



LIFE IN LIGHT OF THE

Resurrection

EASTER WEEK DEVOTIONAL & PRAYER GUIDE

CHURCH FAMILY,

Easter is the most significant celebration in our faith. During Holy Week, we reflect on the journey of Christ—His triumphal entry, His sacrifice on the cross, and His glorious resurrection. It is a time of deep gratitude, worship, and anticipation as we remember the price Jesus paid for our salvation and the victory He secured over sin and death.

Holy Week invites us to prepare our hearts and draw near to the Lord. Each day brings us closer to Easter Sunday, when we celebrate the risen Savior, the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan.

This year at FSBC, we will journey through a special sermon series titled ***Life in Light of the Resurrection*** where we will see how resurrection of Christ transforms our life. We will reflect on the meaning of the cross, the hope of the resurrection, and the victory we have in Jesus.

As you and your family prepare for Easter, we hope this collection of devotions written by our staff will be a blessing to you. Designed for all ages, this resource will guide you through Holy Week with one devotional each day beginning on Palm Sunday. Our prayer is that through these reflections, you will draw closer to the Lord and rejoice in the life and hope found in our risen King.

IN CHRIST,

- Matt Duckett, Michael Garner, Stephanie Hamby, Andy Miller, Tim Northup, Erin Roberts, and Heather Seratte

FSBC LAWRENCE



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Palm Sunday

SUNDAY, APRIL 13

READ: Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 1:1-11

In Mark 8:29, Jesus asks His disciples, “*Who do you say that I am?*” Even today, countless perspectives compete to define Him—some see Him as a great teacher, a wise friend, or a revolutionary leader. Yet, as we prepare our hearts for Passion Week and reflect on the events leading to the cross, we will come to see the true identity of our Messiah. My prayer is that as we journey together, our understanding of Christ and His work on the cross will deepen. May we not only remember what He did but respond with renewed faith, surrender, and awe at His sacrifice. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

For centuries, the people of God longed for their Messiah, waiting in great expectation. He was prophesied to be their King (Micah 5:1-4) and the one who would save them from their sins (Isaiah 53:12). Many had come, claiming to be the Messiah, seeking to overthrow the establishment—but none were the true Savior of the world. Then Jesus arrived. Unlike any who came before Him, He carried authority, compassion, and divine purpose. His words brought healing, His presence brought peace, and His mission brought hope. As the Passover

approached and the streets of Jerusalem filled with people, their wait was almost over. The stage was set for the coming King.

In Matthew 21:1-11, Jesus begins His westward descent from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. Even His mode of transportation fulfills prophecy, declaring His identity (Zechariah 9:9). As He enters the holy city, the people recognize this moment’s significance. They lay their garments before Him and cry out, “*Hosanna in the highest!*” Yet, while they rightly proclaim who He is, we know that in just a few days, many of these same voices will call for His crucifixion.

The question of Jesus’ identity is pivotal in understanding the events that unfold throughout Holy Week. The people of Jerusalem wrestled with who He truly was. The same is true for us today. As Jesus steps into His final days—interacting with those who will betray, deny, and crucify Him—He still asks, “*Who do you say that I am?*”



WRITTEN BY MATT DUCKETT



MONDAY, APRIL 14

READ: Matthew 21:12-22; Mark 11:12-19; Isaiah 56:6-8

On this day around 2,000 years ago, our Savior, Jesus, cleansed the temple on our behalf. For many, this was just another ordinary day. The temple grounds were bustling with activity as people prepared for Passover. The money-changers and those who sold animals for sacrifice likely made a great sum of money. Then Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, entered the temple. In a display of zeal and passion, he drove out the vendors, overturning tables and chairs in the process. His reason was simple: *"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations"* (Mark 11:17 quoting Isaiah 56:7). Jesus, quoting the prophet Isaiah, taught those present that the temple was for all people and was a place to meet God, not a place to exploit others for selfish gain.

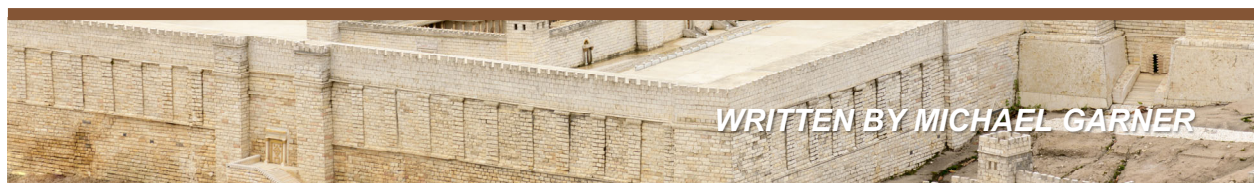
Who were these money-changers and animal vendors? They were swindlers who had created extra rules about keeping the temple free from Roman money and imposed extra requirements of what types and conditions of animals may be offered as sacrifices to God. History teaches that they had set up these booths in the outer court of the temple, also known as the Gentile Court. When Jesus cleansed the

temple, it was an act of love and jealousy for all of those who seek God, not just the Jewish people.

As you reflect on what Christ did on your behalf this week, take a moment to express gratitude to God for His zealous love and jealousy for you. Ask God to reveal where you have let other influences enter your life. Thank God for cleansing you from sin just as Jesus cleansed the temple from those who were not honoring God. After all, you are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Finally, seek His grace and favor for those you know who still do not know Christ and have been deceived by those who would exploit them for selfish gain.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN GOD MAKING YOU MORE HOLY THIS YEAR?

WHAT ARE THE "MONEY-CHANGERS" THAT STILL HAVE A PLACE IN YOUR LIFE?





TUESDAY, APRIL 15

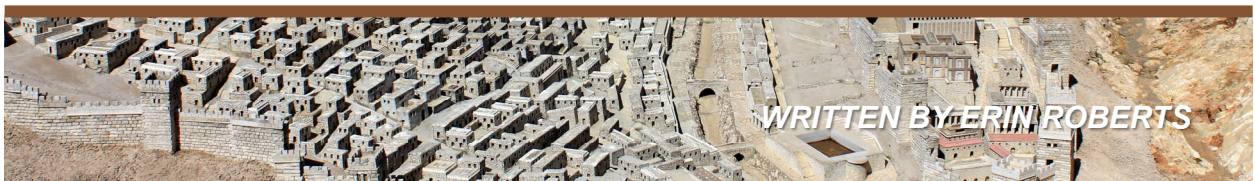
READ: Matthew 21:23-46; Exodus 12:21-28; Isaiah 50:4-11; Luke 4:18

On Tuesday of Holy Week, Jesus entered Jerusalem with divine purpose, His indomitable spirit a testament to His Messianic calling. He was once again leading His disciples from Bethany back into a city filling with the Jewish pilgrims observing Passover, a sacred remembrance of God's deliverance from bondage in Egypt. Now the chosen people of God were under the rule of the Roman empire and once again being brought into submission through fear and oppression. And not only this, but their religious leaders were abusing their power and frantically trying to trample persistent rumblings of the Messiah's arrival. The Jewish people were under subjugation and spiritually lost to their own understanding and self-righteousness.

This is us. Enslaved and lost. Bound by the world's powers, helpless to our own depravity. What did Jesus do to confront the situation back then? What He still does today, offers grace and mercy, teaching us truth through His word. And when we are ready to break from the oppression, He offers us a covering, just as he did for the people in Egypt all those years ago. An escape, a promise of freedom. Innocent

blood shed to redeem us, claimed when we accept Him as our personal savior.

In Jerusalem, he went to confront those abusing their power and reassure those seeking Him. No one understood the plan was never for Him to be the conquering warrior or mighty religious ruler they wanted. Not one expected a simple man with an indomitable spirit to save the lost and usher in His kingdom. As Jesus and his disciples went away from Jerusalem following all of the day's confrontation, He tells His disciples to look forward to the desolation of this world because it means eternity with Him. His heavenly kingdom. Don't expect salvation from this world but endure the turmoil of this life with hopeful expectation of eternal life with Him!





WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16
READ: Luke 22:1-6; Philippians 2:5-11

Today was the calm before the storm, though there was a lot going on behind the scenes. Called Spy Wednesday, today the Sanhedrin plotted to arrest Jesus. Judas came to them offering to betray Jesus into their hands. The history-making events of this week continued to move forward towards the crucifixion.

We know very little about what Jesus was doing on this day. It is likely that he taught in the temple. Maybe he spent time with his disciples and friends - talking, laughing, prepping for Passover - while only he had the bittersweet understanding of what would take place in the coming days. We can be almost certain that he spent time in prayer. Let's reflect on some things that Jesus did during his ministry that show his amazing love, even before he goes to the cross to die for us.

From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus is an example for us. As Jesus stepped into the waters of the Jordan, he symbolized our need for repentance and redemption. With his baptism, he gave us a beautiful picture of how his love for us would lead to his death and resurrection and provide the way for our salvation (Matthew 3:13-17).

Jesus' time in the wilderness is something we

can identify with. This experience was not for his sake, but for ours; so that we could see he faced temptation just as we do. His love is not distant - he understands and draws near to us in our struggles (Matthew 4:1-11).

Jesus welcomed and connected with everyone. He talked with a Samaritan woman. He healed a Roman Centurion's servant. He gave counsel to a rich, young man. Jesus seeks out Zacchaeus, a despised tax collector, and declares, *"The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."* This reminds us that no matter who we are or what we've done, Jesus' love extends to us (Luke 19:1-10).

As he was teaching his disciples, Jesus declared, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6). Out of love for us, Jesus invites us to follow him as the only way to eternal life. His truth overcomes our confusion. His life gives us hope.

It is hard to comprehend Jesus' love for us. His mission was to bridge the gap between humanity and God by offering salvation to those who will believe in him. Let's rejoice, even in the shadow of the coming days, that his love is constant and his promises are true.





Maundy Thursday

THURSDAY, APRIL 17

READ: Exodus 12; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:1-20

Maundy Thursday marks the day when Jesus gathered with his disciples to share the Passover Seder meal. Rich with symbolism, each food item and cup within the ancient Seder commemorates how God had ransomed his people from slavery in Egypt through a series of ten plagues during the Exodus. Due to Pharaoh's hard heart, these plagues culminated in the death of the firstborn. As a marker of God's people and to spare them from the same punishment as the Egyptians, God told Israelite families to sacrifice a spotless lamb and apply its blood to the outer doorframes of their homes. That evening, the people ate the lamb meat with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Later that night God passed over, sparing those who had applied the lamb's blood. Following this miracle, the Israelites were finally released from their centuries of slavery. Despite this new physical freedom, the Israelites remained in bondage to their sinful human nature- so evident during 40 years of wilderness wandering and centuries of covenant-breaking while living in the Promised Land.

Eventually their habitual sins led God's people to experience the pain of exile again - this time at the hands of the Babylonians. It is into this time of despair, God spoke words of hope and restoration to His people through the Prophet Jeremiah. Amid the sorrow of exile, God con-

soled His people promising them that sometime after they returned home, something new and better was coming. An excerpt of Jeremiah 31:31-34 says, ***"I will make a new covenant ... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people...for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."***

About 600 years after these words of hope were spoken, Jesus inaugurated this New Covenant during his last Passover Seder. He said, ***"This cup is the New Covenant, ratified by my blood, which is being poured out for you"*** (Luke 22:20). From Maundy Thursday through Resurrection Sunday, Jesus transformed the Passover Seder from a declaration of release from physical slavery to a redemption from the spiritual captivity of sin and death.

As followers of the crucified and risen Jesus, we are children of this New Covenant in His blood. We are recipients of God's ancient promise to know Him personally with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Joel 2:28-32). It is this life-changing reality that we celebrate during the Lord's Supper. Join us tonight at 6pm for Maundy Thursday service as we honor the spotless Passover Lamb of God.



WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE HAMBY



FRIDAY, APRIL 18

READ: Matthew 27; Isaiah 53; Hebrews 10

First light dawned on the 15th of Nisan. The Jewish leaders convened their official council, the Sanhedrin, and put Jesus on trial. They pressed Him, *“Are You then the Son of God?”* *“But the only answer He gave was, ‘You rightly say that I am’* (Luke 22:70). With this testimony, the council had the evidence they believed they needed to condemn Jesus to death for blasphemy.

Jesus was interrogated many times. He was made to wear a crown of thorns and mocked. He suffered beating and scourging. He carried His cross through Jerusalem to Golgotha. And by the third hour, around 9am, the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus with a sign above Him that read, *“the King of the Jews.”*

We can only imagine how Jesus’ followers felt. Trusting in Jesus as God’s promised, Anointed One. Following Him throughout Israel, supporting and preaching His gospel message. Jesus—their Lord, leader, and friend—was bloodied and broken, condemned by the political and religious leaders to suffer a criminal’s execution at the hands of foreign occupiers.

At noon, an eclipse darkened the landscape. Around 3pm, there was a great

earthquake, the Temple veil was torn, and Jesus *“breathed His last.”* Joseph of Arimathea secretly asked Pilate for permission to take Jesus’ body for burial. Then, he and Nicodemus carefully wrapped Jesus’ body for burial and laid it in a newly-carved tomb.

The Son of Man was dead. And the promise of Isaiah 53 was fulfilled: the Lamb of God was led *“to the slaughter ... cut off from the land of the living ... [crucified] with the wicked—but with the rich at His death.”*

The Lamb was slain, but seeds of hope remained. The Roman centurion testified to the glory of God. Two of the women watched as two members of the Jewish council that condemned their Lord to death secretly dissented. Even death could not extinguish the glory of the Son.

Jesus’ death was not God’s final word. The sins of the world were now covered by the blood of Jesus. The veil into the Holy Place was torn, signifying the end of an era: Jesus, our Great High Priest, made the final sacrifice, shedding His own blood to open the way for us to enter into the presence of the Father. The grave was under siege, and soon the sting of death would be no more.



WRITTEN BY TIM NORTHUP

GOOD FRIDAY PRAYER GUIDE

We hope that you will use this prayer guide for your 30-min timeslot for today's Prayer Vigil or during your quiet time to contemplate Christ's day of suffering. The church building will be open today from 9am - 3pm for prayer in the Worship Center.

1. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

From these words, we can have confidence that our sins can be completely forgiven, that the cycle of sin can end, and that Jesus practiced what He preached. Forgiveness is a decision of the will to forgive, not based on feelings. When you do, the power of the Cross will set you free.

Pray with thanksgiving for His forgiveness. Who do you need to forgive? Pray for Jesus to soften your heart to forgive as He forgives you.

2. Two criminals hung beside Jesus. One rejected Him, and the other said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

Both of the criminals were sinners in need of forgiveness, but something happened to the second man causing him to recognize who Jesus was. Jesus' words of forgiveness transformed that criminal from a doubter to a believer.

Remember that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Pray for those who are rejecting Christ today. Pray that you will witness to them so they might come to believe in Him and have eternal life.

3. "...Jesus said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son, and to the disciple (John), Here is your mother" (John 19:25-27).

As the disciples deserted Jesus in the garden, he felt alone, but John returned at Jesus' trial and crucifixion. John couldn't stay away from his beloved Lord, and wanted to be close to Jesus. You can be as close to Jesus as you want to be. "Come near to God and he will come near to you" (James 4:8).

Pray about the time you spend with God in prayer and in His Word and with His people.

4. When John showed up at the cross, Jesus looked at him, and gave him the high responsibility to stand in his place and care for his mother. John kept his promise and took Mary into his home.

We make promises to stay close to Christ, to spend time with him, to serve others, but we get busy and tired and forsake our promises. "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross..." (Hebrews 12:2).

Pray about coming back to your first love, Jesus. If you can, kneel in adoration and love as you pray, thanking God for His patience, sacrifice, and love.

PRAYER GUIDE CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

5. “About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

This fourth statement from the cross is the very core of our redemption, the essence of the Christian faith. It is, however, confusing, for how could the Father abandon His beloved Son? Make no mistake, He did abandon Jesus. He did it for you and me, for our redemption and forgiveness.

Pray with humility to think that God would forsake His Son because of your sin. Thank God for the reminder of the incredible cost of your sin. Pray that you live a life of gratitude for God’s love and forgiveness. Pray that others will see their need for a Savior.

6. “Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty” (John 19:28).

This was a cry of personal agony, pain and deep spiritual need. Previously he had experienced betrayal by Judas, arrest, trial and interrogations, and flogging. The night before, Jesus was sweating blood at Gethsemane, asking the Father if there was some other way that this cup could pass. No wonder His soul was anguished! He knows our pains and challenges and will never turn down one who comes to Him crying, “Lord, save me.” He will always hear you. “You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry” (Psalm 10:17).

Pray with thanksgiving that God always hears

you. Confess any neglect in spending time with him. Thank Him for enduring so much physical and emotional suffering to make a way for you to come to Him. Pray for comfort for those afflicted in our broken world, for an end to violence.

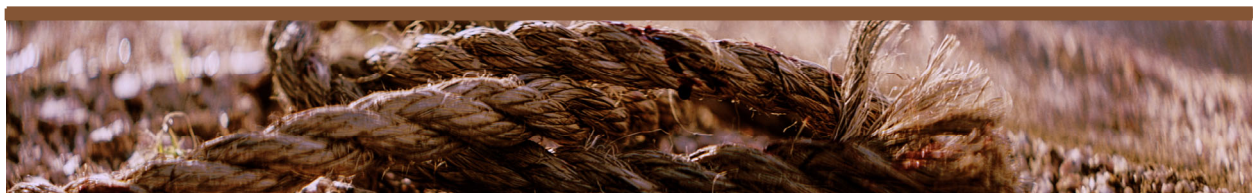
7. “It is finished” (John 19:30).

The word “finished” is a verb that means the purpose has been fulfilled, completed and continues forever. The effect and blessing of the finished work of Christ dying on the Cross are for eternity. It means that every generation and from every nation, anyone who comes to Him and bows at His feet and accepts the blessings that come from that finished work of Christ will be eternally saved.

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Pray about the effect the finished work of Christ has on you today. Pray that you never take it for granted and that everywhere you go, you boldly tell others about this saving grace that comes only from our Sovereign God through the sacrifice of Jesus.

May you be blessed by this time with the LORD, knowing that Jesus reigns from heaven on high and one day will return to take us home!



Black Saturday

SATURDAY, APRIL 19

READ: Psalm 46:1-11; Psalm 34:18-19

Saturday. The Gospels, and Scripture in general, have very little to say about what happened that day. Also known as Black Saturday, it is often overlooked and known as the forgotten day of Holy Week. We don't want to remember. We want to forget the feelings of desolation and despair it brought with it. But it wasn't forgotten or overlooked by the followers of our Savior at the time of His crucifixion. They lived it.

Saturday was a day of loss, mourning, despair, and confusion. Only a few days prior the disciples and other followers were filled with hope and expectation, only to now find themselves devastated by unimaginable grief and sorrow. The man they believed to be the Messiah, the one sent by God to save them, was now dead and buried in a tomb, sealed and guarded. The earth had trembled, the day had grown eerily dark, and everything - the future they once dreamed of - vanished with the sun. Everything was overshadowed by their immense grief. I don't know how they slept through the night Friday night, other than by sheer emotional exhaustion.

Have you ever been there? In that pit of despair? Dragging through sleepless nights

because ALL has been lost, and there seems to be no hope, no promise of a future? It's in those moments that we must pause and reflect on the sheer depth of God's love because it's only in those moments that we ever even come close to understanding His love.

It was in the midst of Black Saturday, that the disciples were reminded, and we should take note too, it's especially in the darkest moment of our lives, the moments of our greatest despair, that God is at work. They didn't see it and neither do we, but in God's providence, He was (is) not finished. What appeared to them to be the end, to be the loss no one could come back from, God had something so much greater on the horizon. He IS still at work. He is not finished with you or the rest of Humanity. Lean into His love. Yes, He was crucified on Friday, but, in the words of SM Lockridge, "Sunday's comin'."

Take some time today to reflect on where you have seen God at work in your life through the years. Write those experiences/ebenezers (faith markers) down. Journal about those times and thank God for His faithfulness.

WRITTEN BY ANDY MILLER

Easter Sunday

SUNDAY, APRIL 20

READ: Luke 24:1-7

He is Risen!

It is Sunday of Holy Week—the tomb is empty, and the throne is occupied. Through His resurrection, Jesus ushers in hope for the believer, proving His death has forever defeated sin and death. Every Old Testament prophecy and Jesus' own words about His suffering and triumph are now fulfilled in this moment of victory.

The biblical story reaches its climax in Jesus' death and resurrection. Yet, the day begins in sorrow and confusion. Mary Magdalene, longing to anoint His body, finds the tomb empty and runs to tell the disciples. Peter and John race to the scene, discovering the folded linens—a silent testimony that He has risen. Could it be true? The reality of the resurrection is unfolding before their eyes.

The wrath of God has been poured out on the Son. The price for sin is paid. Salvation is accomplished. The grave has lost its power. The tomb is empty. Christ is risen! He is not there—He has risen, just as He said. The angel's announcement echoes through time: *"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"*

The resurrection is not just a historical event; it is a personal and eternal truth. It points to our future hope—when Jesus will return and bring forth the new heavens and earth. But it also speaks to our present reality, offering strength, comfort, and joy amid life's struggles. Because He lives, we can face each day with confidence, knowing that suffering is temporary, and victory is assured. Death is no longer the end—it is the doorway to everlasting life for those who are in Christ.

Jesus has conquered death and reigns at the Father's right hand, interceding for us. His victory is our victory. His resurrection means new life, new hope, and an eternal inheritance that will never fade, rust, or perish. Through His Spirit, we are empowered to live boldly, love deeply, and walk faithfully in the light of His resurrection. Let us carry this message to the world, reflecting His glory in all we do.

So, brothers and sisters, let us rejoice! The inextinguishable light has pierced the darkness. Christ is alive, and hope is alive with Him.

He is Risen indeed!

WRITTEN BY MATT DUCKETT