

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

John 12:12-19

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 118:19-29 *This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.* (v23)

2 Corinthians 12:8-11

Matthew 26-27

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature & to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will & in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- 2 Corinthians 12:8-11

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, & calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. ¹¹ I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing.

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

- 1 Humankind is alienated from God due to sin, death, & the devil & we are powerless to change it. Jesus, as the Suffering Servant, comes to redeem us. How do the "servant songs" show that our reconciliation with God the Father is done by God the Son? In other words, that God is one who is reconciled (with/for us) & that God is the one who does the reconciling? *See all four "servant songs" Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-7, 52:13-53:12 (& 61:1-3).* What verbal images in those passages suggest Jesus' humiliations during Holy Week? What words suggest that the Servant was always faithful to God?
- 2 What prevents us from skipping from the Palm Sunday story right to Easter Sunday? *See Small Catechism, Large Catechism: Creed 2nd Article available bookofconcord.org Acts 2:36; Romans 6:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:17-18, 2:2, 7-10, 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 7:9-14*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

- 3 Holocaust survivor Dr. Victor Frankl introduces readers to the concept of "redemptive suffering" in Man's Search for Meaning. In a nutshell, unavoidable suffering is reframed from pointless to significant when a future good or virtuous outcome can result from its path (cf. *American Cancer Society's "More Birthdays" campaign, or a couple whose "hard times" result in staying married, raising children, & encouraging others.*) Think back on five periods of significant suffering in your life; without trivializing or instrumentalizing them, what worse outcomes could have resulted & what better outcomes did occur? Note: "living to tell about it" is a good outcome. *See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logotherapy#Discovering_meaning*
- 4 Thinking on those same 5 episodes, how did they result in humility and new meaning for you in everyday life? How is that connected looking to the interests of others?

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

- 5 "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven," explain how that a) enables Christian immorality or b) encourages those still dead in their sins? *See Romans 6*
- 6 How do vv9-10 remind you that when one is most dependent on God ("weakest"), one is also God's "strongest" instrument? How does this make you more open to God's leading when joining Jesus on his mission to pre-Christians? (Note: "dependent" does **not** mean passive, helpless, ineffective, feeble, or silent; cf. *Romans 10:17*)

Prayer of the Day from SundaysandSeasons.com. Copyright 2026 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies license SB140201. Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Devotion prepared by Rev. Jared Stillions. Copyright 2026; may be reproduced & shared for personal, non-sale use, provided this copyright notice is included. Previous studies available stpeterhallettsville.org/blog

Palm Sunday of Our Lord's Passion

03.29.26

Series: St. Paul Hugs His Cactus

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Dealing with our souls' ugly parts

Humility & New Meaning

Relying on Christ's power & sufficient grace

to become a person of humility, looking past self to the interest of others

-Notes-

hugyourcactus.org

KEY VERSE: But [the Lord] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you,
for my power is made perfect in weakness." (v9a)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

Christ humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him
& gave him the name that is above every name. (*Philippians 2:8-9*)

Prayer of the Day from SundaysandSeasons.com. Copyright 2026 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies license SB140201. Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Devotion prepared by Rev. Jared Stillions. Copyright 2026; may be reproduced & shared for personal, non-sale use, provided this copyright notice is included. Previous studies available stpeterhallettsville.org/blog

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

John 12:12-19

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 118:19-29 *This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. (v23)*

2 Corinthians 12:8-11

Matthew 26-27

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature & to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will & in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- 2 Corinthians 12:8-11

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, & calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. ¹¹ I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing.

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

- 1 Humankind is alienated from God due to sin, death, & the devil & we are powerless to change it. Jesus, as the Suffering Servant, comes to redeem us. How do the "servant songs" show that our reconciliation with God the Father is done by God the Son? In other words, that God is one who is reconciled (with/for us) & that God is the one who does the reconciling? *See all four "servant songs" Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-7, 52:13-53:12 (& 61:1-3).* What verbal images in those passages suggest Jesus' humiliations during Holy Week? What words suggest that the Servant was always faithful to God?
- 2 What prevents us from skipping from the Palm Sunday story right to Easter Sunday? *See Small Catechism, Large Catechism: Creed 2nd Article available bookofconcord.org Acts 2:36; Romans 6:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:17-18, 2:2, 7-10, 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 7:9-14*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

- 3 Holocaust survivor Dr. Victor Frankl introduces readers to the concept of "redemptive suffering" in Man's Search for Meaning. In a nutshell, unavoidable suffering is reframed from pointless to significant when a future good or virtuous outcome can result from its path (cf. *American Cancer Society's "More Birthdays" campaign, or a couple whose "hard times" result in staying married, raising children, & encouraging others.*) Think back on five periods of significant suffering in your life; without trivializing or instrumentalizing them, what worse outcomes could have resulted & what better outcomes did occur? Note: "living to tell about it" is a good outcome. *See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logotherapy#Discovering_meaning*
- 4 Thinking on those same 5 episodes, how did they result in humility and new meaning for you in everyday life? How is that connected looking to the interests of others?

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

- 5 "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven," explain how that a) enables Christian immorality or b) encourages those still dead in their sins? *See Romans 6*
- 6 How do vv9-10 remind you that when one is most dependent on God ("weakest), one is also God's "strongest" instrument? How does this make you more open to God's leading when joining Jesus on his mission to pre-Christians? (Note: "dependent" does **not** mean passive, helpless, ineffective, feeble, or silent; cf. *Romans 10:17*)

Prayer of the Day from SundaysandSeasons.com. Copyright 2026 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies license SB140201. Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Devotion prepared by Rev. Jared Stillions. Copyright 2026; may be reproduced & shared for personal, non-sale use, provided this copyright notice is included. Previous studies available stpeterhallettsville.org/blog

Palm Sunday of Our Lord's Passion

03.29.26

Series: St. Paul Hugs His Cactus

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Dealing with our souls' ugly parts

Humility & New Meaning

Relying on Christ's power & sufficient grace

to become a person of humility, looking past self to the interest of others

-Notes-

hugyourcactus.org

KEY VERSE: But [the Lord] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you,
for my power is made perfect in weakness." (v9a)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

Christ humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him
& gave him the name that is above every name. (*Philippians 2:8-9*)

Prayer of the Day from SundaysandSeasons.com. Copyright 2026 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies license SB140201. Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Devotion prepared by Rev. Jared Stillions. Copyright 2026; may be reproduced & shared for personal, non-sale use, provided this copyright notice is included. Previous studies available stpeterhallettsville.org/blog