



HOLY WEEK

The journey to the cross

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Take 30 minutes each day this week, leading up to Easter, to remember Jesus' experiences on His way to the cross.

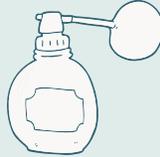
Humility. Heartache. Honesty. Hope.

Disclaimer: There is much dispute over the actual days each of these incidents happened, so while this guide is broken into days, it is not representative of the actual day of the week each thing occurred.

1 Jesus Anointed.

At a home in Bethany, Mary anointed Jesus' feet with perfume, knowing His time with them was coming to an end.

This is significant to how we respond each day as we reflect on Jesus' journey to the cross.



2 Passover Meal.

As Jesus knew His time was coming, He celebrated one last Passover meal with His closest friends, introducing a practice of what we now call Communion to remember the sacrifice He made with His body and blood.



3 Prayer in the Garden.

Jesus' immediate response when He knew His arrest was imminent was to commune with His Father and spend time with Him in prayer—a vulnerable prayer of surrender.



4 Jesus Arrested.

Judas betrayed Jesus, as foretold, and Jesus was taken captive by the Roman guards, beaten, and sentenced to death on a cross.



5 It Is Finished.

We call it Good Friday, not because we rejoice that Jesus died, but because we rejoice in His overall faithfulness and goodness—that He died to save us, and we know that's not the end of the story.



6 A Silent Sabbath.

The day between Jesus' death and Resurrection is often overlooked. While it may be seen as a day of grieving (which is respectable), it actually was the Sabbath day, and we'll take a look at what that can mean for us today.

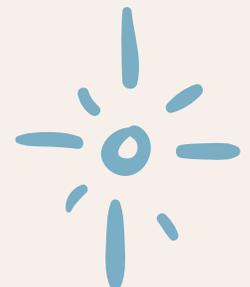


7 He is Alive!

On Easter Sunday, we celebrate that Jesus rose from the grave on the 3rd day.

He is risen indeed!

We'll look at how Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples and why that was significant, then reflect on the intrinsic hope we have in God through this, the greatest act of love.



Jesus Anointed

monday

Before you enter into this guide, familiarize yourself with Jesus' triumphal entry by reading Mark 11:1-11.

Jesus knew what was to come, and He still entered into these unfortunate circumstances with *humility*, offering Himself because He knew that it was for *good*. **Ultimately, His humility is a sign of trusting His Father above the fear He faced.**

Today, we take a look at what happened just before the Triumphal Entry when He shared an intimate moment with His closest friends in Bethany. Most importantly, we are going to zoom in on how Mary responded in humility and honor, and how we can learn from that posture for how we respond this week to the truth in Scripture.

John 12:1-8



1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. 7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."



Mary acted in humility by sacrificing her *best* perfume AND using her hair to wipe Jesus' feet. But why would she do this? As Jesus mentioned, this type of expensive perfume was meant for important burials, but she chose to show Jesus her adoration for Him before He reached that day. She knew it was coming, and this was the best way she could honor Him. **With what little she had to offer, she brought Him her best.** It wasn't just that Mary offered her most expensive possession, it was her willingness to glorify God with what she had in front of her to the very best of her ability.

How often do we actually bring our *best* to Jesus? So often we are guilty of giving Him our breadcrumbs—which He receives *graciously*—but what the disciples thought was a waste, Jesus honored as the greatest response.

He then alludes to his death by saying "you will not always have me." Can you imagine the weight the disciples must have been feeling? Fear, anxiety, doubt—you name it. **Instead of worrying or denying the truth Jesus was sharing, Mary continued to sit at Jesus' feet, soak up every minute with Him, and honor Him with everything she had to give.** That's how we should enter into this Holy Week as we begin to celebrate and honor the life, death, and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

1

Jesus Anointed

monday



Write a prayer, sharing how you feel entering into this week of remembrance. Ask God for help to respond in humility and honor at the memory of Jesus' journey to the cross.



What stands out to you in this passage? How do you typically respond to Jesus—with your *best* or your *breadcrumbs*? How can you offer your *best* this week?

Tuesday

The Passover Feast is significant because in the Jewish tradition, it was the celebration of the liberation of the children of Egypt. In remembrance of the tenth plague in Egypt, they would slaughter a male lamb and eat unleavened bread to commemorate when God saved them and their families because of their faith. So what does this have to do with Jesus' journey to the cross?

Mark 14:12–21



12 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?" 13 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. 14 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?' 15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." 16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. 17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me." 19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?" 20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. 21 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."



Passover was a time-honored custom that honored the sacrifice of a lamb as a way to ask for forgiveness for our sins. This Passover meal with Jesus marked a new celebration—no longer are we weighed down by the debt of our sins, nor do we have to sacrifice a lamb as our sacrifice to God because Jesus is the Lamb that was slain once and for all. We, the children of God, have been liberated from our sins because of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, taking the sins of the world to death. This, the eucharist—communion—is the new Passover celebration, where we now remember Jesus' body and blood, poured out for us, marking the beginning of our eternity in relationship with Him!

This meal is also significant because of what Jesus prophesied in that room—one of His disciples would betray Him, and Peter would deny knowing Him. It seems harsh when we read Jesus revealing the forthcoming betrayal, but when we imagine it unfolding, we might begin to recognize how many times (maybe in smaller and different ways) we have fallen into similar traps that Judas and Peter did. Judas let money become his god while Peter let his insecurity and people-pleasing tendencies get in the way of standing firm in his faith. Only through Jesus' honesty can we see the reality of our own waywardness, and that's a crucial first step in receiving the grace offered to us by the cross.

Tuesday



Write a prayer, expressing your gratitude for the sacrifice of God's Son. Consider how Jesus might have felt, knowing His friends would betray Him, and talk to God about what that means to you.



How does the history of the Passover Feast offer new insight to Jesus' sacrifice? What does the concept of freedom look like for you personally, and how have you seen God liberate you from the weight of your sin?

If you have time and elements (wine and bread, or anything similar), take a moment to share communion with Jesus, thanking Him for His sacrifice to cover your sins.

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 11:26-27

Prayer in the Garden

wednesday

The night of Jesus' arrest, He took His disciples and went to the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane. A lot occurred this evening—Jesus prayed, He got mad at the disciples for falling asleep when He asked them to pray with Him, He grieved what was about to happen and even asked God to not let it happen, He got mad at the disciples again, then He surrendered His life into God's hands, accepted His will, and ultimately, He was arrested at this exact place and taken away to what would be His death (but more on that tomorrow).

Matthew 26:36–42



36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 39 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." 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."



This passage is powerful—it emphasizes how Jesus prepared for His ultimate call in life. You may feel like you're unprepared for the task or circumstances in front of you, but all you need to focus on is **prayer, accountability, and surrender**. Jesus took His twelve disciples to pray with Him, then He broke off into a smaller group with Peter, James, and John, and shared a time of grieving with them.

Jesus did three things as He faced this grief. First, He offered honest and raw prayers to God, expressing His overwhelm. He kept His closest support group by His side for accountability and comfort. Finally, He surrendered His will to align with God's in humble obedience.

Maybe you're feeling overwhelmed and heavy-hearted in this season of your life. Knowing that Jesus felt the same as He journeyed to the cross, this is a great roadmap for processing those seasons *with* God, not apart from Him. Just as Jesus carried His cross, we all have a cross to bear. The best way to carry it without letting it overwhelm us is to offer it to God and pray fervently—in community, and in humble submission to the goodness God has set before you.

3

Prayer in the Garden

wednesday



Write a prayer to God, expressing (like Jesus did) how your soul is today. If need be, ask Him for comfort, direction and hope. Ask for strength to submit humbly to His will.



Evaluate where you're at with these 3 concepts—*prayer, accountability, and submission*. Who are the friends you know you can call on in times of deep need? What is something you need to surrender to God and proclaim, "may your will be done?"

Thursday

As we approach the day of crucifixion, there are hard realities to read and receive. Lean into the feelings you may experience, and share them with God who understands and feels the pain you feel. But don't let that deter you from the ultimate *hope* we have—that these moments in time for Jesus were just the beginning of the greatest miracle ever performed, the resurrection! While we grieve the heartache Jesus and the disciples endured on His way to the cross, we celebrate that God's plan was so much greater than anything we could have put together on our own, and it gives us great hope for our future.

Mark 14:43–50



43 Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders. 44 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 The men seized Jesus and arrested him. 47 Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 48 "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." 50 Then everyone deserted him and fled.



It's hard to imagine Judas doing something so treacherous by betraying Jesus this way. It's hard to imagine the emotions everyone was feeling in that moment (although, we can clearly see how some felt). Jesus' words strike a nerve that is important for us to understand in every season, that there is a set time for everything. For the prophecies to be fulfilled, Jesus knew there was a certain way things were designed to happen. As hard as it is to imagine, this betrayal emphasizes the weight that Jesus carried for us on His way to the cross and on the cross—it represents the depravity of humanity, the weight of our sins that He was committing His life to redeem. And Jesus was willing because of how deeply He cares for His disciples, family, for you and for all humanity.

After the arrest, Jesus was taken to the court of the High Priest, and while none of their reasons for killing Him had any legal or even logical legitimacy, Jesus' simple response that He is Messiah (Mark 14:62) was enough for them to accuse Him of blasphemy and therefore, claim He deserved the penalty of death—the kind of death the worst and lowest criminals of society received—crucifixion on a cross. The religious leaders, who had been anticipating their coming Savior, had the real Messiah right in front of them, and they didn't believe it. They had become blinded by their self-proclaimed righteous rituals and added beliefs to the truth of God's Word. They let Him slip out right before them, but no powers could stop Jesus from His ultimate victory over sin and death. God knew how people would respond, so His plan covered the gaps of our disbelief.

Jesus Arrested

4

Thursday



Process the emotions this passage brings up for you. Have you had a Judas moment where you have turned away from God for something seemingly more satisfying? Have you taken up an inappropriate response to someone or something in attempts of defending God? Ask God to remind you of how deep and wide His love is for you, despite falling short.



Have there been moments for you in life where Jesus was doing something right in front of you but you missed it because you were too distracted by other things of this world or even your own religious rituals like the Pharisees? How can you turn your focus to Him this week and turn off the daily distractions?

It is Finished

good friday

This is the hardest day of the week for so many reasons, but we need not despair because we know how it ends—Jesus is victorious and defeats death! Alas, that's getting ahead of ourselves though, and it is important to recognize the weight of this day. Some wonder why we refer to it as "good" Friday because it doesn't feel like a *good* thing that happened, but I hope you find some good in between the lines—where God's timing and faithfulness win over ultimate devastation and loss, and it's all for the sake of being in right relationship with His creation again (that means you).

Luke 23:26–49



26 As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27 A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. 28 Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' 30 Then "they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" 31 For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33 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. 34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 35 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." 36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37 and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

38 There was a written notice above him, which read: *this is the king of the jews*. 39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" 40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45 for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46 Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. 47 The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." 48 When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. 49 But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

It is Finished

good friday



In John's record of the crucifixion, he uses the phrase "It is finished" as Jesus' last words. These words ring true to the exact purpose of the death and resurrection. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, encompassing all good in His divinity along with all the reality of humanity. He was tempted, bruised, mocked, and tried. Knowing we would suffer for our sin nature by imminent death, He was willing to take the debt upon Himself, dying a gruesome death on the cross. Let that sink in for a while.

When Jesus died, the temple veil tore. This veil was what separated people from the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies to commune with God. By the veil tearing at the moment of Jesus' death, it resembles the unity He accomplished in this act. No longer is there any separation between us and God because sin no longer defines us, and death no longer gets the last say. This is beautiful imagery of what happened that day on the cross—Jesus made the way for you and I to come into God's presence and have whole, eternal relationship with Him.

Recognize the timing in the account of Jesus' death you read. Every little detail was according to the prophecies, the way God intended it. For instance, in John's account (we'll read that tomorrow), we read that they planned to break the legs of the criminals on the crosses to quicken their death, but they neglected to do so for Jesus because He had already taken His last breath. God's timing and sovereignty won out over the Roman Government, the disciples' betrayals, and the schemes of the enemy. That represents the power of God over every aspect of our lives and our future.



Ask God for fresh vision of what this day means for you in your life. Ask Him for clarity in what it means that He is victorious over everything, even death.



What emotions does this gruesome death bring up for you? What "good" do you see throughout this story and where do you see God at work?

saturday

Not much is shared in Scripture about what happened the day in between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection because it was the Sabbath day. So, today, I hope you take a Sabbath rest in weighing what Holy Week has meant for you, what Christ's death means for all humanity, and what the hope of the resurrection means for our future. Today's devo will be mostly up to you with how you want to spend it because **Sabbath is about resting in God's Presence**, and that may look different for everyone. There is suggested reading below, but take this time to catch up on missed reading, journal extra, or read where you feel prompted to.

John 18:30–37



30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. 31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. 32 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. 33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. 35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. 36 These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," 37 and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

For an overview of the entire journey to the cross, read Matthew 26 – 27.



An overview of Jesus' journey to the cross:

Jesus was anointed in Bethany by Mary. He made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. He shared a final Passover meal with His disciples and revealed that Judas would betray him and Peter would deny him. He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane with His closest friends, and He grieved, sought comfort, and surrendered to His Father's will. He was betrayed by Judas, arrested, and put on trial in front of the High Priest and Pilate. He was then sentenced to death for blasphemy. He was beaten, abused, and mocked. He was crucified on the cross. The veil was torn as He spoke His final words—**It Is Finished**. He was buried in a tomb.



Talk to God however you need to today. This is your time to reflect on Jesus' journey, refresh your soul, repent of sins that weigh you down, and reconnect with Him.

This day doesn't need much introduction as I'm sure you're familiar with its significance. Resurrection Sunday marks the greatest truth and hope for all Christians. It's the day we celebrate the victory Jesus claimed over the grave, our freedom from sin, and the unconditional love and unending grace we as believers receive from God. Let's dive right in to the best ending that was actually just the beginning!

Matthew 28:1-10



1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 2 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. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. 5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." 8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."



We know it shouldn't have come as a shock to them that Jesus had risen, because He told them many times, and the Scriptures speak to it, but that's a lot to wrap your mind around. There is such a fervency in these women, Mary and Mary. Immediately after Sabbath ended, they went straight to the tomb to pay respects to their friend and Lord. Remember the veil being torn when Jesus died? Him appearing this way to these women, and the way He continues to appear to the others, is representative of the torn veil. He wasn't just trying to show off a cool trick by resurrecting—His ultimate goal of death and resurrection was to *be with His people*.

The hope of this story isn't just in victory over death, but in the continuous love God offers us each and every day. Even further in the story, we read about Jesus sending a *Helper*, the Holy Spirit, to all those who believe. Even when He physically departed and returned to Heaven, Jesus didn't leave us alone—He left His *Spirit of Truth* within each of us so we can be in constant relationship with Him.

We live in a time period many refer to as "the now and the not yet" meaning that Jesus is with us now through the Spirit and through every step of life. We don't have to go to a temple to repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness, we don't have to ask a High Priest to intercede for us in communion with God. Jesus became the High Priest for us so we can directly commune with our God each and every day. Yet we await the second advent of Jesus for our ultimate reconciliation into the kingdom of God.

7

HE IS RISEN!

easter sunday



Oh happy day! Rejoice in what Christ's resurrection and intentionally seeking out relationship means to you. He is triumphant and victorious, all loving, relational, with perfect timing. Rejoice, remember the promises fulfilled, and express your gratitude for the goodness of God today.



As you celebrate this Easter Sunday, what are you grateful for? What moments from this journey to the cross do you want to take with you into every day? How will your relationship with God look different because of what He revealed to you this week?

*"If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." **John 14:15-17***

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