April 3

Grace and peace to you this day.

Today we enter “Holy Week,” the week leading up to the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus the Messiah. As I reflect on the events to come this week, and on the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, I come once again, as I have so many times before, to this conclusion: Nothing about Jesus meets our expectations.

A number of Scripture verses come to mind that serve to exemplify this, but this one might be chief among them:

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7, NKJV).

When I was a boy, getting blood on your clothes was, well, a sin, at least in my mother’s eyes. Blood is hard to get out of clothes. A blood stain on the furniture, or on the carpeting, was likely to leave a stain that would last.

Moreover, blood in earthly terms is a sign of a wound; some violence that has been done to the body that causes pain, scarring…or even death. That was certainly the case with Jesus. But His blood has a much different effect, and meaning, for us.

The blood of Jesus, shed during His sacrificial atonement on the cross, cleanses. The blood of Jesus purifies. The blood of Jesus gives life to those who put their eternal trust in Him. The blood of Jesus is the only thing that allows us to stand fully justified in the presence of the Almighty. This is what the author of Hebrews says:

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus” (10:19).

And so, my prayer for you today, and during this week, is this: May His blood cleanse you. May His blood purify you. And may His blood lead you, in His grace, to life eternal.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
Greetings, DGCC Family.

In 2006 a documentary film titled “An Inconvenient Truth” was made about former Vice President Al Gore’s efforts to educate the nation about global warming. The title became a catch phrase for a number of modern, and negative, phenomena.

I remember talking to a former colleague of mine shortly after the movie came out about what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Specifically, this person was of the mind that being “a good person” would get him into heaven. My clumsy response was, “It doesn’t work that way.” His reply: “Well, that’s an inconvenient truth.”

Inconvenient or otherwise, nonetheless, it is, in fact, the truth. Jesus Himself, in preparing His disciples for His death, famously said it like this:

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

Like my friend, the world may see this as inconvenient. In a world that values self-reliance over submission, self-service over service of others, and self-gratification over obedience, no doubt this Truth can seem troublesome and problematic.

However, in the eyes of the Almighty, this Truth is a gift freely given. This Truth is poured out for all, free for the taking. This truth is offered out of love and mercy and grace. All we have to do is believe.

Inconvenient? Maybe so.

I’m glad our Savior didn’t think so.

Tomorrow: Betrayal.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
April 5

Greetings, DGCC Family.

Imagine the scene. Jesus has His friends around Him. His beloved disciples. Peter, full of fire and impulse. His much more thoughtful brother Andrew. James and John, also brothers and the sons of Zebedee. The ones Jesus called “The Sons of Thunder.” Phillip, Bartholomew, Matthew the tax collector, and Thomas the twin. Little James, Judas the Greater, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. His dear friends whom He had taught and trained. Constant companions for almost three years. Trusted. Cherished. Loved.

It is His final night on earth. He knows it but the disciples do not. Suddenly, the conversation takes a dark turn:

“As they were eating, He said, ‘Truly I say to you one of you will betray Me’” (Matthew 26:21).

The disciples were in disbelief. But not Jesus. He knew what had been foretold: “Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me” (Psalm 41:9).

It would be Judas Iscariot, possessed by Satan and bought for thirty pieces of silver. And yet, his betrayal teaches us an important lesson: Nothing stops God’s plan of salvation for His people. Nothing. The apostle Paul said it like this:

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

Rest assured that God’s love for you is steadfast. Rest assured that His grace is abiding. And when you place your eternity in the hands of His Son, rest assured that your salvation is secure.

Tomorrow: Denial.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
April 6

Greetings, DGCC Family.

“Peter declared, ‘Even if all fall away, I will not.’ ‘Truly I tell you,’ Jesus answered, ‘today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.’

“While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. “You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said. But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway. When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.” Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept” (Mark 14:30-31; 66-72).

Not once. Not twice. But three times. Peter thought he was strong. Peter thought he was courageous. Peter thought he could take on the world, or at least a Roman squad of soldiers. But in fact, Peter learned a hard lesson that night. Our true strength, and our true courage, comes from our True Savior and not from ourselves.

Despite Peter’s weakness, Jesus nonetheless would trust the keys of the church to him: “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18).

If Jesus can use Peter’s weakness, certainly He can use ours to build up His bride, the church.

Tomorrow: The Cross.

IHS,

Pastor Lou

April 7
Friends,

Today we remember the cross. Today we remember the sacrifice. Today we remember the body broken and the blood shed. Today we remember that it was done for you. And for me. And we remember that because of the cross, Jesus calls us home.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L9NzMmo4h8

IHS,

Pastor Lou