



We celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. Perhaps we think his work is done. His mission is, however, incomplete. Jesus not only defeats death and frees those captive to sin, but also promises the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After Easter, we await his baptism. Pentecost is the day when the disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Jesus' work was completed.

This devotion series is for the fifty days of waiting between Easter and Pentecost. The theme verse follows the disciples' waiting activities. At Acts 2:42 we read:

The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. (CEB)

These devotions span seven weeks. Devotions for five of the weeks draw on themes recounted in Acts: devotion, apostles' teaching, community, shared meals and prayers. There are two additional weeks. One of those challenges us to respond to God's promptings to do ministry in our neighborhoods. The final week introduces us to the Holy Spirit. The Sunday following the devotional series is Pentecost Sunday.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. Amen.

Pastor Keith Cressman

Sunday

Acts 2:42-43

This week our theme is 'devoted.' Devotion signified loyalty and love. It is giving oneself to a person, cause or pursuit.

To what or whom do you give yourself? Make a list. Pray that you will properly love those who are on your list.

Monday

John 6:60-69

Many of Jesus teachings were difficult to understand. Here his teaching is described as "harsh" or "hard." The teaching was so harsh that some disciples decided not to follow Jesus.

What motivates you to be devoted to Jesus? In this account, the disciples who remain reveal that they are devoted to Jesus because nothing else will satisfy their innermost longings. What once satisfied them no longer did. The past satisfactions were not less than they were before Jesus is simply so much better! Peter, speaking for the group, indicates that they have tasted what eternal life is like, and nothing else will do.

Having experienced the best, everything else is less. They devoted themselves to Jesus.

Remember your best experiences with Jesus. Thank him.

Ask Jesus to use these fifty days to refresh your relationship.

Tuesday

Matthew 26:31-35

We sometimes overcommit or expect an unreasonable level of devotion from ourselves. We may not even realize it at the time. Our intentions and motives are sincere, we believe we can deliver as promised.

Jesus' response to Peter is one of understanding and insight. When I read the text, I do not hear Jesus speaking with a tone of disgust or accusation, but rather of acceptance, compassion and understanding. While Jesus knew Peter would not do as he said, he also appreciated Peter's devotion and passion.

Once Peter let himself and Jesus down, he would replay Jesus' words in his mind. He would hear Jesus' understanding and sympathy.

Jesus' understanding and sympathy can comfort us when we have failed him and ourselves.

When have you failed Jesus? Yourself? Others?

Imagine Jesus speaking kindly to you about those failures.

Jesus accepts and comforts you even in your failings.

Wednesday

John 12:1-11

Yum! Nard. Imagine how great it must smell!

Several devotees are described. Judas, devoted to self-gain. Those devoted to killing Jesus and Lazarus. The aroma of devotion that fills the story is, however, Mary's devotion to Jesus.

Devotion is costly. Mary sacrificed much to offer her gift of devotion. She was ridiculed and likely spent her savings.

Misplaced devotion is costly as well. Judas' and the others' misplaced devotion cost them their relationships with Jesus and very likely their souls.

Mary's timing was off, the gift of nard was for Jesus' burial. Perhaps Mary could not wait to honor Jesus. Perhaps she saw little purpose in delaying until he was dead what she could do while he was alive.

Devotion is costly and cannot be delayed for a 'better' time.

Consider other devotions in your life. Are some misplaced?

Devote yourself to Jesus Christ.

Thursday

John 13:36-39

The time to act on our devotion to Jesus is not always up to us. Peter, seemingly always ready to do something NOW, had to wait. Part of Jesus' preparation of Peter included Peter's failures. Peter could not go where Jesus was going...yet. But he would.

Devotion may not mean immediate action. Devotion is a complete surrender to preparation and readiness, as well. When the time comes, God knows you can be counted on.

Peter, while denying Jesus for a moment, led the Early Christian movement that today reaches around the globe. The results of devotion may not be immediate but are effective for thousands of years.

Be open to the not yet discovered or disclosed future God has for you.

Friday

Acts 4:1-22

Peter and John were faithfully sharing the resurrection of Jesus. They and their message were met with stiff opposition from formidable, respected opponents: scholars, clergy, leaders and

police. The opposition was furious at them. They demanded to know the power or authority by which they taught.

With all their authority and power, the opposition demanded that Peter and John cease and desist teaching Jesus' resurrection and demonstrating Jesus' power.

The opposition had heard and seen proof of a miraculously healed person, yet would not believe. Peter and John, on the other hand, would not, could not, stop speaking about what they had heard and seen.

The object of our devotion drives our thoughts and behavior. Our thoughts and behavior reveal to whom and what we are devoted.

Consider your thoughts and behaviors. What do they reveal about your devotion to Jesus? Are any changes needed?

Saturday

Devotion is reflected in our thoughts and behavior. The depth of our devotion is revealed by the sacrifices we are willing to make. As we grow more devoted to Jesus, competing devotions in ourselves and those of others will be revealed. Conflict may result.

Stay on track. Give yourself daily to Jesus.

Prepare to worship together tomorrow morning.

