

1 Week 1: The Passion of Christ: Chapters 1 – 4, pages 1 - 49

2 Introduction: The Passion of a True Love

3 Objective: **Jesus does not want our applause. He wants our hearts!**

- 4 • Think of this study as a *biblical pilgrimage* through the last hours of Jesus' life
- 5 • Like a walk in a *biblical minefield* as we walk through the narratives of Jesus' passion
- 6 • Many places, characters and even the *posture* of a person when he/she is speaking has meaning
- 7 • As we take our walk through His passion, we will have a deeper understanding of what He
- 8 endured for our sake and consider how we can live His example of love in our own daily lives.
- 9 • English word "passion" = Latin word "passio" meaning suffering: an *intense* feeling or emotion
- 10 ○ Webster Dictionary: doing something *passionately* = with all heart, full commitment,
- 11 drive and purpose
- 12 ○ **Jesus is NOT a passive victim but one who has a *passion for people*; AGAPE LOVE**
- 13 ▪ *Agape Love*: outward looking; seeking what is best for another person; willing to
- 14 suffer or sacrifice for that person
- 15 ▪ *Passionate Love*: Inward looking; intoxicated with emotions, romantic feelings
- 16 and sensual desires; focused on one's own feelings and desires; cannot endure.

17

18 God's *passion for people* is so great

19 that it turns God against Himself (Jesus) and His love against justice.

20 He became a man to reconcile God's justice and love.

21

22 Catholic Tradition emphasized Christ's love is what give the Cross its redeeming value; love, not the

23 amount of blood, pain or torture is its center. **Jesus entered into *solidarity with sinful man* to**

24 **emphasize the *agape love*; surpassing what any ordinary human could do.**

25

26 Because Jesus is *fully human*, He can represent the human family (just as Adam)

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29 The nails could not have held Him to the Cross,

30 if *love* had not held Him there first.

31 Chapter 1: The Great Battle

32 The Great (COSMIC) Battle

- 33 • True enemy of Christ was not the chief priest, Herod or Rome but Satan!
- 34 • Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke: 1st battle with Satan: three times in the desert right before
- 35 Jesus begins His public ministry
- 36 • Satan was always in wait for the *opportune time* to try again; his final attack on Jesus = Garden
- 37 of Gethsemane
- 38 • 1st attack: Satan entered into Judas to betray Jesus
- 39 ○ He slowly picks off each of apostles including Peter
- 40 • 2nd attack: stirred up elders (chief priests *slaps* Jesus), Herod mocks Jesus, He is scourged by
- 41 Roman soldiers and sent to crucifixion by Pilate

42 The Mount of Olives

- 43 • Mountain Range parallel to east Jerusalem (ref 6x in OT) is reminder of Zechariah 14: The feet of
- 44 the Messiah will "*will stand on the Mount of Olives*"
- 45 • King David came here to weep and pray when he was betrayed: 2 Samuel 15

46 NOTE: Both David's betrayer, *Ahithophel* and Jesus' betrayers, *Judas* hanged themselves

47 Gethsemane: A Window into Jesus' Soul

- 48 • (1) He *began to be greatly distraught*; profound and intense anguish (Psalm 55:2-5)
- 49 • (2) Jesus *opens His heart, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death* (Mark 14:34)
- 50 • Jesus spoke of His death but never about His soul (Mark 8:31, 9:32, 10:33-34)
- 51 • Greatest suffering is noted in OT Sirach 37:2, *Is it not grief to the death when your friend is*
- 52 *turned to enemy?*
- 53 ○ Jesus' agony
- 54 ▪ about intense physical pain of crucifixion
- 55 ▪ weight of sins of humanity He will assume responsibility
- 56 ▪ Loss of Judas' friendship; *a friend who has "turned to enemy"*

57 No Ordinary Prayer Time

- 58 • Jesus often sought **prayer time** throughout His ministry, but this prayer time was different. He
- 59 ○ (3) *Suddenly withdrew from them* in the Garden (in Greek, withdrew can be literally
- 60 translated as **tearing away violently**).

61 NOTE: Parallels Paul *tearing himself away from his dear friends* in Ephesus (ACTS 21:1)

62 Jesus Knelt and Prostrated

- 63 • (4) No other text describes posture of Jesus when in prayer; *literally means placing His knees on*
- 64 *the ground*;
- 65 • Indicates *intensity* of this prayer; used four times in Bible in context of death
- 66 ○ Stephen *knelt*; Peter *knelt* before raising Tabitha from dead; Paul *knelt* when saying
- 67 goodbye to church in Ephesus and again when he was told he would be arrested

68 NOTE: **Martyrdom can be overcome only by prayer. Jesus is the model of martyrs.**

- 69 • (5) Jesus *fell on His face* during His prayer; **posture of supplication** in prayer or reverence before
- 70 God or to a supernatural experience.

71 NOTE: **Falling on one's face** is the **prayer position** of **extreme submission** to the will of God, of *radical*

72 *self-offering* to Him.

73 Chapter Two: The Prayer of the Agony

- 74 1. **MY Father**: Jesus addressed God in a very personal and intimate way; He says **My Father, Abba**;
- 75 it is an act of *unbounded trust, commitment and love for His Father*. (Mary Healy)
- 76 2. **The Cup**: Old Testament=symbol of God's punishment poured out on the sinful people;
- 77 metaphor of Jesus' suffering and death as He takes on punishment for our sins; *"It is the collision*
- 78 *between light and darkness, between life and death itself – the critical moment in human*
- 79 *history."* (Pope Benedict XVI)
- 80 3. **Pass the Cup**: Jesus was not getting cold feet but simply reflecting He is *truly human*; His will is
- 81 perfectly united to His Father's. (CCC 475); as human nature He has an *aversion to death* but as
- 82 *divine nature*, He is willing to demonstrate the love (agape) of *OUR Father*. Jesus is example of
- 83 how we face suffering in accepting the Father's will

84 Bad Tasting Medicine

85 Like a child who refuses to take bad-tasting medicine, we often procrastinate, and evade our

86 crosses; let us strive to be more like Jesus in the Garden, *"Not as I will, but as You will."* Matthew

87 26:39

88 Strengthened by an Angel

- 89 • His Father answered Jesus' prayer by sending an Angel to strengthen Him
- 90 • Angels often sent to those in distress:
- 91 ○ Gave food to Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-8)
- 92 ○ Those being martyred (Daniel 3:49)
- 93 ○ Overwhelmed with persecution (Daniel 10:15-19)

- 94 ○ Eleazar rescued by angels (3 Maccabees 6:18)
- 95 ○ Angels opened prison doors: Apostles (Acts 5:19), Peter (12:7), Paul (Acts 27:23)
- 96 ○ Jesus: when tested in the desert (Matthew 4:11), in the Garden

97 NOTE: Not the Roman soldiers or the high priest or Judas are not the enemies, Satan is the enemy.

98 His Sweat Became Like Drops of Blood

99

100 "And being **in an agony**, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great

101 drops of blood falling down to the ground." Lk 22:44

102 Really? Drop of blood?

103 "...like drops of blood." Figuratively?

- 104 ● **Not a metaphor**; Jesus' sweat was so intense that His sweat became bloody; it is possible
- 105 Medical term: Hemarthrosis – an extreme level of sweat

106 Runners' Agony

- 107 ● **Symbolic**: Agony=Greek *agonia*, a struggle for triumph in a great contest (like athlete who may
- 108 have an *intense* sweat just before a race (*Runner's Agony*); requires self-control
- 109 ● Jesus is not facing an ancient race, rather a battle with the devil for the salvation of the human
- 110 family; He is at the *starting line* of the redemptive race

111

112 Chapter Three: Watch and Pray

- 113 ● Apostles had two tasks in the Garden that night: **Watch and Pray**; Jesus only wanted His
- 114 apostles Hearts; their friendship, their time, their full attention and their love – very human
- 115 needs when faced with major difficulties
- 116 ● Are you willing to take time each day to keep *watch* with Him and *pray* with Him?
- 117 ● We must *stay awake* spiritually every day and watch for Him and opportunities to pray

118 Keeping Watch

- 119 ● Peter, James and John are told to *watch*; *Watch* what?
- 120 ● Watch: not only a one-time look but vigilance – to *keep watch*; a *spiritual* alertness to prepare
- 121 for the trials coming in the final judgement
- 122 ● WATCH: three previous times in Garden pleading with them to be ready to face their most
- 123 *intense* challenge in their mission
- 124 ● 1 Peter 5:8, "**Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion,**
- 125 **seeking someone to devour. Resist him, be firm in your faith.**"

126 The Devil Seeking to Devour

127 "**Watch and pray** that you may not enter into temptation." Mark 14:38

- 128 ● Jesus not worried about the amount of sleep, He is thinking about the type of temptations satan
- 129 tried in the desert with Jesus; this is what they are getting ready to face; it is a *superhuman* trial
- 130 and only God can protect them. (2 Peter 2:4-10, Revelation 3:20)

131 Five Keys for Spiritual Battle: "...lead us not into temptation..."

- 132 ● Not asking God to help us avoid all trials and tribulations but to *protect us from giving in* to
- 133 those trials through anger, pride, vanity, impurity, envy, fear, anxiety or discouragement
- 134 ● Five simple ways to *resist temptation*:
 - 135 1. *Watch and Pray*: Discipline yourself to say *flash prayers* (quick prayer); bring
 - 136 Him into the middle of things – always, regardless of how complex or simple
 - 137 2. *Speak the NAME of Jesus*: herein lies the *power of prayer*

- 138 3. *Pray the SIGN of the CROSS*: this prayer is a *terror* to devils; it is a *spiritual sword*
139 in your hand; USE IT!
140 4. *Guardian Angel*: Jesus and others were *strengthened* by angels; Call on your
141 angel to be beside (with sword drawn) to help you in *the spiritual battles* you
142 face every day.
143 5. *HUMILITY*: Humbly *acknowledge your weakness* and beg God not to let you be
144 *tempted beyond your ability*; trials purify our nature (Pope Benedict XVI)

145 **Chapter Four: Prophecy Fulfilled: From Shadows to Reality**

- 146 • Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all refer to stories of Old Testament
147 • No words are wasted in the Bible; each is a foreshadowing of Christ's passion and death; all
148 come together in one incredible story of God's saving plan
149 • Events and people in Bible history help us recognize the *epic culmination* of the Messiah and the
150 kingdom He came to establish

151 *New Adam*: Parallels between OT Adam and NT Adam - Jesus

- 152 • Themes of the *devil, a test, sweat* and *doing God's will* repeat many in OT life of Adam and NT
153 life of Jesus (See page 39)

154 *Sacrifice of Isaac*

- 155 • Another theme is portrayed in Matthews Gospel: Sacrifice of Isaac, one of most important
156 *foreshadowing* of Jesus' own sacrifice on Calvary (See page 42-42)

157 *A New Isaac in Gethsemane*

- 158 • In *Gospel of Matthew's* account of what happened in Gethsemane there are four points that
159 suggest how we view the sacrifice of Isaac in relation to the sacrifice of Jesus (See page 43)
160 1. *WHAT* Jesus said (Matthew 26:36; Genesis 22:5)
161 2. *HOW* people acted and re-acted physically (Genesis 22:6, 10, Gen 22:3,6,7,9)
162 3. *WHAT* weaponry people used (Matthew 26:51, Genesis 22:10)
163 4. *SIGNIFICANCE* of *laying of hands* (Matthew 26:50, Genesis 22:12)
164 • Like Isaac, Jesus is NOT a passive victim; He willingly lays down His life
165 • Many parallels between OT figures and Jesus but there is also one in the NT

166 *Why Peter, James and John?*

- 167 • Peter, James and John witness His Transfiguration on a mountain and also the climax of His
168 ministry in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives
169 • Many other parallels (See page 45 – 46)
170 • Peter, James and John witnessed both the glory of the Transfiguration and the suffering of His
171 passion so they might continue to believe He is the glorified Son of God
172

173 *Prayer for the Feast of the Transfiguration*

174 "O Jesus, You are transfigured on the mountain, and your disciples, as much as they were
175 capable of it, beheld Your glory, O Christ our God, so that when they should see you crucified,
176 they would understand that Your Passion was voluntary, and proclaim to the world that You
177 truly are the splendor of the Father."
178 (from the Byzantine Catholic Liturgy)
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184 Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word

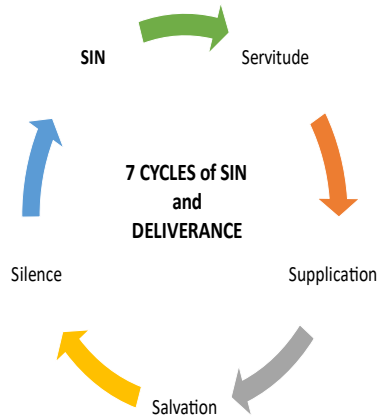
185 Liturgy Training Publications www.LTP.org

186 **Readings: March 2, ASH WEDNESDAY**

187 **Reading 1: Joel 2:12-18**

188 Possibly written after Babylonian exile and rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple (515 -343 BC)

- 189 • The prophet is responding to an onslaught of plagues and swarms of locusts; animals and people
190 are starving, crops and fruits dried up. Joel begs all to repent not just in public but with a
191 changed heart. Walks them through the *pattern of sin*
192 • Same *pattern of sin* found throughout Old Testament



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197 **Reading II: 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2**

- 198 • We are *ambassadors* for Christ
199 • We need to be *reconciled* to God
200 • We need to *work together*
201 • Now is the *day of salvation*

202 **Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18**

- 203 • Don't be a show off to impress others
204 • Don't give offerings or money so everyone sees you doing this
205 • Don't pray like the hypocrites; go to your *inner room*, close the door and pray secretly
206 • Don't look so down-trodden when fasting; be normal
207 • Your Father is watching, and He knows your heart

208

209 **March 6: 1st Sunday of Lent**

210 **Reading I: Deuteronomy 26:4-10** (part of Deuteronomy Law Code)

- 211 • Begins in Chapter 12 introduction and ends Chapter 26 with recommitment to the Covenant
212 made between God and Israel; Israel has been slaves for 400 yrs. and now God is laying down
213 the family rules as He begin to raise His children to be His family.
214 • Today's reading: Sets up the *Feast of Shavuot* (Feast of Pentecost), a harvest festival and
215 celebration of giving of the law at Mount Sinai
216 • *Shavuot* is a way of remembering their family history by giving first fruits of wheat, barley, wine,
217 figs, pomegranates, olive oil and dates all grown and harvested in the Promised Land.
218

219 **Reading II: Paul's Letter to the Romans 10:8-13**

- 220 • From Romans 9:1 – 11:36, Paul uses a literary form of debate to persuade his Jewish brothers that
- 221 the *Gentiles are justified by their faith* HOWEVER, *the Jews who know the LAW cannot be justified*
- 222 *by the Law* – a paradox. (Read Leviticus 18:5, Deuteronomy 30:11-14)
- 223 • Describes the *nature of righteousness* that comes from faith as a free gift from God and we only
- 224 have to accept this.
- 225 • Isaiah 28:16 – God lays the *cornerstone* in Zion; Joel 3:5 - God will preserve a *remnant*; Jesus is
- 226 the *cornerstone* and the *remnant* who saves us

227 **Gospel: Luke 4:1-13**

- 228 • Beginning to show how Jesus' life will parallel the history of the Israelites beginning with their 40
- 229 years in the desert
- 230 • Jesus being *filled* with the Holy Spirit is reminder of Baptism, *You are my beloved Son; with you I*
- 231 *am well pleased.*" Luke 3:22
- 232 • Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert and was *tempted* by the devil
- 233 ○ Jesus was hungry, satan offered Him bread
- 234 ○ Jesus is offered everything the world has to offer if only He worshipped satan
- 235 ○ Satan tempts Jesus by trying to get Him to *prove* He is the son of God
- 236 • Reminder of Israel's 40 yrs. in the desert where God feed them manna and tested them – they
- 237 failed; He did not
- 238 • Although satan left Jesus, he was always in wait for another *opportune* time to test Him –
- 239 Jerusalem where Jesus will suffer and die.
- 240