



# REVEALED

REUNION

Holy Week Devotional - 2018

# REVEALED

*by steve isaac*

# INTRODUCTION

This year I have asked seven couples to pray and then collaborate with one another to share a unique blend of insight, scripture, and personal life experiences to the Holy Week journey. This was not an easy assignment! But they have come through in a wonderful and inspiring way to make this year's devotional something very special. Our theme for Holy Week is "Revealed." Each couple took a day of the passover week of our Lord to share their thoughts on how Christ has been revealed to them.

Sunday - Revealed in Triumph

Monday - Revealed in Moment

Tuesday - Revealed in the Tension

Wednesday - Revealed in Contempt

Thursday - Revealed in Temptation

Friday - Revealed in Death

Saturday - Revealed in Trust

On Resurrection Sunday we will share our message "Revealed in Love." My prayer for you and our entire community at Reunion is that we will walk together on this amazing journey of being faithful to our faith, and that Christ will reveal Himself to you in ways you have never known or experienced before!

pastor steve isaac, reunion community

## SUNDAY

# REVEALED IN TRIUMPH

Reading: Psalm 13, Ecclesiastes 3:1

There are seasons in our lives where we do not have a revelation of God's triumph. In those times we often feel confused and alone, even forgotten. It's like suddenly moving from summer to winter in our lives. What was once full of light and life now is dark and dying. The warm days turn cold and the trees and plants seem to die. David wrote in Psalm 13:1-2 "How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?"

We often fall into seasons of despair only because we do not see what He is doing behind the scenes, not fully understanding what His plans are. As we wonder what is going on, it seems that God is far away. But, we continue moving forward hoping and believing that our plans and goals are all a part of what He has for our lives. When we realize that might not be the case we feel abandoned, hurt and lost. We can become consumed with the problem rather than the triumph God has for us in that problem.

Becky and I had always wanted to have a family. Even during the days that we were dating we had talked about how we wanted to be parents. Just a year into our marriage we decided to "just see what happens". Months passed and no pregnancy came. We started to think something may be wrong. We went to the doctor and began some testing which turned into additional doctors and procedures to correct issues that were making it difficult for us to conceive. Officially we were an infertile couple.

We made our plans on how we were going to overcome this infertility and build our family. There were so many tears shed and so many prayers of desperation and heartache. Praying for God to give us the answer that we thought was right, and in the time we thought was right. Months

became a year, then two, three... We were so broken. I remember hearing Becky praying "God, please just take the desire of being a Mom away from me". We believed God was going to answer our prayers, but we couldn't see His triumph in our time of pain. Times of doubt came into our hearts. People would pray over us, yet the answer we thought was the answer never came. The pain we felt was intense, seeing all our friends having babies while we were in our own lonely place. We couldn't understand why something that would be so wonderful for us was so difficult to achieve when we knew that God wanted us to have a family. He was the one that brought us together and kept us together; He gave us the desire to have kids, so why was this so hard? Why wasn't God answering all of the prayers that we and our family and friends were praying for? Maybe we just weren't trying hard enough. We were determined to defeat this beast called infertility. These were the dark stormy days of winter in our lives for sure.

About two years into our battle with infertility as we were seeing the specialist, Becky brought up the idea that maybe it was God's plan for us to adopt. Adoption? But I wanted to defeat this thing! I said maybe, but let's give this more time. The treatments became more aggressive and more expensive. I thought, "God why are You not allowing us to conceive? Why do we have to go through this rollercoaster each month praying and hoping that this would be the month that the treatment works?" This dark time was consuming our lives. It was emotionally and physically draining.

It was during this dark time that Becky would occasionally mention that maybe we were supposed to adopt. I felt that would be just giving up and accepting defeat. What we didn't realize was that God was wanting to reveal His triumph. He was wanting to reveal His perfect plan for us.

Finally, we had reached a point where the treatments that Becky was receiving were creating health issues for her. It was then I realized what God had been saying to Becky. We both knew the goal was not to defeat

the infertility but rather to have a family. God really did have a plan, I was just expecting it to come in a different way. We decided to stop all fertility treatments and pursue adoption immediately.

After four years of not being able to see or understand God's plan and timing, we were finally free. God was triumphant. He had been working all along on His plan, and His plan was perfect. We started our adoption process in January of 1996. We didn't know that God was working all things according to His time and purpose, He revealed to us His triumphant power over our situation. He had already planned who our first child was going to be.

Five months into our adoption process we met a young lady that was five months pregnant (yes, five months!). We left our first meeting with her and Becky said to me "she's the one, she's carrying our child." I tried to be realistic and told her to not get her hopes up, this will take time. God revealed His triumph in His perfect plan. Ten months after our adoption journey began, our oldest son, Zachariah was born October 7, 1996. Two and a half years later, God grew our family again through an unexpected phone call. And ten days later we brought home our son Anthony. God's triumph had been revealed, not in the way that we thought, but it came just the way He had planned.

Steve and Becky Merryman

# MONDAY

## REVEALED IN THE MOMENT

Reading: Ephesians 4:29, Philippians 4:6-7

When you marry someone you take vows to love for better or for worse, in sickness and in health. We automatically assume that this applies only to each other. In reality, although we don't repeat these vows out loud for all to hear, whenever we come into a genuinely invested relationship, we subconsciously promise these same things.

About 8 months ago, tragedy struck. During those few months, there were many challenging and critical moments. Our niece passed away unexpectedly. She was joy, laughter, passion, and had a smile that could light up any room. Her type of passing leaves a distinctive kind of grief, filled with unanswered questions, and at times immense guilt. This is a topic we don't openly discuss. It is still quite painful. With pain comes growth and change. This loss has definitely changed our family. The moment we heard of her passing we knew things had to change in our family. We knew that we as parents, friends, and people in general had to change. God revealed things to us through her passing. In these moments God reminded us once again of the importance of our words.

The Holy Spirit revealed in those painful moments of grief and loss that our words can build or break another person's heart and spirit. What we say is a direct line to our heart, and our heart a direct line to our spirit. He reminded us that He lives in us, and that even in the little moments love should always come first.

He revealed to us that it is always more important to live in the moment, and to do that we must learn to live in Him, which we discover is allowing Him to live in us. Memories are made when we choose to be present. These moments are brief and they will pass quickly. So we savor the opportunity

to be present in someone's life.

A little guy once told me that we need to love people on the good days and the bad. I've learned you must love them on the bad, because that is when they needed love the most. Speaking of that little guy, he showed us what loving someone in sickness and in health really looks like. As a family we experienced a moment where time stopped. Our future felt paralyzed for a brief moment. Our energetic, spunky, wild 4 year old was about to battle his own Goliath. At a time where it would have been only natural to let fear and doubt consume you, God came in and scooped us into his mercies before the enemy had a chance to stir our hearts. He placed prayer warriors around us at a time when we felt overwhelmed and at certain moments angry. He gave us family when ours was distant. In those anxious moments He revealed simple truths to us.

Do not be anxious about anything. Pray and be thankful in every situation. Present your needs to God. God's peace will guard our hearts and minds.

God revealed to us that the only way we were going to get through this season of our life with peace in our hearts was to trust in his plan. We did not need to worry about tomorrow or the weeks to come. He revealed that in some moments and times of turbulence, all you can do is pray. We do not control the bigger picture. We cannot fix everything, but He can.

The most important thing God has revealed to us in these "big life moments" is the impact of love. As a couple we take our vows to each other seriously. As human beings we never really considered these vows in regards to others. God has shown us that being invested in someone's life means loving with prayer and encouragement. It means being kind before being judgmental. Most importantly, it means being present and appreciating the time you have with them - even on the bad days.

Brad and Karena Krueger



## TUESDAY

# REVEALED IN TENSION

Reading: Hebrews 4:15-16, Philippians 4:8-9, Romans 8:32-39, Psalm 23

It is hard to imagine the kind of tension and heaviness Jesus must have felt in the days prior to His crucifixion. The tension surrounding Jesus and the High Priests in and around the temple was building and growing until it was felt by everyone in Jerusalem. By week's end they all would turn against Him, with the exception of His closest followers. The Romans used their control, to oppress and intimidate the people, but the Jewish Priests and Sanhedrim leaders used their power for corruption and manipulation of the people - now that is tension from every side. Looking ahead to the night of the Passover in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed so intently that his capillaries burst! The bible says His sweat became like drops of blood that fell to the ground. I believe this was Jesus' first shedding of blood for the tension of our obstacles, stresses, anxieties, and fears. Scripture reveals that we have a High Priest who not only sympathizes with us, but always intercedes for us.

We all have times of difficulty, stress and anxiety in our lives. And, in those times (at least for us), we feel very alone - that is tension. There are times where circumstances make us feel like everything and everyone is against us - that is tension. Of course it is then that the enemy likes to throw those "what if" thought bombs at us. Things like, "what if I lose my job?," "what if my spouse leaves me?," "what if I can't pay my bills?," "what if my health fails me?," "what if things don't work out?" Sound familiar?

Yet somehow we try to exist happily and normally in that tension, fear and doubt. This is not God's plan for you! In those times we must learn to trust, believe and have faith His Spirit is there revealing His truth for us to embrace, absorb, and find rest. Remember, all of the tension and

difficulty of the above is nothing compared to what He went through for us - and He will reveal to us why He did!

Fifteen years ago I had a stroke that paralyzed my left side, and left me unable to speak. I could not swallow any liquids, not even my own saliva. Carol was also 9 months pregnant at the time in high risk protocol. The doctors told her that I may not make it, and if I did, I would be unable to ever care for myself. I was lying in ICU thinking of how everything was against us, and then the Lord spoke to my heart and said “think on just, pure, good and excellent things” So, in our greatest moment of tension, that is exactly what I did. We had believers praying for us across the country, and encouraging us in the Lord. God gave us hope, and miraculously healed my body. Carol was able to give birth to our son without complication, I was able to see my son come into this world two weeks after leaving the hospital. Hallelujah!

That tense and adverse time in our lives made us think of the tense and adverse time Jesus spent in prayer for each of us in the Garden. Don't you think Jesus (the God-man) thought of these things too? The tension of... Is there another way to make this work? Can this cup pass from Me? Is this truly Your will, Father? Is this really the way to victory over sin, death, and the grave? But in that tension came the greatest revelation ever known for the human heart. He could not be spared - so we would be spared, He would be delivered up - so we could be delivered up. He would be separated - so that nothing could ever separate us from His love!

Bryan and Carol Thompson

## WEDNESDAY

# REVEALED IN CONTEMPT

Reading: Romans 9:20, Matthew 6:25-34

When we were first given the theme for this devotion it was difficult for us to determine how contempt played a role in revealing anything to us. We both thought we understood the meaning of the word but drew a blank on how to apply it to our lives. A friend suggested when they had trouble with a word they would look at the synonyms. One of the synonym studies revealed "Contempt is disapproval tinged with disgust." What was difficult to apply just minutes before became completely overwhelming. How many times had either of us disapproved of something we saw on TV or read in a Facebook post so much that it caused disgust. Whether or not our view was right I could think of hundreds of times just this year alone. We could literally write a book.

Then we asked ourselves were there times in our life that we felt contempt about decisions we had to make? Had lack of faith caused us to question God's plans? Looking back the decision not to move for my job has been one of the most tumultuous times in our lives, and the one that raised the most questions by us and those around us. The company I worked for was acquired and moved all of its operations to Dallas, Texas. Our family didn't want to move but at the time the job market in my area of expertise was very tight. To make things more difficult my salary was not going to be easy to duplicate and we had just about righted the ship from losing our house a few years before. We prayed for other positions that would allow us to stay in Arizona, but it became increasingly clear if we didn't want to take a massive step back financially, moving was probably the only option.

Everyone wanted us to stay, but everything financially was telling us to

leave. Through it all God seemed silent. Not silent as if He wasn't listening to us. It was more like a parent that is letting their child make a decision; neither one is necessarily wrong but they know which one would be better. We probably wouldn't use the word contempt to describe how we felt about the choice but we certainly did not enjoy it. For the longest time we didn't really make a decision. We packed as if we were moving and I kept looking for other positions as if we were staying, all the while waiting for God to open up a new job for us or give us a peace about moving. Neither happened. The time finally came to within a month of having to load the truck and move, quit my job and collect our last paycheck.

It was at that time we decided to really give the decision to God. "It's not about the money God, just let us know where You want us to be." Seemed simple enough. If He provided a job before we had to load up we would stay, if not we would leave. We didn't realize God had another option. "Since it's not about the money just go ahead and quit even though you don't have another job lined up and trust Me." We don't recall hearing these words but something made us decide to do exactly that.

For the first month we were fine, there was enough money in our 401k to pay our bills and a job was surely just around the corner. By the time we received the last of the money from our retirement fund there was still no job. Again, we wouldn't use the word contempt but it certainly seemed the wrong decision had been made. Why would God allow us to be in this situation when we were pretty sure we followed His guidance when we made this choice? It was during this time God began to reveal something significant to us. Had we ever really given the outcome over to Him? We had prayed and asked God for guidance but in the end it was about finding a job and taking care of our family. It wasn't truly, "...just let us know where you want us to be." While we didn't openly show contempt we certainly disapproved of where our decision had landed us. "We listened to what you wanted us to do God and this certainly isn't what we were hoping

for.” That was our problem. It wasn’t until we stopped worrying about the money and the job that our eyes finally opened. God was waiting for us to truly trust Him. We didn’t need to agree or disagree with what He was doing. We just needed to accept that His plan was for us to stay here and be used by Him. Once we understood that, everything else fell into place.

Contempt is tricky. At its core it is simply not ascribing the proper respect to something or someone. Most of us would not say we have contempt for God, but many times we question His decisions. Why would He allow this to happen to us, or why doesn’t He help in this instance? To ask these questions we are really saying “Well I wouldn’t have let this happen this way.” In essence we are saying we know better than Him. While it is certainly ok to ask God what we are supposed to learn when dealing with situations we should be careful to do so with an attitude of reverence.

While often times the words “Trust in God” are easier said than done, God revealed that He truly does have us in His hands. We may not always see the good in our circumstances but if we love Him and do not resent Him for them, He is always going to use them for our good.

John and Dannielle Basso

## THURSDAY

# REVEALED IN TEMPTATION

Reading: Philippians 4:7, 1 Corinthians 10:13,  
James 5:16, Matthew 11:28-30

When trials come, they always bring with them certain temptations. Whether those trials are finances, communication, illness, aging parents, death and grief, parenting challenges or child behavior, whatever it is - each comes with its own unique but certain temptation. This is a part of life and living in the human condition! Learning to navigate and overcome those times of temptation is something that God wants to teach us. And, if we listen to His words and learn His ways, He will reveal the truth needed to navigate and resist any temptation.

We all have our weaknesses and our strengths, but it is clear that our greatest temptation always seems to be whether we will respond in our own way and our own will, or respond in Gods' way and in His will.

When we respond to life and it's many situations and circumstances in our own way and will, we have chosen to operate in our own strengths and our own resources, which are finite (definitely limited). We do not see that we are simply making the situation or circumstance harder... and most often is harder on the ones we love the most.

Frequently in marriage, when we act in our own way and will, we inadvertently transfer the consequences and stress onto our spouse. This will cause the marriage partnership to suffer. Not only the marriage, but our relationship with God. Life gets hard, and acting in our own will leaves us feeling alone.

God has revealed that when we respond in His way and His will, and trust Him completely with all that we have and all that we love, we can experience His peace amidst chaos and crisis. When we surrender

our will and trust in Him for our best interest, He reveals His greatness and His love for us. God is so big! He is bigger than our trials, bigger than our fears, bigger than our temptations. He makes a way for us to escape to Him. When we do this, our relationship with Jesus Christ deepens and this in turn can strengthen our relationship with our spouse, family and friends.

Vance and Sherry Perry

## FRIDAY

# REVEALED IN DEATH

Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:38-58, Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12, Matthew 27

Jesus didn't want to die. It is at the same time the most comforting and most unnerving aspect of the Gospel. Jesus was fully God, and he was fully man. On "Good" Friday, He would face the most challenging day of his short life. Though he knew no sin, though he loved perfectly, despite his mercy, compassion, and devotion [or maybe because of] he now faced false accusations and did not utter a word. As Isaiah had foretold, more than 600 years prior to this day, like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so the Savior of mankind would be silent and not answer his accusers. He had become less to be more, he was denying himself in order to transform the heart of man, his story was exploding forth from the act of self-sacrifice, the example that being right is not the pinnacle, and that life is more than the whisper that we desperately cling to.

O' death, where is your victory, O' death where is your sting – swallowed by triumphant life!

### Todd

My life has always followed a path – peace like a river – that cuts through the landscape before me – my story exploding forth from my actions. Sometimes those actions were self-sacrificial, often they were self-serving. Not until my soul discovered its counterpart did I fully understand the gravity of life and death, the real-life act of self-sacrificial Love that Jesus so boldly defined through his life and teaching. I have become one flesh with another flawed human being, and together we have embarked upon the greatest adventure known to man – we have together made life. I have never been afraid to die – I am made whole in Jesus and am invited



to enter into his presence [existence] upon my death – let's go! However, God has revealed to me that life is not all about me. Have I done what is needed to secure eternity for my entire family – and not just them, but for my entire self? You see, no longer do I exist as just my SELF – I have intertwined my soul with another and through love have become ONE. My death has forever changed from a personal encounter with God to a shared encounter with those God has joined to me. Jesus looked to God and said, "Why have you forsaken me? Is there another way?... Yeah, that's what I thought... I Love you and I Love them... Let's go!" I don't want my family to ever hurt, feel pain, or die [even though I know they must and will] ... I do, however, want my family to know God [LOVE] forever. God has revealed to my heart and my intellect – my soul – that death is the collective doorway to eternity.

### Amy

For as long as I can remember, my biggest fear has been death. As a child I would have nightmares about my siblings dying with my attempts to save them to no avail. I would sob uncontrollably at the thought of myself dying. At twenty-six my life was turned upside down. During that year I lost both of my parents, all my grandparents, and an aunt. All of them would succumb to my biggest fear – death. It became up-close and extremely personal. There were no words spoken or hugs given that could bring me comfort – I was lost.

When I was thirty-three, my life was changed once again. I met and fell madly in love with my husband. He challenged me physically, intellectually, and most profoundly, spiritually. I started to feel again. I rediscovered my heart and my soul. I learned of Jesus' life, and then of course his death. When I read what he went through and think about death now, I see with an entirely new perspective. Jesus didn't want to die, yet He knew that it was inevitable. He knew that there would be great suffering, and still he

made the sacrifice for us all. Wow!

Reunion Community, God's Word [Jesus], my amazing husband, and beautiful children – they all bring me comfort when I think of death now. I am no longer lost because of what God has revealed to me... because I followed His call, and I found Him.

Todd and Amy Bookout

## SATURDAY

# REVEALED IN TRUST

Reading: John 16:21-33, Psalm 22

### Bre

The Sabbath after the crucifixion of Jesus seemed quiet on the outside. People staying home mourning, grieving and processing what they had just witnessed. Trust is putting faith into a person or thing - many had put their trust in Jesus.

Trust is a choice, sometimes it's easy and sometimes it's difficult. In the past we've all had people that we've looked up to and followed. I think back to those people and the times they let me down, how my trust for them changed.

I think of my husband, David, and how I never wanted to hold my trust from him. Of course things have happened in our marriage that have caused us to doubt, but moments later I think about our covenant and what we have promised each other. We make adjustments, but we don't stop trusting each other. What does trust look like? In relationships, it must be changing all the time. Through all of these trials, our trust actually gets stronger for each other, until death do us part.

Christ's promises were uniquely different. He said he would go away, but would be coming back. What seemed like the end (Death) was the beginning to something new (Life). Christ's death was difficult for everyone who loved him. When Jesus gave his life... everyone asked why? What's happening? Some claimed, "No, I don't know him." People stayed away - they had a change in relationship. Suddenly, everything Jesus said and did seemed far away and impossible. How could they trust him to come back when they saw him die, and believe what He said to be true? The teachable moment for the followers of Jesus came in the

time of silence, when they realized they had every reason to trust him. In their grief and disbelief it seemed they couldn't until Christ revealed what he had promised to be true. They needed more faith so they could fully trust... and with that limited faith came grace. Greater than they deserved, greater than they could imagine, Grace unfathomable.

This is the same grace that meets our needs every single day and restores our trust when our faith is weak. We can doubt, worry, fear, deny, get angry, cast blame, play the ... "what if" game. None the less it is the same grace that meets our doubts, and says "shhhh, just trust me. I got this." When we don't know how to trust Jesus, he still shows his love by dying on the cross. In our waiting we have a choice. We choose to trust he is who he said he is. We trust that everything we've been through with Jesus, and all of his promises will come true. The love we developed in our relationship with him hasn't died. Even when we don't understand what's happening and can't figure out how some things are going to "realistically" play out, we can TRUST.

Jesus' love meets us in the quiet day after his death. The day when we're not sure how to keep ourselves together because everything around us feels different. There's a gentle rustle in the wind that pushes you. You may hear the splashing of puddles in the rain. You may feel the sun kiss your face. All of this is Christ saying that you can trust him. Because he loves you, he died for you, and he's hasn't left you.

## David

After Jesus' death and before His resurrection, all of His followers and believers were left in this state of having to trust in him. Would everything that he said come to pass, or would he remain in the tomb forever? These situations occur for all of us in life, in our relationship with Christ and with each other. The trust we place in others is not realized until we actually have to put our trust to the test.

Even before Jesus' death, he told his disciples that their trust would falter, that their resolve would fail. He knew that he would be betrayed and denied, and he told them this even before it occurred. He encouraged them to trust him and not be discouraged in their failures. Jesus loved and trusted others beyond their own abilities to love or trust him back.

Jesus' example shows the nature of trust in a relationship. Trust doesn't just mean that you're counting on someone to never make a mistake, but that you're counting on them to remain committed to the covenants and promises they've made. Trusting in the character of someone else is an act of love.

In our marriage, I've come to recognize trust as a critical part of our relationship remaining effective and healthy. With that comes admitting and fixing mistakes, taking every step to prevent future violations of trust, and starting every day committed to preserving trust in your relationship. The disciples failed to trust Jesus in the days leading to his crucifixion, yet his trust was well placed. Those that kept fighting for his trust went on to live their lives dedicated to him, founding his church and spreading his word around the world.

David and Bre Schneider





reunion community church  
8153 w. cactus road  
peoria, az 85345  
623-979-5465  
[reunioncommunity.org](http://reunioncommunity.org)