

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**March 31, 2024 Easter. "Living Sacrificially for One Another"**

### **I Intro.**

Welcome to our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. We don't want you to miss out on anything. So, make sure you stay connected to keep informed. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC, and that you can be an essential part of us moving forward. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

### **II Recap.**

We're in the final Sunday of our series on relationships; "*Above and Beyond: Elements of Healthy Relationships*". We're covering all the important relationships we have in our lives. Friendships, co-workers, family, neighbors, and any other relationships you may find yourself in. Relationships can be messy, because people are messy...including us. We believe we were created for connection. To be in relationship. With both God and each other. And since these relationships can challenge us, we want to be curious, students, and admit that no matter how long we've walked this earth there is always more we can learn about how to make our relationships even better. I won't recap the past four Sundays. You can look them up. Today...on Easter we talk about living sacrificially.

### **III Sunday.**

**Happy Resurrection Day!** This devotional won't be as long because the message and conclusion of our "*Above and Beyond*" relationship series was abbreviated because of Easter. This Sunday we wrapped up the series talking about living sacrificially for others. Of course this is the central theme all through Passion Week (Palm Sunday through Good Friday and into Easter) It's the story of Jesus choosing to sacrifice himself, to freely give up his life, in the work of bringing eternal life to all of us. In remembering and celebrating this sacrificial act, we also ask ourselves; "*what would it look like for us to practice a similar type of sacrificial living for those around us?*" So, as always, some questions.

**What does 'sacrifice' mean to you? How have you seen it practiced?**

**How does the story of Jesus, the crucifixion and resurrection impact you?**

There were two scriptures used on Easter. One describing the sacrifice Jesus made. And the second one was a sacrifice made by regular people that made a huge impact on this story. So, we'll read each and use them to talk about how we can live sacrificially for others in our everyday life.

Read **Philippians 2:5-11**, and then **John 19:38-42**.

**What jumped out to you about the nature of sacrifice from each of these passages?**

**What were some elements from the Philippians 2 passage that you see that speak into what it takes to live sacrificially?**

**What do you think moved Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus to make the sacrifices for Jesus that they did?**

There's not a lot to add to these two passages that will tell us any more than we've already discovered. What helped Jesus live this type of sacrificial life, was not only his continual connection with his God. But also this willingness to give up his rights and privileges. And that's just so counter-cultural to our society's values. We're constantly crying out and invoking our 'rights'. In fact our Constitution has built into it the Bill of Rights. Specific beliefs and values we claim as God-given. And yet when we look at the actual son of God, we see someone who was willing to give up any claim to a much higher and more sacred set of earned rights than we could ever claim.

**How should this truth and understanding affect the practice of our faith?**

Even before the resurrection, we see this type of sacrificial living lived out by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. At considerable risk to themselves (because of the threats against the followers of Jesus) they wanted to treat the body of Jesus with honor. There was no real hope for anything out of this. Jesus had talked about coming back, and rebuilding the temple. But it was all so cryptic and coded. It was difficult to tie all Jesus said into an actual resurrection. So, they were just sacrificing their time, safety, comfort, for another who had meant so much to them. And it is this type of sacrifice for others that is at the heart of our relationships. With people who are close to us. And with everyone we come across in our daily lives.

**So, what would this look like practiced in your living sacrificially for others?**

#### **IV Challenge.**

This is the central story of the resurrection and what we remember at Easter. Not just a life lived sacrificially. But that ability and desire to live this type of life was born out of the first move of letting go of any rights or privileges that were presumed. All of that to say. You will never know what your simple act of sacrifice will do until after you take that first step of faith. And not only will this enhance your current relationships. It will set a standard and enhance relationships down the road.

And just like we're doing today. Many years from now. Someone will be able to say.

*"It was the sacrifice of \_\_\_\_\_ that allowed me to be the person I am today."*

**What could you do in your daily life that would be a sacrifice for others?**