

HOLY WEEK: WALKING WITH JESUS

The Week Before the Cross

By Anne Graham Lotz



Every year I read through the Gospel accounts of what took place from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday as I seek to wrap my heart and mind around those days. This year I'm inviting you to join me each day for a brief reading of Scripture that helps give us a meaningful grasp of what took place in the life of our Lord Jesus during Holy Week.

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HOLY WEEK: WALKING WITH JESUS

PALM SUNDAY

To Listen to Anne Read Today's Scriptures, [Click Here](#)

This is Anne Graham Lotz. Today is the beginning of my very favorite time of year. I feel so privileged to share it with you. Thank you for joining me as together we trace our Lord's steps from Palm Sunday to Easter. Each day during this Holy Week, I will post an audio recording of a compilation of Scriptures that helps us wrap our hearts and minds around our Lord's journey from Sunday to Sunday. Today, we begin on Palm Sunday when Jesus entered Jerusalem in a way that uniquely identified Him as Israel's Messiah in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Listen to what the prophets had said:

Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous:
"The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!
Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
This is the gate of the LORD through
which the righteous may enter.
I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.
The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.
The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
From the house of the LORD we bless you. [1]

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes
to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey. [2]

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PALM SUNDAY

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

“Say to the Daughter of Zion,
‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked,

“Who is this?”

The crowds answered,

“This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”^[3]

As we conclude our reading for today, how would you answer that question? Who is Jesus to you? Celebrate Palm Sunday by acknowledging that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God and the Son of David, the Messiah, who has come in the name of the Lord.

[1] Psalm 118:15, 19-21, 22-24, 26a

[2] Zechariah 9:9

[3] Matthew 21:1-11

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MONDAY

To Listen to Anne Read Today's Scriptures, [Click Here](#)

On Monday after Palm Sunday, Jesus went to the heart of Jerusalem. He went to the temple.

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.’”

The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.

“Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him.

“Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read,

“‘From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise?’” [1]

“I tell you,” He replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” [2]

“Listen to (this) parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

“The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.

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“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

Jesus said to them, “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. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew He was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that He was a prophet.

And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night. [3]

As we conclude our Scripture reading on this Monday after Palm Sunday, Jesus once again desires to go to the hearts of His people...to cleanse us of our sin and wrongdoing. While some may reject this assertion of His authority, others submit with joy, and produce the fruit of righteousness. Which are you? On this Monday, ask Jesus to search your heart, then confess any sin He brings to mind and ask for His cleansing.

[1] Matthew 21:12-16

[2] Luke 19:40

[3] Matthew 21:33-44, 17

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TUESDAY

To Listen to Anne Read Today's Scriptures, [Click Here](#)

On Tuesday, as Jesus walked back to Jerusalem from Bethany with His disciples, He passed a fig tree. Looking for and expecting to find fruit, He found only leaves. And so, He cursed the tree that was not fulfilling its purpose.

When He came to the temple, in essence He also cursed the religious leaders who had the leaves of profession of religion, but no fruit of real faith and righteousness before God.

“Woe to you . . . you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. . . . How will you escape from being condemned to hell?

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”^[1]

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

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“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” [2]

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” [3]

At the conclusion of our reading, on this Tuesday of Holy Week, we would do well to live our lives in the awareness that Jesus also comes to us, looking for and expecting to find, not just the leaves of religious profession or platitudes, but the real fruit of a right relationship with God that produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Jesus is coming! All the signs He gave point to the fact that His coming is soon. When He does come, what will He find in your life? Today, make sure that He will find—not the leaves of religion--but the fruit of a right relationship with God because you have placed your sincere faith in Jesus as your own Savior and your own Lord.

[1] Matthew 23:27-28, 37-39

[2] Matthew 24:1-14

[3] Matthew 24:36-44

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WEDNESDAY

To Listen to Anne Read Today's Scriptures, [Click Here](#)

This is Wednesday. There is no Biblical record of what Jesus and His disciples did on Wednesday of Holy Week. It is assumed He may have stayed in Bethany to rest, surrounded by friends who loved Him and believed in Him.

Several days earlier, following the raising of Lazarus from the dead, Jesus attended a dinner in Bethany that was apparently held in His honor. It was served in the home of Simon, identified as a leper, whom Jesus must have previously cleansed. The Bible gives us a glimpse of a very beautiful and meaningful scene that took place there:

While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

When the disciples saw this, they were indignant.

“Why this waste?” they asked. “This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.”

Aware of this, Jesus said to them, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So, they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over. [1]

While we don't know for sure what Jesus did on Wednesday, the Bible does tell us what His enemies were up to. Although they thought they were operating in total secrecy, Jesus was fully aware of their evil plotting.

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When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, “As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. “But not during the festival,” they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.” [2]

Today, on Wednesday, take time to rest and as you do consider the scene in the home of Simon the Leper and contrast it with the scene in the palace of Caiaphas. They were radically different. Both scenes took place within hours of each other, revealing that who Jesus is, and what He says, has great impact. He cannot be ignored. How is He treated in your home? Either He is believed and beloved, or He is hated and rejected. While I'm sure no one in your home would admit to hating Jesus, neglect, dismissal, unbelief or even ignorance of Him is rejection. There can be no middle ground. Tomorrow—Thursday—we will continue to see this contrast.

[1] Matthew 26:6-16

[2] Matthew 26:1-5

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MAUNDY THURSDAY

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This is Thursday. If Wednesday was a time of rest in Bethany for Jesus, Thursday was the opposite. It was an intense time as the Cross drew nearer. On Thursday, Jesus celebrated Passover; He taught His disciples, He prayed in Gethsemane, then allowed Himself to be betrayed by one of His own disciples and arrested by soldiers sent by the religious leaders. Let's enter into Thursday.

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. [1]

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. [2]

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet." [3]

Jesus dismissed Judas and then He must have settled down with the disciples reclining around the table, and He began to teach them; first of all, about Heaven.

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MAUNDY THURSDAY

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” [4]

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” [5]

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.” [6]

“...But now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” [7]

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.” [8]

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. [9]

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MAUNDY THURSDAY

He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.” [10]

Luke tells us that while He prayed, an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. [11]

Returning to the account in Matthew:

Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them:

“The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.”

Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

Jesus replied, “Do what you came for, friend.” Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. [12]

What would it have been like for the disciples to go from the celebration of the Passover meal and the rich, full teaching of Jesus in the upper room, to the shadows of Gethsemane and the horror of seeing Jesus betrayed, arrested, and led off by an armed mob? Although Jesus had told them multiple times this would happen, the disciples had never understood. So...on Thursday night, their nightmare began.

Are you, too, living at the beginning of a nightmare? Thursday teaches us that sometimes God allows us to experience unimaginable circumstances because He is working out a greater purpose for His glory. Trust Him when you don't understand.

[1] Mark 14:12-17

[2] John 13:1-5

[3] John 13:12-14

[4] John 14:1-6

[5] John 15:1-5

[6] John 15:18-20

[7] John 16:5-7

[8] John 17:1-5

[9] John 18:1

[10] Matthew 26:37-39

[11] Luke 22:43-44

[12] Matthew 26:45-50

HOLY WEEK: WALKING WITH JESUS

GOOD FRIDAY

To Listen to Anne Read Today's Scriptures, [Click Here](#)

Friday was horrific! The only reason it could be called good is because it was on this day that the Lamb of God was sacrificed to make atonement for your sin and for mine. Hebrews 9:22 states emphatically: Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

It was on Friday that Jesus shed His blood for our forgiveness.

On His way to the Cross, He was subjected to three religious trials: one before Annas the former High Priest, one before Caiaphas the acting High Priest, and one before the full Sanhedrin. He then was put through three Roman trials; one before Pilate the Roman Governor, one before Herod the Galilean king, then back to Pilate.

In a moment we'll pick up our story with Mark's summary of the Roman trials, but first, let's take a moment to consider a drama that played out during the religious trials of Jesus. While Jesus was being slapped, spit upon, and mocked inside the Palace of the High Priest, outside:

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

But he denied it before them all.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."

Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly. [1]

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GOOD FRIDAY

Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

“Are you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate. “You have said so,” Jesus replied. The chief priests accused him of many things. So again Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of.” But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

“Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate, knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. “What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?” Pilate asked them. “Crucify him!” they shouted.

“Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). [2]

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Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” [3]

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.[4]

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. [5]

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Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” [6]

Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.

The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.” [7]

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. [8]

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment. [9]

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Good Friday ended with Jesus crucified, dead, and buried. 700 years earlier, the prophet Isaiah had described it this way:

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.

He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.

For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. [10]

As you reflect on Good Friday, take time today to thank God for giving us Jesus.

[1] Matthew 26:69-75

[2] Mark 15:1-22

[3] Luke 23:32-43

[4] John 19:25-27

[5] Luke 23:44-45

[6] John 19:28-30

[7] Luke 23:46-47

[8] John 19:38-42

[9] Luke 23:55-56

[10] Isaiah 53

HOLY WEEK: WALKING WITH JESUS

SATURDAY

To Listen to Anne Read Today's Scriptures, [Click Here](#)

This is Saturday. Saturday was a bleak day. A day of silence and stillness. A day when Jesus was isolated, confined. A day when God, literally, was dead. Yet the enemies of Jesus were very nervous and wanted to make sure He stayed dead and buried.

The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. “Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

“Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard. [1]

Psalm 2 comes to mind as a warning to those who plot against the Son of God.

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying, “Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.”

The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, “I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.”

I will proclaim the LORD’s decree: He said to me, “You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.” Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. [2]

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On this day...on Saturday...take refuge in Jesus.

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” [3]

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace. [4]

It’s Saturday. This year many of us are also confined – we are isolated – practicing social distancing. Jesus understands. Use this day to meditate on your salvation. How can you and I ever thank God for the price He paid for our redemption? The only appropriate response is to give Him our hearts...and our lives! Then remember. Sunday is coming!

[1] Matthew 27:62-66

[2] Psalm 2

[3] Acts 4:12

[4] Ephesians 1:7

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EASTER SUNDAY

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This is Easter Sunday, the first day of the week, the day of resurrection. Following the horror of Jesus' arrest and betrayal, following the brutality of His torture and trials climaxing in His crucifixion and death, following the silence and stillness of the cold, lifeless tomb, Sunday brought the spiritual equivalent of a nuclear explosion. Because Jesus rose from the dead! He's alive! He's alive! Listen to the Biblical description...

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

Mary didn't know that according to Matthew

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. [1]

John records that Mary

...came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

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He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. [2]

Praise God! We share the joy of the disciples! Jesus is alive! Our sins are all forgiven! Heaven's gates are opened wide! Praise God! PRAISE GOD! Jesus is alive! And because He lives, we can live today. We can face tomorrow. We know that the best is yet to come. One day, we're going to our heavenly Home to live with Him forever! He's alive!

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Let me close out our week with the words of Paul's prayer in Ephesians chapter 1 verses 15 to 23:

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. [3]

As we conclude this Holy Week, may God richly bless you as you live in the glorious truth that Jesus is alive! He is the only Savior, He is the risen Lord, and He is the soon to return King of kings. Amen and Amen!

[1] Matthew 28:2-4

[2] John 20:2-18

[3] Ephesians 1:15-23

Thank you

for taking the time to reflect on Jesus and prepare your heart for Easter.
We pray these Scripture Readings were a blessing to you.

Who is Jesus?

For more information about how to have a personal relationship with Jesus so you can be sure of Heaven, visit our website using this link: www.annegrahamlotz.org/jesus-gods-living-word/



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