

100th Anniversary Weekly Devotions - April

Week 9 – Greater Love

Rev. Dr. Palmer Wold

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” – John 15:13

When Oliver Cromwell was the Lord Protector of England in the 1650's, he ordered a soldier to be shot for crimes that he had committed. The sentence was to be carried out at the ringing of the evening bell.

That night, the girl who was to marry the condemned man, climbed up into the bell tower and clung to the great clapper to prevent it from striking. When she was brought before Cromwell to give an account of her actions, she only wept and showed him her bruised and bleeding hands.

Cromwell was greatly impressed with the woman and said, “Your lover is alive because of your sacrifice. The sentence will not be carried out. He is now free.”

How would you react if you knew that someone had been willing to suffer on your behalf so that you could live? Can you possibly imagine such love? Yet, that is exactly what Christ did for you. He loved you so much that He endured terrible suffering and death upon the cross so that you might have life, and have it abundantly.

Question: What does Christ's sacrifice mean to you?

Week 10 – A Very Important Question

Rev. Dr. Palmer Wold

“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” - Matthew 22:42

The answer that you and I give to the above question will determine our eternal destiny! If we answer that Jesus is only a man, then we will be inclined to think of him as a self-deluded egomaniac and a blasphemer, falsely claiming the attributes of God. If, however, we believe that His miraculous power, His wise teachings, and His resurrection from the dead identify Him as the true Messiah and our Savior, then we will treat Him with utmost reverence and devotion.

A person has written anonymously, “Consider this One whose birth was not only contrary to the usual laws of life, but whom the power of death could not hold. He owned no cornfields or fisheries, but He could spread a table for 5000 and still have bread and fish to spare. He walked upon the waters of the Sea of Galilee and they supported Him. He preached, did good, and performed miracles for three years, yet religious leaders hated Him and wicked men crucified Him. Although few people mourned His death, God the mighty Creator, hung a black crepe over the sun. Jesus wrote no books, constructed no church buildings, and had no financial backing; yet after almost 2000 years, He is still the central character of all human history!”

Question: Who is Jesus to you? Why do you follow Him?

Week 11 – No Fooling!

Pastor Darrin Vick

For He was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him. – Mark 9:31-32

In 1996, Taco Bell took out a full-page ad in six of the nation's largest newspapers announcing its latest corporate marketing decision. In an attempt to help reduce the national debt, Taco Bell had purchased the Liberty Bell. The promotional ad (published on April 1st) assured the public that the Liberty Bell would still be available for public viewing, but it would split its time between Philadelphia and Taco Bell's headquarters in Irvine, California.

The public's reaction was swift. Angry calls poured into Taco Bell demanding a reversal of the decision. So Taco Bell issued a second “genuine” press-release revealing the April Fools joke and pledging a donation of \$50,000 for the preservation of the Liberty Bell.*

There were plenty of followers of Jesus who didn't understand and couldn't believe his claim that he was going to die and then rise from the dead. It sounded like foolishness. How could their hero die a criminal's death? And if so, how could he overcome the grave and live again? But Jesus did just that! Our faith in Jesus means that his death and resurrection is now our promise of forgiveness and eternal life! It's no joke and it changes everything about our lives!

As the martyred missionary, James Elliot, once wrote, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”

Question: How has your faith in Jesus' death and resurrection changed your view of the future?

*Original story found at <http://mentalfloss.com/article/62676/11-greatest-pranks-all-time>

Week 12 – Rhymes with Weak

Pastor Darrin Vick

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth – Matthew 5:5

In ancient Greece, wild horses were captured in the mountains and then brought down to the cities to be trained or “broken”. Depending on the nature of the particular horse, some would become best suited to working on farms or pulling carts for merchants. Others would serve as ordinary riding horses. And a select few of them would become war horses. These were the strongest and most disciplined animals. They were not afraid of the sounds and sights of warfare. They remained steady during the fiercest of battles. And they were totally obedient to the direction of their masters. These war horses would be described with the Greek word, “praus” which translates into English as, “meek”.

Most of us don't think of war horses when we hear Jesus describing those that, “shall inherit the earth.” In fact, some translations of the Bible replace the word, “meek” with the words, “gentle” or “humble.” These words aren't incorrect translations, but they don't tell the whole story. Meekness is not

weakness, it is strength under authority. When the wars of life rage around us, we can easily become frightened to the point of fleeing or triggered to the point of lashing-out wildly. Neither is the path of the meek. Jesus doesn't call us into fear or into flailing. He calls us into faithfulness and fortitude.

Questions: In what areas of your life do you need to "broken" so Jesus can use you in his Kingdom?