

HOLY WEEK: 2

Tuesday 7th April – Holy Week Reflection: 12:30-1pm & 7:30-8pm

Introduction:

Holy Week begins with Jesus entering Jerusalem on a humble donkey. He is hailed as King; songs are sung and cloaks and palms are laid in his path as it would be for any ruler or royalty. But little do the people know that Jesus entering Jerusalem, the heart of God's people Israel, would be the culmination of His ministry on earth. Many will now turn away from Him and against Him because of His challenge to change. His teaching becomes stronger, His parables become more challenging. He shines light into darkness and evil hates Him for exposing its corruption. Jesus experiences a dichotomy of reaction to His presence as He reveals Truth by confronting dishonesty, exploitation, wickedness and all manner of wrongdoing. Those who are right with God love Him and follow Him to the end; those not right with God hate Him and are literally 'hell bent' on His destruction. This week follows the path of His final journey with its powerful challenges that charge us to contemplate our personal position. Jesus asks us, as He did those of His time, to look for Truth and make our own choice whether to turn away or follow Him to the end.

The Lord's Prayer: *all say together*

CD: *Israel's Passion* by Paul Heyman **Track 5:** Father Into Your Hands

Matthew 22:34-40 *The Greatest Commandment*

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵and one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question to test Him. ³⁶"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" ³⁷Jesus said to him, "You shall love the lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it; 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

CD: *Israel's Passion* by Paul Heyman – *continued...*

Wisdom or Law?

"Huh! Who is this upstart that thinks He knows it all, I'll show him", thought Tzadok. He was a lawyer, and a very good one, even if he did say so himself! He had been called in by the Pharisees for some advice on how to deal with a young Jew giving out new and different teaching. "There is no one better at quoting the law than me", Tzadok thought. "I have sacrificed a lot to study all hours and be the best lawyer there is. I am very popular because I win cases in the high priests court. The Pharisees love me and they pay handsomely for my services." He was mulling over the background on this man that the Pharisees had given him. "Apparently, he's from Nazareth, I mean, what comes out of Nazareth except carpenters and depravation? Oh, that's right, he is a carpenter, so what on earth does he think he is doing aspiring to Rabbi status!" Tzadok was feeling confident, "Even my name means 'justice', he told himself, "It was determined at my birth that I should become a lawyer and the wisest in the land, this will be fun!" he thought. He went to where Jesus was teaching with a gathering of Pharisees ready to show them what he was capable of. They watched, listened and waited for the right moment. Jesus had just told a series of parables with a very pointed meaning against the religious leaders and those in authority. "If this man thinks he can intimidate me with the trickery of parables he has met his match!" Tzadok mused. Jesus was about to move on, Tzadok saw his opportunity and went for it! But far from being praised for his legal prowess, he found himself exposed by the knowledge of this

man. Not only did Jesus know the commandments but He put a different perspective on them that was challenging. Tzadok was stunned to silence. “Wow!” he thought, “I wasn’t expecting that! I feel a bit stupid now and very embarrassed. What will the Pharisees think of me now?” He went over Jesus’ reply to his very clever trap and could not find anything wrong in it, far from it in fact. “I have never thought about the commands of God that way before” he reflected. “I don’t think the Pharisees are right in thinking this Jesus is speaking blasphemy. I think He just has a fresh way of teaching God’s law that shows True wisdom. No wonder He’s rattling their cage, He’s even got me changing my mind!” And with that thought rattling round in his head Tzadok left the crowd and walked back to the temple to think and pray.

CD: *Israel’s Passion* by Paul Heyman – *continued...*

Matthew 23:11-33 *The Seven Woes of the Scribes & Pharisees!*

11“The greatest among you will be your servant. **12**All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

13“But **woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the Kingdom of Heaven. **14**For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them.”

15“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.”

16“**Woe to you**, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.’ **17**You blind fools! For which is the greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred?

18And you say, ‘Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.’ **19**How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? **20**So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; **21**and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the One who dwells in it; **22**and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the One who is seated upon it.”

23“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law; justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. **24**You blind guides! You strain a gnat but swallow a camel!”

25“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. **26**You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.”

27“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. **28**So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

29“**Woe to you**, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, **30**and you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’

31Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. **32**Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. **33**You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell?

CD: *Israel’s Passion* by Paul Heyman – *continued...*

Coming of Age!

Little Baruch was twelve and coming up to his time in the synagogue when he would become a man. This was the most important time for Jewish boys and he had been studying hard and rehearsing the Scriptures he must read aloud from the Scrolls. He had heard about Jesus and was following the crowd and listening to His teaching in the hope of learning something new. His friend Ezra had joined him that day and they were watching absorbedly all that was going on. Jesus had just answered a tricky question very skilfully and the boys were well impressed. “He didn’t half show that lawyer up” said Baruch. “I should say He did”, replied Ezra. “I hope I can learn to think that quickly and answer that well in a tight spot” said Baruch. “Me too” replied Ezra. “Oh my, didn’t He go on though, all those woes!” said Ezra. “He didn’t mince His words, that’s for sure, I’ve never heard anyone speak to the Pharisees like that before” said Baruch. “Me neither” replied Ezra “Did He actually call them a brood of vipers?” “Oooh yes!” said Baruch, “Did you see the chief priests face, he went red as the tanners dipping pools!” They both giggled at the recollection. “And what about straining a gnat to swallow a camel” said Ezra. “I know” recalled Baruch, “I thought I would burst at that comment, one of the market holders had to turn away he was laughing so much”.

“Seriously though”, said Baruch, “I’ve been studying the Scriptures and what Jesus says is right, when you think about it, they don’t practice what’s written in the scrolls.” Ezra nodded in agreement, “I know what you mean, Jesus said that to love your neighbour sums up the law and the prophets, but I don’t see them treating others very kindly.” “Your right there”, said Baruch, “It’s like they have one rule for us and a different rule for themselves! I certainly would not dare to cross them; I’d hate to think what they might do to me. “Just the thought sends shivers down my spine” said Ezra. “But I can’t stop thinking about all those woes” said Baruch, “I wouldn’t like to be on the receiving end of those. I would want to change my ways and try to avoid them if at all possible.” “I agree”, said Ezra nodding vigorously, “Jesus has certainly given me something to think about. Before today I would not have dared question anything the Pharisees told me, I mean they are supposed to know what they’re talking about!” “But not anymore?” quizzed Baruch. “No! Not anymore! From now on I’m going to check things out in the scrolls for myself!” said Ezra. “You always were a rebellious mutt”, retorted Baruch as he skilfully managed to dodge a swipe from Ezra. Laughing, Baruch turned on his heels and ran up the street hotly followed by Ezra, still trying to land a playful punch!

CD: *Israel’s Passion* by Paul Heyman – *continued...*

Matthew 23:37-39 *Lament over Jerusalem*

³⁷Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸See, your house is left to you, desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see Me again until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord’.”

Matthew 24:1-2 *The Destruction of the Temple Foretold*

¹As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, His disciples came to point out to Him the buildings of the temple. ²Then He asked them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

CD: *Israel’s Passion* by Paul Heyman – *continued...*

Disturbing Observations

Peter was concerned about the mental state of Jesus as he watched Him weep bitterly over the state of Jerusalem. He knew that coming into the city would attract trouble; did he not warn Jesus when He revealed His plans? He shared his thoughts with Bartholomew, “Have you seen the change in Jesus; the way He wrestles with Himself; this is not a good place for Him to be.” Bartholomew was also concerned, “I know what you mean, the Sadducees and Pharisees have definitely got it in for Him and no mistake. Jesus put that lawyer well and truly in his place but it took its toll.” Peter nodded in agreement, “He became deeply distressed and angry at their attempts to trip Him up. All that passion in giving them what for has sapped His strength and dampened His spirit” said Peter. “I noticed that too”, said Bartholomew, “Jesus did not hold back in warning them of the consequences of their corrupt leadership but I don’t think they will take it on board. His words and warnings only seem to make them more and more angry at Him”. “If only they would see that He is trying to save them from themselves”, said Peter. “Jesus is the Lord, the Son of God, why can they not see it?” Bartholomew shook his head, “They don’t want to”, he replied, “They are so hung up on their own self-importance that they blind themselves to the love He has for them, even now, despite their venom!” Peter sighed heavily, “Well I guess there are some people that just won’t be helped no matter how much anyone offers it, even the Messiah”, he reflected. “My grandmother had a saying for people like that” Bartholomew remembered, “Cut your nose off to spite your face attitude she called it! I just think it’s stubborn superiority!” “You always did tell it like it is” said Peter, “You must get that from your grandmother!” Bartholomew laughed and said, “Well Truth is Truth and cannot be changed so it’s best just to accept it I say!” “Here, here,” said Peter also laughing, “But for now we had better try and cheer Jesus up a bit, I think He needs our TLC just now.” So they pointed out the marvels of the temple building in the hope it would lift their Lord’s spirits.

CD: *Israel’s Passion* by Paul Heyman – *continued...*

Poem/meditation: TRUTH ©Janice Morgan 1998

Truth speaks inwardly without noise of words
and shines through the eyes of the soul

One who speaks Truth is listened to carefully
but the words of a fool are dismissed unheard

Truth is the rock on which we stand secure
but depart and the soul will surely be destroyed

Though mischief be made in the secret of darkness
the Truth is exposed with the passing of time

Truth releases the river of forgiveness
who’s overwhelming wave is the secret of peace

The eyes are the windows of the soul
therein can be seen the Truth of the heart

God is watching and God knows the Truth!

Silent pause:...

CD: Christafari *Valley of Decision* **Track 7:** Modern Day Pharisee

Strong Jamaican accent...

Intro:...

Judgment! Enough of them run up their mouths with their Bad lip service.

Blah blah boom boom.

They say that they are bonafide but them bones fe fry.

They try to give you respect but they give you disrespect.

Contangarous, Friendenemy. They are a big disturbance!

Chorus:... Modern Day Pharisee you didn't have to judge me,
Modern Day Pharisee you can do no wrong, no wrong,
I said you can do no wrong, no wrong.

Look the way that you live your righteousness worn on your sleeve.

You're working so hard to be good to convince that you've done your duty.

You are a pillar of society. A righteous man you claim to be.

So well respected in your church,

You know it's by grace you've been saved and that not of your works, Modern Day Pharisee.

Chorus:... Modern Day Pharisee you didn't have to judge me,
Modern Day Pharisee you can do no wrong, no wrong,
I said you can do no wrong, no wrong.

You tie your heavy load and throw it upon my back,

and if I stumbled and fell to the floor you'd pursue with a viscous attack.

You love to sit and accuse, and go so far to inflict abuse.

Are you really out for blood?

Don't forget that we all fall short of the glory of God, Modern Day Pharisee.

Modern Day Pharisee you love to shine brightly.

Modern Day Pharisee you didn't have to judge me.

Boy you go on like you are article, but your artificial

Back stabber, Go have His mercy!

Chat Chorus:... See the hypocrites and parasites bite. Plastic smile they love to shine bright.
See the hypocrites and parasites bite. Concrete hearts. Watch this!

Jesus He turn over the tables, and He let loose the doves,

it is time to rebuke, that means to encourage in love.

Crack the whip and stop the bad lip service when you speak.

What makes you go on acting like you're meek.

Chat Chorus:... See the hypocrites and parasites bite. Plastic smile they love to shine bright.
See the hypocrites and parasites bite. Concrete hearts. Watch this!

Reflection:...

Modern day Pharisee, concrete hearts!

You give a tenth faithfully, and even fast maybe twice a week.
Yet you judge me from the start?
Don't you know that the Lord only sees what is there in your heart, Modern Day Pharisee.

Modern Day Pharisee you love to shine brightly.
Modern Day Pharisee, you didn't have to judge me.

Final Statement!...

They're a brood of Vipers, they would pluck you off one by one just like a sniper.
They lash out there tongue like a lethal weapon.
They don't deal with a relationship (with God) just religion.

Resources:

CD: *Israel's Passion* by Paul Heyman

CD: *Valley of Decision* by Christafari

Copies of: x7

Song: Modern Day Pharisee by Christafari