



DAILY READINGS FOR
LENT/EASTER 2013

"Come & Dine"

THE LONG

JOURNEY

HOME

“COME & DINE”

The Long Journey Home

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"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Where are You? – Week 1

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 22:27

All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD,
And **all the families of the nations will worship before You.**

Psalm 66:4

"All the earth will worship You, and will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name." Selah.

PERSPECTIVE

Our prayer and intent is to celebrate the lavish provision of God for His people to enjoy Him forever. There is no greater joy or sense of satisfaction apart from Him. Our text encourages us along two distinct lines. **First**, we know the end. The day is quickly approaching when all the nations shall worship before Him. **Second**, we are part of the processional. We are the means God currently uses to accomplish His end. We invite you to use this season of the year to deepen your understanding of God and actively celebrate His goodness to you in the person and work of Jesus the Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. How might you celebrate God's lavish provision?
2. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
3. How might you share this provision and celebration with family and friends?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Where are You? – Week 1

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:23

"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "**GOD WITH US.**"

John 19:30

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "**It is finished!**" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

Acts 1:8

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be My witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

PERSPECTIVE

By marking the three larger movements inside of the liturgical calendar one can go about intentionally remembering the larger bookends of God's Story. First, **ADVENT** says, "God is with us." Second, **LENT/EASTER** says, "It is finished." Our betrayal of Him is met with His provision for us. He establishes the means whereby we are redeemed from our sin and adopted into His family. Third, **PENTECOST** says, "Go and tell." PENTECOST fills His people with hope knowing God reigns and finishes the Story He began. PENTECOST is the glad proclamation of God's victory over sin and death shared with anyone, everywhere at all times.

QUESTIONS

1. What does God being with you mean for you?
2. What does the finished work of Jesus Christ mean for you?
3. What does the mission of God in the mission of the Church mean for you?
4. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
5. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Where are You? – Week 1

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:15

Then **the LORD God** took the man and **put him into the garden of Eden** to cultivate it and keep it.

PERSPECTIVE

In the beginning God created a garden, an environment where humanity might live with Him and enjoy His presence forever. In time a shift took place in the thinking of humanity's first couple, Adam and Eve. At a pivotal point, they moved away from simply trusting God to trusting someone or something else. **In their quest to love God they sought to be like God and then be God.** The reversing of this rebellion is the content of the biblical *Story* and to this end, the *Story* begins.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did God create the Garden of Eden?
2. Why did God create you?
3. What does this tell you about God?
4. What action steps can you take to live in and out God's desire for you to enjoy Him forever [and today]?
5. How can you make God's desire for others known to them?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Where are You? – Week 1

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 16:11

You will make known to me the path of life; **In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.**

PERSPECTIVE

Although much focus is on the actions of Adam and Eve, and rightly so we might add, I find the movement of God more compelling, and conceivably more scandalous than what they did. Scandalous in the sense that it is shocking to think God would choose to pursue a relationship with man. **First**, God's habit of walking in the Garden in the cool of the day to meet with His people is scandalous. Why would God stoop to such a level as to commune with created things? **His joy was in the joy of those who experienced joy in His presence.** God knows in His presence is fullness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures forever more (Ps. 16:11).

QUESTIONS

1. Why is God's love of me more significant than my love for Him?
2. Where is God's joy found?
3. Where is humanity's joy found?
4. What might we say to "unhappy" people?
5. What action steps can you take to live in and out God's desire for you to enjoy Him forever [and today]?
6. How can you make God's desire for others known to them?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Where are You? – Week 1

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 3:9

Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "**Where are you?**"

PERSPECTIVE

This is also scandalous; God seeking, pursuing, and asking, "Where are you" (v. 9). God could justly dismiss this pursuit. He could have chosen to let them face the bitter fruit of their choice. God was the shunned lover. He "felt" the sting of their rejection, yet still He pursued. God has done everything necessary for the fullest and final experience and expression of our capacity for joy. He only and alone fills our emotional cups to overflow. We push ourselves away from the banquet table of God's provision in the center of His Garden. Yet He calls and invites.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did/does God pursue us?
2. What provision has God made for our coming?
3. What need do you currently have that God can meet?
4. What action steps can you take to live in and out God's desire for you to enjoy Him forever [and today]?
5. How can you make God's desire for others known to them?
6. Who do you know that has a need that God can meet?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Where are You? – Week 1

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ "**Come to Me**, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and **I will give you rest.** ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

PERSPECTIVE

God persistently pursues; He continually invites and welcomes us back with open arms. The house has been prepared and the table is set. God welcomes us into the warmth of His fire on a long and cold journey of absence. Remember, the larger idea of Scripture is seen and the means of understanding the Story is found when emphasis is placed on **God's quest to celebrate His greatness through the joy of His people in Him.** **God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him.** All of Scripture speaks to this preparation whereby His people might enjoy His presence **forever in the Garden of His making.**

QUESTIONS

1. Do you hear God's invitation? If so, how, where, and when?
2. Do you understand just how much God desires for you to joy in His joy?
3. How might you share His joy for all nations with family, friends, co-workers and neighbors?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home
Where are You? – Week 1

Sunday February 17

Please avail yourself of a response group shortly following the morning service.

If you do not have a group please feel free to go to whatever group you wish.

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

And There Was War in Heaven – Week 2

SCRIPTURE

Read Genesis 4:1-16

Genesis 4:8-11 (ESV) "Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?' And the LORD said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.'"

PERSPECTIVE

Many of us have had disagreements with our siblings while growing up. We felt overshadowed, worthless, and alone in the shadow of our siblings. The hope of recognition may have driven us to extreme measures to be seen. If we lived in these moments of extreme action, it would be detriment to our families and eventually ourselves. When Cain faced a moment such as this, he chose to kill his brother. Cain placed blame upon his brother that was squarely upon his own shoulders.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was impacted by Cain's actions?
2. How would you describe Cain's relationship with God?
3. How does this story relate to the promise given by God in Genesis 3:15?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

And There Was War in Heaven – Week 2

SCRIPTURE

Read Genesis 11:1-9

Genesis 11:4-7 (ESV) “‘Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.’ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.’”

PERSPECTIVE

What moment in life would be placed atop your trophy case of accomplishments? Has fortune, marriage, employment, family, or friends defined your life? As the days, months, and years fly by we will see many moments worthy of celebration and remembrance. In the midst of these accomplishments do not forget God. Our pride and selfishness will want to claim ownership of our successes but who is it that truly supplied your needs, wants, and desires? Do not go through life disregarding God by taking His glory and honor for your own.

QUESTIONS

1. What was God’s concern about man building the tower?
2. How do we act in a similar way towards God in our own lives?
3. In what ways can we encourage one another to fix our affections on God alone and not on our own prowess and desires?
4. How does this story relate to the promise given by God in Genesis 3:15?
5. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

And There Was War in Heaven – Week 2

SCRIPTURE

Read Genesis 19:30-38

Genesis 19:30-32 (ESV) "Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. And the firstborn said to the younger, 'Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve offspring from our father.'"

PERSPECTIVE

We all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The sinful nature within us is always working contrary to God's way. Sin will tell us that we can take the easy way out of our circumstances to find the wholeness we desire. The story of Lot's drunkenness is a moment where we see sin raging against God's design. In the midst of the messiness of life it will often appear that there is no way to endure and no way to find hope. It is in these moments that we will be faced with a choice to trust God or trust ourselves. What will you choose?

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Lot afraid to live in Zoar?
2. Why did Lot's daughters choose to seek offspring from their father?
3. How does this story relate to the promise given by God in Genesis 3:15?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

And There Was War in Heaven – Week 2

SCRIPTURE

Read 2 Samuel 11

2 Samuel 11:2-5 (ESV) “It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, ‘Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’ So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, ‘I am pregnant.’”

PERSPECTIVE

We have all experienced moments when we felt compelled to sin. We have all tasted the bitter dregs of sin's allurements. David was standing on the roof surveying his kingdom. Life was good for him. The coming sunset was looking to be a good one. All of a sudden the moment of battle within his heart had commenced. A woman was bathing on the roof of her home. David was faced with the fury of sin's curse and he caved to the enticement. We are unable to conquer sin on our own.

QUESTIONS

1. How did David respond to his sin?
2. Why do we keep sinning to cover up sin?
3. How does this story relate to the promise given by God in Genesis 3:15?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

And There Was War in Heaven – Week 2

SCRIPTURE

Read Judges 2:6-10

Judges 2:10 (ESV) "And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel."

PERSPECTIVE

The book of Judges highlights moments of failure for the Israelites and moments of God's perfect faithfulness expressed. When life became easy for the Israelites within the Promised Land, they forgot how God had brought them out of Egypt and gave them the land they now delighted in. They forgot about their relationship with God. When the people of Israel became enamored with the wonders of the Promised Land they forgot God and turned to worshiping gods of their own creation and choosing.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the people of Israel stray from God so quickly?
2. What things do you delight in that pull you away from God?
3. How does this story relate to the promise given by God in Genesis 3:15?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

And There Was War in Heaven – Week 2

SCRIPTURE

Read Jeremiah 21:1-10

Jeremiah 21:4,5 (ESV) “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands and with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon and against the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the walls. And I will bring them together into the midst of this city. I myself will fight against you with outstretched hand and strong arm, in anger and in fury and in great wrath.”

PERSPECTIVE

God is full of compassion and abounding in faithfulness. Surely He will rescue us as always... Did the people of Israel dismiss their relationship with God? The wandering hearts of the people of Israel compelled God to deliver them over to the Babylon. God lovingly expressed Himself to the people of Israel by sending them to Babylon in order to remember Him. In the midst of our busy lives we can often find ourselves as the Israelites as we rest upon our laurels of life. Our past prowess and proficiency will never meet the need we have today.

QUESTIONS

1. Did the people of Israel dismiss their relationship with God and choose to cling to the memory of a relationship held by their forefathers?
2. Can you see God's loving provision for you in midst of troubling times?
3. How does this story relate to the promise given by God in Genesis 3:15?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home
And There Was War in Heaven – Week 2

Sunday February 24

Please avail yourself of a response group shortly following the morning service.

If you do not have a group please feel free to go to whatever group you wish.

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

The Hour Has Come – Week 3

SCRIPTURE

Galatians 3:3-5

³ So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. ⁴ But **when the fullness of the time came**, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

PERSPECTIVE

Paul speaks of “when the fullness of the time came.” There was a point in time when the promises of God would find ultimate fulfillment. There is a massive build up and then outpouring in Matthew 1 and 2. The **Seed Promise** of Genesis 3:15 is coming to fulfillment and the **Blood Picture** of Genesis 3:21 is coming to completion. Jesus is God’s response to humanity’s rebellion.

QUESTIONS

1. Why do you believe the moment was “ripe” for fulfillment?
2. Why is the description given of Jesus important?
3. What did His coming accomplish?
4. What has this truth done in your own life?
5. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
6. How can you make God’s Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

The Hour Has Come – Week 3

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:1

The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

PERSPECTIVE

Matthew 1:1 identifies the fulfillment of the Seed Promise with the action/word Messiah. The words Messiah and Christ are one and the same. Messiah is Hebrew and Christ is Greek and both mean "anointed/chosen." In the context of biblical revelation they speak to the Lord Jesus being the one chosen by God as the fulfillment of the Seed Promise and the completion of the blood picture. He has been anointed by God to finish the *Story of God's* glory through the redemption of His people.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important that Jesus is identified as the Messiah?
2. Was He the only one identified in such a manner?
3. What makes Him "different" than all other "messiahs?"
4. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
5. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

The Hour Has Come – Week 3

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:3, 5, 6

³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by **Tamar**, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram. . . ⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz by **Rahab**, Boaz was the father of Obed by **Ruth**, and Obed the father of Jesse. ⁶ Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by **Bathsheba** who had been the wife of Uriah.

PERSPECTIVE

In a climate of pure breeds and aristocracies we are dealing with mutts and outcasts. All the patriarchs were notorious liars. None of the women mentioned, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth nor Bathsheba is of Judah's line, the tribe from which the messiah was to be born. Yet **God chose to use the unlikely to accomplish the impossible.** When the biblical narrative ends we are faced by 400 years of silence. **Yet if we know anything, the best plants are often grown from the most composted and manure saturated soils.** Look at your own life and consider it in light of His.

QUESTIONS

1. What does His lineage tell us about God?
2. What does His lineage tell us about Jesus Christ?
3. What can we conclude from the telling of His lineage?
4. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
5. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

The Hour Has Come – Week 3

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.**

PERSPECTIVE

The narrative carefully states the uniqueness of what is transpiring. The Messiah would come by means outside of human effort or achievement. Something miraculous is about to unfold. The event would be unprecedented and unrepeatable. This is a miracle.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the virgin birth of the Messiah necessary?
2. Will this type of conception ever happen again?
3. What does this tell us about Jesus the Messiah?
4. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
5. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

The Hour Has Come – Week 3

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:21

She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name **Jesus**, for **He will save His people from their sins.**

PERSPECTIVE

Jesus the Messiah has come to seek and to save those who are lost (Luke 19:10). The name Jesus is the same as Savior. It is derived from the verb signifying "to save." In Hebrew it is the same as Joshua. How incredible is this!

QUESTIONS

1. His name is Jesus. Do you know Him for the saving of your immortal soul and the forgiveness of your sins?
2. Who do you know who does not know Jesus as their Savior from sin? Would you write their names down and begin praying specifically for them that they would receive Jesus as the Savior from their sins?
3. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
4. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

The Hour Has Come – Week 3

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:23

"BEHOLD, **THE VIRGIN** SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

John 1:14

And **the Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

PERSPECTIVE

In Jesus the Messiah, God would tabernacle among us and we saw His glory (John 1:14). "God with us" defines a moment preceded by "He is not with us." Something unparalleled is about to take place. "God with us" speaks to something notable and fulfills past expectations and satisfies present longings. God is now here.

QUESTIONS

1. Again, God is with us! As He was with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, so He is with us! Do you know Him?
2. Are you aware of His presence? Do you recognize that everything is from Him, sustained by Him, and for Him?
3. What might this look like on a daily basis? What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
4. How can you make God's Story known to others?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home
The Hour Has Come – Week 3

Sunday March 3

Please avail yourself of a response group shortly following the morning service.

If you do not have a group please feel free to go to whatever group you wish.

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Tell John What You Hear and See – Week 4

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 9:27-31 (ESV) "And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David.' When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' They said to him, 'Yes, Lord.' Then he touched their eyes, saying, 'According to your faith be it done to you.' And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, 'See that no one knows about it. 'But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.'"

PERSPECTIVE

Imagine you are living in the darkest night imaginable. It has been all you have ever known. Your life is defined by this night. Suddenly hope burst in. A man named Jesus is doing the remarkable as people are healed of their afflictions. Could He help me? These blind men groped along the street listening, hoping for deliverance. They had no hope for their future apart from the condescension of their families and neighbors. It is in the midst of this moment that Jesus Christ changes their lives.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did these men keep telling about what Jesus did?
2. How did the onlookers view this miracle?
3. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

Tell John What You Hear and See – Week 4

SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 5:17-26

Luke 5:20-23 (ESV) “And when he saw their faith, he said, ‘Man, your sins are forgiven you.’ And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, ‘Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, ‘Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’”

PERSPECTIVE

We often take our mobility for granted until it becomes impaired. When our aches and pains increase they are never far from our minds. You could say that we define ourselves by these aches and pains. This man healed by Jesus was aware of his inability to move. He defined himself by his paralysis. His friends knew the weakness as they carried him. Jesus doesn't speak to his lame body at first. The condition of his soul was more paramount to Jesus than his ability to walk. Jesus was always looking at the eternal side of the people he interacted with.

QUESTIONS

1. Why were the scribes and Pharisees upset?
2. Do you look to the eternal side of your relationships?
3. What prevented the scribes and Pharisees from seeing Jesus Christ as the Messiah?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

Tell John What You Hear and See – Week 4

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 1:40-45

Mark 1:40-42 (ESV) “And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, ‘If you will, you can make me clean.’ Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, ‘I will; be clean.’ And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.”

PERSPECTIVE

When have you implored someone? Have you implored someone at the local fast food restaurant to get a few more french fries? Have you implored your employer to give you that promotion you’ve been hoping for? The leper that came to Jesus Christ was defined by his inability. He had nothing to give or lose. He had faith in the power of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to heal. That was his hope and the reason he implored Jesus for help.

QUESTIONS

1. What have you implored God for?
2. Has anyone ever implored you for aid?
3. What would happen if we had the faith of this leper?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

Tell John What You Hear and See – Week 4

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 7:31-37

Mark 7:35-37 (ESV) “And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.’”

PERSPECTIVE

What comes to your mind when you think of an ambulance siren? Do you think it a nuisance or inconvenience? The siren sound is never more beautiful than to the person who is waiting for its deliverance. This deaf man with a speech impediment was brought to Jesus for the hope and healing He offered. This man encountered Jesus and his life was transformed and renewed. In an instant he could hear his Savior. How could he do anything but proclaim the news?

QUESTIONS

1. What can hope and healing do for your need? Is Jesus enough to meet that need?
2. Have you been transformed by Jesus Christ?
3. Can you do anything but proclaim Him?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Tell John What You Hear and See – Week 4

SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 7:11-17

Luke 7:13-16 (ESV) "And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has arisen among us!' and 'God has visited his people!'"

PERSPECTIVE

Have you experienced the loss of a loved one? Consider this encounter with Jesus where grief was turned to fearful joy in an instant. The cloud of mourning was vaporized by the love of Jesus Christ. The touch of Jesus renewed and transformed the lives of these people. The expression of the crowd was the realization that God was in their midst. Jesus Christ transforms and renews lives. We cannot encounter Jesus Christ and depart the same person.

QUESTIONS

1. How has Jesus Christ transformed your life? Have you told people of what He has done?
2. What insurmountable fear grips your life? Can you believe that Jesus Christ is able to transform that fear?
3. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

Tell John What You Hear and See – Week 4

SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 5:1-12

Matthew 5:3-6 (ESV) “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

PERSPECTIVE

Has the tumult of life beaten you down this week? Have the worries of life left you weary? Does it seem like everyone around you is seeking to have the center stage of life? Does the world not understand your desire to live for Jesus Christ? I have good news for you: The kingdom of heaven is yours. . . be blessed. You will have comfort for your weary soul. . . be blessed. Your meekness does not go unnoticed. . . be blessed. Your thirst for Jesus Christ will be satisfied, be blessed... Jesus Christ is all that we need today and forever.

QUESTIONS

1. Were the words in Matthew chapter 5 written for the present or future?
2. How did these words of Jesus Christ impact the people of Israel? How do they impact you today?
3. Do you take time to remember how blessed you truly are?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home
Tell John What You Hear and See – Week 4

Sunday March 10

Please avail yourself of a response group shortly following the morning service.

If you do not have a group please feel free to go to whatever group you wish.

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Come and Dine – Week 5

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 22:4

Tell those who have been invited, 'Behold, **I have prepared my dinner**; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast'

PERSPECTIVE

Matthew's Gospel captures the tension between those who embrace the Seed of the woman and those who are in opposition to the Seed Promise. The entire biblical *Story* is retold using a wedding metaphor. The author's intent is to show just how lavish God's preparations are for His people. They remove the curtain and enable the reader to see just how far God goes in inviting and welcoming His guests into His celebration.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you understand that God has made all the necessary provisions for you to have joy?
2. Do you trust Him to provide or are you still trying to prepare your own table before Him?
3. How satisfied are you in the provision of God?
4. What does this satisfaction look like in your daily experience?
5. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
6. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Come and Dine – Week 5

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 25:6-8

⁶ The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; **A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine.** ⁷ And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

PERSPECTIVE

Notice the language used by the prophet to describe the lavish provision God makes for His people.

"A feast is a proper and usual expression of joy in consequence of victory, or any other great success. The feast here spoken of is to be celebrated on Mount Sion; and all people, without distinction, are to be invited to it. This can be no other than the celebration of the establishment of Christ's kingdom, which is frequently represented in the Gospel under the image of a feast; "where many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;" Mt 8:11.

(Adam Clarke's Commentary on Isaiah 25:6)

QUESTIONS

1. How might you describe God's provision using language familiar to you and your audience?
2. What does the provision of God tell you about God?
3. How does His provision minister into your daily experience?
4. What do you think creates the disconnect between the lavish provision of God and the problematic experiences of life?
5. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
6. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Come and Dine – Week 5

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,**

Ephesians 3:20-21

²⁰ Now to **Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think,** according to the power that works within us, ²¹ to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

PERSPECTIVE

"Spiritual and heavenly blessings are the best blessings; with which we cannot be miserable, and without which we cannot but be so." (*Matthew Henry on Ephesians 1:3*)

The Scripture speaks of abundance and lavish provision. The life we live in shadow speaks to the lavish provision of God. Consider your life in light of His provision.

QUESTIONS

1. What does God's lavish provision look like in your life?
2. How do we compare and contrast the apparent lack we experience and the lavish provision of God?
3. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
4. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Come and Dine – Week 5

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 2:9

but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH **EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD**, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

PERSPECTIVE

"These words have been applied to the state of glory in a future world; but they certainly belong to the present state, and express merely the wondrous light, life, and liberty which the Gospel communicates to them that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in that way which the Gospel itself requires."

(Adam Clarke's Commentary on 1 Corinthians 2:9)

QUESTIONS

1. Have your eyes seen and your ears heard what God has/is doing?
2. Do place yourself among those who love God?
3. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
4. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Come and Dine – Week 5

SCRIPTURE

Job 38:4

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" Tell Me, if you have understanding, "

Job 40:1-5

¹ Then the LORD said to Job, ²"Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it." ³ Then Job answered the LORD and said, ⁴"**Behold, I am insignificant**; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. ⁵ Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more."

PERSPECTIVE

"To understand the cause of things, man should have been present at their origin. The finite creature cannot fathom the infinite wisdom of the Creator (Job 28:12; 15:7,8)."

(Jamieson, Faucett, and Brown Commentary on the Whole Bible on Job 38:4)

QUESTIONS

1. Have you considered the magnitude of who God is and what He has done?
2. Do you see who you are in light of who He is? What does this mean before you believe Him? What does this mean after you believe Him?
3. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
4. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Come and Dine – Week 5

SCRIPTURE

Revelation 22:16, 17

¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "**Come.**" And let the one who hears say, "**Come.**" And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

PERSPECTIVE

"This gracious and wide invitation is cheering after the gloomy picture of the doomed and the damned. The door of mercy still stands wide open today, for the end has not yet come. The series of panoramas is over, with the consummation pictured as a reality. Now we drop back to the standpoint before we saw the visions through John's eyes. In verse Re 22:17 we hear the voice of the Spirit of God inviting all who hear and see to heed and to come and drink of the water of life freely offered by the Lamb of God."

(A.T. Robertson's Word Pictures on the NT on Rev. 22:17)

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think concerning the invitation of God?
2. Do place yourself among those who have come?
3. When did this happen and what did it look like?
4. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
5. How can you make God's Story known to others?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home
Come and Dine – Week 5

Sunday March 17

Please avail yourself of a response group shortly following the morning service.

If you do not have a group please feel free to go to whatever group you wish.

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Eden Remix – Week 6

SCRIPTURE

Mark 8:36-38 (ESV) "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

PERSPECTIVE

The world is built upon economy. A basic fundamental of economics is that nothing is free. There is always a cost associated to something. We horrifically apply this reasoning to our relationship with God. We convince ourselves that we must make a payment to obtain God's grace. We become trapped into thinking that our faith in the sufficiency of the Cross is not enough. We pervert the truth that Jesus Christ is enough. We cling to the self-help economics of the world and cast aside the beautiful simplicity of the Cross of Calvary.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it such a hurdle for mankind to believe that Jesus Christ is enough?
2. Have you invited others to come and meet Jesus Christ?
3. Is Jesus Christ enough for your needs today, tomorrow, and forever?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Eden Remix – Week 6

SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 11:25-30

Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV) "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

PERSPECTIVE

Are you beaten down by the troubles of life? Come to Jesus. Are you overwhelmed with the weight of responsibility you find yourself carrying? Come to Jesus. Have the bonds of sin so entangled you that you feel suffocated? Come to Jesus. The simplistic message presented by Jesus is one that calls people to come to Him. It does not matter what ailments or afflictions you are burdened with because all you need to do is come. Jesus Christ will do the rest. He will lift you up out of the miry depths of despair to find hope and wholeness in Him.

QUESTIONS

1. What impact did this message of Jesus have upon the oppressed and downtrodden Jews? What impact does it have for us today?
2. What burdens are you carrying needlessly that you need to cast down before Jesus?
3. Have you heard the beautiful call of Jesus to just come?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Eden Remix – Week 6

SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 19:16-30

Matthew 19:20-22 (ESV) "The young man said to him, 'All these I have kept. What do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

PERSPECTIVE

What was this young man before Jesus seeking? Was it hope, healing or affirmation? This young man was looking for a process to follow to obtain eternal life. He excelled in following the rules. Did the rules he followed transform his heart? The truth that this man could not see is that he needed to just come to Jesus. It did not matter what he did or possessed because it was only Jesus that mattered. No merit of his own would ever surpass that of Jesus. The same battle is raging our lives as we seek to find assurance of our salvation by our accomplishments. It is only through the complete surrender of coming to Jesus as we are that we will find the wholeness and freedom we desire.

QUESTIONS

1. Can we be perfectly devoted to Jesus on our own?
2. Why do we want to believe that process and possessions can save us?
3. What are you clinging to for your wholeness and freedom? Is Jesus Christ?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

Eden Remix – Week 6

SCRIPTURE

Mark 10:13-16 (ESV) “And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.’ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.”

PERSPECTIVE

Do you remember how summer vacation seemed to last an eternity when you were a child. You had tea parties to organize, battles to fight, and endless possibilities as each day passed by. The imagination of childhood is slowly overpowered by the weight and responsibility of the world as we grow up. Dreams are replaced with bills and tea parties are replaced with the monotony of the work routine. As adults we easily forget how to believe and have unconditional faith. Jesus is telling us that all we need to do is come to Him with the faith of a child. There are no processes or procedures in coming. We just come.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe your faith in God to a child?
2. Would you describe your faith to an adult in a different way? Why?
3. Do you believe that all you need to do is come to Jesus?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Eden Remix – Week 6

SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 6:25-34

Matthew 6:31-34 (ESV) "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

PERSPECTIVE

When are your bills due? What needs to be repaired around your house? Did you hear that noise while you were driving the car yesterday? Surely Jesus didn't mean these things when he told me not to worry... We carry the worries of life upon our shoulders. Jesus is telling us that we need to trust Him alone for all that we need. We need to come to Him for our hope for today, tomorrow, and forever. He holds the future for us. We need not add the worry of tomorrow into our delight of the present with Him.

QUESTIONS

1. How do we live in this hope when times are tough?
2. How do we keep from being overwhelmed by the worries of today?
3. Do you delight in Jesus?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

Eden Remix – Week 6

SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 10:34-39

Matthew 10:37-29 (ESV) “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

PERSPECTIVE

When we come to Jesus Christ we cannot cling to anything but Him. We must believe that Jesus Christ is everything and that nothing else matters. Our identity is not who we are, who our family is, or what we have accumulated. We are to be identified by Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. It is the great mystery of the Gospel when we give our lives to Jesus Christ and truly find it. No qualifier is given to us other than for us to come to Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe coming to Jesus?
2. What does it mean to be identified by Jesus' death and resurrection?
3. How would you encourage your friends and co-workers to come to Jesus?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home
Eden Remix – Week 6

Palm Sunday

Please avail yourself of a response group shortly following the morning service.

If you do not have a group please feel free to go to whatever group you wish.

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

Passion Week – Week 7

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 9:1-11

Mark 11:9-11 (ESV) “And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!’ And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.”

PERSPECTIVE

Look... LOOK! That is the man. That is Jesus... The people of Jerusalem experienced the entrance of Jesus Christ into their midst. Every person present had hopes, dreams, and agendas for a better life and a better Jerusalem. Jesus Christ was entering the city as a liberator but it was the souls of the people held in bondage to sin that He was freeing. It would be this same crowd filled with dreams of a better future crying out “Crucify Him” in the coming week.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe your experience with Jesus Christ?
2. How is the way Jesus Christ liberated Jerusalem different than what the people expected?
3. How can we encourage one another to keep our eyes fixed on the eternal things and not on temporal things?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Passion Week – Week 7

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 12:1-12

Mark 12:2-5 (ESV) "When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed."

PERSPECTIVE

When Jesus entered Jerusalem the people were all gathering to celebrate the Passover. People were gathering together to remember how God had delivered the nation from Egypt with a longing for another deliverance from the current oppression by the Roman Empire. Jesus spoke the parable of the tenants to a people who were waiting for God's second deliverance, the fulfillment of the promised Messiah. **Living in the midst of this sin cursed world caused the people of Israel to not see beyond their present need. They could not see their true need of deliverance from their bondage to sin and death.**

QUESTIONS

1. How did the Israelites identify with these tenants as this story was told?
2. What type of tenant are you? What type of response would you give?
3. What have you lived for?
4. What would you say to someone who has lived life against God?
5. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Passion Week – Week 7

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 11:27-33

Mark 11:27-30 (ESV) "And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, 'By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?' Jesus said to them, 'I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me.'"

PERSPECTIVE

The world of Jerusalem was full of strife and tension. The chief priests and scribes sought to keep the status quo for society. Jesus Christ was upturning their world by preaching hope to the hurting, healing to the sick, and joy to the downtrodden. It was in the midst of Jesus ministering the downtrodden that the questions of Mark chapter eleven are given. Jesus Christ came to restore the eternal fellowship of mankind to the Father. The eyes of the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees did not look beyond the temporal. They desired to maintain the status quo. The process of life had usurped their fellowship with God.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus answer the questions of the chief priests with another question?
2. Why were the scribes and priests unwilling to answer Jesus' question?
3. What do you believe?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Passion Week – Week 7

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 12:28-34

Mark 12:32-34 (ESV) "And the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.' And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions."

PERSPECTIVE

We live in a culture that will tell you what to do in any situation that you might find yourself. This mindset has encroached into the church as a whole as we continually build up more programs to meet needs. We have become so enamored with doing that we have neglected the only relationship that truly matters. We have laid aside our relationship with Jesus Christ for everything that we want to do for Him. The young scribe who was talking with Jesus saw that all the process and procedure of Jewish life did not matter if the relationship was neglected. It left the crowd speechless and wondering. It must also leave us speechless as we look upon our to-do list today.

QUESTIONS

1. Is your relationship with Jesus Christ more important than what you do for Him?
2. Place yourself in the crowd with the other Jews. How would this conversation make you feel?
3. How do we live out our lives today as citizens of the kingdom of God?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

Passion Week – Week 7

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 13:31-37

Mark 13:35-37 (ESV) “Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

PERSPECTIVE

What are you living for? Are you living to satisfy the creditors, your spouse, the demands of family, your own ambition, or the flow of popular culture? This world is not our home. We are currently living out the preface of God's wonderful story today. The day is approaching when God will turn the page and we will enter into the continuation of the story that will last an eternity. Are you living in constant expectation of God's imminent return? The things that vie for our affections will always surround us but we must not let these things become our gods.

QUESTIONS

1. Are you awake?
2. What things in your life have taken over your affections and pulled you away from fellowship with God?
3. How do we live in this world where everything desires to pull our affections away from God?
4. How does the church play a role in enabling people in this journey?
5. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Passion Week – Week 7

SCRIPTURE

Read Mark 15:43-47

Mark 15:45-47 (ESV) "And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid."

PERSPECTIVE

We are in the midst of the point in the Gospel Story when, from the human perspective, hopes of freedom in a new kingdom have been snuffed out. Fear clouds the hearts of the people who had tasted the amazing truth preached by Jesus Christ. "How can we live a life blessed apart from Jesus?... How could Jesus have let this happen to Him?... What do I do now?..." Doubt is fiercely attacking the memory and faith of everyone who had encountered Jesus' healing hope. It is in this moment that Joseph of Arimathea approaches Pilate for the body of Jesus Christ and two women, transformed by Jesus, look to see with their own eyes where Jesus Christ was buried.

QUESTIONS

1. Where do you see yourself at this point in the Gospel Story? Would you need to see for yourself what had happened?
2. How is doubt still fiercely attacking us today?
3. Why do we so easily forget what God has done in the midst of troubling times?
4. Who are you bringing along to listen to this Story? Who are you inviting to enter in to this journey and relationship with Jesus Christ?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home
Passion Week – Week 7

Easter Sunday

Please fellowship with the WBC family
following the morning service.

Food and drink will be available.

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Home at Last – Week 8

SCRIPTURE

John 14: 1-3

¹ "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for **I go to prepare a place for you.** ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

PERSPECTIVE

The entire journey from start to finish is marked by the design and quest to return to what once was. It is fitting to start where we end in order to begin well. Our text (14:1-3) is wrapped in the warmth of an intimate setting filled with overflowing emotion marked by harsh tones and sharp colors. Within this stormy setting are the celebration of the Jewish Passover and the imminent fulfillment of ancient promises. Jesus is assuring His disciples that He has prepared a place where they will be with Him forever.

QUESTIONS

1. What thoughts cross your mind when you realize God is preparing a place where you might dwell with Him forever?
2. How might this empower you in unstable times?
3. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
4. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Home at Last – Week 8

SCRIPTURE

Mark 4:37-40

³⁷ And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. ³⁸ Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. ⁴⁰ And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?"

PERSPECTIVE

When comparing John 14 with Mark 4, it would appear a repeat performance is played before the audience. While the disciples feared for their lives, Jesus slept peacefully in the boat. His words then are equally appropriate here, "Why are you afraid" (Mark 4:40). Much was taught and much needed to be learned.

QUESTIONS

1. What storm are you currently in?
2. Is it possible to have peace in the storm?
3. What does this rest look like in your daily experience?
4. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
5. How can you make God's Story known to others?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home

Home at Last – Week 8

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:8, 9

⁸The LORD **God planted a garden** toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. ⁹Out of the ground the LORD God caused **to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food**; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

PERSPECTIVE

God created a Garden, a sanctuary, a dwelling place for Himself where He might meet His people in the cool of the day in order that they would enjoy His presence forever (Gen. 3:8). God comforts His people in difficult times by calling them to remember Him. He is the reason why peace is possible in the midst of storms.

God's garden is pleasing and soul satisfying.

QUESTIONS

1. God's garden is pleasing and soul satisfying. Why?
2. Why did God plant this Garden and where does this Story end?
3. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
4. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Home at Last – Week 8

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 51:3

Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; **Joy and gladness will be found in her**, Thanksgiving and sound of a melody.

PERSPECTIVE

His preparation of this place is no different than His creative hand in Genesis 1 and 2. It is the same invitation seen throughout the journey of the Jewish nation through Tabernacle and Temple, when God dwelt with His people. And it is no different than the Church being His Temple (1 Cor. 3:6). God has prepared Himself a dwelling place where He might be with His people and they might enjoy His presence forever.

QUESTIONS

1. Read the verse and speak of your initial thoughts and emotions?
2. How might this empower you in unstable times?
3. How is this part of the gospel?
4. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
5. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Home at Last – Week 8

SCRIPTURE

Revelation 21:1-4

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "**Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them**, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

PERSPECTIVE

Everything from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22 is telling this Story. We have been and continue to be on a long journey home. What is described in Revelation 21 and 22 is home. This is our rest, and it is where we will find Him.

QUESTIONS

1. God with us and we forever with Him. How great is this?
2. Think of your present heartaches. How does this future and present hope heal and help?
3. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
4. How can you make God's Story known to others?

"COME AND DINE" – The Long Journey Home

Home at Last – Week 8

SCRIPTURE

Revelation 21:5-7

⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." ⁶ Then He said to me, "**It is done**. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."

PERSPECTIVE

And for almost 2,000 years this future hope fills our present perplexity with expectancy. What Jesus said and secured speaks to a certain end. We know where all this is heading and we, like the early disciples, can hear the words of our Lord comforting and encouraging, strengthening and securing, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." May this be the word delivering us from our past failure, present bondage and future worries. O friends and fellow pilgrims, let us together encourage one another with these words, "Come and dine."

QUESTIONS

1. "It is done." What is done? What must you do?
2. Why is this good news?
3. What action steps can you take to live in and out the gospel?
4. How can you make God's Story known to others?

“COME AND DINE” – The Long Journey Home
Home at Last – Week 8

Sunday April 7

Please avail yourself of a response group shortly following the morning service.

If you do not have a group please feel free to go to whatever group you wish.

