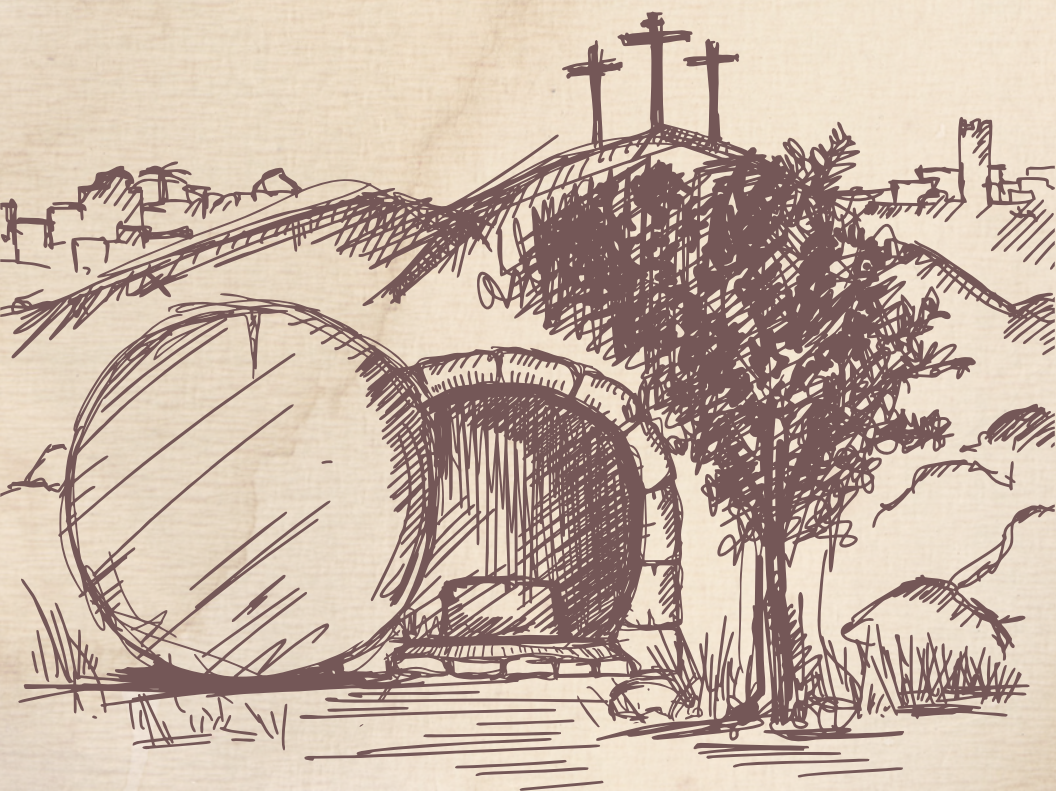


# EXPERIENCE

*Passion Week*



# PASSION WEEK IN REAL-TIME

*"These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name." John 20:31*

The Apostle John, in his profound reminder of the Gospels' purpose and all of Scripture, emphasizes that the ultimate goal of our meditation is to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Through this belief, we attain eternal life in our precious Lord Jesus. Passion Week serves as a poignant reminder of the harsh realities Christ endured for our sake, granting us life in Him.

Often, Passion Week may pass by swiftly, treated just like any ordinary week. Sadly, Easter is sometimes regarded merely as a secular holiday, lacking the reverence and significance it truly deserves. Such an attitude is not only irreverent but also detrimental to our souls. The Gospels provide intricate details of Jesus' sacrificial obedience to the Father, urging us to contemplate His acts day and night. This reflection fosters a closer connection to Christ and the profound events surrounding our beloved Savior.

Consider the symbolism inherent in believers' baptism—a representation of our death with Christ and subsequent resurrection with Him. If we have shared in the likeness of His death and resurrection, should we not be eager to delve into the events intimately linked with those united with Christ? Undoubtedly, we should. Recognizing this, we developed this resource to aid in meditating, praying, fasting, and journaling through the events of Passion Week.

My sincere hope is that this resource enables you to sense a personal journey alongside Jesus through these significant events. May you deeply feel the pains, agonies, and joys that Christ experienced. This resource is designed to encourage you to ponder each step, each event, and every hour that Christ walked through physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Ask yourself questions like, "What was He feeling?", "What physical endurance did He endure?", and "What is the spiritual significance of this event?"

Taking it a step further, connect Passion Week to yourself as one of the elect purchased by Christ. Recognize that every moment Christ walked through was for you and me, allowing us to comprehend the depth, width, and breadth of

His everlasting love. This resource is not just a devotion but a tool to help you meditate, pray, fast, and journal through Scripture in the morning and in the evening. May it guide you to see the interconnectedness of the Gospels and encourage you to memorize and meditate on these events. Let this guide deepen your connection to the real events that our Lord endured for His Church—yes, for you and me.

Here are the basic instructions on how to use this Passion Week guide:

- 1. Read the Scriptures of the day.**
- 2. Ponder/Meditate on them for 5-10 minutes in the morning & at night.**
- 3. Pray using our prayer prompts.**
- 4. Process the way the Lord speaks to you in the journal space provided.**

We strongly encourage you to contemplate the practice of fasting throughout this week. In his book, "Spiritual Disciplines," Donald Whitney provides the following definition: "*Christian fasting is a believer's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.*"<sup>1</sup> The primary objective of fasting during Passion Week is to deeply engage with and reflect upon the profound sacrifices made by the Son of God for our salvation. Fasting serves to heighten our focus on the subject of our meditation and prayer. While there are various forms of fasting, we specifically recommend considering a "normal" fast, which involves abstaining from all food, but not from water.

Consider fasting this week in one of these 3 ways:

- 1. Fast one day to focus on a specific passion week event.**
- 2. Fast in the morning and break your fast in the evening.**
- 3. Fast all week and break your fast on Easter Sunday.**

We will have a congregational fast on Good Friday. We encourage our people to fast on Good Friday as we follow the timeline of Jesus' Crucifixion. During our Good Friday service, we will break our fast with the Lord's Supper.

We do not want you to feel coerced to fast. There is no pressure to fast. If you are not ready to fast or have medical conditions that do not allow you to fast, please be encouraged to use prayer and journaling as your primary tools of meditation and reflection.

1. Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. NavPress, 2014.

# THE ANOINTING OF A KING

FRIDAY / SATURDAY

## Morning Meditation

### **Jesus arrives at Bethany**

"Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead." John 12:1

### **Mary anoints Jesus**

"So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with Him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples (he who was about to betray Him), said, 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. Jesus said, 'Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.'" John 12:2-8

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

## Morning Reflection

As God's sovereign timing orchestrates Passion Week, we witness the unfolding of the Lord's redemption plan before our eyes. Jesus arrives at Bethany, a mere two miles from Jerusalem, where He will willingly sacrifice His life for sinners in just a few days. Martha, Lazarus' sister from Bethany, expresses her love and devotion to Jesus by pouring out a costly ointment. Mary's act of love, despite the vehement opposition from the trader Judas Iscariot, signifies that she knew something he did not—that Jesus is indeed the long-awaited Messiah. Do you know Jesus, Savior and Messiah? How does your life reflect this saving knowledge of Christ?

# Evening Meditation

## Crowds come to see Jesus

“When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of Him but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.” John 12:9-11

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

## Evening Reflection

An intriguing scene unfolds on the Saturday preceding Jesus' well-known triumphal entry. Large crowds gather to witness Jesus and the resurrected Lazarus. However, the chief priests arrive not to confirm the miracle but to eradicate any evidence of it. Their motive is clear: they desire Lazarus dead, as his resurrection has led many Jews to believe in Christ. This pivotal Saturday foreshadows the events at Calvary on Good Friday. In echoing the sentiment of Genesis 50:20, what man intended for evil, God purposed for good. Do you know that nothing can thwart God's plans? Do you know that God works all things together for the good of those He calls?

### Ponder, Pray, and Process

1. As you ponder the readings, consider what you have learned about the Lord, His journey to Calvary, and His finished work on the cross. In light of this, reflect on what you have learned about yourself.
2. What has the Lord shown you, by His Spirit, through these events of Passion Week, that stirred your affections for Him? Express your love, worship, and gratitude to Him in prayer.
3. As you spend this intimate time with the Lord, journal what He has revealed in Scripture about Himself (His attributes and character) that has caused you to treasure Him more. How will this help you love Him and others better?

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# PALM SUNDAY

## SUNDAY

### Morning Meditation

**Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem** (Read Matthew 21:1-10, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-44, John 12:12-18)

"The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and He sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before Him and that followed Him were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!' And when He entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, 'Who is this?' And the crowds said, 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.'"

Matthew 21:6-11

### **Some Greeks seek Jesus (Read John 12:20-36)**

"Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.'" John 12:23-24

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

## **Morning Reflection**

All four gospels describe the account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, a clear fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy given almost 500 years earlier. Ironically, the same crowds who are hailing Him as king will five days later be calling, "Let Him be crucified!" But He came willingly to bring peace between God and man through His sacrifice on the cross. As the Jewish crowd cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were quoting the Messianic passages in Psalm 118 and recognizing Jesus as the "greater David," the long-awaited Messiah. However, the people's cries of "Hosanna!" were misdirected. He was not coming at that time to establish an earthly kingdom as they desired. He was coming to die on a cross for all of mankind's redemption, as an atonement for sin. When we decide to embrace the first Triumphal Entry and completed work on the cross, it ensures that we need never fear His second coming as Warrior-Judge in the ultimate Triumphal return of the King of kings!

## **Evening Meditation**

### **Jesus weeps over Jerusalem**

"And when He drew near and saw the city, He wept over it," Luke 19:41

### **Jesus enters the temple and then returns to Bethany (Read Matthew 21:17)**

"And He entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when He had looked around at everything, as it was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve." Mark 11:11

## Evening Reflection

Here in Luke's gospel, Jesus is weeping at the sight of the beloved but rebellious city. In weeping over Jerusalem, He showed His sympathy for His countrymen and He was lamenting the lost and their hard hearts. The name Jerusalem means "city of peace" or "foundation of peace." The people were hoping that Jesus would bring them the peace that they needed. However, He wept because He saw what lay ahead of the nation: war, suffering, destruction, and a scattered people. He then comes to the temple, sees the corruption, clears the temple, and then returns to Bethany. A key point to consider here is that Jesus wants the church to act like the church; to be a house of prayer, bind up the broken and broken-hearted, and "Restore all people from all walks of life back to God by Grace through faith in Jesus Christ." Sound familiar? He did not find this in the temple, so He left and went out from there. May He find what He wants from us this Lent season.

### Ponder, Pray, and Process

1. As you ponder the readings, consider what you have learned about the Lord, His journey to Calvary, and His finished work on the cross. In light of this, reflect on what you have learned about yourself.
2. What has the Lord shown you, by His Spirit, through these events of Passion Week, that stirred your affections for Him? Express your love, worship, and gratitude to Him in prayer.
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# TRUE WORSHIP

## MONDAY

### Morning Meditation

**Jesus curses the fig tree** (Read Mark 11:12-14)

"In the morning, as He was returning to the city, He became hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, He went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And He said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once." Matthew 21:18-19

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

### Morning Reflection

This curious cursing of a fig tree happens the morning after Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem with shouts of praise. The nation of Israel was often likened to a fig tree in the Old Testament and, here, the Lord is showing the emptiness of the people's worship as He uses the fruitless fig tree as a metaphor for the people of Israel.

The people were as fruitless as this barren fig tree—bearing leaves of

profession but void of any true spiritual fruit. He was not the Messiah they had expected, not the Messiah they wanted and their hearts were far from Him.

As you reflect on His rebuke, would you consider your own heart? Has your worship become dull or routine? Would you ask the Lord to stir your affections for Him this week as you consider who He is and what He's done?

## Evening Meditation

**Jesus clears the temple** (Read Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-17)

"And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be a house of prayer" but you have made it a den of robbers.'" Luke 19:45-46

**Jesus returns to Bethany with the twelve**

"And when evening came they went out of the city." Mark 11:19

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

## Evening Reflection

The book of Mark places the cleansing of the temple right after the cursing of the fig tree that we read about this morning. We can see that, in both situations, the Lord is concerned with true worship. Jesus is rightly angered by the unfair profiteering that was taking place in the temple.

Mark adds the detail that Jesus said that the Lord's house should be "a house of prayer for all nations," showing that Jesus likely entered through the Court of the Gentiles, the only place where non-Jews could meet. In the hustle and bustle of commercialism, prayer (and likely worship) had become impossible.

Have you considered the great privilege of prayer? What distractions must you remove so you can enter into quiet, focused prayer and worship with the Lord this week?

## Ponder, Pray, and Process

1. As you ponder the readings, consider what you have learned about the Lord, His journey to Calvary, and His finished work on the cross. In light of this, reflect on what you have learned about yourself.
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# FAITHFUL LIVING

TUESDAY

## Morning Meditation

### **The lesson from the fig tree** (Read Luke 11:20-21)

"When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, 'How did the fig tree wither at once?' And Jesus answered them, 'Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, "Be taken up and thrown into the sea," it will happen. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.'" Matthew 21:20-22

### **Jesus teaches in the temple** (Read Matthew 21:23-23:39, Mark 11:27-12:44, Luke 20:1-21:4)

"And in the hearing of all the people He said to His disciples, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'" Luke 20:45-47

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

## Morning Reflection

These passages offer insights into Jesus' teachings on faith, prayer, and righteousness. He encourages His followers to have unwavering faith in God's power and promises, while also warning against the dangers of hypocrisy and self-righteousness. As believers, we are called to cultivate genuine faith, humility, and integrity in our walk with God, trusting in His goodness and seeking to live lives that honor Him in every way. What a comfort it is to know that we can go before the throne of grace at any time. Do we approach God with boldness and confidence, trusting in His promises? Or do doubts and uncertainties hinder our prayers?

In contrast, in Luke, Jesus warns against the dangers of hypocrisy and self-righteousness, particularly among the religious leaders of His time. He challenges us to consider the sincerity of our own hearts: Are we motivated by genuine love for God and others, or are we more concerned with outward appearances and personal gain? Do we prioritize humility and service, or do we seek recognition and status?

## Evening Meditation

**Jesus predicts the future** (Read Matthew 24-25, Mark 12:1-37, Luke 21:5-36)

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on his glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" Matthew 25:31-34

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

## Evening Reflection

This passage presents a powerful glimpse into the future judgment when Jesus will return in glory to separate the righteous from the unrighteous. As we contemplate these verses, we're confronted with the reality of our eternal destiny and challenged to examine the state of our hearts and lives.

The imagery of sheep and goats being separated prompts us to consider our own spiritual condition. Are we living as faithful followers of Christ, characterized by love, compassion, and obedience to His commands? Are we actively serving others and living out the values of God's kingdom in our daily lives? Or are we, perhaps unintentionally, neglecting opportunities to demonstrate God's love and grace to those around us?

As we meditate on these verses, let's allow them to stir within us a renewed

commitment to live faithfully for Christ.

## Ponder, Pray, and Process

1. As you ponder the readings, consider what you have learned about the Lord, His journey to Calvary, and His finished work on the cross. In light of this, reflect on what you have learned about yourself.
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# WALKING IN TRUST

WEDNESDAY

## Morning Meditation

### **Jesus continues daily teaching in the temple**

"And every day He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet. And early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him." Luke 21:37-38

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process*—

## Morning Reflection

It is about two days before the Lord Jesus would be betrayed, arrested, and, ultimately, crucified. He has warned His followers in the preceding verses (34-36) to pray for strength and to remain faithful. In today's passage, He exhibits perfect strength and faithfulness as we find Him openly and publicly teaching in the temple.

What a comfort it is to our souls to know that our Savior was composed, resolute, and unwavering as His ordained death approached. What areas of your life need to be informed by the Sovereignty of God so that you may trust Him and continue to walk in His strength and faithfulness? Will you trust Him today?

## Evening Meditation

### **The Sanhedrin plots to kill Jesus** (Read Matthew 26:3-5, Luke 22:1-2)

"It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest Him by stealth and kill Him, for they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.'" Mark 14:1-2

## Evening Reflection

Mark timestamps the significance of this passage. With these important festivals approaching, the city of Jerusalem would have been crowded as travelers arrived. The religious leaders are open with each other in their intent to kill our Lord. But their concern is for their reputation with the people, not the sinfulness of their actions. They were cowards, clinging to a form of religion, but far from God. Their jealous hearts hated that the Lord exposed their hypocrisy and, in their pride, they were desperately determined to protect their power.

But, the Lord is sovereign over the intentions of man. The Passover season was in His perfect plan to bring ultimate redemption to mankind through the blood, not of a lamb, but of the spotless Son of God. As you reflect on the wisdom and timing of His perfect sacrifice, will you join with the saints of old and sing, “Hallelujah! What a Savior!”?

### Ponder, Pray, and Process

1. As you ponder the readings, consider what you have learned about the Lord, His journey to Calvary, and His finished work on the cross. In light of this, reflect on what you have learned about yourself.
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# THE LAST SUPPER

THURSDAY

## Morning Meditation

**Preparations for the Passover** (Read Mark 14:12-16, Luke 22:7-13)

"Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it."" Luke 22:7-8

**Passover meal/The Last Supper** (Read Matthew 26:20-35, Mark 14:17-26, Luke 22:7-13)

"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'" Matthew 26:26-29

## Morning Reflection

This is now the last day before Jesus will go to the agonizing cross to bear the weight of our sins, but what does our Lord do in this anxious hour? He makes plans so that He can celebrate the Passover meal with His disciples. We see here how Jesus is caring for His disciples even as His most dreadful hour approaches. How fitting is it, that this is the meal we remember often within our worship services! Unlike the countless generations since the Exodus where this meal pointed to the past event of the redemption of the Israelites out of Egypt, instead Jesus shows how this meal was ultimately about the salvation He came to accomplish. Jesus is the lamb to be slain for the salvation of His people! Now instead of this meal pointing backwards, this meal points forward to Jesus's body that will be broken and His blood poured out, even as we remember what Jesus has done for us we still look forward to that day when Jesus has this meal with us in His Father's Kingdom when He returns.

How might you feel sitting and hearing Jesus teach about the Gospel through this meal? Do you sense the weight of emotion that Christ felt when you partake in communion at church? When you go through suffering and times of fear or sorrow, do you turn towards serving others, or towards isolation and selfishness? Remember in those dark hours, to turn to Christ who's heart is full of love and compassion for you through the Last Supper.

## Evening Meditation

**The upper room discourse** (Read John 13:1-17:26)

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35

**Jesus prays in Gethsemane** (Read Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:39-46)

"Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here, while I go over there and pray.' And going a little farther

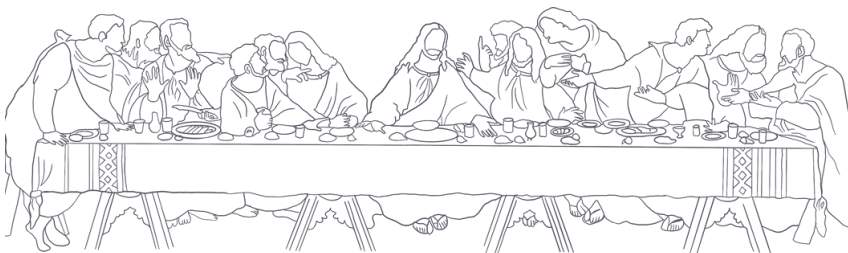
He fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.'" Matthew 26:36, 39

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

## Evening Reflection

Throughout the last supper, Jesus taught His disciples what He was most concerned about, the love that His disciples had for each other. How many of us can say that loving others is the top of our priority list, especially if we are experiencing suffering or fearful circumstances? Yet, Jesus is careful to teach His disciples, and us today, that the way we experience His presence more is through the love of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus not only shares a meal, but His very life with us. As Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends..." And in response we take this love He has given us and obey Him in loving others, this is the fruit of the Gospel in action.

Jesus's teaching on love and obedience then turns into action as He goes to the garden of Gethsemane to pray. Here, Jesus shows His heart to us in an even more intimate way. We see Jesus cry out to God for help, for strength, and pray the prayer we are often unable to pray ourselves, "Lord, is there another way?" And the Father's answer was no, there is no other way than the cross to save lost sinners. How much do you sense Jesus understands your struggles? How much do you believe God hears your prayers? Look to Jesus in the garden and remember that God in the flesh cried out in the midst of His suffering, so that when you cry out in your suffering you can know with certainty that God hears, answers, and redeems!



## Ponder, Pray, and Process

1. As you ponder the readings, consider what you have learned about the Lord, His journey to Calvary, and His finished work on the cross. In light of this, reflect on what you have learned about yourself.
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# GOOD FRIDAY

## FRIDAY

*Today, we encourage you to pause, reflect, and journal at each stop on the way to the cross.*

**Jesus's trial before Annas and Caiaphas. (4 to 6 a.m.)**

Read Matthew 26:57–68; Mark 14:53–65; Luke 22:66–70; John 18:12–28

**Jesus's trial before Pontius Pilate and Herod. Jesus appears before Pilate, is sent over to Herod, and then back to Pilate where He is sentenced to be crucified. (6 to 8 a.m.)**

Read Matthew 27:1–26; Mark 15:1–15; Luke 23:1–25; John 18:28–19:16

**Jesus carries His cross, with Simon of Cyrene's help, to Golgotha. (8 to 8:30 a.m.)**

Read Matthew 27:27–32; Mark 15:16–22; Luke 23:26–33; John 19:16–17

**Jesus is crucified: "It was the third hour." (Mark 15:25). (9 a.m.)\***

Read Matthew 27:35; Luke 23:33; John 19:18–22

**The soldiers divide Jesus's clothing. He prays for them. (9 to 9:30 a.m.)**

Read Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23–24

**The soldiers watch over the crucifixion and mock Jesus: "He can't save himself. Come down from there, Son of God." (9:30 to 11 a.m.)**

Read Matthew 27:36–43; Mark 15:24, 29–32; Luke 23:34–38; John 19:23–24

**Jesus speaks from the cross to the thieves on either side. The repentant thief asks Jesus to remember him, and Jesus promises, "Today you will be with me in paradise." And to His mother, Mary, and to John, Jesus says, "Woman, here is your son. . . . John, here is your mother.'" (11 a.m. to Noon)**

\*For the Jewish people, the first hour of the day was 6 a.m.

Read Matthew 27:38–44; Luke 23:39–43; John 19:25–27

**A three-hour darkness descends upon the land: “When the sixth hour had come, there was a darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.” (Noon)**

Read Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33

**The earth quakes, the temple curtain is torn, and Jesus thirsts. (Noon to 3 p.m.)**

Read Matthew 27:51–54; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45; Matthew 27:46–50; Mark 15:33–37; Luke 23:35–38; John 19:29

**Jesus dies: “At the ninth hour, Jesus cried out, ‘My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?’” “Jesus said, ‘It is finished,’ and he gave up his spirit.” (3 p.m.)**

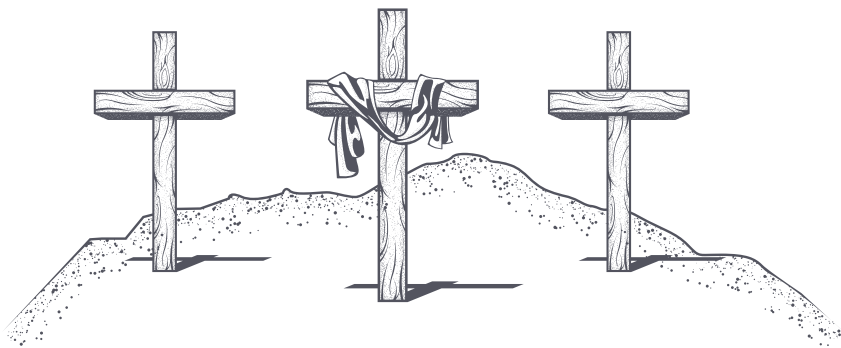
Read Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34–39; Luke 23:46; John 19:30

**Jesus’ burial. (Evening)**

Read Matthew 27:57–61, Mark 15:42–47, Luke 23:50–54. Luke 19:38–42

## Evening Reflection

As we pause, pray, and close our eyes to ponder the weight of these events, I pray that you feel the agony and misery that our suffering servant endured. Every lash, mockery, lie, and blood droplet on the ground fulfills the prophecy in Isaiah chapter 53. The Lord truly bore our griefs and literally carried our sorrows, as it was the will of the LORD to crush him (Isaiah 53:10). The Roman cross, originally made for a criminal crucifixion, became the altar upon which Jesus, the Lamb of God, took away the sins of the world.



## Ponder, Pray, and Process

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# A DAY OF SILENCE

SATURDAY

## Daily Meditation

### **A Silent and Secured Tomb**

"The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, 'Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while He was still alive, "After three days I will rise." Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples go and steal Him away and tell the people, "He has risen from the dead," and the last fraud will be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.' So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard." Matthew 27:62-64

*— Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process —*

## Daily Reflection

On this quiet Saturday, as we reflect on the sacred pause between the agony of Good Friday and the triumphant dawn of Easter Sunday, it's profound to realize that Jesus himself is silent. The echoes of His words from Friday still linger, and the promises of liberation on Sunday await fulfillment. But on Saturday, a hush envelops the Savior.

Similarly, God, who thundered from the heavens on Friday, now remains silent. The torn temple curtains, the opened graves, the trembling earth—all were manifestations of His power on that fateful day. Yet, on this silent Saturday, God's voice seems to rest.

Often, our discussions about Easter weekend focus on the crucifixion's pain and the resurrection's glory, bypassing the quiet significance of Saturday. Yet, we all have our silent Saturdays—the space between our struggles and solutions, questions and answers, prayers offered and responses awaited.

The silence of Saturday can be tormenting. It prompts us to wonder if God is



displeased, if we've let Him down. We may question why God seems inactive. Why doesn't He intervene in the midst of our career struggles, financial pitfall, or marital chaos? The silent Saturdays in our lives can be perplexing.

In these moments, we are urged to emulate Jesus. Like Him, we lie still and stay silent, placing our trust in God. Jesus faced death with unwavering confidence, believing, "You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay" (Acts 2:27 NIV).

Just as Jesus knew God wouldn't leave Him alone in the grave, we need assurance that God won't abandon us in our struggles. His silence should not be misconstrued as absence; His inactivity is never apathy. Saturdays in our lives serve a purpose, allowing us to experience the full force of His strength.

Consider this—if God had raised Jesus immediately after His death, would we fully appreciate the magnitude of the act? Or if God resolved our problems the moment they arise, would we truly grasp the depth of His strength?

For reasons known only to Him, God inserts a Saturday between our Fridays and Sundays. If today feels like a silent Saturday for you, be patient. As the one who endured such a day wisely said, "Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord" (James 5:7 NKJV). Trust in the unfolding plan, and let the quiet Saturday prepare you to fully appreciate the power of God's deliverance when Sunday dawns.

## Ponder, Pray, and Process

1. As you ponder the readings, consider what you have learned about the Lord, His journey to Calvary, and His finished work on the cross. In light of this, reflect on what you have learned about yourself.
2. What has the Lord shown you, by His Spirit, through these events of Passion Week, that stirred your affections for Him? Express your love, worship, and gratitude to Him in prayer.
3. As you spend this intimate time with the Lord, journal what He has revealed in Scripture about Himself (His attributes and character) that has caused you to treasure Him more. How will this help you love Him and others better?

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# RESURRECTION SUNDAY

## SUNDAY

## Morning Meditation

**Empty-tomb witnesses** (Read Matthew 28:1-8, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-12)

"Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. . . . The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead.'" Matthew 28:1, 5-7

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

## Morning Reflection

This Sunday morning as you prepare your hearts to join your brothers and sisters in celebrating our Resurrected Lord, take a moment to pause and thank God for His saving power. Thank Him that since He was raised from the dead we have hope for today and all of eternity. In the midst of fear and heartache, God accomplished a glorious feat. He defeated sin and death and proved it by raising Jesus from the dead! Remind yourself that Jesus was raised from the dead and He lives forever more. Since Jesus lives we can face whatever tomorrow brings!

As I ponder on the resurrection I think of the sin and death we experience in this life....the loved ones we've lost and the devastation and hardships we experience every day. If we were left to put our trust in the things of this world, then we would be utterly hopeless. The things of this world are here today and gone tomorrow. Like dust in the wind, the things of this world fly away in a moment's notice.

Yet as Ephesians 2:4 says, "But God". This is the greatest interjection in history. God has stepped into His creation to make a way for sinners like you and me to be reconciled with a Holy God. Because of the resurrection we can rejoice! Sing the song, "Because He lives I can face tomorrow."

## Evening Meditation

**Resurrection Appearances** (Read Matthew 28:9-20, Mark 16:9-20, Luke 24:13-53, John 20:1-21:25)

"Eight days later, His disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.' Thomas answered Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" John 20:26-29

— *Pause to Ponder, Pray, and Process* —

## Evening Reflection

After the resurrection, Jesus didn't leave His disciples guessing as to what He wanted them to do. They were locked away and afraid of the Jews and the Romans. They were in fear and disbelief of what Jesus had promised He would do. Then, suddenly, their master showed up and revealed Himself to be alive. He gave proof to doubting Thomas of His bodily resurrection and the assurance that everything He said was true. Jesus wanted them to have confidence in His words and to not disbelieve, but believe.

Coming to the end of Passion week and the end of Resurrection Sunday, it's very easy for us to go about our lives and not think about these events until Easter rolls around next year. Jesus does not desire that we graduate or move on from the resurrection. This reality of the resurrection guided and motivated the lives of the disciples. They took this gospel message to the ends of the earth and it was the source of their strength and encouragement. This gospel message was the source of their hope and trust.

Do you believe in what Jesus has accomplished? Does the resurrection of Jesus from the dead impact your life? Do you live in the hope of the resurrection?

Brothers and sisters, examine your hearts and look to the Lord for our blessed hope! We will continue to proclaim Christ's perfect life, death and resurrection until he comes back or he brings us home. Find hope in the resurrection of the body and allow that hope to motivate you to proclaim Christ!



## Ponder, Pray, and Process

1. As you ponder the readings, consider what you have learned about the Lord, His journey to Calvary, and His finished work on the cross. In light of this, reflect on what you have learned about yourself.
2. What has the Lord shown you, by His Spirit, through these events of Passion Week, that stirred your affections for Him? Express your love, worship, and gratitude to Him in prayer.
3. As you spend this intimate time with the Lord, journal what He has revealed in Scripture about Himself (His attributes and character) that has caused you to treasure Him more. How will this help you love Him and others better?

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## EXTRA JOURNALING SPACE

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