*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

September 30 – October 5

*Jesus’ Death and Resurrection*

**Monday, September 30 Luke 22:31-38; Isaiah 53:10-12**

*“He was counted among the rebels”*

Jesus had previously told the disciples to go out without extra clothes or food or money to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom, trusting God that he would supply them through the hospitality of the people to whom they ministered. But now it will be necessary to take a purse, a bag, and even a sword. They are now going to minister in a world that may well be hostile to them. What takes place fulfills Isaiah 53:12. Jesus will be considered a criminal and by implication, so will those who identify with him. The disciples must be prepared for what lies ahead and understand that ministry will take place in a context of resistance.

The disciples misunderstand his rhetorical remarks about defending themselves in the face of opposition. They think that Jesus wants them to take a sword inventory to get ready for battle, and they note they have two swords. But the sword inventory they really need is an inner one. Will they have the inner strength to withstand the spiritual assault they will face? Jesus thus makes a dismissive remark: “That is enough,” meaning “This conversation is over.”

*Strengthen me, Lord, to stand strong against those opposed to you. Amen.*

**Tuesday, October 1 Matthew 27:45-49; Psalm 22:1-5**

*“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*

Jesus had been on the cross for about three hours when darkness came over the land. “Darkness” in the Bible is an evocative word. If light symbolizes God, darkness suggest everything that is anti-God, including wickedness and death. After about three hours of darkness Jesus’ tortured body was nearly lifeless. From out of the darkness, Jesus’ voice cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” The darkness was a fitting context for the agonizing content of Jesus’ cry.

Jesus’ words are from Psalm 22. After the opening lament of verse one, David went on in his psalm to remember the ways in which God had delivered him from evil, but Jesus’ cry does not go that far. Matthew’s readers, who know the full story of Jesus, can think of the entirety of Psalm 22 as a preview of Jesus’ vindication by the resurrection. But Matthew focuses on Jesus’ abandonment. Hell came to Calvary that day, and the Savior descended into it and bore its horrors in our stead.

*You were forsaken, Jesus, so I would not be. Amen.*

**Wednesday, October 2 John 19:16-24; Psalm 22:12-18**

*“They divided his clothes among them”*

It was common for Roman guards during a crucifixion to demand the right to the prisoner’s clothing. They take Jesus’ clothes and divide them into four parts. These four “parts” have led to speculation as to what Jesus was wearing. His clothes probably included a head covering, a belt, sandals, and an outer cloak, in addition to the tunic or robe. This last item draws special attention because of its value and the soldiers’ interest that it not be torn in parts because it is seamless.

The soldiers gamble for the tunic, which John understands as a fulfillment of Psalm 22:18. References to the Old Testament become more frequent in John’s Gospel during Jesus’ betrayal, arrest, trial, suffering, crucifixion and death, presumable because his Jewish audience would have been particularly skeptical about a crucified Messiah. By connecting Psalm 22, a passage about the suffering of God’s righteous servant, to Jesus’ death, John is providing biblical evidence for Jesus as the Messiah.

*Even in the gambling of soldiers, Lord, your Word is fulfilled. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

September 30 – October 5

*Jesus’ Death and Resurrection*

**Thursday, October 3 John 19:28-36; Exodus 12:43-46**

*“I am thirsty”*

Just as the loss of his clothing was a fulfillment of Scripture (see yesterday’s devotion), John notes that Jesus’ cry of thirst also fulfills Scripture. Jesus is fully aware that the work he has been sent into the world to do is finished. He has revealed the Father’s name, gathered those given to him, and exhibited God’s love and revealed his word. His cry of thirst is not a desperate word from a dying man under a Middle Eastern sun. Jesus speaks in order to fulfill Scripture. “I thirst” recalls Psalm 69:21, “They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.”

John makes it clear that Jesus dies during Passover week. On the first night of the Passover the most perfect animal from the flock was to be chosen as the Paschal Lamb. And not one of its bones was to be broken when it was sacrificed and its blood was poured as a sign of grace on this night of death (Exodus 12:46). Jesus now has become the perfect Paschal Lamb, shedding his blood to save his people, and none of his bones has been broken.

*You finished the work, Jesus, and so fulfilled your Father’s will. Amen.*

**Friday, October 4 Luke 23:44-46; Psalm 31:1-5**

*“I entrust my spirit into your hands”*

In Psalm 31 the righteous sufferer prays that God might deliver him from his enemies, while expressing his confidence that his fate is in God’s hands. He prays for deliverance from enemies who threaten to put him to shame (verse 1), who attack him (verses 2-3), and who seek to trap him (verse 4). In the face of his enemies, the psalmist seeks refuge in the Lord (verses 1-2, 4). He appeals to God’s righteousness (verse 1), to his willingness and ability to hear, see, and help (verse2), to his name (verse 3), and to his redemption and faithfulness (verse 5).

Where the psalmist entrusts himself to God as he is surrounded by enemies, Jesus entrusts himself to God in the face of imminent death, expressing his submission to God’s will and his confidence that God will deliver him – that is, bring him back from the dead. When Jesus quotes Psalm 31:5, he extends the original meaning of the psalm from God’s protection of a righteous sufferer to God’s protection of a righteous person who has died, heightening the strength of the psalm’s profession of faith in God.

*In life and in death, Lord, I entrust myself to you. Amen.*

**Saturday, October 5 John 20:1-9; Psalm 16:1-11**

*“They still hadn’t understood the Scriptures”*

It is Mary who first comes to the tomb only to discover that something has happened. The stone has been removed. When Mary sees the open tomb she assumes the body is gone. She must get this news to the disciples, so she runs to share it with Peter and John. When the two disciples hear her story, they take off running for the tomb to find out what might have happened. John arrives first. He does not go in, but stoops down at the entrance and looks in, seeing nothing but the linen cloths. Obviously there is no body there.

It is Peter, impulsive and courageous as ever, who goes in all the way and sees the grave clothes lying there neatly, all in place. Now John goes in, and we are told that “he saw and believed.” The empty tomb and the folded grave clothes are quiet evidence for him that Jesus is alive. Later the living Christ will illuminate and open up those Scriptures which testify to his own resurrection, pointing perhaps to Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 53:10-12, and Hosea 6:2. These are passages the disciples never understood during Jesus’ earthly ministry.

*You are risen, Lord, in fulfillment of your Father’s Word. Amen.*