

# *Holy Week Reflections 2019*



This week we invite you  
to meditate and reflect  
upon the events that  
brought about our  
salvation and embrace  
the blessing of this gift.

# HOLY WEEK DAY 1: PALM SUNDAY



Suggested Readings: **Zechariah 9:9** and **Luke 19:28-40**

On Palm Sunday, Jesus entered Jerusalem with his disciples riding a borrowed donkey. He arrived to much celebration, but it was the beginning of the end of His human life.

There's such a stark contrast between Palm Sunday and Good Friday. The crowd went from shouts of acclamation to cries of indignation. From welcoming Jesus as the messiah to demanding His death for insurrection.

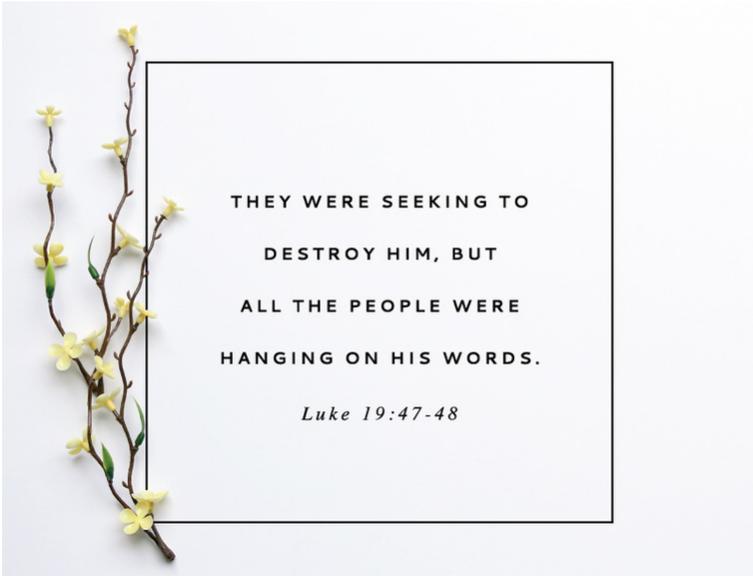
They welcomed Him as their Savior. And they should have, because He was. He entered Jerusalem that day knowing exactly what was going to happen. He knew what He was marching into. He knew that declaring Himself the Messiah would get Himself killed.

And yet, he did it anyway. For you. For me. For all of us. Hosanna, indeed.

**Reflection:** How do you know for sure you would not be one that "set out palm branches" on Sunday and "spit" on Friday?

**Prayer:** Ask God to reveal your heart.

## HOLY WEEK DAY 2: HOLY MONDAY



Suggested Readings: **Isaiah 56:1-8** and **Luke 19:41-48**.

In today's readings, Jesus asserted His authority by throwing out anyone and everyone who was doing business inside the temple complex. The Jewish leaders were less than impressed with the display of power.

We can be moved by the depth of the emotions He showed that day; He wept over the city. He was furious with those who would take advantage of His people. And he did something about it.

It infuriated the authorities, because they could see what was really happening. Jesus was acting like He had the right to question the status quo. He had the audacity to call them out, and they were NOT pleased.

It's here on Holy Monday that the trickles of unease start to swell. Jesus was a problem that needed to be fixed, but as long as the people flocked to hear Him teach, there was nothing the temple authorities could do about it. They didn't want to make a scene. So, they bided their time. They plotted. They planned. And they waited.

**Reflection:** Jesus showed His compassion for the lost by the depth of His emotions. How is your love for the lost expressed in your daily walk?

**Prayer:** Ask God to grow in you a compassion for the lost.

## HOLY WEEK DAY 3: HOLY TUESDAY



Suggested Readings: **Psalm 118:19-27, Psalm 110, and Luke 20**

On Holy Tuesday, temple leaders challenged Jesus by putting him to the test. Literally. They raised a number of theological debates with Him and questioned both His teaching and His God-given authority, but no matter how hard they tried, they couldn't stump Him.

It is good for us to slowly walk through these passages. They will come to mind throughout the day, and as we find the unrest in Jerusalem growing, so does the unrest in our world. The hard truth is that He was there, facing hostility and opposition, for my sake and for yours. If not for our sin, His death would not have been necessary.

We may not have been there setting traps for Him and conspiring against Him, but we are just as guilty for His death. Thank God for His incredible mercy and His marvelous grace. We need it today.

**Reflection:** When does the world challenge your faith directly? What do you think the answers are?

**Prayer:** That God would illuminate His truth to you, that there would be no fear but overcoming love.

## HOLY WEEK DAY 4: EXTRAVAGANT WEDNESDAY



Suggested Readings: **Luke 21, Mark 14:1-11, Matt 7:17-23, and Luke 19:17**

On Extravagant Wednesday, Jesus continued His teaching, which only riled up Jewish leaders even more, but the tipping point came when a woman honored Jesus by anointing him with really expensive oil. This didn't sit well with Judas, who went straight to the religious authorities and offered to deliver Jesus into their hands.

It seems that Jesus was the kind of man you either loved or hated. There aren't any people in the gospel accounts who are kind of OK with Him. None who are ambivalent. None who are on the fence. It's one extreme or the other.

In today's reading, we see both. We see the people who were so completely captivated by His teaching that they flocked to Him and hung on His every word. We see the leaders who hated Him and all that He represented so desperately that they start covertly plotting His death. We see the woman who loved Him so deeply that she gave up her most precious possession for Him. And we also see the man who resented Him so fully that he outright betrayed Him.

It's no wonder that Holy Week ended the way it did. Such a vast difference of opinions was bound to result in violence.

The question for you and for me, then, is one of identity. Who do you identify with in this story?

I pray that in the end I'm more like her than the others. I want to honor Jesus with all that I have. I want Him to look at me and say, "Well done. You have done beautiful things for me. You have done what you could."

**Reflection:** Will the Lord say to you "Well Done" because of your extreme generosity?

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to be extravagant in the way that I serve You.

**On Wednesday April 17<sup>th</sup> we are asking you to join others in the church by fasting using one of the following suggestions as a guideline**

- Sun up to sun down, or the entire day with no food
- Media fast (TV, Facebook, twitter, etc.)
- A Daniel fast (fruits, vegetables, and grains)
- Fasting from one meal to spend time in prayer

## HOLY WEEK DAY 5: HOLY THURSDAY



Suggested Readings: **Isaiah 50:4-10** and **Luke 22:1-65**

On Holy Thursday, after celebrating the Passover and instituting the Lord's Supper with his disciples, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. There, Judas betrayed him. He was arrested, tortured, and questioned while Peter denied him.

Let's take a minute to talk about the Passover, shall we? The story (found in Exodus 12) reeks of blood, death and destruction. We may not like to think that the God that we love and serve would do something like that.

Our discomfort lies in the fact that I tend to think of the Egyptians as innocent bystanders in a throwdown between God and Pharaoh, but the truth is that they were not. There was nothing innocent about them. They were sinners just like the rest of us, and whether we like it or not, death is the natural outcome of sin.

It's a hard truth, but it is truth nonetheless. The wrath of God against sin is relentless. He will not let it go unpunished . . . But the good news is that His mercy is every bit as real and relentless as His wrath.

And so it was that on that Passover night as Jesus and the disciples remembered how God in His great mercy made a way for the Israelites to survive the final plague, God was making a new way for the rest of us to survive the terrible wrath to come.

What was true on that first Passover night is still true today. Unless we are covered by the blood of the Lamb, we will face the same fate as the Egyptians.

Of course Jesus knew that. It's the reason He didn't resist the arrest. It's the reason He didn't bother to answer their accusations. It's the reason He allowed Himself to be beaten and tortured and ridiculed.

It is, after all, the reason he came.

**Reflection:** There was no cost too great for Jesus

**Pray:** That God would increase your love for Him.

## HOLY WEEK DAY 6: GOOD FRIDAY



Suggested Readings: **Psalm 22:1-18**, **Luke 22:66-71**, and **Luke 23:1-56**

On Good Friday, the Jewish leaders, with the help of Pilate, subjected Jesus to a shoddy trial that resulted in a death sentence for the One who would be called the King of the Jews. He was hastily crucified and quickly buried before the Sabbath began that evening.

It's a contradiction, really, to speak of Good Friday as good. It is, after all, the day that Jesus died, and we don't generally think of death as a good thing. When's the last time you heard someone jumping for joy after a loved one died? Probably never. When someone dies, our first thoughts aren't usually, "Good! I'm so glad!"

Sometimes we Christians brush over Jesus' death. When it comes to Easter, we sing songs about the resurrection and proclaim gladly, "Up from the Grave He Arose!" because that's what happened. But that's the end of the story. In order for the resurrection to be possible, first His death had to occur.

Those of us who believe know that Jesus was both fully God and fully human, but the confounding thing about this story is that on Good Friday, He dies. It's the last thing we expect to happen. The most shocking thing about the story. That God Almighty, the immortal, unchangeable, king of creation, all-powerful, unchanging Lord could actually die.

And yet, in the span of a few hours one Friday morning, He laid all of that aside and breathed His last. For me. For you. For all of us.

His death was necessary to cancel out everything that is ugly and evil and wrong in this world. And that is exactly what He did. He canceled it all out. In that moment, finally, justice was served.

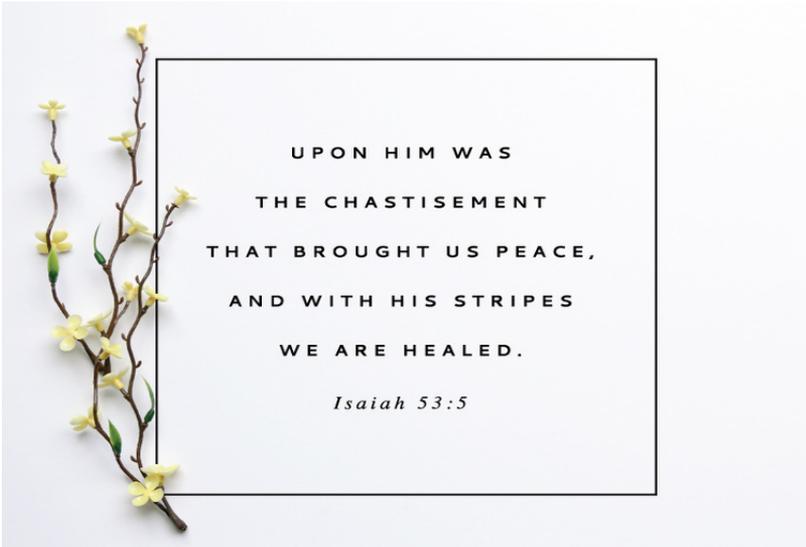
And that is why Good Friday is so good. Because on that day, God offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice, the only sacrifice that would do. And it is by that sacrifice that we are healed, that we are purified, that we are able to draw near to God.

And that, sweet friends, is a good thing.

**Reflection:** Why is Good Friday good for us?

**Prayer:** That God would reveal to you the depth of His love.

## HOLY WEEK DAY 7: HOLY SATURDAY



Suggested Readings: **Isaiah 52:13-15**, **Isaiah 53**, and **Luke 23:56**

On Holy Saturday, not much happened...that we know of, at least. Since it was the Jewish Sabbath, all activity came to a grinding halt, and Jesus' followers had to wait until the next day to properly prepare His body for burial.

We can't help but wonder what those closest to Jesus were thinking and feeling. He had told them quite explicitly that the Son of Man would die and rise on the third day, but given their behavior that weekend, it's pretty clear that they didn't understand exactly what Jesus meant.

Their own words serve as evidence: "Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people...we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel." (Luke 24:18-21)

Did you notice that? They used past tense. They acted as if all of their hopes had died right alongside Jesus on that cross. Saturday must have been a day of overwhelming grief and confusion. How could it have been anything else?

Can you imagine? Even though I try, I can't even begin to comprehend the depth of their sorrow, because I always have the end of the story in sight. It changes everything.

But we can't get to Sunday until we go through Saturday. And so, on this Holy Saturday, as we wait for the dawn of a new day, let's give glory to the One who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows far, far away. Sunday is coming.

**Reflection:** As we conclude Holy Week, we look forward to the hope we have in celebrating RESURRECTION SUNDAY.

**Prayer of Intercession:** Father we pray for all those you would speak to as we celebrate the Risen Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Encourage and invite people to our joyous celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ on April 21, 2019**

**Holy Week Reflections adapted from:**

<https://leslieannjones.com/holy-week-with-jesus>