

Immersed in God's Word, following Jesus – together

They took note that they had been with Jesus. ~ Acts 4:13

Monday, Mar 25: Disciples don't worry about yesterday

Many Christian traditions highlight these pre-Easter days as "Holy Week," but it is not actually more holy than other weeks. If you look back at Jesus'



life, every week He lived was holy. So why "Holy Week?" We hold the events of this week in special esteem for their impact on the life and definition of the world and the church. John dedicates nearly half of His gospel material to the events of this week. We will follow some of those events with Jesus as best we can place them, leading us into short times of prayer with the Lord after that. Monday's event is the cleansing of the temple and kicking out the money changers, found in Matthew 21:12-13:

Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer," but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'"

It's a great segue or transition to the following prayer for the week:



Prayer for the week: Lord Jesus, I pray that You would cleanse my temple and renew it as a house of prayer for You as well – head to toe. Stir my spirit and deepen my appreciation for the events You experienced this week, pouring out Your heart and soul, life, and blood to redeem Your people – to redeem me. I look forward to another week of Your blessings and pray that the Father grants it in Your name. Amen.

8 Prayers to Pray Each Day of Holy Week

If you would like to supplement your Holy Week experience with prayers created by **IBelieve** to walk toward Jesus' death and resurrection, check out Maria Miriam's content with written or video options:

www.ibelieve.com/faith/8-prayers-to-pray-each-day-of-holy-week.html



Micro-Meditation: Psalm 51:13-19

Read 13-19

2x

Mark words or phrases that catch your attention

Meditate:

Talk with God about those words. Ask Him to put things on your heart and mind in response.

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.

¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed,
O God, you who are God my Savior
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring
it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken
and contrite heart you, O God, will not despise.

¹⁸ May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the
righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.



Pondering Point: Psalm 51:19 speaks of *the sacrifices of the righteous*. The following language may be grandiose, but it is true nonetheless: You will never find a more righteous person (Jesus) making a more powerful and effective sacrifice than the one celebrated this week. Ever since then, His disciples have been teaching transgressors about His ways, enabling hearers to be delivered from their sins. Hopefully you are one of those sinners who has declared the praise of God for His Son Jesus' sacrifice.

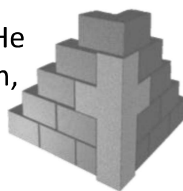
Tuesday, March 26: God's Mission in Matthew 21:33-45

Have you never read in the Scriptures, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes"? Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ~ Jesus, Matthew 21:42-43

Tuesday of Holy Week for Jesus included, beside teaching things,

1. Dealing with enemies trying to trap Him with questions, and
2. A series of parables that indicted those in Jewish leadership.

Once those exchanges occurred, Jesus let them know He was the Cornerstone of all God's work. They heard Him, disagreed with Him, and stepped up their efforts to arrest Him without riling up a crowd of sympathizers.



Prayer: Jesus, many people (including church and political leaders of Your day) rejected You as Messiah, but like the Apostle Peter, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matthew 16:16) and I know that I have life in Your name (John 20:31). I also know that You taught people to *render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's*. Recognizing Your ownership of my life, I render myself to You. Be the Cornerstone of my life as You are the church. I pray this in Your name and to the glory of our Heavenly Father. Amen.

Micro-Meditation: Psalm 51:13-19

Ps 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.

¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed,
O God, you who are God my Savior
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

Teaching or Command of God:

You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.



Matthew 7:5

THE PROMISE

2 Peter 2:6

For in Scripture it says: See, I lay a stone in Zion a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.



Pondering Point: How do you (or any follower of Jesus) avoid the hypocrisy of judging others for their sin while offering excuses for our own? OR, how do you avoid the hypocrisy of forgiving others for their sin while refusing to forgive yourself for failures that God has forgiven in Jesus' name?

Wednesday, March 27: Your Identity in Christ

- **We are reconciled to our Heavenly Father by Jesus' death and resurrection, making us without blemish and free from accusation; I know that I live holy in His sight in Jesus' name.**

Wednesday is thought to be the day Judas agrees with the chief priests to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. The arrest happens later, but this sets the betrayal in motion. In our devotions, Wednesdays are about identity in Christ; sadly for Judas, he found his identity outside of Jesus. It is astonishing that a disciple who spent countless hours with Jesus doesn't seem to capture His heart – or at the least Judas chose against Jesus' heart. It's not that he didn't love Jesus; he was quite remorseful later. But Judas loved something else more – in this case money (see John 12:6). He had a higher master than Jesus. That master made him prone to the devil's plans. Scriptures tell us that we cannot have two masters; Judas is a prime example. Of course, God has long known the heart of man and often we see God use even evil intent to work for His good. Judas chose his own path, but God used those choices to bring blessings for our paths.

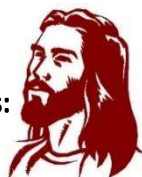


Prayer prompt: Check in with God about any rivals that exist in your life as potential masters. Don't cheat yourself of this opportunity. With the Holy Spirit's help, make a list and clearly rebuke any other potential masters in prayer.

Micro-Group Connections: A Disciple's Lifestyle



Micro-Group Moment (MGM):
Considering a life of **VIGILANCE** as
a case for participating in Micro-Groups:



Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

Deuteronomy 4:9

As a Micro-Group participant, you are going to have a significant impact in a micro-group in multiple ways – some healthy and, if we are honest, sometimes unhealthy. Pray for more – much more – of the healthy kind.

Vigilance

The quality of being alert and watchful



Prayer prompt: *I said, "I will watch my ways
and keep my tongue from sin;
I will put a muzzle on my mouth
while in the presence of the wicked."*

Psalms 39:1

Micro-Meditation: Psalm 51:13-19

Ps 51:15 Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

Teaching or Command of God:

May these words of my mouth and this
meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight,
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.



Psalms 19:14

THE PROMISE

[You are a chosen people] that you may declare
the praises of him who called you out of
darkness into his wonderful light. Once you
were not a people, but now you are the people of God.

1 Peter 2:9b-10a



Pondering Point: Ponder what has come out of your
mouth today or yesterday; consider what has been tugging
at your heart. Is it God-pleasing? Praiseworthy?

Thursday in Holy Week encompasses Jesus gathering His disciples in the Upper Room where a foot washing and the Last Supper occur. They will later head to the Mount of Olives where Jesus prays in the garden and sweats what are described as droplets of blood (Luke 22:44). During that time, Jesus tells His disciples that *the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak* (Matthew 26:41). He then encourages them to pray as a counter to the body's weakness. That leads us to our **Review** the week, **Repent** if necessary and **Return** as necessary.



R *Review:* Where and how have you allowed the weakened flesh to cause trouble for your spirit (who is trying to follow God)? No sense in hiding our sinful choices, weaknesses and places we've succumbed to temptation. God already knows.

R *Repent if necessary:* Go ahead and repent of those sinful choices and pray that the Lord strengthens you and your spirit. Jesus prayed so that He would be strengthened to do God's will and we want to pray for that same type of strength and fortitude as we seek to do God's will also.

R *Return:* Ask God to help you set aside the weakened flesh and to restore Him to His rightful place on your heart's throne; let Him be master over all in your world.

Micro-Meditation: Psalm 51:13-19

Ps 51: 16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, O God, will not despise.

Teaching or Command of God:

To love [God] with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.



Mark 12:33

THE PROMISE

God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.

Proverbs 3:34



Pondering Point: Based on these three bible passages, what brings God delight? How can you apply that in your life today or this week to the glory of God?

Friday, March 29: Discipleship Point for Good Friday



*And when I think that God his son not sparing
sent him to die I scarce can take it in. (How Great Thou Art)*

The Apostle Paul testified, “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”. In our **Covenant of Discipleship** at Hope, this is where the path of discipleship starts: A confession of faith: *I confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe God raised Him from the dead.*

Friday is the day of Jesus’ crucifixion, planned centuries before Jesus became a baby. Good Friday’s events represent how deep God’s love is and show His Heart for people – for mankind. That goes for God the Father giving up His Son and for God the Son enduring significant suffering. Hymns we sing on this occasion speak deeply: *O Sacred Head Now Wounded, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, even the simple lyrics, *were you there when they crucified my Lord*. We end today’s devotion with a prayerful image from a powerful lyric of the song *Once Again* by Matt Redman.



*Once again I look upon the cross where you died
I’m humbled by your mercy and I’m broken inside
Once again I thank you, once again I pour out my life.*



Micro-Meditation: Psalm 51:13-19

Ps 51:18-19 May it please you to prosper Zion
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Teaching or Command of God: Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of
God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.



THE PROMISE

1 Peter 2:5

You also, like living stones, are being built into
a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood,
offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable
to God through Jesus Christ.



Pondering Point: In order to let us view God's mercy in our
lives, Jesus offered His body in sacrifice, a holy and pleasing
act to God the Father. When we offer our bodies as living sacrifices
in the name of Jesus, that too is holy and pleasing to God – an act
of spiritual worship in God's eyes.

Saturday, March 30: Scripture's Story for the Week

The Resurrection of Jesus Matthew 28:1-10



Saturday was the ordinary (weekly) Sabbath in the life of a Jew, including the now-famous Jew we know as Jesus. The Sabbath was fashioned after the seventh day of rest in Genesis 1 that God took after creating the heavens and the earth. Here between Matthew chapters 27 and 28, is the Saturday of what we call Holy Week, we find the body of Jesus, God-in-the-flesh, experiencing rest from His work on this Sabbath. He had just been on the cross uttering "It is finished" and died; now He was buried. While not 'six feet under'

He was definitely ‘behind closed doors.’ Have you ever thought about this? This Saturday is the one of the greatest portrayals of Sabbath rest, seeing Jesus’ body **at rest** in a grave awaiting the resurrection that would transform and redeem the history and future of man.



Prayer Prompt: While you review the story of Jesus’ resurrection which we celebrate tomorrow (Sun-rise), take a few moments to rest from your work and ponder the work of Jesus on this day of His deepest rest.

Sunday, March 31: Call to worship God, gather together

Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised!

Psalm 113:1

When one thinks of the wondrous glory of Christ, how astonishing that He can join with us! But more, when one thinks of His bringing many sons to glory at such a cost, one is lost in adoring amazement.

~ G. V. Wigram



Prayer: Father God, on this day of resurrection that we celebrate again today, two

suns would arise: The sun of our solar system and the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2). Both rise to shine on the evil and the good. May both run their course with great effectiveness from now until eternity. I thank You for them both and the blessing that they bring into my life and the lives of those whom I love. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

