

7 DAYS TO EASTER



*Meditations from
The Gospel of Mark*

This week of Easter, let us prepare our hearts by looking at the events of the last week of Jesus' life through the Gospel of Mark as we look to the cross and the resurrection. Set aside time each day to get alone with the Lord in meditation and solitude. We encourage you to do this devotional individually and/or as a family in preparation for Easter.

****On Good Friday, you are challenged to fast for at least one meal as you reflect on the power of the message of the cross in Jesus' death in your place for your sins.****

Sunday March 29

The Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1-11

Most would expect a king to enter a city on a stallion with a military parade. Jesus the King entered Jerusalem on a colt with His disciples. While the people were celebrating Jesus as a potential political Messiah, Jesus marched into Jerusalem to be a sacrificial Messiah and a personal Savior. The Triumphal Entry takes place at the beginning of Passover Week. The Passover was meant to remember how God “passed over, spared” the firstborn of the Israelites from the plague of death because they put the blood on their doorposts (Ex. 12:1-13:16). Jesus the Son of God shed His blood to save us from judgment and the curse of sin and death. The word *hosanna* means “Save!” or “Please save!” This is exactly what Jesus came to do—He came to save (Luke 19:10). “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Pray:

- Praise and celebrate Jesus as your King, Savior, and Lord.
- Pray for God to focus your life to worship Jesus this week.
- Pray for people to be saved by Jesus this Easter.
- Pray for people by name that God would draw them to Jesus.

Monday March 30

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Mark 11:15-19

Have you ever been so angry that you flipped a table? Jesus did! I bet if you did that in front of a crowd, you would get some terrified looks, some angry looks, or some looks that communicated “what’s up with this guy?” Meek and mild Jesus turns quite angry. Make no mistake though; Jesus was not out of control in His anger, but His anger was controlled and rightly-focused on standing for God’s holiness. So why did Jesus get angry? The temple, the house of God, had gone from being a place of sacred worship to soliciting exploitation. It was supposed to be a house of prayer that pointed the nations to God in worship. Jesus was kind, compassionate, meek, humble, gracious, and loving, but He also was about justice, righteousness, and the holiness of God. Today, our bodies are God’s temple (1 Cor. 6:19), and Jesus has bought us for a price (1 Cor. 6:20). It glorifies God when our lives glorify Him. Are you glorifying God with your life?

Pray:

- Pray that your life will glorify God.
- Confess idols or sin in your life that need to be cleansed and removed.
- Praise Him as the God of holiness and love.

Tuesday March 31

The Parable of the Tenants

Mark 12:1-12

Isn't it amazing that so many people during the time of Jesus totally missed Jesus? This parable describes the generations of Israel that missed the message of the prophets about Jesus and even missed Jesus Himself—to the point of killing Him. Jesus quotes the Messianic Prophecy of Psalm 118:22—"the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Just as the cornerstone is the foundational stone upon which the whole building is built, so Jesus is the CORNERSTONE, the foundation of faith. Yet, many in Israel stumbled over Him and rejected Him (Is. 8:14, 1 Cor. 1:23). Jesus did not fit their mold. He was not the kind of Messiah they wanted. They missed the whole point of Jesus. Many stumble over Jesus in our world. Yet, as His own rejected Him, Jesus tells us that He will "give the vineyard to others." Jesus opens His mission of the Gospel to many—we are the beneficiaries of His mission! Let us be committed this Easter with sharing Jesus with someone.

Pray:

- Pray for lost people who are rejecting Christ.
- Pray for boldness and opportunities to share the Gospel.
- Pray for God to use CBC to reach our community for Christ this Easter.

Wednesday April 1

The Great Commandment

Mark 12:28-34

Imagine you are a Jewish person back during the time of Moses, Joshua, David, or even Jesus. When you woke up in the morning and before you went to bed in the evening, you would recite what is known as the *Shema*. The *Shema* (“to hear”) was recited for it reminded every Jew Who they were (*God’s covenant people*) and Whose they were (*God’s covenant people*). When we love God most, it speaks to Who we are and Whose we are. In Mark 12, the scribe admits that Jesus is right—that loving God and loving neighbor is most important. Yet, Jesus says to him in 12:34 “you are not far from the kingdom of God.” Why does Jesus say that? Because to truly love God, one must first meet the love of God. And one meets the love of God when they meet Jesus and are transformed by His gracious love displayed through His work on the cross. Do you love God most? Pray that He will be your first and greatest love.

Pray:

- Thank God for loving you unconditionally by giving His Son for you.
- Pray that you will grow more in love with God and love Him most above everything.
- Pray for the Lord to remove things that rival your love for Him.

Thursday April 2

The Last Supper

Mark 14:12-42

The Passover Meal would be observed by families as they recalled the great saving event where the Lord God “passed over” the houses of the Israelites that had blood on their doorposts and delivered them from their bondage and slavery in Egypt (Ex. 12:1-51). However, the Old Testament Passover served as a reminder that sins were not yet paid for. The New Testament Lord’s Supper serves to remind us that our sins have been paid in full! The bread symbolized His sacrificed body in our place as our substitute for the penalty of sin. The cup symbolized His shed blood for the forgiveness of our sins making atonement for us. As you read about the Lord’s Supper, remember what Christ has done for you. Reflect on the agony He went through to accomplish the Father’s will to save sinners like us (Mark 14:32-42). And until Jesus returns, we remember the Lord’s death (1 Cor. 11:23-25), we proclaim the Lord’s death (1 Cor. 11:26), and we identify with the Lord’s death (Rom. 6:4-6, Gal. 2:20).

Pray:

- Give thanks to Jesus for sacrificing His body and shedding His blood for you.
- Remember and reflect upon what Jesus did for you through His work on the cross.
- Repent of unconfessed sin.

Friday April 3

Good Friday

Mark 14:43-15:41

The climax of all human history from the beginning of time, the event that changed human history forever was the crucifixion of Christ. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ shook the world and changed it forever! It started movements, it helped define governments, it was the spark for liberation, it started programs and humanitarian efforts that have changed the world forever. But most importantly, the death of Christ saved us. When Christ cried out “My God my God why have you forsaken me (Mark 15:34),” we see the moment where the weight of our sin was placed upon Him, the wrath and judgment of God for our sin was felt upon Him, and He became forsaken so we would never have to be. When He breathed His last after a cry of “it is finished (John 19:30),” the temple curtain was torn in two—all the work needed to be done to save us had been completed, a relationship with our loving God was opened for us to live eternally with Him. Today, may you “survey the wondrous cross. On which the Prince of glory died.” May you be overwhelmed with the great cost of God in sending His Son to be forsaken so you would never have to be.

Pray:

- Reflect upon the magnitude of Christ’s death for you.
- Thank Jesus for dying in your place on the cross.

Saturday April 4

Jesus is Buried

Mark 15:42-47

A gravesite is the final stop during a funeral. Often, it is the most difficult part of the funeral process because the family says goodbye once and for all to the loved one. The sight of a casket about to be lowered into a grave is a hopeless sight. One can imagine the hopelessness that the disciples felt as they saw their Teacher die—the One they had followed and given their lives to for 3 years was gone. We read in the Gospels of the heartbreaking sorrow of the women who knelt at the cross. After Joseph prepared and laid His body in the tomb and the stone was shut, you can imagine the feeling of “it’s over” settling. Yet, Jesus made a promise about this moment in John 11:25 before He raised Lazarus from the dead as a promise for His own resurrection “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.” Do you believe this? Today, remember, “Friday is good because Sunday is coming.....”

Pray:

- Pray for the Lord to focus your hope in a hopeless world on the Risen Christ.
- Pray for those in hopelessness to find hope in Christ this Easter.
- Ask the Lord to prepare your heart to worship and celebrate Jesus on Easter Sunday.

Sunday April 5

Easter Sunday: The Resurrection

Mark 16:1-8

The day death died. While Good Friday is the day Jesus died, Easter Sunday is the day death died. The greatest words ever uttered in human history were the words of the angel in Mark 16:6 “He has risen. He is not here!” He is risen! Sin, Satan, hell, and death have been defeated! Jesus Christ and life have won! We win because Jesus won! Death has lost and life has won for resurrection morning has come! On this Easter Sunday, may we celebrate the life-giving, hope-securing truth that Jesus is alive and well. But, may the glory and hope of the resurrection not end today—may it lead us on to live every day for the mission of our Risen King until He comes. May this be our heartbeat until Jesus returns: “Halleluiah praise the One who set me free. Halleluiah death has lost its grip on me. You have broken every chain, there’s salvation in your name, Jesus Christ, my Living Hope!”

Pray:

- Praise God for raising Jesus from the dead and that Jesus is alive!
- Pray that you will live in the hope, power, and glory of the resurrection.
- Pray that people will be raised from death to life through salvation in Jesus this Easter.
- Pray for the Good News of Jesus to spread.