

**PRAYING
THROUGH
HOLY WEEK**

As we reach Holy Week, we invite you to prepare your hearts by taking a look at how Scripture describes the last week of Jesus' life. We pray that this is a time for you and your family to be reminded of the incredible sacrifice that was made on our behalf by Jesus. Please take time each day to read the provided Scriptures and pray as we look forward to the New Hope that we will celebrate Easter Sunday.

Sunday April 14th-Palm Sunday.

Related Scriptures- Matthew 21:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, John 12:9-19

Setting- Jesus is preparing to enter Jerusalem where He would ultimately meet His death. Saddled on top of a donkey, Jesus rode into Jerusalem to the shouts of "Hosanna", but the reality was that the crowd saw Jesus more as a celebrity than a king. By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus' fame had grown throughout the land. Jesus' triumphal entry served as a major disruption to the city. Something that the religious leaders did not look kindly upon. The plotting to execute Jesus would soon take place. Little did the people know that the resurrection of Lazarus was not the last resurrection that would take place.

Prayer- Ask God to allow you to see Him as King and not simply a celebrity. A King is deserving to be praised by all people, at all places, at all times.

Monday April 15th

Related Scriptures- Matthew 21:12-22, Mark 11:12-19, Luke 19:45-48

Setting: The authority of Jesus is clearly seen in the actions that took place on Monday. He spends the day “cleaning house”. Jesus asserts His authority in two ways. First, we see the authority that Jesus has over nature. Seeing a fig tree on the side of the road, Jesus goes to grab a bite to eat only to find the tree fruitless. Jesus shows His power by speaking and causing the tree to wither. A fruitless tree (a fruitless Christian) is worthless. Second, we see Jesus assert His authority by running the money-changers out of the temple. Finally, we Jesus assert His authority by healing the blind and the lame. By showing His authority, Jesus only further infuriated the people who sought to kill Him.

Prayer- The authority of Jesus should be clear in our lives and in the life of our church. Pray that all of us would submit to His authority. Pray for any areas in your life that you struggle to hand over to Jesus. Pray for the Deacons, Members of Committees, the Leadership Team, and for the Staff to clearly hear, and follow, the leading of Christ.

Tuesday April 16th

Related Scriptures- Matthew 21:23-26:5, Mark 11:27-14:2, Luke 20:1-22:2, John 12:37-50

Setting- On Tuesday, Jesus confronts the religious leaders and indicates that He does not believe that the religious leaders have any sort of authority over Him. This is the last time that Jesus would teach in the Temple as a free man. Specifically spend some time looking at John 12:44-50 and see what Jesus teaches about Himself. This is one of the greatest arguments that Jesus makes regarding His purpose. When Jesus finishes teaching at the Temple, the Chief Priests and Scribes begin to seek how to arrest and kill Him. Jesus has become too big of a threat to allow to teach in Jerusalem.

Prayer- Review John 12:44-50, is this what you believe about Christ? Pray that God would remind you daily of exactly who He is! Pray for someone you know that needs to know/understand the truth about Jesus. Pray that you might have a chance to invite them to church this Sunday to hear the glorious truth about the Gospel of Christ.

Wednesday April 17th

Scripture- Matthew 26:6-16, Mark 14:3-11, Luke 22:3-6

Setting- We see Jesus in the house of Simon the leper where a woman opens an expensive jar of ointment and pours it on Jesus head. This was a symbol of the woman giving Jesus the very best that she had to offer (even if it was costly). Many who witnessed this act rebuked the woman, but Jesus defends her act. Little did the people realize that she was preparing Jesus for burial.

We also see that Judas begins to plot how to betray Jesus. After receiving a sum of money, Judas begins to seek an opportunity to hand Jesus over to the authorities.

Prayer- Are you offering Jesus the very best that you have? Pray that God would reveal to you what it may be that you are keeping from Him. Pray that God would make you faithful!! Remember that person you prayed for yesterday, have you invited them to church yet? If not, pray for boldness and strength to be faithful.

Thursday April 18th

Scripture- Matthew 26:17-75, Mark 14:12-72, Luke 22:7-71, John 13:1-18:27

Setting- Here we see Jesus gathering His disciples for the Last Supper. Before the institution of the Lord's Supper, John tells us of one of the amazing moments in the Scriptures. When Jesus and the disciples entered the upper room, Jesus took the form of a servant and washed the feet of His disciples. The job that was typically reserved for the lowest of slaves, Jesus willingly accepted. As the people who have gathered begin to eat, Jesus announces that someone in the room would soon betray the Son of God. As the disciples inwardly wonder if they are the ones who will betray Jesus, it soon is mentioned that Judas would turn his back on the true Messiah. During the Last Supper, Jesus grants new meaning to the bread (His body) and the cup (His blood). This meal will no longer remind the people of how God delivered the people from Pharaoh, but rather will serve as an everlasting reminder of how Jesus delivered His people from the penalty of sin. Soon Jesus will take Peter, James, and John to the Mount of Olives to pray and wait for the time of His betrayal to take place.

Prayer- Do we serve as Jesus served? That is a question that should ring in our hearts. Pray that you would have the heart of a servant. Pray that the Father would remind you of the amazing sacrifice that He has made for you. His death rescues sinners from the penalty that they deserve.

Friday April 19th

Scripture- Matthew 27:1-61, Mark 15:1-47, Luke 23:1-56, John 18:28-19:42

Setting- In the middle of the night, Jesus was arrested on the Mount of Olives and a whirlwind of events begin to take place. During this time we see Peter deny Jesus on three different occasions (John 18:15-18). The Sanhedrin, along with the chief priests, hold a hasty and secret hearing during which they pronounce Jesus guilty and sentenced Him to death on a cross. Although Pontius Pilot found no ground for which to crucify Jesus, he eventually relented to the crowd and allowed them to do as they wished with Jesus.

This is when the beatings began. Beatings so severe that many would have died from the punishment. Jesus was mocked, spit on, and forced to carry His cross to the place where He would be crucified. After being nailed to the cross, Jesus hung there for 6 hours suffering until He finally breathed His last breathe. The people who had followed Jesus are at a loss. They do not know where to go, they do not know what to say, and they believe that the Romans had conquered who they believed to be the Messiah. Little did they know the significance of what had just happened. Joseph of Arimathea takes Jesus' body and buried Him in the tomb where He would remain until the resurrection.

Prayer- Do we truly grasp the significance of what Jesus has done for us? How has the death of Jesus changed our lives. Pray that the Father would always help us to remember what has been done for us. Pray that we would never forget the significance of the cross. Pray for those who need to hear the story of Jesus' death. By the way, have you invited your person to church? Pray for them!

Saturday April 20th

Scripture- Matthew 27:62-66

Setting- There is very little written about the Saturday after Jesus' death, but that does not mean that this day is not unique. History shows that Saturday is the only full day that the body of Christ remained buried in the cave that was provided by Joseph of Arimathea. What we do see is the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilot and they are remembering the teachings of Jesus. On several occasions (Matthew 12, Mark 8, 9, 10) Jesus has claimed that He would die but raise again on the third day. These words still echo in the minds of the people who have put Jesus to death. Why did these words stick in their minds? Secretly did these people see something different about Jesus? To make sure that nothing happens to the body of Jesus, guards are placed at the entrance of the tomb to assure that the beliefs about Jesus ended with His death. There was fear that the disciples of Jesus would come and steal His body in an attempt to continue the beliefs about Him.

Prayer- Think about the despair that would have gripped the followers of Jesus at this time. What are they supposed to do next? Were they wrong about who the Messiah was? Did Jesus lead them astray? We have the advantage of knowing the results of history, but we need to think about the despair. We are surrounded by people who live inside of that same despair. We know that Jesus is the answer to that despair. Pray that we could have the eyes and heart of Jesus to see the lost as He does. Pray for yourself and your family, how are you being the light for the Gospel in your lives? Pray that you would shine the light of hope (the Gospel) into the darkness of the lives of those who live without Christ. (See you tomorrow!!)

Sunday April 21st- Easter Sunday

Scripture- Matthew 28:1-20, Mark 16:1-8. Luke 24:1-53, John 20:1-21:25

Setting- Early on the Sunday after Jesus' death, some of His friends headed to the cave to anoint His body. However, when they arrived instead of seeing Jesus they were greeted by an angel who declares that Jesus was not there. Jesus had risen from the dead just as He said He would! Jesus is alive!!

The point of the cross can only be seen with a correct understanding of the Gospel. It was necessary for Jesus to live, die, and to be buried in order to fulfill His purpose here on Earth. His life was not taken from Him; in fact, He willingly laid down His life to fulfill the will of the Father. Jesus was not sent to Earth to simply die, He was sent to rise from the dead, defeating sin and death for good! Easter serves as a reminder of what Jesus has done for us. **2 Corinthians 5:21** **“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** Today is a day to celebrate not in what we have done, but in what has been done for us! Jesus is alive!

Prayer- We all have a story to tell regarding the story of Jesus! We must be people who live out the Great Commission. **Matthew 28: 19-20** **“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”** Pray that God would break your hearts for people who don't know Him! Pray that God would give you opportunities to share His Gospel. Pray that we would never forget the sacrifice that was made for us. As a believer, Easter is a day to celebrate, however, there are people in our lives who cannot celebrate as believers can. We are called to go to them and tell them what Jesus has done for them!