



Part 1: **The People Of THE PASSION**

Three kinds of people at the *passion*: Those motivated by...

1. _____

Caiaphas: Chief priests said, “If we let him go on like this... the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation” Caiaphas... spoke up, “You know nothing at all! ...it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.” He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. John 11:48-51

Pilate: (They) kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.” When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement. John 19:12,13

2. _____

Peter: Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “today --yes, tonight --before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.” But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you!” And all the others said the same. Mark 14:29-31

3. _____

Mary Magdalene: Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene... Mark 15:40

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out... Luke 8:1,2a

Which of these do you relate to?

Daily Meditations

Here's a chance to spend some time each day this week meditating on today's topic!

This week's memory verse: “*You are a king, then!*” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “*You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.*” John 18:37

Monday: The Religious Leaders

Why do you think some people object to “organized religion”?

What temptations do you think are faced by people in positions of religious authority?

Jesus' longest speech against the religious leaders of his day is recorded in Matthew 23. This was given just days before his arrest and crucifixion, and certainly made Caiaphas and his crowd even more angry with Christ. Take this interesting challenge: It's so easy to apply all of Matt. 23 to the Pharisees and dodge the bullet for ourselves. So read Matthew 23:1-28, only whenever Jesus says “teachers of the law and Pharisees”, instead substitute *your own name!* Before you read, ask God to speak to you through the passage. As you read, ask yourself which critiques-- which “woes”-- ring true for you. Which ones are areas you need to address? Write your observations here:

How would it look, in your life, for you to be more Christ-like in these areas?

Ask God in prayer to help you be more Christ-like and less Pharisee-like in the areas you noticed were most applicable to where you are now in your walk! And He will!

Tuesday: Pilate

Read Matt. 27:11-26 & John 18:28-40. How did Pilate attempt to evade any responsibility in the condemnation of Jesus? What did Pilate want the Jewish leadership to do with Jesus?

What decisions have you been putting off for fear of the responsibility involved?

How would you describe Jesus' exchange with Pilate? What do you learn from Jesus' response to Pilate?

In what situation do you need to quit arguing and defending yourself? How can you begin that process today?

Thank God today for His patience with you. Ask Him for the grace to not defend yourself at every turn. Pray that your restraint will heal relationships and point people to Jesus.

Wednesday: Peter

Read Matt. 26:69-75 & John 18:15-18, 25-27. Recall a time when you told a lie that caused you pain later. What were the consequences of that?

Describe Peter's attitude in these verses. How do you think he was feeling? How can you relate to Peter?

When are you most tempted to downplay your Christian faith?

Think of the day ahead. How can you consistently acknowledge Jesus in your words and actions?

Thank God today for His mercy and forgiveness. Pray for boldness and strength to stand firm in your faith no matter who is watching.

Thursday: Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene is mentioned by name 13 times in the gospels, and some of the unnamed women (such as the woman who broke the alabaster jar over Jesus' feet) are sometimes identified with her as well. Incidentally, the anointing of Jesus' feet with perfume often associated with Mary Magdalene was the incident that, according to Matthew 26, pushed Judas to betray Jesus. Here is what we know for sure: Since Jesus cured her of "evil spirits and diseases"-- specifically, according to Mark 16:9 and Luke 8:2, "seven demons"-- Mary became a devoted follower of Christ. Then in John 19:25, who is at the cross?

Why do you suppose these women and John stayed when all the other disciples ran away?

Notice that, in a sense, she is rewarded for her devotion with a wonderful surprise! Read John 20:1-18. Why do you suppose Jesus appeared to Mary first?

In what ways do you hope to be like Mary Magdalene?

In what ways *are* you like Mary Magdalene?

Ask God to help you stay close to Him out of a sense of love and devotion, like Mary Magdalene. Thank Him for the ways He has delivered you, as He delivered Mary.

Friday: Roman Soldiers

Read Matthew 27:27-31. Where did the guards take Jesus and what did they do to him?

How did the soldiers mock Jesus?

Why did Jesus put up with torture when He could have destroyed all His attackers?

How has Jesus demonstrated His mercy towards you when you've hurt Him? How has His mercy impacted your life?

Thank God today for His amazing grace. Thank Him for the painful price He paid to redeem your soul. Ask Him to help you reflect His mercy and love to those you encounter today.

Saturday

Today please finish any meditations you might have missed, and please pray for the services this weekend. Pray also for the Easter services coming up in just 3 weeks-- and be praying about who you can invite! Thanks!!