



JOURNEY
*TO
THE* **CROSS**

STUDY GUIDE

“Journey to the Cross”

Sermon Series

As Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem and his destiny on the cross, he encountered several people along the way—and one tree. All of them have their stories and their stories may sound a lot like ours or a lot like people we meet as we go about our day. What did Jesus tell them? How were they changed or not? What can we learn about our lives, God’s plan and His grace for us?

Join us during Lent at First Presbyterian Church of Edmond as Lead Pastor Eric Laverentz leads us in the study of God’s Word that will prove to be deeply personal and impactful as we journey to the cross together and the new life of the resurrection.

February 26
Luke 18:18-30

The Un-Repentant Rich Ruler

March 5
Luke 18:35-43

The Desperate Blind Beggar

March 12
Luke 19:1-10

The Broken Tax Collector

March 26
Matthew 20:20-28

An Ambitious Mother and Her Sons

April 2
John 12:1-8

The Fruitless Fig Tree

April 9
Luke 24:28-35

Walking with the Resurrected Jesus

1 SHARE who you are

2 CARE for one another

3 READ and PRACTICE scripture

4 PRAY together

5 INVEST in people

6 SERVE community

7 CREATE and SEND leaders

NEW LIFE,
through **JESUS,**
for **EDMOND**
and the **WORLD.**

Lesson 1:

The Un-Repentant Rich Ruler

And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.' " And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth." When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God." And Peter said, "See, we have left our homes and followed you." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Luke 18:18-30

A young man who had it all approached Jesus seeking justification. His disposition was shown by his question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" He was seeking to be saved by works and achievement rather than by grace. When Jesus lifted up the harsh requirements of the law that he was seeking for his justification, the man who had it all was not willing to give up what he had in this world to receive eternal life. At the same time, Jesus assures His disciples that everyone who gives up the things of this world to follow Him.

1. How confident are you in being justified or saved by what you can do? How is the rich, young ruler's question fundamentally flawed? What does he get wrong? (**Luke 18:18, Ephesians 2:8-9**) What are some of the problems with believing we can fashion our own salvation?
2. How does Jesus show this man kindness and grace? (**Luke 18:19-20**) What is the relationship between truth and grace? Can there be grace

Lesson 2: The Desperate Blind Beggar

As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me recover my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Recover your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.
Luke 18:35-43

As Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and the cross continued, he passed through Jericho. In Jericho there was a blind man who learned Jesus was coming and he cried out in the darkness for Jesus' mercy. The more the crowds told him to be quiet, the more he cried out for Jesus. He would not be denied. Jesus heard him and after asking him what he wanted, healed him. This resulted in the people of Jericho praising and glorifying Jesus.

1. Have you ever called out in desperation for Jesus? What happened? Did he respond? What does the Word promise about calling on Jesus? (**Romans 10:13**) Why can we count on Jesus to hear us when we call out for Him? What does it tell us about Jesus' fame that even this blind man in Jericho knew exactly who Jesus is and knew He could heal him? (**Matthew 4:24-25**)

2. Why do you think the people tried to make this man be quiet? What about his crying out was so troubling to the crowd? Is there someone crying to God around us whose troubles make us uncomfortable? What does the Word call us to do for people who need healing? Are we to shut them up? (**James 5:14-16**)

3. What does it tell us about Jesus' character that He heard this man amid the swell of the crowd? (**Luke 18:40**) Can you think of any other times

Lesson 3: The Broken Tax Collector

He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Luke 19:1-10

Once again Jesus noticed a man seeking him out. This time the man was far from a poor, desperate blind man. Instead he was a notorious man who was infamous in and around his town because he worked for the hated Roman Empire collecting taxes, and became fabulously wealthy doing it. Still, there was something missing for Zacchaeus. He was seeking for more. Was it because he was hated by the community? Was it because he had lived his life defrauding and taking advantage of everyone? Was it because he realized there is more to life? It doesn't matter because Zacchaeus knew he was lost, he needed Jesus, and he sought to meet Him.

1. Where do you need Jesus to show up in your life? Is there somewhere you are at odds with your neighbors where you need Jesus to work? We are told Zacchaeus was wealthy. (**Luke 19:2**) Why do worldly gifts like wealth fail to meet our deepest needs? (**Ecclesiastes 3:9-11**)

2. Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus. (**Luke 19:4**) What is the greatest length you have gone to meet Jesus? What does the Bible promise about those who seek God? (**Matthew 7:7-11, Jeremiah 29:11-14**) What are some good ways to seek God? Why does God promise when people step

Lesson 4: An Ambitious Mother and Her Sons

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:20-28

Immediately after Jesus declared He was going to Jerusalem to be delivered to the Chief Priests and crucified and raised on the third day, the mother of James and John, two disciples of Jesus, sought out Jesus. She kneeled before Him and asked if her sons could sit at his right and left hand in His Kingdom. Jesus did not encourage her, instead asking if her sons were able to drink from His cup, in other words to follow in Jesus' steps. Jesus also realigned her idea (and ours too likely) of greatness by saying those who are greatest are those who serve. Jesus demonstrated this for us and continues to do so!

1. What is your greatest ambition? Did you ever have a dream to become someone great? What drove that? Did it happen the way you believed it would? How would you respond now to Jesus' question, "What do you want?" (**Matthew 20:21**) To whom else did Jesus ask this same question? (**John 1:38-39**)

2. Why is ironic about the timing of James' and John's mother's request for her sons to share in Jesus' greatness? (**Matthew 20:17-19**) Do you think she or the disciples understood what was going to happen to Je-

sus? Why or why not? How well do you think we understand what Jesus has done for us?

3. What does Jesus mean by saying “Only His Father can grant who can sit at his right or left hand?” (**Matthew 20:23**) What did Jesus say is the prerequisite for that kind of authority? (**Matthew 20:22**) What does ‘drinking from Jesus cup’ look like? (**Luke 22:42**) What would it look like for you to drink from Jesus’ cup? Have you? Can you?

4. Why were the other ten disciples indignant at James and John’s request? (**Matthew 20:24**). If they understood the true nature of ‘Jesus’ cup’, would they have been? Why or why not? How could the disciples have been with Jesus every day for three years and still misunderstand His mission and purpose? How well do you understand it? What does your life say?

5. How does Jesus re-define authority? (**Matthew 20:25-28**) Can we separate Christian authority from serving others? Why or why not? How did Jesus model this for us? (**John 13:1-5**) How does serving others fit into your life? How did Jesus model serving others on the cross?

NEXT STEPS

Ask the Holy Spirit to provide you an opportunity to serve someone. It could be a stranger or someone in your family or at work. It may even be someone you dislike. Take note of how this service humbled you. Share this with your small group.

Lesson 5: The Fruitless Fig Tree

In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once. When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?" And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."

Matthew 21:18-22

One of Jesus' encounters on his way to the cross was with a fig tree. Matthew's Gospel tells us Jesus was hungry and looking for something to eat. But the tree had no fruit. We know from the time of Passover that this was not even yet the season for figs or any other fruit in that part of the world. Yet Jesus cursed the fruitless tree because it did not provide. The tree died and the disciples were amazed. Jesus answered their amazement by proclaiming faith as the reason for its demise.

1. How do you handle things that disappoint you? Do you ever find yourself 'cursing' them? Why or why not? Why do you think Jesus was disappointed in this fig tree? When he cursed it, was he talking about more than just a fig tree? What else could He have been talking about? (**John 15:1-5**)
2. Are you surprised to see this hungry and very human side of Jesus? Where else do we see Jesus' human side? (**John 21:9-14, Luke 22:41-44**) Why do you think we have such a hard time seeing Jesus as human? Why is it important that Jesus is fully human and fully God? (**Hebrews 2:5-9**)
3. Was it fair that Jesus expected this fruit tree to bear fruit out of season? Is God always fair? Why or why not? Why should we be glad that God is not always fair? (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) Have you ever produced fruit out of season? What is the key to producing fruit? (**John 15:5-7**) Is fruit-bearing contingent upon our season of life or our connection with Jesus?

Lesson 6: Walking With the Resurrected Jesus

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, 29 but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" 33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Luke 24:28-35

Two men walking on a seven-mile road from Jerusalem called Emmaus were joined by a mysterious stranger. Like all of Jerusalem, they had been rocked by the death of Jesus and the strange stories of His resurrection. Amazingly, this stranger seemed oblivious to all these astonishing events. The two men shared these stories with Him, even as they slowly became aware that there was perhaps more to Him than it initially seemed. Finally, the party arrived at their destination and Jesus re-enacted some of the events of the Last Supper with them and they recognized their risen Savior and Lord just as He supernaturally vanished from their midst.

1. Have you ever been surprised at a place where God shows up? Why were you surprised? Why shouldn't we be surprised at any place where God chooses to meet us? (**Psalm 139:7-11**)
2. What did Cleopas and the other man get right about Jesus? What did they get wrong? (**Luke 24:19-24**) What did Jesus say to correct them? (**Luke 24:25**) What lack of faith did Jesus hear in their words about His own crucifixion and resurrection?
3. Why is it important that Jesus interpreted the Scriptures, Moses, and

