

St Barnabas Cray

"Crucified for Us: The Power of the Cross"

Weekly Devotional Journey

Monday - Faith Rooted in Reality

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

1 Corinthians 1:18 - For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Devotional Thought

C.S. Lewis understood something profound when he observed that reality is usually something we couldn't have guessed. Our faith isn't built on wishful thinking or beautiful myths—it's anchored in real history, real people, and real events. When the Creed mentions Pontius Pilate, it's declaring that Jesus stood before an actual Roman governor at a specific moment in time. Archaeological evidence confirms Pilate's existence, just as historians document his role. This isn't make-believe; it's the intersection of divine love with human history. The cross may have looked like graffiti on history—ugly, offensive, out of place—but God transformed what appeared to be the worst news into the best news ever. What the world sees as foolishness, we recognise as the very power of God.

Reflection Question

How does knowing that your faith is rooted in historical reality strengthen your confidence in Christ today?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Christianity is not make-believe. It is not myth or wishful thinking. It is rooted in real people, real history, real blood, and real love."

Today's Application

When facing doubt or criticism about your faith, remember that Christianity stands on solid historical ground. Research one historical fact about Jesus or early Christianity today to deepen your appreciation for faith's foundation in reality.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that my faith isn't built on sand but on the solid rock of historical truth. When the world mocks what seems foolish, help me remember that Your cross is the power of God for salvation. Strengthen my confidence in You today. Amen.

Evening Devotion

When Faith Endures Mockery

Evening Reflection

The earliest image of Jesus, scratched on a Roman wall around 200AD, was meant to mock Christians—showing a young man worshipping a donkey-headed figure on a cross. Yet nearby, another hand quietly replied: 'Alexamenos is faithful.' How powerful. The world has always sneered at the cross, but faith endures. Mockery cannot silence truth. What looks like defeat to the world is actually God's greatest victory.

Evening Reflection

How can you respond with faithful endurance when your beliefs are mocked or misunderstood?

Evening Prayer

Father, when others mock my faith or misunderstand Your ways, help me respond like that anonymous believer who simply declared faithfulness. Give me courage to stand firm in truth, knowing that Your cross is victory, not defeat. Amen.

Tuesday - The Great Exchange**Morning Devotion****Today's Verse**

1 Timothy 2:5-6 - For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.

Devotional Thought

Picture the scene: two men named 'Son of the Father' stood before Pilate—one guilty, one innocent. Barabbas, the rebel, walked free whilst Jesus, the faithful Son, was condemned to die. This wasn't coincidence; it was the Gospel in action. Jesus didn't merely take Barabbas' place—He takes our place too. He bears our guilt so we can walk free, swapping our rebellious identity for His righteous one. He became what we are so that we might become what He is. This revolutionary love conquered hearts not through violence but through sacrificial grace. The innocent died so the guilty could live—that's the scandal and beauty of the cross.

Reflection Question

What does it mean to you personally that Jesus took your place and bore your guilt?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Jesus swapped our rebellious identity for his righteous one. He became what we are—so that we might become what he is."

Today's Application

Reflect on one area where you feel guilty or ashamed. Thank Jesus specifically for taking that burden upon Himself, and ask Him to help you live in the freedom of His righteousness today.

Morning Prayer

Jesus, I'm overwhelmed that You took my place—bearing my guilt, shame, and rebellion.

Thank You for this great exchange. Help me live today not in condemnation but in the freedom of Your righteousness. Transform my heart to reflect Your love. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Revolutionary Love

Evening Reflection

Jesus was indeed revolutionary, but not as the world expects. He didn't overthrow empires with self-seeking violence—He conquered hearts with sacrificial love. He turned the world upside down not through political power but through the power of grace. This challenges every culture that tries to co-opt Him for their own purposes. His revolution was one of love, mercy, and self-sacrifice.

Evening Reflection

How can you live as a revolutionary of love in your daily circumstances?

Evening Prayer

Lord, help me to be revolutionary like You—not through force or self-interest, but through sacrificial love. Show me how to turn my world upside down with Your grace and mercy. Make me an agent of Your peaceful revolution. Amen.

Wednesday - For Our Sake

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Isaiah 53:5 - But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Devotional Thought

The Creed doesn't simply state 'He was crucified'—it declares 'for our sake.' This wasn't an accident of history or a tragic miscarriage of justice. Jesus chose the nails, the shame, the suffering because His love ran deeper than our sin. Isaiah prophesied this centuries before: He was pierced because of our rebellions, crushed because of our crimes. He took what we deserved so we could receive what only He deserved. None of us deserve God's grace, yet rather than being obsessed with our failures, we can trust that Jesus has taken the punishment for our sin upon His shoulders. This is amazing grace—love so great it saves the undeserving and calls the lost home.

Reflection Question

How does understanding that Jesus died specifically 'for your sake' change how you view yourself and God's love?

From Sunday's Sermon

"He chose the nails, the shame, the suffering — because his love ran deeper than our sin."

Today's Application

Write down three specific sins or failures that burden you. Pray over each one, thanking Jesus for bearing that particular burden 'for your sake' and ask Him to help you accept His forgiveness.

Morning Prayer

Dear Jesus, I'm humbled that You chose suffering for my sake. Your love truly runs deeper than my sin. Help me not to be obsessed with my failures but to rest in Your amazing grace. Thank You for calling this lost soul home. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Love So Great**Evening Reflection**

Amazing grace—what powerful words. It's love so great that it saves the undeserving. We don't earn it through good behaviour or lose it through our mistakes. Grace taught our hearts to fear God's holiness and then relieved those fears through Christ's sacrifice. This grace doesn't just save us; it transforms us and leads us safely home.

Evening Reflection

In what practical ways can you extend this 'amazing grace' to someone who doesn't deserve it?

Evening Prayer

Gracious God, Your love is so much greater than I can comprehend. Thank You that grace has taught my heart to fear and relieved my fears. Help me to extend this same undeserved love to others. Lead me safely home. Amen.

Thursday - Death Defeated

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

2 Timothy 1:10 - But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Devotional Thought

Don't skip over these profound words: 'He suffered death.' The Author of life died. The Creator died for His creation. The One who made the stars was laid in darkness. Why? So that death would never have the final word again. Because Jesus passed through death, it's no longer a wall for us—it's a doorway. This transforms everything about how we view mortality. Even our dying becomes part of our living in Him. There's no guilt in life, no fear in death—this is the power of Christ in us. The silence of the grave couldn't hold Him, and it cannot ultimately hold us either.

Reflection Question

How does Jesus' victory over death change your perspective on life's difficulties and mortality?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Because Jesus passed through death, it's no longer a Wall for us — it's a DOORWAY."

Today's Application

If you're facing a 'death' in your life (end of a relationship, job loss, illness), ask God to help you see it as a potential doorway rather than just a wall. Pray for His perspective on your situation.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for suffering death so that death would never have the final word. Help me live without fear, knowing that even in life's darkest moments, You have transformed every ending into a doorway to new life. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Buried with Dignity**Evening Reflection**

After Jesus died, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus treated His body with honour, wrapping it carefully and laying it in a new tomb. Even in death, they showed dignity and love. Jesus truly entered the full depth of human experience—even the silence of the grave. This reminds us of the importance of caring for one another, especially in our most vulnerable moments.

Evening Reflection

How can you show Christ-like dignity and care to someone who is suffering or vulnerable?

Evening Prayer

Father, thank You for those who showed dignity and love to Jesus even in death. Help me to care for others with such tenderness, especially when they are most vulnerable. May I reflect Your love in practical ways. Amen.

Friday - Living the Sacrifice

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Luke 9:23 - Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my follower must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.'

Devotional Thought

Maximilian Kolbe's story echoes through history—stepping forward to take another man's place in a Nazi starvation cell, leading others in prayer and hymns until death. His sacrifice mirrors, in a small way, what Jesus did for all humanity. Jesus stepped forward saying, 'I will take their place.' But how do we respond to such grace? We don't merely admire His sacrifice—we live it too. We take up our own crosses, showing mercy, speaking truth, offering forgiveness, serving others. Just as Jesus went to the lost, we go to those who feel forgotten. We don't belong because we're perfect; we belong because we're found. Grace has saved wretches like us, and now we live as His faithful people.

Reflection Question

What does 'taking up your cross daily' look like in your specific circumstances today?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Jesus stepped forward and said, 'I will take their place.' He suffered death so that we might live. That's amazing grace in human form."

Today's Application

Identify one person in your life who feels forgotten or overlooked. Plan a specific way to show them Christ's love this week—a phone call, visit, or act of service.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, You stepped forward to take my place. Now help me to take up my cross daily and follow You. Show me how to live Your sacrificial love in practical ways, reaching out to those who feel forgotten or lost. Amen.

Evening Devotion

The Centre of History

Evening Reflection

When we declare that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered death and was buried, we stand at the centre of human history—the moment where guilt met grace, rebellion met rescue, and death met its defeat. The cross in our church reminds us weekly of His loving sacrifice, showing both the darkness of sin and the light of Christ overcoming it. This isn't foolishness to be embarrassed by—it's the power of God we can confidently share.

Evening Reflection

How can you confidently share the power of the cross with someone in your life who needs to hear this good news?

Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, thank You that Your cross stands at the centre of history and at the centre of my life. Help me live as Your faithful person—humble in heart, grateful in spirit, and confident in the power of Your cross. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.