



Theme: Tell Me Something Good **– Good News in the Gospel of John** **“Seeing Through the Mud”**

We have a great new way for you to get these Meditation Moments each day directly to your phone. Just text “**med moments**” to **970-426-0700** to receive the **daily Meditation Moment** each morning and start your day grounded in faith and peace.

Weekly Memory Verse:

11 He told them, “The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.’ So, I went and washed, and now I can see!” – John 9:11

The season of Lent is the 40 days and 7 Sundays before Easter and we will be reading through the gospel of John together as a congregation. The Meditation Moments contain a reading plan for the Gospel and just a few minutes a day will take you through the entire book. If you get behind, or join us in the middle, don’t worry or try to catch up...just join us where we are! Our hope is to experience something good, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, through these readings that bring life and light.

Meditation Moments for Monday, March 16 – Read **John 11:54 to 12:19**. John devoted a third or more of his story to the crucifixion week. He said Mary, Lazarus’ sister, anointed Jesus with very expensive perfume. Some criticized her extravagant act of gratitude. Jesus, knowing the cross waited at the end of the week, said Mary had anointed him in advance of his burial. Jesus rode into Jerusalem, praised by a crowd, including some who saw him raise Lazarus. As we learned two weeks ago, this same crowd was sometimes silent and eventually would shout for his crucifixion. His ride reminded people of Israel’s royal history about riding a donkey told in 1 Kings 1:38-40, Psalm 118:19-29, and Zechariah 9:9-17.



Imagine the profound inner love and gratitude that led Mary to give Jesus this extravagant gift. What does Jesus’ response tell you about how much her

fervent love meant to him as he faced death? How can you show your love for Jesus with Mary's beautiful spontaneity and urgency, both in your inner "sacred space" and outwardly?

 Jesus' entry as a king coming in peace brought the religious leaders no joy, only despair and frustration. Their vision was limited to human credentials and contacts. Before too glibly condemning them, ask yourself: if Jesus came today, from a small town, with no formal degree or denominational credentials, would you be open to listen to his message? We know that the Holy Spirit often works through other believers. But what does it take to let the Spirit be the final authority and guide for your heart?

Prayer: *O Lord, grow in me a heart like Mary's, pouring out devotion and gratitude to you. Replace any critical, selfish corners in my spirit. Thank you for the gift of new life in you. Amen.*

Tuesday, March 17 – Read **John 12:20-36**. Some who were not Jewish, but Greek, began asking to see Jesus. In response, Jesus began to describe how he was about to be "glorified." But note: Jesus used the word "glorify" about crucifixion, which the Romans considered the most humiliating type of death they could invent! As scholar William Barclay put it in his commentary on John, "Jesus says: 'The hour has come when the Son of Man must be glorified'... Jesus did not mean by glorified what they understood. They meant that the subjected kingdoms of the earth would grovel before the conqueror's feet; by glorified Jesus meant crucified."

 Moses asked in Exodus 33:18, "Please show me your glorious presence." Exodus 34:6 tells us God then, "passed in front of him and proclaimed: 'The Lord! The Lord! A God who is compassionate and merciful, very patient, full of great loyalty and faithfulness.'" In our world, "glory" generally means power or wealth. In what ways do you see God's mercy, love, patience and loyalty as a greater kind of "glory"?

 In Romans 5:3, the apostle Paul said Christ's followers, "even take pride in our problems." Does your view of "glory" for your own life lie mainly in strength and accomplishments that others admire? What must happen inwardly for you to let God's power transform your struggles or pain into "glory"? How can you learn, at times of struggle, to say like Jesus in John 12:28, "Father, glorify your name!"?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you said that when you were lifted up on the cross, you would draw all people to you. Implant in me your heavenly definition of "glory," and use me to shine YOUR glory to all in my world. Amen.*

Wednesday's Lenten Service and Soup Supper are at the Unitarian Universalist Church at 6 PM.

Wednesday, March 18 – Read John **12:37-50**. John returned to the sad question of why many did not accept Jesus. He echoed Isaiah 6:10, a verse that NOT mean that God kept people from faith. Instead, it pointed to the truth that the way they chose to respond to God's light in Jesus hardened rather than softened their hearts. They lived

closed off from God, their neighbors, and their own soul, rather than being open to God's work inside them. Then he said Jesus summarized his ministry and his message by saying in verse 46, "I have come as a light into the world so that everyone who believes in me won't live in darkness."

 In John 8:12, Jesus had already said, "I am the light of the world." In John's Gospel, darkness represents spiritual blindness, being lost or broken, and evil. It is what happens we are separated from God or from others. For John, when we believe in Jesus, our eyes are opened. Suddenly we can see ourselves and the world with our eyes opened by Christ. Today's news reports and political arguments mostly make our world seem very, very dark indeed. In what ways do you see the world differently because you see it in Christ's light?

 The Message version of the Bible caught the meaning of John's Isaiah 6:10 quotation well: "First they wouldn't believe, then they couldn't." Those who refused to believe in Jesus saw the same signs as those who believed but responded differently. Some compare it to the way one type of clay softens in the sunlight, while another kind of clay bakes into bricks. What helps you to keep your heart open to the signs of love and grace God sends your way?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, keep my heart, my spirit, open and pliable to the sunlight of your love, grace and goodness. Keep "this little light of mine" shining to brighten the darkness. Amen.*

Thursday, March 19 – Read **John 13:1-20**. Typically, a slave had the job of washing tired, dirty feet that had walked on dusty or muddy roads all day, clad only in sandals. That's why the disciples, acutely conscious of their relative rank in the group, all shied away from washing the feet of the others. But Jesus didn't flinch and did the slave's work. Then he pointedly told his status-conscious disciples, "I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do."

 Living and travel conditions are vastly different today. Often today, though not always, washing someone else's feet is mainly symbolic, and does little to make that person's life better and more pleasant. Given that, what are some real-life ways you can meaningfully "wash the feet" of family members, neighbors, co-workers or other church members?

 There are deep, underlying spiritual questions this story asks each of us. Are we worried about who appears to be the greatest, or are we focused on humbly serving others? What's your answer? How has it changed over time? Do I see myself as better than others in certain categories in our world? If so, why? How does Jesus ask us to see ourselves, and our place in the world, based on this story? What would it mean for me to "glorify God" by serving others instead of seeking to be served?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, this is a hard prayer to pray; but I mean it. Teach me how to find my greatest glory in serving you and others in the ways you have equipped me to serve. Amen.*

Friday, March 20 – Read **John 13:21-38**. John 10:17-18 tells us that he wanted his readers to know that Jesus didn't accidentally stumble into his saving death but chose that course. In today's reading, he made a point of showing that Jesus knew who would betray him. His spiritual symbolism was clear: verse 30 says that when Judas left to betray Jesus, "it was night." Instead of bemoaning the darkness all around him, Jesus gave his followers a new commandment that radiated heaven's light: "As I have loved you, so you must love each other. This is how everyone will know you are my disciples."

 The command to love one another was not new. However, saying, "as I have loved you" took love to a whole new level. In what ways did Jesus' model of love expand love's reach, and deepen its intensity? After Jesus taught, but before John wrote his gospel, the apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22 identified love as the first and greatest fruit of the Spirit. Ask the Spirit to guide you in shaping your view of yourself in the light of Jesus' love, so that you in turn can love the people in your life well.

 Right after Judas left on his dark errand, Jesus returned to the idea of "glory." He said that now he had been glorified, and God had been glorified in him. From a human standpoint, there was no glory on that dark night. Scholar N. T. Wright wrote in his commentary *John for Everyone*, "Swords don't glorify the creator-God. Love does. Self-giving love, best of all." When, or through whom, have you gotten at least a glimpse of the glory of being a "champion" in living out self-giving love?

Prayer: *Lord God, let the light of your love increasingly shine out from me into the hurting, darkened world around me. Give me the courage to live that way even when others do not seem to see the value of it. Amen.*

Saturday, March 21 – Read **John 14:1-31**. Jesus' talk of going away puzzled his disciples. But he promised that he would return, and when he did his followers could always be with him. He gave them a vivid picture of God's house as a spacious place with plenty of room for everyone. He told them that in him, they'd seen the Father. Then, in a further glimpse into the mysteries of God, he promised not to leave them orphans, but to both send and come to them in the person of the "paraclete," a Greek word that meant companion, helper, advocate and comforter—the Holy Spirit.

 This passage really boils down to simple questions that every human must answer at some point in our lives. Who do I trust? What do I trust? When I get down to the bare bones at the bedrock of my life, what is that I put my trust and confidence and hope in? Jesus calls us to trust in him. John drives the point home in his gospel that we can not only believe in Jesus, but we can also count on him. How do you answer that "trust" question?

 At the end of this chapter, in verse 27, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don't be troubled or afraid." Have you ever found the "peace" the world gives ultimately empty and meaningless? How can trusting in Jesus, truly counting on him, give you the greater, deeper peace Jesus promised?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you promised, "I won't leave you as orphans, I will come to you." Thank you for always being my Companion and Comforter, even when my circumstances seem to be the hardest. Amen.*