

# HOLY WEEK

2021

MOUNTAIN BROOK COMMUNITY CHURCH

# HOLY

set apart, distinct,  
like no other

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# WEEK

a period of  
seven days

# INTRODUCTION

Christians have long recognized the significance of the final week of Jesus' life. We call it "Holy Week." It is a week like no other.

During this week, Jesus proclaims that "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (John 12:23). The fullness of time has arrived.

During this week, the Creator of the universe "humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8).

During this week, the Promised Messiah "was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

During this week, God our Savior provides eternal salvation to all who trust in Him, "not because of works by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy" (Titus 3:5).

In other words, this week is all about the fulfillment of God's eternal plan to save humanity. It is the week that gives us hope in our present circumstances, and hope for all eternity.

Use this devotional as a tool to reflect on the greatness of our God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Each day has a Scripture text from the Gospel of Mark and a devotional written by someone from our ministry team.

## THREE WORDS OF INSTRUCTION:

1. Read the text each day aloud as we follow the story in the Gospel of Matthew.
2. Read the devotional thought slowly to meditate on the Person and Work of Christ.
3. Take time to pray to and worship our Savior from this passage of Scripture.

*It is our hope and prayer that this devotional will deepen your love, devotion, and worship as you reflect on the great love that God demonstrates for us through Jesus Christ.*

- MBCC Ministry Team, Holy Week 2021

# PALM SUNDAY



## **MATTHEW 21:1-11**

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying 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. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

"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.'"

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

**IN FIVE DAYS,** Jesus would be murdered. But today, Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week, we follow Jesus's final footprints toward a cross. Jerusalem swelled with thousands of people celebrating Passover. The prophet Zechariah's words were still ringing in the ears of creation after centuries. On this day, Zion finally rejoiced at the coming of their King.

It had been a long, dark winter under the Roman rule, and the Jewish people desperately awaited spring to burst forth with the Messiah. They wanted a hero to vanquish their governmental foe. With hope, they shouted "Hosanna." They cut branches from the trees and laid them on the street beside coats they shed from their own back. They wanted a King, yet it was a Lamb that rode a donkey into Jerusalem that day.

Isn't that just like Jesus? All along the way, He baffled His disciples by turning the world upside down. When they thought the 5,000 should break for dinner, Jesus fed them out of a little boy's lunch box. When they looked for Jesus on the shore, He met them by walking on the water.

Jesus doesn't always do what we want Him to do. But He most certainly does what we need Him to do. Even if we

don't know what it is that we need. They signaled coming victory with palm branches, but His palms would soon be pierced by Roman nails. They laid cloaks on the ground below His royal feet - the same feet that would soon be hammered to a cross. They wanted a new government. Jesus gave them eternal life. They wanted reformation. Jesus gave them redemption. They wanted Him to rule with a sword and to sit on a throne. Jesus was pierced with a spear and hung on a cross.

As we start this Holy Week together, I encourage you to lay aside who you think Jesus "should" be in order for Him to graciously overwhelm us with who He truly is. Let's not miss Him by letting our agenda get in the way of His rescue mission. Some of those who were there on Palm Sunday missed it. Some who joined the crowd in shouting "Hosanna" would later join in a different, tragic anthem to the tune of "crucify Him".

Today, and everyday, let us behold Jesus for who He is. God has humbled Himself to die a sinner's death. The King we want is the slaughtered lamb we need. Father, give us eyes to see You.

- Drew Kearney

# MONDAY

## **MATTHEW 21:12-17**

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. He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 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, 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'?"

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

**ON THIS SECOND DAY OF HOLY WEEK,**

in Matthew 21:12-17, we enter an unsettling, yet significant, scene – Jesus is angry. Jesus, however, is not subtly irritated, but publicly and intentionally acting out his anger in flipping tables and rebuking people as he drives them out of the temple. But, why? What happened from the great celebration of the Triumphant King entering Jerusalem yesterday where palm branches were being raised to the Mighty Judge entering the temple today where tables are being turned?

Jesus is angry not because something is out of place, but because everything is wrong. Jesus is angry because, as He enters the temple, He sees that what is supposed to be a “house of prayer” has been turned into a place of ill-gained profit (v. 13; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11). Rather than worshipping God, people were making a profit, taking advantage of others, and robbing God of the praise and glory He rightfully deserves. Their actions reveal their cold, distant, and stubborn hearts toward God and others. Yes, Jesus is angry, and this passage

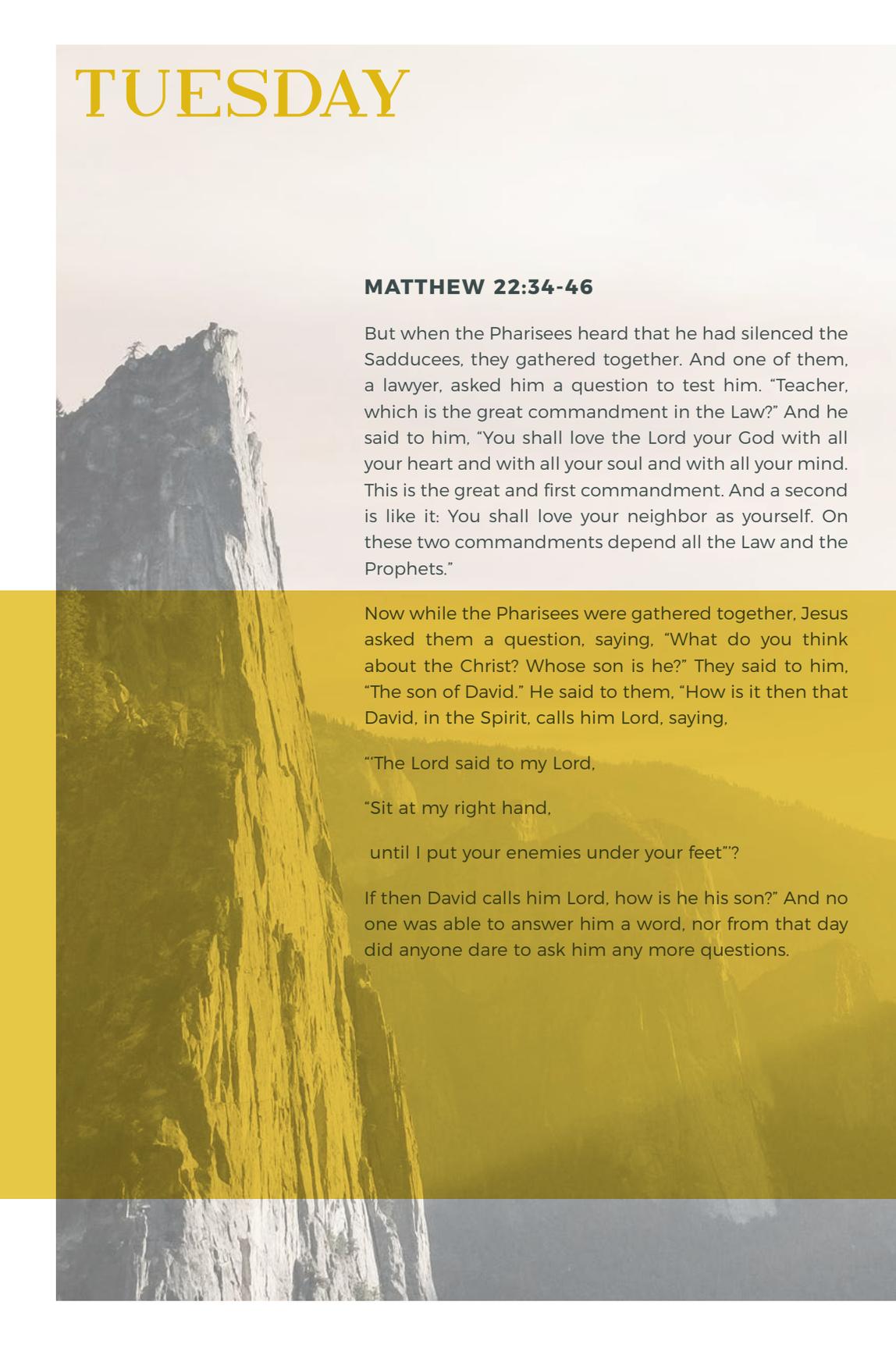
shows us that His anger is a good thing. But how?

Unlike our anger that is often rooted in being out of control, Jesus’ anger is always rooted out of His compassion for others. Notice that even when Jesus is angry and drives out the ungodly, the outcasts and the overlooked are drawn toward Him, because as we are told, “The blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them” (v. 14). In this passage, Jesus’ anger is not destructive but restorative. It is not like a wildfire destroying everything in its path but a warming fire making people whole. Jesus turned over tables because He was returning everything to its proper place.

How is the anger of Christ good news for us today? Today, on Monday, we see that Jesus was angry at what was sinful and wrong. On Friday, we will see Him go beyond being angry as we see Him suffer for our sin to make us right with God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

- *Ben Telfair*

# TUESDAY



## **MATTHEW 22:34-46**

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

"The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet"?"

If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

**THEY ARE SPOKEN TO US**, and by us, hundreds of times a day. They have traveled the globe and throughout history in many different languages and to many different people groups. They are used in the search of truth and sometimes to simply make a point. They teach us, convict us, motivate us and call us into action. What are they?

Questions.

The question asked to Jesus in this passage was very pointed and intentionally designed to test and trap Him. The Pharisees gathered together, after two other failed attempts and devised a plan that they thought would incriminate Jesus. They strategically selected their spokesperson, a lawyer who is gifted in the craft of questioning and is an expert in the law. It was a foolproof plan that would finally show the flaws of this man claiming to be God, or so they thought. With a clear throat and a powerful voice, the Pharisee presented this famous question to Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" The words that followed were truths that have transcended time in revealing who Jesus was, and why He came to the Earth.

His response came from the Shema, a traditional Jewish prayer from Deuteronomy 6 that was to be recited daily. To love God with all their heart, soul and might was a common prayer but a distant practice for many of the Pharisees that were questioning King Jesus that day. To them they were just words, but to Jesus who was the Word, they were the embodiment of why He came to dwell among us. He came because He loved God and loved others and He laid down his life so all could taste and see that love.

At the end of the passage, Jesus silenced the crowd by asking them another question that we must consider today; "What do you think about the Christ?" Ironically, the Pharisees were looking him in the eyes and still couldn't see Him clearly. Some thought He was a good teacher and a noble man, while others saw Him as a blasphemous threat to their way of life.

What do you think about Christ?

May God grant us the eyes to see and the ears to hear, the fullness of His love that was revealed to us in Christ Jesus.

- Skot Montgomery

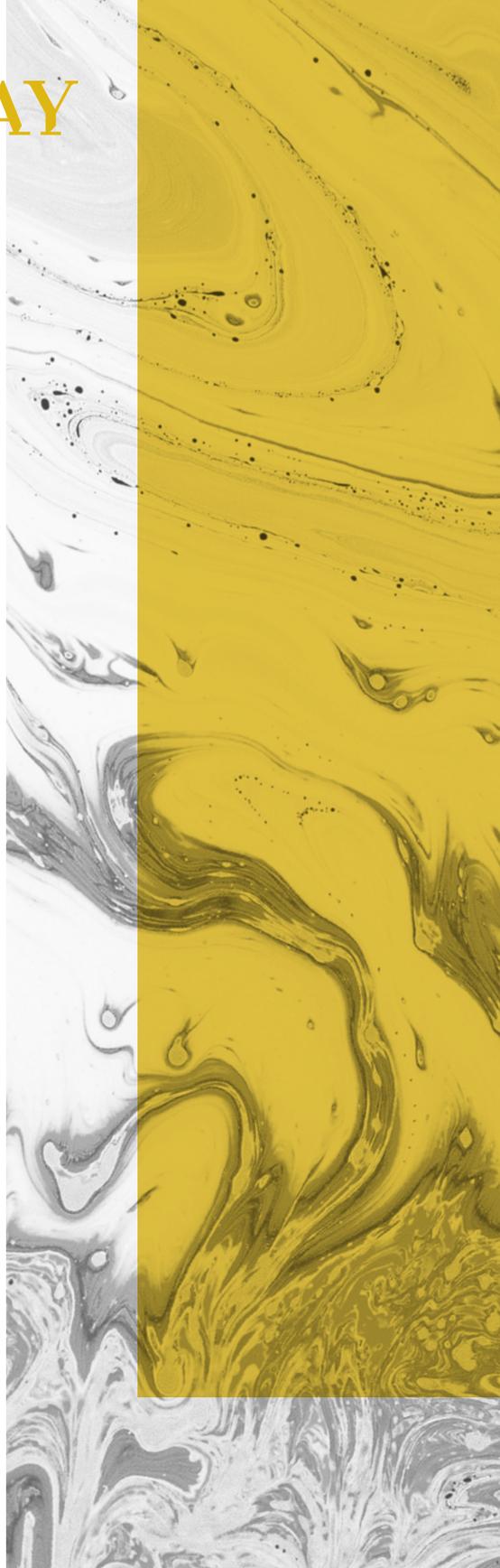
# WEDNESDAY

## **MATTHEW 26:1-13**

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor." But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."





**WHAT STRIKING CONTRASTS** we see in today's passage. Love and hatred. Extravagant adoration and selfish ambition. Plotting in secret and the open display of love and affection.

Israel's religious elite gathered to plot how to arrest Jesus and kill Him. They needed an undercover plan, but not during the Feast for they feared the crowds who gathered around Jesus. Their plan had to be stealth.

While His enemies were secretly plotting, Jesus was again telling His followers that His hour was near. He specifically connected the Passover in two days with His crucifixion. Jesus knew that He would be the Passover Lamb sacrificed. But His words fell on deaf ears. That is, except for one.

At Bethany, Jesus was with His disciples and friends to share a meal together. In walked a woman with her precious treasure in her hands. She entered the room with eyes only on Jesus, yet everyone in the room was staring at her. Without a word, she broke open an alabaster flask and poured ointment on the head of her beloved Savior, her King. John's gospel tells us this is Mary of Bethany. We have seen her before sitting at the feet of Jesus, soaking up His every

word. He said He would be crucified in two days. So this may be her one chance to anoint His body for burial. Only the finest would do, the costly ointment she had been saving all these years. Extravagant; keeping none for herself. She lavished on Jesus her love, devotion, honor, and worship down to the last drop.

While the sweet fragrance of the ointment filled the entire house, this sacred moment was interrupted by the indignant cry : "Why this waste?" John's gospel explains this was Judas, focused on money. Jesus quickly defends Mary. "In pouring this ointment on My body, she has done it to prepare Me for burial." What a beautiful example of devotion and what hope to see Mary give her all to Jesus. He not only noticed, but said it would be recorded in the gospels.

Are we willing to pour out our love for the Lord despite the world telling us, "what a waste"? Are we willing to give our very best to Jesus and drown out the voices questioning "why"? May we be like Mary, showing extravagant acts of love that shine the light of Christ and remind the world that there is HOPE and His name is Jesus.

- Dana Sheheane

# MAUNDY THURSDAY

## **MATTHEW 26:36-46**

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not

enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."



**IT'S LATE THURSDAY NIGHT.** This evening has included a shared meal with friends, parting personal instructions, the shocking act of humility of washing feet, Peter's bold declaration, the institution of the Lord's Supper and Judas' abrupt departure.

Now Jesus walked along with His friends singing hymns and speaking softly.

Eleven remained, no longer twelve, soon there would be none. Not one would stay. All would flee. Strike the Shepherd and the sheep scatter. They passed through the city gate and walked up the hill through the olive trees where they came to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Gethsemane means "oil press" or "a place of crushing." A fitting description as it took on an infinitely deeper meaning that night. For it was there that Jesus experienced His own "pressing" and "crushing" agony. As Isaiah said, "He was crushed for our sins."

In 1739 Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon entitled, Christ's agony:

"At Gethsemane Jesus had a near view of the furnace of wrath into which He was to be cast; He was brought to the mouth of the furnace that He might look in; that He might know what He was about to suffer."

Jesus fell on His face and prayed as His

friends, just a stone's throw away, could no longer fight sleep.

He cried out, "Father, if possible, let the cup pass!"

Then as if the Son knew the Father's answer He whispered,

"Your will be done."

So, Jesus stared into the cup. What He saw flung Him into the throes of agony. He pressed His forehead deep into the dirt, which softened into mud when mingled with His tears. He felt several small explosions of pain underneath the skin on His face. The tiny capillaries in His sweat glands burst under the stress; blood flowed through His pores and fell to the ground; it ran into His eyes; it stung.

Finally, after pleading a third time, Jesus lifted His head to the sky and cried out, "Not my will but your will be done. I will drink from this cup, Father. I will drink from this cup so that your glory may be revealed and the sheep you have given me will see your salvation and enjoy it forever."

And so Jesus did. He downed every last drop of the scalding liquid of God's white-hot wrath against sin.

Hallelujah, what a Savior!

- *Tim Kallam*

# FRIDAY

## **MATTHEW 27:32-44**

As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

**THE APOSTLE PAUL** concisely sums up the paradoxical nature of Jesus' death in 1 Corinthians 2:8: "they...crucified the Lord of glory." Such a statement seems irreverent, contradictory, even reckless to our tame, Christian ears. How could the Lord of glory be subject to such a shameful fate? Is a God capable of suffering and death worth following at all, or is only a God capable of supernaturally removing Himself from the cross a God worthy of our worship? These questions, though difficult, likely troubled the minds of the 1st century witnesses of Jesus' crucifixion, ultimately leading them to deny Jesus' divinity and murder Him on a Roman torture device.

Jews and Gentiles alike watched as the self-proclaimed incarnate "I Am" hung on the cross, mocking His inability to save Himself. "Some king this is...he must truly be the Son of God," they jeered, ignorant of the irony behind their claims. In the heat of the moment, they forgot Jesus' words of John 10:18: "no one takes (my life) from me, but I lay it down myself." Consequently, they failed to see that the purest representation of Jesus' divinity, the greatest expression of God's self-disclosure and love, is found in this very moment of weakness and humiliation.

This is the pinnacle of God's love for His people. To endure such physical and spiritual suffering for the very people who nailed Him to a tree evidences that there is no God apart from the dying God. There is no "King of the Jews" aside from the suffering servant pierced and crushed for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:5). There is no Messiah apart from the one who remained on the cross, refused to save Himself, and died in order that He could save sinful humanity. Love, not nails, pinned Jesus to the cross, and here, 2,000+ years later, we continue to reflect on the nearness of our salvation through Jesus' sacrifice on this day.

Ironically, it was Jesus' refusal to abandon the cross that proved His divinity... His acceptance of poverty, humility, and shame that secured his title as "THE KING OF THE JEWS." Hanging intentionally right in the center of sinful humanity, the Son of God embraced a fate that we deserved, a crucifixion earned by our sinful merits, and offered us access before the gracious and loving face of the eternal Lord of glory as a result. How great a love!

- *Chris Morgan*

# SATURDAY

## **MATTHEW 27:62-66**

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





**THE GRAVE IS SEALED.** The guards are keeping watch. Jesus the Messiah is inside, and He's dead. As you read this text, it's hard not to sense a finality about what has just happened to the Son of God. You'll notice that Jesus is not mentioned by name in this passage, nor does He have any active roll. In fact, even in His death He's still insulted, described by the chief priests as "that deceiver." So what does this text and this day in Holy Week say about Jesus? That our Savior is dead, and there's no getting out.

If you were a first century person and you read this passage, there would be the same depth of sadness that we all have when someone we love has died. There would be confirmation that death, in the end, always wins. There would be a sense of no escape, a sense of rage that this great Enemy called Death is still undefeated, and deep grief at the

hopelessness of it all. But on top of all those feelings, there would be the ruined belief that this defeat wasn't supposed to happen to God's Messiah; this wasn't supposed to happen to the One who came to bring life and life everlasting.

So how can such a dark day bring any sort of hope for us today? How is Jesus' lifeless body any comfort? We've just lived through a year in which we've been confronted with death on a daily basis; we can't escape the reality of it. But as Christians, we are supposed to remind ourselves of death in our lives of following Jesus. We are called to "number our days" (Ps. 90:12). We do so because we know that in His death, Jesus has gone there before us. More so, in His death and resurrection He has defeated the (previously) undefeated Enemy. By fully facing the reality of Holy Saturday in all its hopelessness, we can experience the profound joy of Resurrection Sunday in all its glory. In light of Jesus' death, as Christians we are now able to rename death "sleep" because we look toward the hope that when the dead and resurrected Jesus returns, He will raise to life all who have "fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4:14). Praise to Jesus for His deep love, to go before us even to the grave.

- Clayton Hornback

# EASTER SUNDAY

## **MATTHEW 28:1-10**

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. 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. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 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." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

**AT THE END OF THE MOST DRAMATIC WEEK**

in the lives of Jesus followers, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary got up early and made their way to the tomb of Jesus. The gospel writers don't give us much insight into the nature of the women's conversation during their early morning journey, just the fact that they went together to check on the tomb.

These two women had proven to be extremely loyal to Jesus during His years of ministry. But it was during the events of the previous week that they demonstrated faithfulness that seemed greater than all others. They were present at the foot of the cross and witnessed the extreme abuse Jesus endured during His torture. They were present when Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and placed in the tomb, and now in spite of their anguish and uncertainty, they would be present on this first Easter morning.

The reward for the two Mary's on this new day would allow them to be the first to hear the three most powerful words in Christian history, words that give us life, hope and purpose. God's heavenly messenger greeted the women, calmed

their fears and filled them with joy. HE HAS RISEN!

With the strong assurance of God's angel the two women "leave quickly" to share this breaking news of the empty tomb. The two Mary's carry with them the life changing truth that the grave could not hold Him, death could not defeat Him, just as He promised. It was all true!

Every year we return to celebrate the truth of the resurrection. On Easter we need to be reminded that the difficulties and struggles of our lives, our losses, disappointments and sin cannot undermine the power of the empty tomb!

"Death is swallowed up in victory"

"O death where is your victory?"

O death where is your sting?"

"But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1Corinthians 15:55,57)

**He is Risen, He is Risen indeed!**

- Kevin DeLaney

HE IS  
RISEN!



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