

Monday

Read Luke 19:41-44

What is your favorite place to take in a great view?

We go to such places for awe-inspiring views and the joy and wonder they can bring. Jesus went up to the Mount of Olives to look out over the whole city and weep. Our translation says that Jesus wept over the city, but the Greek word used is *κλαιω* (*klaiō*) which means something more like full sobbing or wailing. We don't have much room in our culture for men who are wailing and sobbing, but that is what Jesus is doing here. Why? Why is Jesus so moved? They are the tears of one who knows that the people have already turned their backs on God's messenger. Jesus is like a spouse watching their partner spiral out of control in addiction or a parent watching a child make a terrible decision. It is heart-wrenching, exasperating, and depressing. Perhaps Jesus, like the spouse or parent, is filled with sadness having wished he somehow could've done more, even though he knows he's done everything he can do. Jesus is moved with compassion and mourning for a city that is sealing its fate as the city will come to a fever pitch in a few days to execute him. Jesus is sad because Jerusalem has missed the nature of the times.

What does this passage tell us about Jesus' character?

Tuesday

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The people of Jerusalem, the people of Israel, had been groaning, suffering, and expecting the Messiah for centuries. Imagine if the first settlers of Jamestown over on the coast had a deep, consuming longing when they established that settlement in 1607 and that the same specific deep longing resided deep within you over 400 years later. There specific hope is now your hope and it

has been passed on from generation to generation all those centuries. Now, double that amount of time. That is at least how long the people of Jerusalem and the people of Israel had been waiting for the Messiah, the Savior, God's chosen one. Then the Messiah arrives and the vast majority of the people reject him. If they were even prone to believing that their faith foretold a Messiah they became trapped in looking for the right signs and characteristics but in the wrong way. Jesus checked off all the biblical boxes for being the Messiah, but he was not the Messiah people had come to expect. Jesus offered peace and unity with God the Father. The people wanted a Messiah to deliver political power and military victory over the Roman Empire. We see this when they shout for the release of the insurrectionist Barabbas instead of Jesus. We see this when the Jews in Israel/Palestine revolt about 30 years after Jesus' death with the consequence that much of Jerusalem and the Temple is destroyed. We see this about 100 years after the death of Jesus when a large number of Palestinian Jews followed a would-be Messiah, Simon Aroha, into revolt against Rome again which led to catastrophe and devastating defeat.

Where are the places in your life where you want Jesus to be a different kind of Messiah – one who better suits what you think your needs are? How does Christianity do the same thing sometimes?

Wednesday

Read Colossians 1:9-10

Jesus wails because the people of Jerusalem are missing the nature of the times. The times had changed and they had not. Reality did not match their expectations.

Change is inevitable; growth is optional.

Jesus did not fulfill their expectation of the Messiah as a great political ruler and military leader. Things changed; they did not grow.

Jesus took care of the sick and poor and lifted them up above the religious types against what those religious types thought was right. Things changed; they did not grow.

Jesus taught with the force and illumination of God the Father but taught contrary to what they wanted to hear and thought they knew. Things changed; they did not grow.

Jesus said he would give his life as a ransom for many, but they didn't think they needed saving in that way. Things changed; they did not grow.

Jesus was executed but that wasn't their hope for a mighty Messiah. Things changed; they did not grow.

Jesus was resurrected in the great victory over sin and death, but they didn't want that type of victory. Things changed; they did not grow.

How will you be tuned in to what God is doing today so that when things change you will continue to grow?

Thursday

Read Luke 19:28-40

Things will continue to change. In your life, your family, your home, your church, your neighborhood, this country, and this world. It is inevitable. But will you grow? Will you choose to grow closer to Jesus by opening yourself more and more to him in faith? Will you choose to tap into the Holy Spirit, read the scriptures, pray, act, and live so that you not only know who and what brings peace to this world but live in the patterns that do so?

How will you do those things? It will look a little different for each of us and I'm happy to meet with you and help you chart a course. First and foremost, it will absolutely require you to make the choice to embrace a mindset and spiritual posture of growth. You know to look to Jesus. Now look to grow. Look to enjoy the times of fast spring growth. Be prepared for the slower times of winter growth and not lose heart. Rejoice in the harvest and don't be afraid of being pruned back so that you can grow more vigorously.

Friday - Join us for worship at 7:00 this evening!

Please spend today in prayer for Sudan and the Christians in Sudan.

You can get more info, and this info comes from, here:

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/>

What is life like for Christians in Sudan?

Although Sudan has taken significant steps towards religious freedom in the past year, Christians from a Muslim background still face extreme persecution from their families and communities. While they no longer face the death penalty for leaving Islam, they may be attacked, ostracized or otherwise discriminated against if their faith is discovered. Believers still keep their faith secret, for the safety of them and their family.

Areas for prayer:

- Praise God for these steps towards religious freedom in Sudan, answering years of desperate prayers by Sudanese believers and many others. Ask God that those in power would continue to make strides in this direction.
- Pray for protection for Sudanese Christians from a Muslim background—that they would be able to withstand opposition from their families and communities.
- Pray that Christian women in Sudan would be protected from sexual violence.