



HOLY
WEEK

Daily Devotional

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HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

On Easter we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Holy Week marks the seven days leading up to that celebration. We have created a daily devotional that includes a selected reading, three prayer points, and a fasting prompt to help you ponder the loving-kindness of our God. May each day lead your heart to worship, your mind to awe, and your actions to grace and mercy as you reflect on this great God, who so loved us that He gave His one and only Son for us.

Matthew 12:38–42 (ESV)

³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” ³⁹ But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, **SOMETHING GREATER THAN JONAH IS HERE.** ⁴² The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

PALM SUNDAY: THE APPROACH



BEFORE YOU BEGIN, take a few moments to quiet your mind and prepare your heart to receive God's Word.

Read the following passage, and then pray through the points below.

Matthew 21:1–11 (ESV)

¹Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” ⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

⁵“Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹And 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!” ¹⁰And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?” ¹¹And the crowds said, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.”

PRAYER POINT 1

“This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee” (v. 11). Jesus was born in a barn, in a humble town to no-name parents, and was now riding into one of the world’s greatest cities on a donkey. This is not the triumphal entry we would expect from the King of Kings. It wasn’t a parade of gold and fine silk. There was no menagerie of exotic animals or court suitors following Jesus.

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus consistently subverted our human understanding of authority and kingly reign. From the very beginning, He set the tone that He would be a different kind of king, one who intertwined authority with humility, and grace with truth and justice.

What do you think your response to seeing Jesus ride into the temple that day would have been? Would you have joined the crowds in cheering and naming Him a prophet? Or would you have been skeptical of this man the prophet Isaiah had called “a man who had no form or majesty that we should look at him, no beauty that we should desire him” (Isaiah 53:2)?

Talk to God about how you see Jesus. Ask Him to give you words today to praise your King as you learn more about Him this week.

PRAYER POINT 2

Jesus directed the disciples to go and get a specific donkey and colt, and bring the animals to Him. We don’t know what the disciples were thinking in that moment, but perhaps they thought it was a strange request.

However, they obeyed.

Consider your obedience to God this past week. Did you listen to His voice through His Word and do as He commanded? Or did you struggle to obey in certain situations or regarding specific commands of Scripture? Make a list of the areas where you struggle to obey God, and ask Him to help you follow His commands because you love and trust Him.

PRAYER POINT 3

There is a joy, an anticipation to the way the people responded to Jesus riding to the temple. People were shouting, laying down cloaks and branches for Him to ride upon, and blessing His name.

What do you do when Jesus doesn’t seem glorious to you? Talk to God about how that feels.

No matter what you're facing in life right now, ask God to help you experience the joy and anticipation the crowd showed in cheering Jesus' entering the temple in Matthew 21. Ask God to give you tangible ways to share your joy with others as you walk with Jesus and anticipate celebrating Resurrection Day this week.

Each day we'll fast from something different to re-center our hearts on King Jesus and remind ourselves that God's Word is our daily bread. We encourage you to fast along with your friends, family, and community.

TRY THIS: TODAY WE'LL FAST FROM SCREEN TIME.

According to a 2018 Nielsen report, American adults spend, on average, over nine hours each day interacting with digital media on various platforms.¹ Screen time isn't inherently bad, but it can easily dominate our time and attention.

Let's turn off our televisions, video games, phones, and the devices we use to kill time when we're bored, and instead spend today focused on other things. Allow yourself extra time to read and think about Scripture, enjoy an extra-long meal with people you love, either with those in your household or with your community, or get outside and experience the wonder of God's creation.

Remind yourself to be present among the people God has called you to love, pray for, and spend your life with.

¹ Nielsen, "Time Flies: U.S. Adults Now Spend Nearly Half a Day Interacting with Media," July 2018, <https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2018/time-flies-us-adults-now-spend-nearly-half-a-day-interacting-with-media/>.

HOLY MONDAY: THE CLEANSING



BEFORE YOU BEGIN, take a few moments to quiet your mind and prepare your heart to receive God's Word.

Read the following passage, and then pray through the points below.

Matthew 21:12–27 (ESV)

¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹³ He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant, ¹⁶ and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read,

“‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies
you have prepared praise?’”

¹⁷ And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

¹⁸ In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. ¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?”

²¹ 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. ²² And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

²³ And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these

things, and who gave you this authority?”

²⁴ Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’” ²⁶ But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

PRAYER POINT 1

Not everyone in Jerusalem was happy to see Jesus the day He entered the temple. When the Jewish religious leaders saw the wonderful things Jesus did, they were indignant. They didn’t like Jesus coming into their house and taking over. The money changers in the temple had turned a house of prayer into a den of robbers, twisting the priorities of the people. Jesus saw this and refused to let His Father’s house be defiled any longer.

The money changers had taken an area that was supposed to be devoted to prayer and worship and used it for their business dealings. While people needed to be able to buy animals for sacrifices, this place should have been kept holy.

Consider if the space in your life that should be devoted to prayer and worship is being crowded out by the busyness of life. How can you reclaim that space for devotion to God? What motivations need to change so that your priorities can be realigned? Ask the Lord to search your heart and change any wrong motivations into sacrificial worship. Ask Him to give you a heart that fights to seek Him above everything else on this earth. Ask Him to give you joy as you pursue Him.

PRAYER POINT 2

In the prayer point above, we thought about our individual worship. Now let’s take a moment to consider how we think about our corporate worship gatherings.

Are there any ways in which your worship with other Christ followers has been twisted into something other than worship for God? Have you begun to see church as just a social gathering, a place to network, or even a place to do business, rather than primarily a place to gather as the people of God to worship Him?

Ask God to use our congregation gatherings to remind one another of who He is and what He has done for us and through us. Ask Him to purify us as a people so that our gatherings will always be for worshipping and enjoying Him, and never for our own self-interest or self-promotion.

PRAYER POINT 3

The children in the temple were crying out and worshipping Jesus because they saw the great things He had done. What are some great things Jesus has done for you and your family or community? Where has He caused you to marvel at His power and love? Thank God for those things, and ask Him to help you be intentional this week about seeing His wonderful works and praising Him.

TRY THIS: *TODAY WE'LL FAST FROM COMFORT FOODS.*

We turn to many things in our lives to give us comfort, to help us disconnect or numb ourselves from grief, pain, and boredom. Commit today to giving up whatever comfort foods you love most—sugar, caffeine, etc.—to remind yourself that Jesus is our ultimate comfort.

HOLY TUESDAY: THE PREDICTION



BEFORE YOU BEGIN, take a few moments to quiet your mind and prepare your heart to receive God's Word.

Read the following passage, and then pray through the points below.

John 12:20–33 (ESV)

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

²⁷ “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

PRAYER POINT 1

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose, I have come to this hour” (v. 27).

Jesus’ soul was troubled because He was about to experience an excruciating death. Facing all that was to come—such agony that the thought of what He must do caused Jesus to sweat blood—His focus was on the glory of God. He knew the stakes, and He understood the cost. And still He said, “Father, glorify your name” (v. 28).

Suffering is never easy. Not even Jesus, perfect God-made-man, was spared from the pain of suffering. But God is faithful, and we can trust Him to comfort us as we seek to do His will.

If you’re suffering, ask God to comfort you, through His Word and through people in your life who can encourage and exhort you. Ask Him to give you friends and community in this church family who can show you the love of God in your seasons of suffering. Reach out to a leader at your congregation if you need someone to talk to or need help finding community.

PRAYER POINT 2

Jesus knew what would happen to Him, and He still laid down His own desires for the will of the Father.

Where are you unwilling to put aside your own ambition for something God is calling you to? Where have you prioritized wealth, influence, a job, relationships, or anything else in your life over the sacrificial obedience God has called us to through Scripture?

Take a moment to consider those things, and, if you’re ready, ask God to forgive you for valuing the things of this earth and your own ambition more than eternal things and godly, kingdom-minded ambition. Pray for God to give you joy in Him through obedience, and then trust that His Spirit is working in you, because He loves you.

PRAYER POINT 3

Jesus’ death had eternal ramifications, both for our reconciliation to God and for our ministry here on this earth. “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (v. 24).

It was only through death that God's glorious plan for salvation was accomplished. Through Jesus' sacrifice, generations of believers, people from every tribe, tongue, and nation, can come to know God and be adopted into His family.

Sit and meditate on Jesus' words in this passage, and respond with thankfulness that, through Him, we are able to bear fruit that has eternal impact.

Pray for our brothers and sisters who have gone to other countries and people groups to share the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Pray that their work will bear much good fruit, that God would be glorified, and that we would all be encouraged.

TRY THIS: *TODAY WE'LL FAST FROM SOCIAL MEDIA.*

Using and consuming social media can tempt us to believe our worth is found in the approval we receive from what we present to others online, either in snapshots of carefully constructed happiness or even in those of "curated messiness." After a while, it may become difficult to remember what it means to really be known by others.

Comparing our lives to what we see online may cause us to miss out on the good gifts God has given each of us, too. We can begin to think God's provision isn't good enough, and those thoughts can rob us of present joy. We can forget that the love and approval of God is unfading and always available, and we can easily elevate the opinions of man to an unhealthy degree. We may also deny others the chance to see Jesus working in us, changing us and growing us.

Commit today to realign any disordered affections, and use the time you would normally spend on social media to remember all the ways God has shown you love and affection as His beloved child.

HOLY WEDNESDAY: THE BETRAYAL



BEFORE YOU BEGIN, take a few moments to quiet your mind and prepare your heart to receive God's Word.

Read the following passage, and then pray through the points below.

Mark 14:1–11 (ESV)

¹It 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, ²for they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.”

³And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. ⁴There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? ⁵For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her.

⁶But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. ⁸She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. ⁹And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

¹⁰Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. ¹¹And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him.

PRAYER POINT 1

The chief priests and scribes were looking for a way to kill Jesus, but they knew they couldn't do it out among the people, lest there be an uproar.

Why did the people care about what happened to Jesus?

Because He had done wonderful things among them. He had healed the sick, given sight to the blind, and shown care and kindness to the “least of these” in Jewish society.

What are the ways in which Jesus has upended your understanding of what it means to love and serve others? What are the signposts in your life that would cause people to grieve or cause an uproar if you were gone? Ask God to magnify the fruit that comes from using the gifts He has given you.

PRAYER POINT 2

When the woman with the alabaster flask of nard broke it and poured it over Jesus' head, some who were there scolded her for “wasting” the valuable ointment.

However, Jesus called her anointing of Him “beautiful” (v. 6).

Would God call your worship of Him genuine and beautiful? Take a moment to remember the character of God, and why He alone is worthy of worship as King and Lord of everything. If there is any apathy or wrong motives for worship in your heart, ask God to purify you from all unrighteousness and to make your worship genuine and beautiful.

PRAYER POINT 3

Mark 14:10–11 tells us Judas went to the chief priests and actively looked for an opportunity to betray Jesus. This was not a betrayal of convenience that fell in his lap—Judas sought a way to betray his master and friend.

Have you ever been betrayed by someone you deeply cared for? How did you feel in that moment? About that person? About yourself? About God? Is there anything you still need to resolve? Is there any healing you still need to seek?

It's possible that Judas may have been offended for being rebuked over the alabaster flask incident. Or maybe he was tired of waiting for Jesus to act in a “big” way and start a revolution. Whatever the reason, Judas had had enough, and he looked for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

Have you been hurt by God? Have you felt that He mistreated you or let you down? Have you told Him how you felt when that happened, how you may still feel, even if the wounding was long ago? Do you trust that if you share those feelings with Him now, He'll listen and care?

Ask God to show you if there is hurt, resentment, or any other feeling from that betrayal still hiding in your heart. Ask God to heal you and show you other people who can help you heal. Consider if you need to seek reconciliation. Remember that God loves you and is with you, even if you cannot understand how. His love for you does not change.

TRY THIS: *TODAY WE'LL FAST FROM TECHNOLOGY NOTIFICATIONS.*

Today we'll fast from banners on our lock screen, text message "dings," and those tiny red circles that demand our attention. Instead, we'll focus on remembering the simplicity of abiding in Christ as we go about our day. Turn your phone to "do not disturb" mode, leave your Apple Watch on your nightstand, and shed the tyranny of the urgent for the importance of presence and peace.

Contemplate what it means to simply come before God and just exist as His child, undistracted by the notifications of this world. He loves you and desperately wants to spend time with you!

HOLY THURSDAY: THE SUPPER



BEFORE YOU BEGIN, take a few moments to quiet your mind and prepare your heart to receive God's Word.

Read the following passage, and then pray through the points below.

Luke 22:7–23 (ESV)

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.” ⁹ They said to him, “Where will you have us prepare it?” ¹⁰ He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters ¹¹ and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹² And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.” ¹³ And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. ²¹ But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. ²² For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” ²³ And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

PRAYER POINT 1

Jesus told His disciples He earnestly desired to eat this Passover with them before He suffered. He wanted time with those closest to Him before He had to experience the utter solitude of death apart from the Father. He wanted to symbolically show them how He would willingly give His body and pour out His blood so that the Father's will would be accomplished. The Passover lamb sacrificed for this meal was a reminder of the true Passover Lamb, Jesus, who would be sacrificed to save people from their sin.

When we're suffering, it's easy to want to isolate ourselves instead of pressing into sharing that pain with others. Sometimes we just don't know how to ask for help. One of the gifts we can give one another as the body of Christ is to gather around those who are suffering so that they don't have to endure it alone.

Is anyone in your life going through intense suffering with whom you could spend? Ask God to show you someone who needs the gift of your presence in your neighborhood, office, school, or community. Ask God to show you opportunities to serve them through sending a message, leaving a gift at their door, or connecting in the best way you can. Ask Him to give you words to comfort and the patience to mourn with those who mourn.

In so doing, we honor God and remind one another of the gift of community. We comfort others as people who are ultimately comforted by the love and peace of God.

PRAYER POINT 2

Jesus knowingly broke bread with Judas, the man who would betray Him and hand Him over to be killed. He also ate with the disciple who would deny Him three times in less than 48 hours (Simon Peter). Sharing a meal with people is a way we build relationships, trust, and camaraderie, but Jesus was sharing His last meal with men who would betray or turn against Him.

What does it say about Jesus that he shared His Passover meal with the man who would turn Him over to the authorities and with the one who would deny knowing Him?

Even in the face of betrayal, Jesus did not sin.

How are you inclined to treat those who are unkind to you? How do you respond to the co-worker who's always competing with you, the neighbor who consistently judges your parenting choices, or the family member who regularly slights you in some way? Ask God to help you wisely and humbly love and serve others like Jesus did, even when it seems impossible.

PRAYER POINT 3

It is at this Passover supper that Jesus introduces the ordinance of communion, the breaking of bread, representing His body, and the drinking of wine, representing His blood poured out for us. Jesus asks His followers to take communion in remembrance of Him.

Consider the posture with which you take communion. Are you remembering Jesus and what He's done for all who believe in Him? Ask God to deepen your understanding of and appreciation for the sacrifice Jesus made so that we could be reconciled to God.

TRY THIS: *TODAY WE'LL FAST FROM ESCAPISM AND DISSATISFACTION.*

When we're dissatisfied with our present circumstances, it can be easy to escape into a fantasy world where we're just a little happier, a little healthier, a little more together.

When we live in realities that don't exist (and may never exist), we miss opportunities to see what God is doing in us and through us right now. We miss out on enjoying what God has blessed us with already. We forget the prayers He's already answered.

While each day and moment may not be the ideal we would create for ourselves, each one has its little graces and blessings. How can you be present today? What can you be thankful for? What can you share with others, so that they can be encouraged that God loves them?

We often can't see God's provision, protection, or grace until we're on the other side. So commit today to not escaping to some alternate reality when life is hard. Rest in the promises of God, be thankful for the gifts He's given you, reach out to friends for support, and ask God to sustain you and show you the joy of right now.

GOOD FRIDAY: THE PASSION



BEFORE YOU BEGIN, take a few moments to quiet your mind and prepare your heart to receive God's Word.

Read the following passage, and then pray through the points below.

Luke 22:47–23:49 (ESV)

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” ⁴⁹ And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him. ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? ⁵³ When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”

⁵⁴ Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. ⁵⁵ And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. ⁵⁶ Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.”

⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” ⁵⁸ And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.” ⁵⁹ And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.” ⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly.

⁶³ Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat

him. ⁶⁴ They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" ⁶⁵ And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.

⁶⁶ When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, ⁶⁷ "If you are the Christ, tell us." But he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, ⁶⁸ and if I ask you, you will not answer. ⁶⁹ But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God." ⁷⁰ So they all said, "Are you the Son of God, then?" And he said to them, "You say that I am." ⁷¹ Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips."

¹ Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. ² And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king." ³ And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." ⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." ⁵ But they were urgent, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place."

⁶ When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. ⁷ And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. ⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him.

⁹ So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹² And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

¹³ Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. ¹⁶ I will therefore punish and release him."

¹⁸ But they all cried out together, "Away with this man, and release to us

Barabbas”—¹⁹ a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder. ²⁰ Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus, ²¹ but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” ²² A third time he said to them, “Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him.”

²³ But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.

²⁶ And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. ²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

³² Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments. ³⁵ And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour and there was darkness over the whole land until

the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" ⁴⁸ And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

PRAYER POINT 1

The betrayal of Judas led to the arrest of Jesus, followed by Jesus' trial and crucifixion. As Jesus was questioned, mocked, struck, and condemned to die, He maintained He was the Son of God, submitting to God's will.

Jesus was fully God, but He was also fully human on this earth, and He suffered as a human. He felt every blow; He felt every nail driven through His body. He got tired, sad, and lonely, just as we do.

How does knowing what Jesus endured help you when you're struggling, when you feel fear, doubt, pain, or loneliness?

Thank God today that Jesus did not only go before us, but that He also experienced hard things the same way we do, in a human body, with human faculties. Ask God to remind you of that when you suffer. Ask God to comfort you with this truth when it feels like no one understands the pain you're experiencing.

PRAYER POINT 2

As Jesus hung on the cross, He prayed for the criminal hung alongside Him. As He waited at death's door, Jesus was thinking of others and how He could point them to the Father. Even knowing that one of the criminals would mock Him, Jesus prayed that His Father would forgive them. In His most vulnerable state, Jesus was considering others above Himself. With some of His final breaths on this earth, He was praying for someone who desperately needed God.

What a beautiful reminder Jesus gives us to remember others, even at our most vulnerable. When we're suffering, it's easy to turn inward and forget about the world outside. It's especially easy to ignore those who make our lives more difficult.

Who is your enemy? Who mocks you? Who is it that is most difficult for you to pray for? Maybe it's a rival at school or work, or someone with different political beliefs. Maybe it's a family member who doesn't know God or a spouse who's walked away from the faith. Maybe it's the "perfect" mom on Instagram or that person in your community who has everything you're still asking God for.

Ask God to show you how to genuinely love and pray for the people in your life who are the most difficult. Ask Him to strengthen you and give you words to pray when you absolutely don't want to show love to that person. Ask Him to transform your heart as you pray, that you would look more like Jesus and receive joy in praying for that person.

Remember that when you're at your most difficult, God's love for you never wanes. It never fails you or holds you in contempt. It's that transformative love in us that gives us the ability to truly and sacrificially love others.

Rest in the Holy Spirit working in you.

PRAYER POINT 3

Just before Jesus committed His spirit to the Father and died, the curtain of the temple was torn in two. The curtain divided the Holy Place in the temple from the Most Holy Place, where the High Priest would enter once a year to atone for the sins of the people.

When the curtain tore in two on the day of Jesus' death, it signified the removal of the barrier between God and people. Jesus removed that barrier for us.

Read verses 44–49 again, and meditate on the death of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to you that Jesus accomplished what the Father sent Him to do? What does it mean to you that He didn't turn away or give up because the Father's will was too much to ask?

Thank God for that today!

Consider who you can share this good news of new life through Jesus with today. Ask God to give you the opportunity to share your story, along with boldness to proclaim what Jesus has done for you.

TRY THIS: *TODAY WE'LL FAST FROM ENTERTAINMENT IN THE CAR OR IN OUR HOMES.*

Many of us get in the rhythm of doing the same thing every day as we travel to and from work, school, the grocery store, and everywhere else we have to go. Today we're asking you to fast from entertainment each time you ride in your vehicle. Whether it's audio books, podcasts, or music for you, or iPads or movies for the kids, turn off the entertainment and tune into a real conversation with the people in your car.

Talk about highs and lows of the day, what you're most thankful for, or anything that is edifying. If you're alone, take the time to think about Scripture you read this morning or to pray for yourself, our church, our city, or the nations. Redeem this entertainment-free time today with intentionality and presence.

HOLY SATURDAY: THE QUIET



BEFORE YOU BEGIN, take a few moments to quiet your mind and prepare your heart to receive God's Word.

Read the following passage, and then pray through the points below.

Matthew 27:57–66 (ESV)

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ ⁶⁴ 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.” ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

PRAYER POINT 1

Joseph of Arimathea was a man of high standing in the Jewish community. Jewish custom dictated that crucified bodies should be taken down before evening. Joseph showed care and respect by taking down Jesus' body, wrapping it, and putting it in the tomb.

Spend a minute considering what it would have been like to care for the body of this man whom many people had just mocked and killed. What might Joseph have been feeling and thinking?

Thank God for people in your life and in our city who show care when it is difficult or may be unpopular. Ask Him to show you how to be one of those people who honors others and glorifies God through your treatment of them.

PRAYER POINT 2

The Jewish religious officials who had called for Jesus' death were now afraid the disciples would steal Jesus' body from the tomb. They didn't believe it was possible for Jesus to rise, but they were afraid His followers would claim He rose.

Have you ever doubted Jesus rose from the dead? Do you doubt that now? Talk to God about any doubts you have about who Jesus is or what He did. God already knows what you think and how you feel; nothing is hidden from Him. But He wants you to talk to Him about everything—both good and bad—so don't be afraid! He is both patient and kind.

Ask God to comfort you even in your doubts, to reveal truth, and to give you faith to believe He is who His Word says He is. Ask Him to help you believe that all His promises are true, and that they are for you!

PRAYER POINT 3

Jesus was made like us in every way, even in death. Just as humans before Jesus died and descended to Sheol, Jesus died and descended into Sheol for three days (Matthew 12:40).

Saturday was silent, and hope on earth was dimmed. The disciples didn't know if this was the end. Jesus had promised His kingdom would reign forever, He promised He wouldn't leave them, but they had just seen Him killed.

Where was God?

Why had Jesus abandoned them, when they had left everything to follow Him?

Sometimes it seems like God has left us, like He's forgotten about the promises in His Word. The silence of unanswered prayers and the burdens of life can bear down with crushing regularity, leading to loneliness and fear. The world seems unbearably quiet in those moments, and our hope, like that of the disciples, is dimmed.

But what if God's silence is just Him waiting for the right time, working in ways we cannot see? What if all His promises are still trustworthy? What if He's still acting for our good, even

though it seems like circumstances are against us? What if the sun is about to break through and banish the dark clouds forever?

We can have hope, because Sheol could not claim Jesus forever. Just like the disciples, we must wait and see what God will do.

If you are struggling to believe God is here, and that He cares, tell Him that. He wants to hear all your thoughts and struggles and feelings. Ask Him to show you that He hears you and loves you.

If you feel like God has abandoned you, take heart. Jesus died for you so that you never have to experience life without God. Thank God that Sheol could not hold Jesus, who defeated sin and death for us. Praise God that Sunday is coming, and that every new day brings us life in Him!

TRY THIS: *TODAY WE'LL FAST FROM A MEAL.*

As we sit in the quiet and await Resurrection Sunday, we remember Jesus is our only hope, our true sustenance in these frail and faulty human bodies. Fast from lunch or dinner today, ² and use your meal time to read through and meditate on Matthew 27:57–66. Let's be thankful together that Jesus didn't stay in the grave!

Each time you feel hungry, tell God one thing you're thankful for about who He is and what He's done for you.

Remember: our suffering is momentary. Sunday is coming.

² If fasting from food is unwise or unhealthy for you, please choose something else to fast from today.

EASTER SUNDAY: THE RESURRECTION



BEFORE YOU BEGIN, take a few moments to quiet your mind and prepare your heart to receive God's Word.

Read the following passage, and then pray through the points below.

Matthew 28:1–20 (ESV)

¹ 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. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

¹¹ While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers ¹³ and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’” ¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

PRAYER POINT 1

When Jesus’ disciples went to His tomb, they were met by an angel who gave them incredible news: Jesus was no longer in the grave—He was risen!

The angel commanded the women to go and spread the news. The women departed with fear and great joy, and then Jesus appeared to them and reinforced the command to go and tell the disciples.

What would have gone through your mind as you received the news at the tomb and then saw Jesus risen? Though we have not seen Him, we can trust He is as real today as He has always been. Praise God that, though you have not seen Jesus in the flesh, God has revealed the truth of the resurrection to you.

PRAYER POINT 2

Those who saw Jesus and believed He was risen responded in worship. All our growth in knowledge about God and who He is should lead us to worship Him, too.

Spend a few moments worshipping God. What have you learned about Him this week? How has your love for Him increased as you walked through the Holy Week Scriptures?

Thank God for the good gift of His Word, filled with His promises!

PRAYER POINT 3

Jesus promises to always be with us, even to the end of the age (v. 20). Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, and we have authority through Him to do the work of the Father. Therefore, we need not fear anything God has called us to.

Where is God calling you to trust Him in faith? Where is He calling you to share the gospel? Pray for boldness today to be obedient and to remember that God is with you.

TRY THIS: *CELEBRATE TOGETHER!*

After completing a week of fasting, today is the day to celebrate! Gather with your community, family, or friends, and talk together about what it means that Jesus is risen. Share a meal with those in your household or with friends or family, and remember that Jesus promised His people would do even greater works than He did, through the power of the Holy Spirit (John 14:12). That is your inheritance and call in Christ.

Rejoice today. Sunday is here! Jesus is Risen!

