



DAILY DEVOTIONALS
FOR HOLY WEEK 2010
Christ the King Presbyterian Church

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The Gospels weave a dense fabric to tell the story of the last days of Jesus' life, and throughout history Christians have chosen different ways to reflect and remember the events of the Passion. This guide provides scriptures to read and prayers that help walk you through the major themes as they are often observed during Holy Week - starting with Palm Sunday and ending on the Saturday before Resurrection Sunday.

Each Day has two readings - a morning and an evening reading. The first one is taken from the Gospel accounts and the second one from the Psalms of Ascents. Our Church, Christ the King, has been engaged in a year long series on the Psalms of Ascents. This collection of psalms is particularly poignant in the last days of Jesus life as they were popularly sung by Jewish pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

Each day also provides a prayer for Adults and one for children. You may choose to use these or simply let them guide your own prayers.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS' LIFE

Meditations for Holy Week

While at Bethany, a days walk from Jerusalem Jesus gathered with his disciples and friends for what would be a parting farewell from the three years of life and ministry he had shared with them. All of his closest friends were there to feast and prepare for the celebration of Passover – mostly unaware that Jesus was soon to become their Lamb of God. Only one woman truly recognized the significance of the evening and the import of his words. And with an extravagance reminiscent of Psalm 133 she anointed Jesus with a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, worth almost a year's salary. An anointing fit for a king, an anointing fit for a king's death and burial. With this act Mary of Bethany cast a long shadow forward over Jesus' imminent arrest, trial, condemnation, crucifixion, and burial. (Read in John 12:1-8)

Jesus was now poised to enter Jerusalem and face off with the power and principalities, the sorrows and sickness, the sin and salaciousness of the broken human race. As Philippians 2:8 reminds us so well, "he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

This obedience would lie at the heart of his mission: To do all that the Father required of him. To stage an earthly obedience that Man could never muster. To undo all the wrong that had been done in the Garden when Adam ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 3).

This week spend some time each day to reflect on the final days of your Savior's life. Use each day to cast your eyes upon him, to reflect on your own sin and to bask in his glorious life, death, and resurrection.

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Come to the Saviour now, He gently calleth thee; In true repentance bow, Before him bend the knee; He waiteth to bestow Salvation, peace and love, True joy on earth below, A home in heav'n above.	Come to the Saviour now, Ye who have wandered far; Renew your solemn vow, For his by right you are; Come, like poor wand'ring sheep Returning to his fold; His arm will safely keep, His love will ne'er grow cold.	Come to the Saviour, all, Whate'er your burdens be; Hear now his loving call, "Cast all your care on me." Come, and for ev'ry grief In Jesus you will find A sure and safe relief, A loving Friend and kind.
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— John Wigner, 1871

PALM SUNDAY

A king that can never be...

Jesus enters Jerusalem to the shouting and acclamation of the crowds, who lay palms before him and publicly laud him as the Davidic King. Their hopes of freedom from the Roman yoke resting in this promised Messiah.

It is the beginning of the end, for the Triumphal Entry initiates the Passion, and sets into motion a chain of events that inexorably lead to betrayal and darkness. There is celebration, but it is the empty celebration of those who will scatter at the sign of trouble; there is joy and truth, but the joy is laced with irony and the truth is not understood.

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Morning - Read Matthew 21:1-17

In this account how does Jesus begin to defy his followers expectations?

Evening - Read Psalm 122

How does this Psalm hope for the true king of Israel?

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Adult's Prayer

Father, forgive us when we try to shape you in our own image. When we use you for our own sorrows and ambitions. Help us to learn the way of the true king. Give us eyes to see, and ears to hear the call of Jesus, our High King of heaven. Amen.

Children's Prayer

Jesus, thank you that you call us to you. Help us to pray with those who sang over Jesus, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Help us to know you. Helps us pray to you every day. Help us learn what it means that you are our Savior. Amen.

MONDAY

A king that hungers after true righteousness...

The following day the gospel of Matthew tells us that as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem from Bethany he became hungry and seeing a fig tree in leaf by the side of the road he went over to it (for it was spring). When he saw that there was no fruit on it he cursed it to the roots, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once.

The disciples were later amazed at this and Jesus used the event to remind them of faith and the power of prayer. In Mark's Gospel it is also couched in the language of The Lord's Prayer. (Mark 11:20-25)

The Fig tree was a powerful sign of peace and prosperity in the Old Testament. The epitome of peace was to sit under your own fig tree (Micah 4:4). The picture of the wrath of God was the destruction of the fig trees in the Land. (Hosea 2:12)

Why is it significant that Jesus cursed the fig tree? (hint: Consider the fig tree. It showed the promised of fruit but once you got up close, it was barren. Matt 25:32-35)

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Morning - Read Matthew 21: 18-45

Evening - Read Psalms 127 and 128

What are the blessings that these Psalms describe to speak of the fruit of God?

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Adult's Prayer

Father, you have filled our lives with so many gifts and given us nothing less than your very Spirit. Help us to bear good fruit in your name and for your glory. We pray that our lives would be a reflection of your good gifts to all of creation. Amen.

Children's Prayer

God, you love to see things grow. You have filled your creation with so much promise and beauty. Just like the fruits and vegetables you expect your children to bear fruit and to grow and to become more and more like Jesus. Help me become more like Jesus. Amen.

TUESDAY

A king attempts to prepare his loyal subjects...

The ruse is up – the Pharisees are hot on his trail and the true King needs to prepare his followers for what is surely to come. Preparation for the sorrow, vigilance for the battle, and hope and joy for the glorious victory of those who are his own!

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Morning - Read Matthew 25:1-13 and 31-46.

Jesus here describes himself as a Bridegroom. Where else do we read about Jesus as the Bridegroom? (*hint: Revelation 21*)

Evening - Read Psalm 124

In this Psalm we can imagine the deliverance of God as in the Final judgment mentioned in vs. 31-46.

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Adult's Prayer

Jesus, you could not have more clearly spelled out for us the importance of praying for and preparing for your return. Yet we are daily distracted by a million things. Have your way with us so that we will be prepared. Prune and discipline us that we would be vigilant for your return. Jesus, we want to be your glorious bride. Help us, we pray. Amen.

Children's Prayer

Jesus, help us to listen and be obedient to our parents when they work to prepare us for life. We know this is good training to follow you. Teach us to know your word and to hear your voice speaking to us. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

A king watches as the battle lines are drawn...

Jesus' followers have begun to show their true faces while the enemies of Christ draw up their battle plans. Quietly and away from the crowds the Sanhedrin hopes to catch and kill him with their newly acquired spy (Judas). Meanwhile Jesus rests with friends in Bethany and enjoys a brief respite.

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Morning - Read Matthew 26:6-16

This story narrates two gifts given to Jesus – one of love and one of treachery. We are all filled with both love and disdain of God. Confess your sinful idolatry and lukewarm affections and ask God to fill you with an overflowing love for him, his kingdom and his people.

Evening - Read Psalm 123 and 133

How does God protect us from evil and temptation?

What are the joys he gives us in the family of God?

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Adult's Prayer

God, you see through us all. You see through our darkest and brightest intentions. Your spirit cuts through sinew and bone. We are utterly exposed before you. God, we humbly ask that you would forgive our sins, and protect us from the evil one. Have your way with us. Conform us to the image of your glorious son, Jesus. Amen

Children's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

THURSDAY

A king prepares for a new feast...

Jesus makes final preparations for his death. The disciples secure a place to eat his last Passover - the Last Supper. He serves his disciples by washing their feet, he recreates the Passover as his meal – the Lord’s Supper. He gives them a new command. He continues the work of patiently walking his disciples through all that the scriptures have spoken concerning him. He labors in prayer under the burden of Gethsemane and he suffers the first betrayal.

Maundy Thursday (‘Maundy’ comes from ‘mandatum’- latin for commandment) is traditionally associated with these four events narrated wholly in Matthew 26: the washing of the disciples feet, the Last Supper, Jesus’ prayer on Gethsemane, and the betrayal of Jesus by Judas.

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Morning - Read Matthew 26:17-46

Why is the Passover so central to the Jewish tradition? How does Jesus redefine it?

Evening - Read Psalm 121

Even in his darkest hour Jesus never hesitates to take his burdens and sorrows to God.

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Adult’s Prayer

Almighty God, time and again you have delivered your people from evil. Time and again you answered my prayers for deliverance. Jesus, you prayed a similar prayer for deliverance in Gethsamane. But it wasn’t answered. Thank you for earning my deliverance. Amen.

Children’s Prayer

Jesus, help us to love our family, our friends, and even those we struggle to love. Give us joy and make us thankful for all you have given for us. Help us even now to trust in you and your plan for our lives. Amen.

FRIDAY

The true King of kings is revealed...

On Friday the Man of Sorrows begins his tortuous pilgrimage from Pilate's hall to Golgotha. Time seems to come to a standstill as the Gospel authors relate every painful detail. At every step Jesus breathes obedience to the Father's will, at every turn he bears the weight of our sin and guilt. On Calvary he is nailed to a cross, mocked, and crucified. Even more, on the cross he bore the full wrath of God due our sin. And then he breathed his last.

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Morning - Read *Matthew 27*

Why did the Jews get angry that the sign above Jesus on the cross read "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews"?

Evening - Read *Psalms 120 and 129*

On the cross Jesus prayed from Psalm 22. How do these Psalms speak to the sorrows and trials of Christ on the cross?

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Adult's Prayer (adapted from 'The Precious Blood' from *The Valley of Vision*)

Lord Jesus, before your cross I kneel and see my heinous sin, and the iniquity that caused you to be 'made a curse.' Show me the enormity of my guilt, help me to meditate on your sufferings. Have compassion on me in my weakness. Let me walk in the depths of humiliation bathed in the forgiveness of your blood and righteousness. Amen.

Children's Prayer

Jesus, I remember that you said "Let all the children come to me." But the cross is a frightening place to go that I don't yet understand. Help me to come anyway to ask for your forgiveness and receive the gift of salvation. Amen.

SATURDAY

The true King lies silently beyond the veil...

The world is silent.

The Christ is crucified. The price is paid. The temple curtain is torn. The earth is shook. The sky is rent. Death swallows up the Son of Man. The Promise charges into the silence of the grave.

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Morning - Read Matthew 27:57-66

As a Sabbath of Sabbath's the whole world was truly cast in silence waiting for God.

Evening - Read Psalm 130

This psalm captures beautifully the soul in hope-tuned awaiting for God's deliverance.

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Adults Prayer (adapted from John Hunter, *Devotional Services for Public Worship*)

Holy God, the silence is deafening as we await the Resurrection morn. We wait and we pray even now for the return of our Blessed Savior. Grant O God, that as we are baptized into the death of Jesus, we may by the continual mortification of our corrupt affections, be buried with him and through the grave and gate of death pass into our joyful resurrection. Amen.

Children's Prayer

God, it is hard to hear you in the silence. It is hard to know what to do when you don't speak. Even as I pray this will you give me faith. Ears to hear you, and eyes to see you. Amen.

‘TIS MIDNIGHT; AND ON OLIVE’S BROW

‘Tis midnight; and on Olive’s brow
The star is dimmed that lately shown:
‘Tis midnight; in the garden now,
The suffering Savior prays alone.

‘Tis midnight; and, from all removed
Emmanuel wrestles lone with fears:
E’en the disciple that He loved
Heeds not his Master’s grief and tears.

‘Tis midnight; and, for others’ guilt,
The Man of Sorrows weeps in blood:
Yet He that hath in anguish knelt
Is not forsaken by His God.

‘Tis midnight; and from heavenly plains
Is borne the song that angels know:
Unheard by mortals are the strains
That sweetly soothe the Savior’s woe.

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mp3 on cardiphonia.org

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Product made possible by a grant from Calvin Institute of Christian Worship with funds provided by the Lilly Endowment.