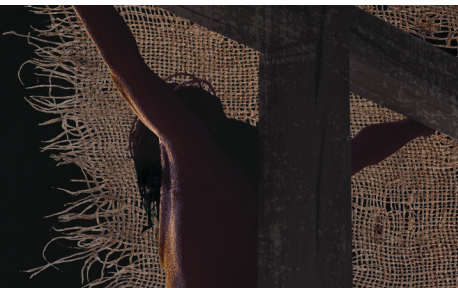


*No wonder  
they  
crucified  
Him*



FIRST MONDAY OF LENT  
DEVOTIONAL

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**MARCH 7, 2022**

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Today is the first week of Lent.

*Take a moment to pause and breath in and out slowly.*

*Intentionally.*

*Rest in and welcome God's grace-filled presence.*

†

Choices and decisions. Our lives are filled with them. Some even suggest that the average person makes 35,000 choices per day. Not counting the average sleep time of 438 minutes. That means we make roughly 2,100 decisions per hour or one decision every 1.7 seconds.

†

Think of all the decisions you've already made today before listening to this podcast. How many do you even remember? Which ones stand out? Why?

†

As we listen to Jesus today, we hear a story that forced people to make decisions. As we listen to this dissonant story to our modern ears, discern how Jesus is offering you a decisive moment to turn towards His way rather than staying neutral or turning away.

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**SCRIPTURE**  
**MATTHEW 12:22–32 (NLT)**

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<sup>22</sup> Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn't speak, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both speak and see. <sup>23</sup> The crowd was amazed and asked, "Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?"<sup>24</sup> But when the Pharisees heard about the miracle, they said, "No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons."

<sup>25</sup> Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, "Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart.

<sup>26</sup> And if Satan is casting out Satan, he is divided and fighting against himself. His own kingdom will not survive. <sup>27</sup> And if I am empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said. <sup>28</sup> But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. <sup>29</sup> For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.

<sup>30</sup> "Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me.

†

Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me. Are you surprised by hearing these strong words from Jesus? How is not making a decision for Jesus actually working against Jesus?

†

C.S. Lewis writes, "Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you the part of you that chooses into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole with all your innumerable choices all your lifelong you are slowly turning the central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature. Either into a creature that is in harmony with God, others and itself or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God and with its fellow creatures and with itself." [*Mere Christianity*, page 87]

†

Thinking of the decisions you've made today, what type of creature are you more like — a heavenly or hellish? Why?

†

As you hear today's Scripture again, place yourself on the scene. What group would you have been part of — the ones turning towards Jesus or the ones turning away? Why?

†

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†

In these final moments today, talk to Jesus about what areas of your life you hesitate to choose Him. Ask Jesus to give you what you need to discern what it is that you are afraid of, so you can make a decisive decision and choose life in Him.

†

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## CLOSING AFFIRMATION

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<sup>66</sup> At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. <sup>67</sup> Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?”

<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. <sup>69</sup> We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God. — John 6:66–69, NLT

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