

2011 *Reflections*  
*Easter*



**Second Baptist Church**

A loving community transformed by Christ  
for unbounded service



April 17

MATTHEW 26:17-30

**“Is it I, Lord?”**

I think this passage marks the beginning of Christ’s suffering as each of the disciples asks, “Is it I, Lord?” This question seems self-centered. Each disciple seems more concerned about his own innocence and finding out who will betray Jesus rather than the upcoming suffering of their teacher and friend.

We do not like pain and suffering. We may even want to skip straight to the resurrection account and be more concerned with our individual needs this week. As followers of Christ, we need to read these passages to experience Jesus’ pain so we can better understand our Lord’s suffering. May we not have the same self-centered attitude of the disciples.

**Ginny Richardson, M.Div.** student with concentration in Christian Education, McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University, Atlanta, GA

April 18

MATTHEW 26:31-46

**“Let this cup pass from me ...”**

This must have been one of the darkest times in the life of Jesus. Knowing what was to come, yet feeling left alone by His disciples, we can only wonder how difficult it must have been for Jesus to ask God for His burden to be lifted. Even still, Jesus knew our forgiveness depended upon His sacrifice. As Christians, we read about the life of Christ in order to understand how to strengthen our relationship with, and trust in God, even in times of trial. Here, Christ gives us the perfect example of how to face adversity and follow God’s will for our own lives every day, but especially when we know it will be difficult.

**Brent Miller, M.Div.** degree from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond

# April 19

MATTHEW 26:47-56

**“Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled ...”**

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled sets a vivid scene.

Matthew alone mentions “twelve legions of angels” and the fulfillment of Scripture to drive home two points. First, Jesus offers Himself freely for the sin of the world, completely alone. Secondly, Matthew uses the word disciple in this context to note that those closest to Jesus – those who were most appreciative and most thankful – deserted their Master in an hour of need.

*Gracious Lord, thank You for Your sacrifice. May we sacrifice and stand for the people and values we hold dear, whatever the cost. Amen.*

**Ron Crawford, M. Div. and D. Min., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC**

# April 20

MATTHEW 26:57-75

**“Answerest thou nothing?”**

*“Preach the Gospel always, and if necessary, use words.” – St. Francis of Assisi*

In John 2:19, Jesus never said, “I can destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days.” He said, “Destroy THIS temple, and I will rebuild it in three days.” He was talking about his body! He was talking about the resurrection! But Jesus knows that the council of priests won’t understand. And so in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7, Jesus remains silent:

***He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open His mouth ...***

Do our reputations speak for us? Are we, as Christians, capable of communicating the Gospel without saying a word? And do we have an answer for when it is time to speak up?

**Dane Jackson, M. Div. student in Youth and Student Ministry, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond**

# April 21

MATTHEW 27:1-26

**“Why? What evil has He done?”**

Where do we stand today, on the Maundy Thursday side of the cross? Few of us likely identify with the crowd demanding Jesus’ execution. More of us may identify with Peter, who fearfully denies Jesus. But perhaps we can all identify with Pilate, asking indignantly, “Why? What evil has He done?”

Do not be fooled by Pilate’s ablutio. He may recognize that Christ is “innocent” (v. 19), but does this recognition render him “innocent” (v. 24)? Pilate’s denial of Christ is less apparent than Peter’s, but it is no less real. There is no such thing as an innocent bystander.

Whether we stand with Peter, who actively denies Christ, or with Pilate, who passively denies Him, let us ponder this Maundy Thursday how our actions, or inactions, reflect our own share in humanity’s rejection of Jesus.

**Jonathan Kruschwitz, M. Div., Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond**

# April 22

MATTHEW 27:27-44

**“He saved others, He cannot save Himself.”**

Who would want to follow a crucified Messiah?

Not the disciples, and often, not us. We prefer to picture Jesus as the “resurrected” Christ – full of power and wisdom, one who conquers. And while He is that, we must recognize that His suffering and earthly death were real. In order to identify ourselves with the *power* of the resurrected Christ, we must identify ourselves first with the *suffering* of the crucified Christ.

Can we get behind Jesus, even while He’s on the cross?

Can we grasp that God, who cannot be mocked, chose to be mocked?

Worse yet, can we grasp that we are the mockers?

**Emily Riley, M. Div. student at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, and a Master of Social Work student at Virginia Commonwealth University**

# April 23

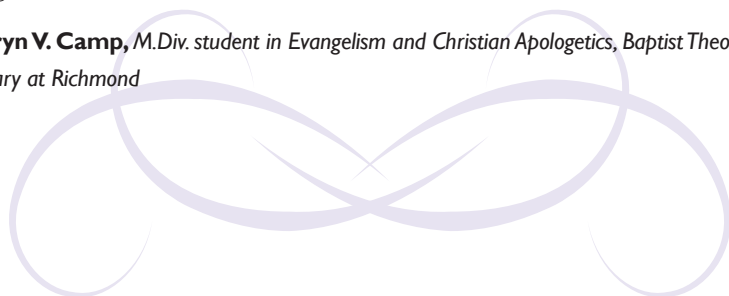
MATTHEW 27:45-61

**“Why hast Thou forsaken me?”**

Where are you God? Please don't leave me! Those of us who have felt the sting of great loss or the fear of an incurable illness may have felt the heaviness of abandonment.

Our Lord and Savior hung on the cross that day, beaten, bruised, spat upon, and bleeding. Abandoned by all of the twelve except His beloved disciple, now He was forsaken by God. As onlookers passed by, He hung there in complete humiliation, the humiliation that we deserve when we sin against a holy and righteous God. He paid our ransom and we owe Him everything. God is in the midst of our pain and suffering; it is only because of Jesus we are able to approach the throne of grace. Thank you, Lord Jesus.

**Kathryn V. Camp**, *M.Div. student in Evangelism and Christian Apologetics, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond*



# April 24

MATTHEW 28:1-18

***“He is not here, for He has been raised.”***

As I write this, I am profoundly aware that in a matter of days I will be “here” – “here” in Israel, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; “here” at the traditional site of the garden tomb. “Here” where an earthquake struck that Easter morn – an angel descended and rolled back a stone, guards became like dead men, and women first witnessed the living “dead man.”

On my last pilgrimage in 2007, I sat in front of the Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre for more than an hour, in silence, watching the pilgrims and seeing through them that Christ was there. People from all over the world came out with awe on their faces from being in the presence of the Holy.

“Here” it is – the center of our faith, the reminder of the resurrection, the locus of God’s greatest-ever miracle, the center of life’s labyrinthine search. For in His absence from the tomb, He is forever “here” – everywhere, for everyone. Let’s meet here, as the Risen One meets us, in worship this morning!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

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