



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of April 3, 2022 (John 19:1-16a)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Holy God, there are so many who rule in this world. Many create rules for themselves, some inherit title and position, some are elected to positions of government, some are thrust into leadership because people believe in them. Sometimes our world is a mixed-up place where the rulers, leaders, and those with power make a right mess of things: Economies falter, the world's resources are damaged, relationships between nations and peoples break down, suspicions are heightened and barriers are erected, gaps between the rich and poor are widened, people are denied the rights to healthcare, education and work, while others prosper. Lord God, may your leadership be made real in the world of our time. May peace, justice and mercy rule the world.

Devotions for Life A LifeGroup & Personal Resource

The Story: John 19:1-16a

Context: This week we once again pick up with the very next verse after last week's text. Jesus is now being handed over to be crucified. There is not a lot say contextually about this passage, since it's all the same context as last week. That said, it may be helpful to look back to 18:38, where Pilate asks, "what is truth?", which is followed by the part about choosing to release Jesus or a criminal named Barabbas.



As we endure the bloody beating (and crucifixion next week), it's important not to lose sight of the choice between the religious leaders and Pilate. In as much as we look at who they chose to crucify, we should remember who they chose to let go as well. But since there isn't much about Barabbas in John, this is a time when it may be helpful to look at what the other Gospels say about him (Matthew 27:15-26, Mark 15:6-15, and Luke 23:13-25).

Lord God,
 may your leadership be
 made real in the world of our
 time. May peace, justice and
 mercy rule the world. May
 the impending glory of
 resurrection and celebration
 in Eastertide bring the world
 great hope and reason to
 believe that the world does
 not have to remain as it is. In
 your name, and to you glory,
 we bring our prayer.
 Amen.

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Acts of Compassion & Justice:

Feed My Starving Children Event, April 14th:

Join us for a food packing event at Feed My Starving Children at 7pm on April 14th. This is a great way to "set apart" Holy Week ("holy" literally means "set apart"). Sign up by clicking the event image at aldersgatemn.com!

Contribute to Every Meal:

This month we're raising funds for the organization, Every Meal. Learn more about them at www.everymeal.org and if you can, contribute their efforts in ending child



Reading the Story:

As you read the story this week and next, know that this whole chapter can be hard to stomach for some. And that's ok. If that's you, don't feel you need to force yourself to read it vividly. What's important, however, is that we understand that Jesus was in fact beaten, tortured, crucified, died, and was buried. We may want to skip to Easter, and have it be all duckies and bunnies, but Easter significantly loses its meaning and power if we do that. We don't need to dwell on and vividly envision the pain and torture (as films like The Passion of the Christ seek to do), but we do need to let in that part of the narrative. The disciples did not have the benefit of knowing that Jesus would resurrect. The fear, uncertainty, and reality of death that they experienced we should seek to experience, or at least have empathy for, as well.

Questions for Discussion & Reflection:

- What words, images, or moments stand out to you in this passage?
- What do you think is going on in this passage? What is motivating people's actions/words? (Jesus, Pilate, the religious leaders, onlookers, the disciples...)
- What do you make of Jesus' relative silence in this part of the story? When is he silent? What does he say and what is the significance of what he says?
- If Pilate finds no case against Jesus, why do you think he allows him to be flogged, beaten, and mocked?
- What do you think Pilate is afraid of?
- What is significant about the chief priests' response in verse 19:15?
- What kind of power dynamics are at play? Who has power in this story (to any degree)? Who does not?
- What is power? How does it function in our world today? How can this passage speak into power dynamics in our world today? In your world?

