
Weekly Schedule

Wed, Apr 7th (Carrollton)	Area Prayer @ Charles & Mercy's res (7 PM)
Fri, Apr 9th (Mesquite)	Fasting Prayer @ Parsonage (10 AM)
Sat, Apr 10th (Murphy)	Prayer Meeting @ Saju & Suma's res. (6:30 PM)
Sun, Apr 11th (Metro)	English Worship (9:30 AM)

Prayer for the Nations: Belize & British Virgin Islands (Latin America)*

Belize

- Formerly British Honduras, Belize was the last Central American country to gain its independence in 1981.
- With the second largest barrier reef in the world and more than half of its land as protected forests, Belize's main source of income is eco-tourism.
- Most Belizeans would call themselves Christians, but in each different culture there are underlying superstitions or black magic. Pray that Spanish speakers, Caribbean Garifuna and Mayans would all have the chance to hear the truth about Jesus in a way that is culturally relevant.
- Many new Christians fall away because there isn't enough follow-up to help people understand how to live out their faith.

British Virgin Islands

- The British Virgin Islands are a cluster of 60 Caribbean islands, of which 15 have people living on them.
- Tourism is big business for the islands.
- In recent years their government has tightened up laws to keep a closer watch on off shore banking, because of the mafia organisations it was attracting.
- The islands' motto is a biblical one; 'where there's no vision the people will perish'. Use this as a prayer for the Christians living there - that they would have a passion to see others saved.

* http://operationworld.24-7prayer.com/country.php?country_id=165, 168



metrochurch of God



*Celebrating the Presence of God
Demonstrating the Love of God
Communicating the Word of God
Educating the People of God*

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"...the LORD is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge."
(Ps 94:22)

Welcome

The Test of the Cross

Praise the Lord. Welcome to the house of the Lord as we worship the risen Lord in the beauty of his splendor. Today the Christian world is celebrating yet another Easter day—the resurrection of the Lord defying and defeating death and its claims. Thus he became triumphant ensuring victory over sin and Satan. In him and in his victory we have confidence for our victory over the powers of sin and Satan. But this victory was made possible by the passion of the cross. The cross preceded the resurrection and ensured that the victory would be decisive and complete.

Last Friday the Christian world celebrated yet one more ‘Good Friday’ a celebration of the suffering of Christ from Gethsemane to Golgotha. I take this opportunity to lay before you seven tests that the cross brings before us as it played in the life of these people. The cross becomes significant only because it relates to us humans in our life situations.

1. **Test of Commitment:** The life of Simon Peter (Read the story in Matthew 26: 69ff; Mark 14: 66ff; Luke 22: 55ff; John 18: 16ff, 25-27) The cross became a test of commitment for Peter because of the prediction of Jesus that Peter is going to deny him three times before the rooster crows twice. All his lofty commitment that he is ready to die for the master was brought under sharp scrutiny and he failed the test of commitment. Even today the cross is calling from us a test of commitment. Can we stand up for Christ in a situation like that of Peter? Can we be faithful to our covenantal promises?

2. **Test of Grace:** The release of Barabbas (Read the story in Matthew 27: 15, 16; Mark 15: 7; Luke 23: 18ff; John 18: 40) The man who was caught for his insurrection by the Romans was destined to die on the cross. He was not merely a robber but one who wanted to overthrow the Roman empire’s yoke by his own power. He failed in it miserably and now awaiting death saw the prince of Glory taking his place. His cross was already prepared and which now becomes the cross of the Savior. Christ took his place so that he may go free. The tradition according to Jewish Mishnah prescribed that ‘ a Passover lamb may be offered for one whom they have promised to bring out of prison’. The cross brings the test of our grace to its foremost. We did not receive what we deserved and that is the language of grace. Are we standing in the grace which we have obtained?

3. **Test of Friendship:** The friendship of Pilate and Herod (Read the story in Luke 23: 6ff) Before the cross event Herod and Pilate were enemies and since Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, the enmity was restored and now they became friends. Bible does not mention what may be the cause of this enmity. The NT is very clear that the anger of God was coming upon the ungodly and we are strangers and enemies of God. But with the cross came the reconciliation and we became friends with God. In Christ we become closer to God and it cancels the enmity and a new bond of friendship is established. Jesus no wonder called his disciples his friends. On the other hand Judas acted as a friend and gave a deceptive kiss. But even today the cross calls us to see the true nature of our friendship with the Lord.

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The Test of the Cross

(Continued)

4. **Test of opportunity:** Simon of Cyrene (Read the story in Matthew 27: 32ff; Mark 15:21ff; Luke 23: 26ff) A Jewish man who was coming from Cyrene, a port city in North Africa where Jewish settlements were found since 74 B.C according to Josephus, the Jewish historian. In two passages it says that he was compelled to carry the cross. He was not sympathetic towards Jesus, because of which he carried the cross. Yet in the annals of church history it is assumed that he became a follower of Christ and his sons Alexander and Rufus became famous in the Lord. Even today the cross is calling you with a opportunity to become and do something for the cause of the Kingdom of the Lord. Our smallest act of faith and grace will not go unnoticed by the Lord. Are you using your present opportunities?

5. **Test of Trust:** The Dying Thief (Read the story in Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32 and Luke 23: 39ff) In Matthew and Mark both the robbers were reviling Jesus. But one had a change of heart may be after watching Jesus for sometime now. In Christ’s words ‘Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing’ he must have found heart consolation. He pleads with Jesus to remember him when Christ returns in glory. In his cry we see that he has thrown himself completely at the feet of Jesus in absolute trust. He has nothing to look back and only an indefinite future, but he casts himself completely in the confidence of trusting in Jesus as he approaches his own death. The test of cross for us is can we trust the Lord with our life and all that pertains to life.

6. **The Test of Belief:** The Centurion at the Cross (Read the story in Matthew 27: 54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23: 47) This centurion was responsible for carrying out the punishment of Jesus. From the palace of Pilate to the Pretorium guards barracks and then to the place of the skull he was totally involved in the death of Jesus. He must have come across all what the people, Jewish leaders and Pilate said about Jesus and now in his statement that this Jesus is truly the “Son of God” we see a confession of faith. After having observed everything closely he finally believed that Jesus is truly what he claimed to be. The test of cross is bring us back to our fundamental belief system. We must not see Jesus merely as human but truly the Son of God, the Second Person of Trinity and the very God of the very God. Do we believe today in a postmodern society that Christ is truly what he claimed to be?

7. **Test of Discipleship:** Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (Read the story in Matthew 27: 57ff; Mark 15:42ff; Luke 23:50ff; John 19: 38ff) Two people about whom we relatively see very little when it came to being the public disciples of Jesus we suddenly find them at the foot of the cross. In the cross their secret discipleship was exposed and they are ready to take the challenge of their calling. They both are ready to sacrifice their own tomb and many pounds of spices respectively for Jesus. When duty called them they did not compromise and were found as true disciples when most of his previous disciples ran away due to fear of the Jews. The cross calls to focus on the cost of our discipleship. Are we ready to follow Christ at any cost?

It is my prayer that these tests of the cross would become a source of blessing as you meditate on these Scripture references for further edification.

In Christ Alone,
Pastor Satish Kumar