

LENT DEVOTIONAL



LENT PROGRAM

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ABOUT PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

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Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry

Spiritual Formation Certificate

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Continuing Education

Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology

Miller Summer Youth Institute

Metro-Urban Institute

World Mission Initiative

Zeitah Excavations

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EVENTS

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LENT DEVOTIONAL APRIL 5, 2020

SCRIPTURE

ZECHARIAH 9:9-16

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!

Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war-horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall command peace to the nations;
his dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

11 As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

12 Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

13 For I have bent Judah as my bow;
I have made Ephraim its arrow.
I will arouse your sons, O Zion,
against your sons, O Greece,
and wield you like a warrior's sword.

14 Then the Lord will appear over them,
and his arrow go forth like lightning;
the Lord God will sound the trumpet
and march forth in the whirlwinds of the south.

15 The Lord of hosts will protect them,
and they shall devour and tread down the slingers;
they shall drink their blood like wine,
and be full like a bowl,
drenched like the corners of the altar.

16 On that day the Lord their God will save them
for they are the flock of his people;
for like the jewels of a crown
they shall shine on his land.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Dr. Anita Stuart-Steva '04/'13, Creative Ministry (2017)

A recent trip to Israel has informed this Lenten reflection on Palm Sunday and Holy Week. Jerusalem, to a great degree, seems more like Disney World than a sacred place. It is difficult to find quiet places for reflection. Crowds of people from all over the world are everywhere, pushing and shoving to get ahead . . . both locals and tourists. Vendors are aggressive in their efforts to make a sale . . . to catch tourists in their trap. The roads are narrow and hilly; people press in on all sides; the chaos and commotion are disorienting.

During the last week of Jesus' life, things were probably much the same. People from all over the known world pressed into the Holy City; the noise, chaos, and commotion must have been overwhelming. As Jesus rode the colt along that narrow, hilly road, people must have pressed in on him, thus making it difficult to move forward. Strangers, unaware of who he was, most likely glared at him, even as others shouted his praises and cried out in desperation, "Save us!"

At the Temple, vendors surely hawked their goods aggressively to catch out-of-town visitors with the exorbitant prices. Even now, I can hear Jesus shouting, "This is a house of prayer!"

By the end of the week, crowds must have been pushing and staring at the man moving slowly toward Golgotha—the man

who, at the very least, inconvenienced them as they prepared for Shabbat. Surely the priests, scribes, and Pharisees haughtily walked before and behind, glad finally to get rid of this pain in their back side, to nip this movement in the bud, like they'd done with other movements so many times before. This rabble rouser Jesus, this self-made rabbi, was a threat to them by leading people astray with his talk of forgiveness and love. How were they to make a living if they couldn't sell their religion to anyone they could trap in their Law-filled snare?

This Holy Week, will we take time to reflect, or will we be caught up in the trappings of the commercialization of the holy? Will we consider our special services inconveniences in the midst of egg hunts, Easter breakfasts, and clothes shopping? Let us allow Jesus, the rabble rouser, to rouse us with his grace that we might discard the commercial and embrace the holy.

PRAYER

O Lord of infinite forgiveness and love, rouse our hearts to see the holy in the hustle and bustle, to feel the peace in the noise and chaos, and to experience your grace anew. Amen.

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