Weekly Bible Reading - April 2020

//April 5//
The Cup of Suffering: John 18-19
The Last Supper dishes are washed, and Jesus and the disciples have made their way to the Garden. When confronted with arrest, Jesus and the disciples react differently: Jesus with confident surrender and Peter with a sword. Jesus ask him, "Shall I not drink of the cup of suffering the Father has given Me?"

That phrase is worth a wrestle, and that wrestle has been thrust upon many these days. A different kind of suffering, pale in comparison, but life-altering none-the-less.

Our human side tries to make things as normal as possible. But perhaps there is something in our souls that needs to embrace it and learn.

As you read this week, keep these thoughts in front of you:
- We are being allowed to struggle. How can that benefit the kingdom?
- Jesus lost His followers during the approach to the cross. Who do I need to assure of my presence in their life?
- The crucifixion took place prior to the Passover Sabbath. During the time Jesus was in the tomb, there was a remembrance of deliverance and The Deliverer. Am I taking taking time to recognize the constant presence of my Deliverer, or am I still finding ways to just occupy my time and mind?

//April 12//
The Resurrection of our Savior: John 20
He is RISEN! Just as He promised.
John 20 captures the greatest event in history, and it's worth our spending a week reading and re-reading. God, as man, came back from the dead and sprang from the grave to remind us that death has no power over those that believe.

Jesus asks Mary, upon her arrival at the tomb, two questions for us to ponder this week:
- **"Why are you crying?"**
  - This is a great check of our emotions in times of uncertainty. It's a BIG PICTURE question. He wasn't negating her emotions. He just wanted to let her know that the end of the story in her mind was not the true end. No matter what we are going through, our response can be KINGDOM-sized and kingdom-focused. We can retreat in emotion or march forward to accomplish what is still before us.
- **"Who are you looking for?"**
  - Mary was saddened not just for the loss of her Savior, but of her friend, teacher, and companion. So who are you looking for during this time? Jesus is big enough to fill the voids we have right now. Our minds might only desire to call to a provider or comforter, but our Spirits need a leader, a wise counsel, and an example of love. Or, like Thomas, we might someone to satisfy our doubts. WHOMEVER you need, He is our need.

//April 19//
John 21: Jesus and the Seven
Jesus re-appears to his disciples now to move them to action and remind them of their promise and motivation. His main message: your love for me will move you toward others.
- **"Do you love me?"**

Well that's easy enough to answer, right? But this was Peter's chance to wipe away doubts that had crept into His mind as he denied knowing Christ to save his own skin. Jesus knew the answer, but was Peter convinced in his own mind? That's a simple question, but ask yourself that every day this week and pray through the answer. Grow in confidence and faith more and more as you answer.
- **"Then feed my lambs."**

Our love means something. Not just to God but to the people surrounding us. Jesus is reminding Peter that "love does." Jesus believed in Peter's faith, and He believed in Peter's ability to let that spread. Our question is this: how do I allow the love that I feel move me toward HIs sheep?

//April 26//
Luke 24:13-34: The Walk to Emmaus
What an interesting story. It was Jesus and two of His followers, walking along together in anonymity. Why God chose to make it this way we can't be sure, but there are plenty of theories. As you digest this repeatedly this week, come up with your own thoughts and applications. Here are some questions to ponder while you do:

- Why do you think God blinded the men to whom it was they were walking?
- How do you reconcile the faith of these men with their faces that showed sadness?
- Why did Jesus rebuke them for their doubts?
- Why did God choose the moment of breaking bread to reveal His identity to the men?
- When is a time your heart burned in the presence of Jesus?