster will strike, war will erupt, and persecution will begin. More amazing that even these dreadful predictions, however, is His encouragement to the disciples. He will provide words of wisdom in the face of oppression (v. 15). And they can stand firm without fear, trusting in God's faithful deliverance (vv. 34–36).

APPLY THE WORD

Today is Easter, Resurrection Sunday! Hallelujah! What a wonderful time to remember that the Son of Man will return in a cloud. In the Old Testament, the cloud symbolized God's presence, and the book of Acts describes Jesus' ascension into heaven hidden by a cloud (Acts 1:9). The cloud is proof that the resurrected Jesus is the Son of Man, Son of God.

PRAY WITH US

As we celebrate Christ's resurrection today, let's reflect on the theme of this month's devotional and praise the Lord for His love and faithfulness. The hope of Easter overcame and still overcomes the power of death and suffering.

*Look, the Lamb of God, who takes
away the sin of the world!*

John 1:29

MONDAY
MARCH

28

Jesus, the Passover Feast

Today is sometimes called Easter Monday in what the traditional church calendar calls the season of Easter, which lasts until Pentecost. It would be wonderful if these next few weeks meant that we experienced the fullness of Christ's resurrection—freedom from sin and death and all their painful consequences!

But as we know, even during Easter we face the problem of evil in our world. The resurrection means that we will one day be fully free, but for now we still look forward to that blessed hope (Titus 2:13).

As Jesus nears the cross, Satan was stirring up trouble. First, he entered Judas, who agreed to deliver Jesus over to the Pharisees for a small sum of money (vv. 3–6). Then, he tried to attack Peter's faith, though Jesus Himself prayed that Peter's faith would not fail (vv. 31–32). Some might think that belief in a personal Devil

is strangely superstitious, but Jesus Himself acknowledged the reality of Satan's attacks. The Devil and demons and angels have all made appearances in Luke's Gospel. Moreover, spiritual forces of evil are as alive and active today as they were then.

But we need never fear the invisible powers of darkness, for while they are bent on destroying God's people and defeating His plans, God is ultimately in control. Indeed, the small details of the borrowed colt (in Luke 19:32–34) and the borrowed room remind us that nothing is incidental in God's plans. God is always going ahead, preparing whatever will be required for our next act of obedience.

"I am among you as one who serves" (v. 28), Jesus told His disciples at the last supper. The Lamb of God lifts the cup of His blood and the bread of His body and offers them for the Passover Feast.

APPLY THE WORD

In 1 Corinthians 11:17–34, Paul addresses abuse of the Lord's table—some are going hungry while others are getting drunk. Observing the Lord's Supper should be a remembrance of Jesus' redeeming work and a demonstration of His body, the church, living in love and unity. Pray that this will describe you and your community of believers.

PRAY WITH US

Please pray for the staff of WGNB, Moody Radio station, serving the Grand Rapids, MI, area. During your time with God today, thank Him for Jack Haveman, Scott Curtis, Joshua Harrison, and Perry LaHaie and all the hope and encouragement this station brings to the listeners.

TUESDAY
MARCH

29

*Wounds from a friend can be trusted,
but an enemy multiplies kisses.*

Proverbs 27:6

Jesus, the Betrayed

Actor Ryan Reynolds welcomed his firstborn daughter into the world and celebrated by sending pictures to his family and closest friends. To his horror, he discovered soon after that a longtime friend betrayed his trust by trying to sell those same pictures to the media.

Betrayal by a friend is painful, and Jesus' betrayal at the hands of Judas—who had been a disciple for over three years—was even worse. The Jews pressured Judas for insider information, and for a small payment of thirty pieces of silver, Judas led them to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus often ended each day. The text seems to indicate that there was a particular spot in the groves where Jesus often retreated for prayer (vv. 39–40). As Jesus' disciple and friend, Judas knew the exact spot.

In this passage, Jesus prays His most difficult prayer. Strikingly, His words

echo the prayer of the leper (v. 42; Luke 5:12). Jesus cries out to His Father, pleading for the possibility of forgoing the pain and suffering of the cross. Though Jesus had been willing to touch and heal the man covered in sores, God the Father is not willing to save His own Son from execution. The plan of salvation cannot be altered. Jesus must offer His own body for the purification of sins before He sits down at the right hand of God the Father.

But God the Father does not abandon his Son to despair. He sends a ministering angel (v. 43). And when Jesus is betrayed and arrested and some of His followers fight back, Jesus graciously performs His last act of healing. Characteristically, Jesus meets His betrayer and the soldiers not with a fight but with piercing questions. “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” (v. 48).

APPLY THE WORD

Before His execution, Jesus honestly prayed and struggled to bear the weight of the cross. We, too, can struggle honestly before God with the responsibilities we are called to carry. We don't have to pretend that we are free from doubt; sometimes we find difficult the paths of obedience we are called to walk. God hears and cares!

PRAY WITH US

Again, uphold in prayer the ministry of Moody Radio through its WMFT station, serving Alabama and eastern Mississippi. Pray that the programs, words, and music provided by its staff—Brad Law and Patrick Bosley—would touch the hearts of many listeners.

*Jesus, remember me when you
come into your kingdom.*

Luke 23:42

WEDNESDAY
MARCH

30

Jesus, King of the Jews

On February 27, 2015, Boris Nemtsov was another critic of Russian president Vladimir Putin found shot to death in Moscow. Although the Kremlin has denied any involvement, a growing number of journalists, aid workers, and political opponents have been arrested or assassinated in Russia. Nemtsov had spoken publicly about corruption within the government and had been preparing a paper documenting the experiences of Russian soldiers in Ukraine.

When corrupt political leaders want either to seize power or to protect it, they consider the strategy of assassination. We see this in our reading today. Though the Jewish religious leaders wanted Jesus dead, they had to make a political case for His execution. They had to prove that Jesus wasn't just a religious problem that threatened their regime of temple worship. They needed to paint Jesus as an insurrectionist and a threat to Roman

rule. He had to be portrayed as a self-appointed candidate for king, who refused to bow the knee to Caesar.

And they were right, of course, about the radical nature of the message that Jesus preached. When Jesus announced the coming of a new kingdom, He wasn't simply speaking about how people get to heaven when they die (although this is important). He was proclaiming a transfer of power. He was saying that He deserved worship and allegiance—not Caesar.

Even though Jesus is the rightful King, He allowed an egregious miscarriage of justice on the day He surrendered to have His name taunted and His body subjected to beatings. It was not justice that prevailed on Good Friday; it was the shouts of the people. It was the voice of the crowds, whose shouts of praise days earlier had become death threats: "Crucify him!" (v. 20).

APPLY THE WORD

We are nearly a week past Good Friday, but this reading should cause us to reflect with soberness on the terrible price that Jesus paid to redeem us. Are we like the crowds, demanding our own way? Like Herod and Pilate who choose expediency over truth? Or like the women who remain faithful to following Jesus?

PRAY WITH US

Remember in prayer our Digital Marketing specialists—Brian Ixcaragua, Bryan Young, Daniel Russell, and Noelle Bud—as they help Moody Global Ministries reach across cultures and generations via websites, emails, apps, and social media.

THURSDAY
MARCH

31

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise.

2 Peter 3:9

Jesus, the Final Word

In his book *Lament for a Son*, Christian philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff has explored the grief of losing his adult son in a mountain-climbing accident. “It’s the neverness that’s so painful,” Wolterstorff says. “All the rest of our lives we must live without him. . . . A month, a year, five years—with that I could live. But not this forever.”

Death is not what God intended for His creation, and the Bible describes death as humanity’s great enemy. If we have suffered the grief of losing someone we have loved, we know the searing pain, suffering, and tragedy of death. Thankfully, we also know the good news of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, which reverses the curse of death. The day will come when we will not seek for the living among the dead. The dead will be raised to life, and Jesus’ resurrection is proof that our hope for death’s defeat is certain (see 1 Corinthians 15).

Luke closes his Gospel by returning to some themes we have seen since the beginning of his account. The angels were present to announce the good news of Jesus’ birth to Mary and to the shepherds, and they are now posted as sentries at the empty tomb. The disciples throughout Luke’s Gospel have been slow to grasp the understanding of Jesus’ identity, and they continue in their obtuseness even after His resurrection. It would take multiple eyewitness testimonies and finally a shared meal to begin believing that the apparition before them was not a ghost but the resurrected Jesus (vv. 36–43).

Luke began with reminders about God’s faithful promise-keeping, and the Gospel ends by reminding us that the resurrected Jesus fulfills all that has been written in the Law and the Prophets (v. 44). Jesus is the final Word of God.

APPLY THE WORD

Luke wrote this Gospel for Theophilus (which translated means “lover of God”) to have certainty of the things about Jesus. What new aspects of Jesus’ ministry did you see in our study of Luke? What new hope did you gain? Will you, certain of the crucified and resurrected Christ, share the good news of His salvation?

PRAY WITH US

In conclusion, please add to your prayers these Digital Marketing employees: David Quigley, Kiel Russell, Katie Fore, Nathan Hill, and Rachel Strull. Ask God for good communication, creativity, and teamwork as they serve at Moody.



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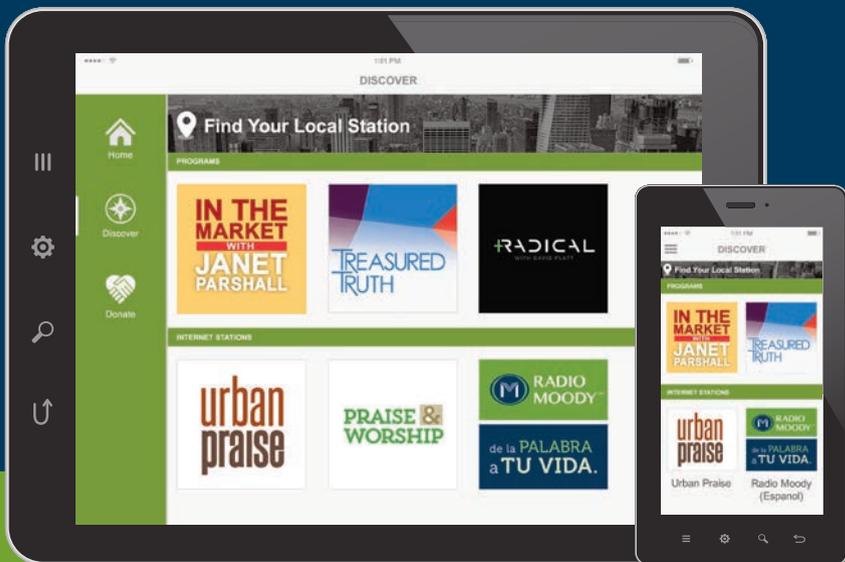
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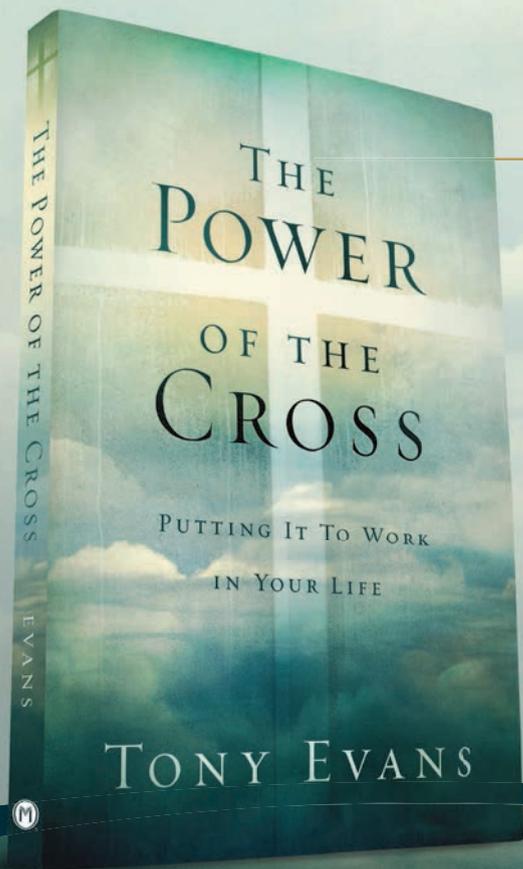


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