



## **GROW. PRAY. STUDY.**

The Church of the Resurrection – Weekly Guide

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### **“Lessons of Faith from D-day**

#### **SUNDAY 5.26.19**

Scripture: Romans 5:6-8,10-11

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us... For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

### **Christ died to save us**

#### **MONDAY 5.27.19 Romans 5:6-11**

“They fight not for the lust of conquest. They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt \*

President Roosevelt’s words showed a key reason we so admire the victorious D-day invasion troops: their quest was to set other people free from oppression and terror. The apostle Paul stressed the almost incredible selflessness of Jesus giving his life. He died “for ungodly people,” came to save us “while we were still enemies”! Going far beyond anything we could have done for ourselves, he gave his life to set us free spiritually forever.

- Scholar William Barclay wrote about today’s passage, “Through Jesus our *status* with God was changed. Sinners though we were, we were put into a right relationship with God. *But that is not enough*. Not only our *status* must be changed but our *state*. The saved sinner cannot go on being a sinner; he must become good. Christ’s death changed our *status*; his risen life changes our *state*....the saving process goes on, and never ends, until we see him face to face and are like him.” \*\* In what ways is accepting Jesus’ saving love changing you into a better person?
- Barclay added, “The coming of Christ and the death of Christ, is the proof of *God’s* love. Sometimes the thing is stated as if on the one side there was a gentle, loving Christ, on the other an angry and vengeful God; and as if Christ did something which changed God’s attitude to men. Nothing could be further from the truth....Jesus did not come to change God’s attitude to men; he came to show what it is and always was.” \*\* Have you realized that God did not have to be “talked into” saving you, that your salvation was God’s idea? How does that shape your walk with God?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, your ultimate battle against evil was a spiritual battle, even though it cost you great physical suffering. I thank you for your self-giving love which liberates me. Amen.

\* From <https://www.azquotes.com/quotes/topics/d-day.html>

\*\* Both quotations from William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Letter to the Romans (Revised Edition)*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, pp. 76-77.

## **In the end, arrogant power loses**

### **Tuesday 5.28.19 Matthew 21:33-45**

“It was unknowable then, but so much of the progress that would define the 20th century, on both sides of the Atlantic, came down to the battle for a slice of beach only six miles long and two miles wide.”

–Barack Obama \*

The world we live in is far from perfect. But imagine how much worse it would be if the D-day invasion failed, and Hitler’s arrogant racism and self-serving violence won out. Facing arrogant, self-serving religious leaders, Jesus used the image of “God’s vineyard” (from Isaiah 5:1-7) for a grim story. In it, tenant farmers tragically sowed the seeds of their own ruin by killing the owner’s son. Matthew said the religious leaders plotting to kill him “knew Jesus was talking about them.”

- ✚ “God’s power is at its greatest not in his destruction of the wicked but in his taking all the wickedness of the earth into himself and giving back love.” \*\* What does Jesus’ way of defeating evil as the Suffering Servant (cf. Isaiah 52:13-53:12) tell you about how God’s power works? What kinds of evil have you faced? How can Jesus’ example guide you toward the path of true eternal victory at those times?
- ✚ Those who heard Jesus’ vineyard story pronounced sentence—on themselves. Germany’s Nazi leaders claimed to defend Christianity, but their viciousness and arrogance united much of the world to stop them. Ask yourself: how fully are you willing to trustingly submit your life to Jesus and the ways of his kingdom? What people and experiences have shaped, either positively or negatively, your willingness to respond to Jesus?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you defeated hatred and death, not by hating and trying to kill, but by taking the worst they could do on yourself, and then emerging alive and loving. Thank you for inviting me to share in your victory over hatred and death. Amen.

\* From <https://www.azquotes.com/quotes/topics/d-day.html>

\*\* T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, ed. *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000, p. 222.

## **God’s great crusade against evil**

### **WEDNESDAY 5.29.19 Isaiah 59:14-20, Ephesians 6:10-17**

“You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you....Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle hardened. He will fight savagely....let us beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.”

–Dwight D. Eisenhower \*

General Eisenhower knew, as he wrote the Order of the Day for D-day, that the invasion had a moral dimension, not just a military one. The prophet Isaiah and the apostle Paul also saw not just human powers at work in our world, but cosmic spiritual forces. They promised that God’s spiritual “armor” could defeat even “forces of cosmic darkness.” Life’s crucial battle is spiritual. And that battle’s goal was and is to use spiritual weapons to win hearts and minds to God’s side.

- ✚ Scholar David Mc. Kenna noted, “Along with the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation, [God] will also clothe Himself in the garments of “*vengeance*”—better interpreted as vindication—and “*zeal*” (v. 17b)...God must intervene...but not in violation of His own character. His zealous action to vindicate the truth will be taken within the character of His righteousness and the goal of His salvation.” Isaiah, like Paul, drew on images of how humans fight. How did Jesus’ life show that God’s way of fighting evil operates in a different sphere from human military conflict?

- ✚ The city of Ephesus held temples of many pagan gods and cults. Paul listed the many powers of darkness in verse 12 for “believers [who] came to the Lord from a background in magic, astrology, witchcraft, goddess worship, and various mystery cults.” \*\*\* What forces in today’s world make it hardest for you to hold fast to your commitment to God? Which parts of God’s armor have been most important to you in pushing back the darkness in your own life, and in the lives of others?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you entered this violent world as a helpless baby, and faced the cross as a simple peasant. Yet you won an eternal victory. Without foolishly seeking danger, help me to live as though my ultimate security lies with you and your eternal kingdom. Amen.

\* From <http://www.kansasheritage.org/abilene/ikespeech.html>

\*\* David Mc. Kenna, *The Preacher’s Commentary Series, Volume 18: Isaiah 40–66*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994, p. 216.

\*\*\* Clinton Arnold comments on Ephesians in Clinton Arnold, gen. ed. *Romans to Philemon: Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary, Volume 3*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002, p. 336.

## **Risking all for a great cause**

### **THURSDAY 5.30.19 Acts 5:17-33, 40-42**

“At the core, the American citizen soldiers knew the difference between right and wrong, and they didn’t want to live in a world in which wrong prevailed. So they fought, and won, and we all of us, living and yet to be born, must be forever profoundly grateful.” –Stephen Ambrose \*

On D-day, Allied soldiers took great and costly risks to bring about human liberty in the face of the Nazi’s fury and power. When Jesus’ first followers faced a “furious” Sanhedrin, they said, “We must obey God rather than humans! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead...We are witnesses of such things” (verses 30, 32). When the authorities beat them, instead of complaining, they astoundingly “left the council rejoicing because they had been regarded as worthy to suffer disgrace for the sake of the name.”

- ✚ In all ages, some “realists” see physical survival as the highest goal. In the end, they say, that matters more than standing for good against evil. We often call money, school, career, houses, cars, even health and illness “the real world.” But the apostles saw the spiritual world as the real “real world,” with eternal issues at stake. How can you open your thinking more fully to let God raise your gaze beyond “this-worldly” worries, and focus your life energy in the “real reality” of God’s world?

- ✚ Be sure you don’t miss this remarkable sentence: “The apostles left the council rejoicing because they had been regarded as worthy to suffer disgrace for the sake of the name.” Before Jesus’ death, the apostles had squabbled about which of them should be greatest. How had they come to see God’s priorities more clearly? How can you, like them, refocus on those priorities?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, empower me to live a life that, in easy decisions and hard ones, glorifies you and always sees the difference between right and wrong. Help me to never give up on your calling to me. Amen.

\* From [https://www.azquotes.com/author/337-Stephen\\_Ambrose](https://www.azquotes.com/author/337-Stephen_Ambrose)

## The victory that has defeated the world

FRIDAY 5.31.19 1 John 5:1-5

““We are the children of your sacrifice. We are the sons and daughters you saved from tyranny's reach.”

– Bill Clinton \*

D-day was almost 75 years ago. Few of us alive today could have taken part in that battle even if we wanted to—but we all benefit from the soldiers' defeat of tyranny. The belief in Jesus that John wrote about was not an abstract, sterile belief. It was a living, passionate, active trust that Jesus was and is who he said. That conviction can sustain all of us in building the kind of life that can defeat all the evil, hatred and negativity in our tired old world.

- ✚ There's power in learning lessons from D-day about the Christian life. There's also a hazard: that we might think it takes a long list of historic human achievements to impress God. 1 John 5:4 stated the basis of spiritual victory clearly: “This is the victory that has defeated the world: our faith.” What helps you, as you train spiritually and work to be God's hands and voice in the world, to keep your trust in God's goodness, not your own?
- ✚ Of course, if we're honest at all, we know that too often we suffer spiritual defeats (bad behaviors or attitudes). What if we are losers in God's eyes? But if it's true that “this is the victory that has defeated the world: our faith,” then the only thing that could block us being in God's winning “army” would be to give up. How can a clearer sense of this free you from obsessive, self-destructive guilt and allow you to live joyfully and gratefully in the light of God's grace?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I believe in and trust you. (Even when I'm not sure I do, I'm like the man who cried, “I believe—help my unbelief.”) Thank you for using my fragile faith as the basis for a victorious life. Amen.

\* On the anniversary of the D-Day landings / 1994 from <http://www.greatpersonalities.com/d-day/>

## Worthy is the Lamb! SATURDAY 6.1.19 1 Corinthians 15:51-58, Revelation 5:4-13

“These are the boys of Pointe du Hoc. These are the men who took the cliffs. These are the champions who helped free a continent. These are the heroes who helped end a war.”

–Ronald Reagan \*

President Reagan eloquently hailed the soldiers of D-day, those who survived and those who died, as heroes. As a nation, we agree. The ultimate human threat all tyrants have used is, “I will kill you.” We know that Roman officials puzzled over how little that threat seemed to affect Jesus' followers. Jesus, who died and rose again, set his followers free from even the fear of death (cf. Hebrews 2:14-15). In 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul boldly proclaimed a divine victory so sweeping that death would be “swallowed up.” And in Revelation 5, we read about a vision of the hosts of heaven singing at the top of their lungs, “Worthy is the slaughtered Lamb” in praise of Jesus, the ultimate hero.

- ✚ Jesus faced evil and death at their very worst—you can read about his arrest, trial and execution on a cross in any of the four gospels. Jesus defeated evil and death at their very worst—go on to read the Easter story in any of the four gospels. Christians through the centuries have staked their lives on the truth of Jesus' victory over death. One of the most striking images in the vision of Revelation is “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah” seen as “a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain.” Can you feel the power of the vision's poetic message when all of creation worships the “Lion” by singing “worthy is the Lamb”? When has your worship led you to a deeper sense of the power of God's self-giving love?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you went where most of us most dread going—the realm of death—and you returned to life! You offer me the choice to join you in that victory. I accept your offer of a life that lies beyond the power of death. Amen.

**Family Activity:** Prepare to watch a family movie featuring superheroes. Before you view the movie, invite your kids to watch for ways different characters use their power. As you view the movie, serve a fun snack and enjoy! Following the movie, ask your kids one or more of the following questions. “Who was good/evil in the movie?” “Why do you say that?” “What were some choices the characters had to make regarding how they would use their power?” “What do you imagine you would have done when...?” Let your child know that though we may not have the powers of a superhero, we have God’s power within us which is even greater. Talk about how God wants us to use His power for good in the world. Pray and ask for God’s help.

\* From <https://www.azquotes.com/quotes/topics/d-day.html>