

Please welcome...

Preaching for us today is **Frank Dungan** from the North Clairemont church. Be sure to welcome him and thank him!

Encouragement in the Tests of Life

“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” James 1:12

“Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.” Isaiah 40:31

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

“The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him.” Nahum 1:7

February Birthdays

8 Zoie Perales 18 Hazel Brouillette 24 Jonathan Munayco

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
(Vacant)

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“Tests of Life...”

How to Face Your “Golgotha”

(Excerpted from HousetoHouse.com)

(Please read Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46)

Jesus was facing the greatest test of faith in His life. He did not look forward to the events that would culminate in His own funeral (such as it was). He knew exactly what was coming. Betrayal. Shame. Torture. Trauma. Thirst. Loneliness. Death. How could He look at that and not flinch? How do we handle the great challenges to our faith—our “Golgothas”? What happens when...

- The doctor says, “Three months, tops...”
- The dean says, “I’m sorry, but you can’t graduate till you take this course over...”
- The trooper reports, “You’ll have to wait till bail is set to get him out...”
- The funeral home phones, “When could we work out a time for you to view the body...”
- Your boss says, “I’m sorry, but business has been off, and we have to downsize somewhere...”
- Your wife says, “I just don’t love you any more...”?

Where do we turn when there’s nowhere to turn? Where do we put our feet when the rug has been jerked from under us? Jesus left us an example the night He faced “Golgotha” (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-22).

Jesus Sought a Place Where He Could Privately Address His Problem

Jesus was in great demand. It seemed He could never shake the crowd (“for there were many coming and going” Mark 6:31b). On some occasions He could not find “leisure so much as to eat” (Mark 6:31c). He never complained and always offered a hand to

the helpless. Still, on this night, He uncharacteristically made no time for publicans and sinners. The Great Physician's office was closed. He stepped out of the limelight and addressed the deep concerns in His own heart. He got out of eyesight of the multitudes, out of earshot of His disciples, and got in touch with His Father. He went deep into the bowels of Gethsemane to gather His thoughts, wrestle with God's purpose for His life, and to summon strength to face the inevitable.

What is the message for sufferers today? Take some time away from doctor's offices, business meetings, and family gatherings. Find a place to sort things out in your own mind. Spend some time in separation, meditation, and contemplation. Often, things do not look nearly as daunting after a good night's sleep as they did after a long day's turmoil. The first thing God told a depressed Elijah to do was to eat a good meal and get some sleep (1 Kings 19:5-8). We can usually handle things better if our minds and bodies are well rested. Jesus certainly emphasized rest—both spiritual (mental) and physical. He invited sinners to come to Him and rest (Matthew 11:28), instructed Peter, James, and John to “*sleep on now, and take your rest*” (Matthew 26:45), and insisted that the harried band, “*come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while...*” (Mark 6:31a). Further, one day He has promised that He will come back and grant us eternal rest (2 Thessalonians 1:7; Hebrews 3:11; Revelation 14:13).

Lesson #1: Facing Golgotha? Spend some time in Gethsemane.

Jesus Sought the Company of Close Friends

Friends were important to Jesus. It is interesting that twelve of the sixteen times the word “*friend*” is used in the New Testament, Jesus either said it, or it was used in His presence. He knew about friendship. He is, after all, the “*friend that sticketh closer than a brother*” (Proverbs 18:24), and the “*friend of publicans and sinners*” (Luke 7:34).

So we are not surprised to find that though Jesus sought solitude this dark night, He did not get too far from His friends. We may not fully understand all that was involved, but He took the Eleven with Him to the Garden. He invited three close friends—Peter, James, John—to go with Him into the Garden. Although He prayed alone, He kept coming back to see them...to be with them. He alternated

between His Father and His friends. He wanted them to stay awake and pray with Him (at least at the same time). It is safe to say that even the Son of God wanted friends around when the night was really dark.

God did not create us to be “lone rangers,” either. Solomon instructed us to pay attention to friendships, for one day we will need them. “*Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off*” (Proverbs 27:10). Good friends can make us “sharper” (Proverbs 27:17). It is not a wise man that keeps his problems all bottled up and never turns to anyone for counsel. “*Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established*” (Proverbs 15:22). Our friends may be unable to offer the perfect solution or even to come up with suitable words of comfort. Jesus' friends let Him down that night (they could not even stay awake!). Still, just speaking our mind is often a relief. “A joy shared is doubled; a burden shared is halved.”

Lesson #2: Don't try to climb Golgotha by ourselves.

Jesus Sought Comfort from the Father in Prayer

In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed as no man had ever prayed. He wrestled with severe mental anguish (Matthew 26:37-38). Mark says He was “*sore amazed*” (ekthambeo, “to astonish utterly; affright”) and “*very heavy*” (ademoneo, “to be in distress of mind”) (Matthew 14:33). If you had visited that spot at daybreak, you could have found a damp place where His sweat dripped during those prayers. He prayed until His capillaries burst into His sweat glands, and He literally sweated blood (Luke 22:44-45)! If you had found the dampened earth, it would have been tinged red.

Prayer is a privilege for God's child! He can lift up his tear-stained face to heaven and say, “*Father,*” and the God of the universe turns His head and bends His ear to listen. Imagine! What a joy to know that “***God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble***” (Psalm 46:1). He knows (Galatians 4:9), and He cares (1 Peter 5:7).

Lesson #3: Don't try to climb Golgotha on our feet. Use our knees.