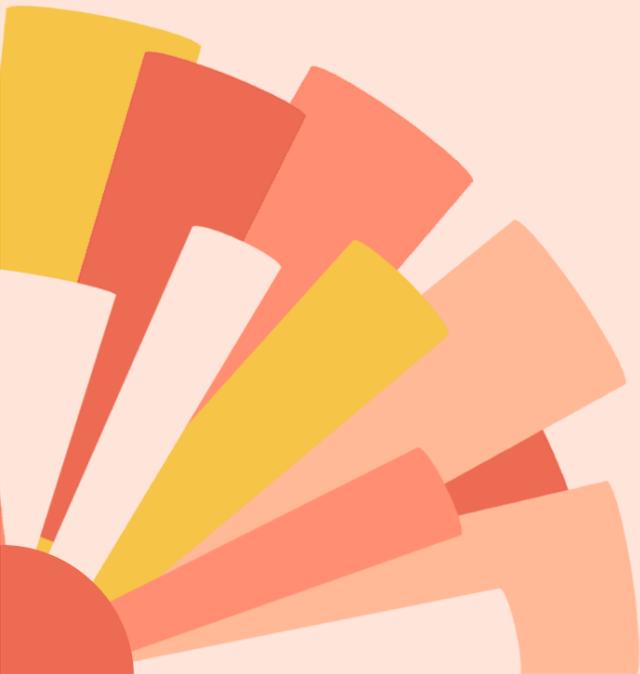


Holy Week

DEVOTIONAL



Holy Week Devotional

MONDAY'S DEVOTION

by Marci Worthy



READ Luke 22:1-38

When we read about Judas Iscariot, we are saddened by his evil betrayal of Jesus. Judas—who was handpicked by Jesus to be one of His disciples, learned first-hand from Jesus, and witnessed miracle after miracle—lived a double life engaged in secret sin. He looked like a religious elite as he distributed food to the multitudes with Jesus, yet privately his heart was hard, his mind was prone to greed, and his hands stole from the shared money bag. The heartbreaking reality is that Judas could have turned to Jesus and asked for help with his temptations and received forgiveness for his sins. Instead, he allowed his sin to consume him to the point of death.

The heartbreaking reality is that Judas could have turned to Jesus and asked for help with his temptations and received forgiveness.

During the Last Supper with His disciples, Jesus distributed the bread and cup as He predicted His death and revealed that a betrayer was sitting with them at the table. The disciples began inquiring among themselves as to who could possibly do this. Judas had successfully hidden his heart from his friends, but he couldn't hide it from the Lord.

The disciples also argued about who would be the greatest among them, and Jesus tells Peter that he will deny Him three times that very day before the rooster crows. This prophetic passage shows the disciples lack of understanding about the impending suffering, death and resurrection that Jesus was proclaiming.



REFLECTION

Like Judas, deep down we can conceal sin in our hearts. As we approach Easter and reflect on Jesus' death and resurrection, is there any area of your heart that you have not surrendered to the Lord? Take a moment to ask God to reveal to you any unrepented sin that you may be hiding or not even recognize. God longs to forgive you, heal you, and set you free.



PRAYER

Father, thank you for Your incredible love for me that paid the price for my sin. I am forever grateful. Lord, I long to love and serve You with pure motives and a clean heart. I want to walk in repentance and obey Your Spirit. Thank You that I can turn from sin and return to my loving Father who forgives, heals and restores me into a right relationship. Thank you for Your mercy and grace. I love You, Amen.

TUESDAY'S DEVOTION

by Scott Grabendike



READ Luke 22:54-62

Peter followed Jesus at a safe distance where he could see Jesus, but not be seen with Jesus. Before we race to criticize Peter, we need to recognize Peter's very human moment of weakness, because it often parallels our own. We have all gone along to get along at some point in our life. We have all taken the easy path of cowardice or abdication. We have all avoided something hard in our lives because the prospect of confronting it frightened and overwhelmed us.

Peter's very human moment of weakness often parallels our own.

In Luke 22:61, Jesus looked directly at Peter. Jesus saw Peter, and He sees us. He sees the beauty and brokenness in each of us and He never leaves us nor forsakes us. The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 5:8 that "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Jesus went to the cross even when we were in our weakest state of abandonment and embarrassment. He went to the cross on our behalf, knowing of our human weakness and sin.

Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him three times, and yet, we can only surmise that when He looked straight at Peter, His gaze was one of love and forgiveness. This gaze transformed the trajectory of Peter's life. And, God willing, it will transform the trajectory of ours as well.



REFLECTION

In what way(s) might you be following Jesus from a distance?

What beauty and brokenness do you think Jesus sees in you?



PRAYER

Take a minute to thank Jesus for His uncompromising love. Weep bitterly. Laugh hilariously. Worship expressively. During this Holy Week, thank Jesus extravagantly for His unmerited love for you.

WEDNESDAY'S DEVOTION

by Clara Cutbill



READ Luke 23:1-25

The story of Easter is one overflowing with hope, grace, and goodness. It is also a story riddled with betrayal, hurt, anger, and hate. Jesus experienced all of this in the week leading up to the cross. In a matter of days, the people of Jerusalem go from extravagantly welcoming Jesus into the city, to bringing Him before Pilate and demanding His death. And although Pilate declared Jesus not guilty three times, the crowd still won out. Jesus was sentenced to death.

When I read this story, I can see myself in Barabbas. Unlike Jesus, Barabbas was completely guilty of his crimes. Yet, he is allowed to walk free while Jesus is condemned to death. Barabbas' name translates to "the son of the father." Even before the cross, the man named "son of the father" is saved by the ultimate Son of the Father. Barabbas deserved the punishment, but Jesus took it. I am like Barabbas, guilty of my sins but still saved by Jesus. I deserved it, but Jesus wore it.

Even before the cross, Barabbas, the man named "son of the father" is saved by the ultimate Son of the Father.

We can find ourselves in every character in this story. We can be like Barabbas. We can also be like Pilate, someone who knows the truth but still falls to the demands of the crowd. Or we can be like the crowd of people, choosing someone or something worldly and bad over Jesus. We can even be like Herod, who mocks and berates Jesus when He doesn't perform a miracle for him. The beautiful thing is that no matter who we are, Jesus still offers salvation to us. Jesus went to the cross for each person in this story; Jesus went to the cross for each one of us. We deserved it, but Jesus wore it.



REFLECTION

Who do you relate to in the story of Luke 23, and how does that connection transform your thoughts about Holy Week?



PRAYER

Lord God, we are so undeserving of the miracle of the cross. Thank you that no matter who we are or what we have done, You have saved us anyway. As we finish out Holy Week, help us remember the reality of what You suffered for us and remind us of the blessing that You gave us. Guide us closer in relationship with You as we celebrate Your goodness and glory this week. Amen.

THURSDAY'S DEVOTION

by Todd Hicks



READ Luke 23:26-43

When we read these verses, our hearts are overwhelmed with the reality that the Son of God willingly submitted Himself to the ignorance and hatred of His enemies. We are awed by the fact that Jesus would take that ignorance and hatred - and the sins of all mankind upon Himself—suffering a violent and excruciatingly painful death. He was forsaken even by the Father Himself, and yet He remained resolute in obedience to the Father's will (Hebrews 12:2). On the cross we see the just dying for the unjust. Here, God's justice is once and for all satisfied - past, present, and future. He offers mercy to sinners as justice and mercy meet at the cross (Romans 5:6-10). This is the greatest good news in the history of the world!

*Justice and
mercy meet at
the cross.*

In today's passage, we also read of two criminals being crucified at the same time, one on each side of Jesus. One of the criminals is not willing to accept what he deserves. He underestimates the seriousness of his sin and his need for God's forgiveness. The other criminal seems to see reality more clearly. He hears Jesus' incredible prayer asking the Father to forgive those who were crucifying Him unjustly, and realized that forgiveness was still a possibility—even for him. Jesus saw this man, and his changed heart. This criminal received undeserved grace and forgiveness. A full pardon. That day he would be with Jesus in Paradise!



REFLECTION

Are you willing to carry your own cross as Jesus did? (Luke 9:23-24) What might that look like in your life?

Are you truly grateful for the forgiveness you have received? Write out some of the reasons you are grateful.



PRAYER

Father in heaven, teach me through the life and death of Jesus, and through the guidance and power of Your Holy Spirit dwelling in me, to love the unlovable, as You have loved me; to forgive as You have forgiven me. Help me to repent and confess when I fail. Help me to live and share the transforming love of Jesus. Amen.

FRIDAY'S DEVOTION

by Parkher Murphy



READ Luke 23:44-55

As they were looking on, so we too gaze on his wounds as he hangs. We see his blood as he dies. We see the price offered by the redeemer, touch the scars of his resurrection. He bows his head as if to kiss you. His heart is made bare open, as it were, in love with you. His arms are extended so that he may embrace you. His whole body is displayed for your redemption. Ponder how great these things are. Let all this be rightly weighed in your mind: as he was once fixed to the cross in every part of his body for you, so he may now be fixed in every part of your soul.

- Augustine of Hippo

Remember, it was never the nails that kept Jesus on the cross. He's the Son of God, after all. In a split second, He could have summoned legions of angels to free Him from this horrific suffering. No, it wasn't the nails that kept Him on the cross, it was love. It was His conscious, continuous decision to stay up on that cross through the end. It was His desire to grant us, sinners, His mercy, that kept Him on the cross.



REFLECTION

When we experience suffering in this life, most of the time we seek immediate relief. We look for the fastest way to get through. What does the cross teach you about suffering?

Where are you suffering in your life right now? Who is really in control? How might the Father be calling you to suffer as Jesus did?



PRAYER

Father, I will never fully understand the true depth and beauty of Your Son's death on the cross. But I see that His motivation is one of pure love and devotion to me, an undeserving sinner. Help me to recognize and be truly thankful for Your mercy in my life. Help me remember the cross as I suffer in my daily life. And give me the heart to love both friends and strangers through their sufferings. Amen.



Be sure to join us for a special GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE Tonight at 6:30 pm

SATURDAY'S DEVOTION

by Josh Nordgren



READ Luke 23:56

If every musician on stage were to play all the notes at the same time, the result would be a cacophony. Skilled musicians not only know which notes to play, they also know when to not play anything at all. Truly, it's the space between the notes that makes the song; gaps between strategic notes create beauty.

Skilled musicians not only know which notes to play, they also know when to not play anything at all.

As a worship leader, I will sometimes ask a musician to "wait" to start playing on a certain song so that when they do start playing, a new dynamic and frequency is added to the song. The listener appreciates the new sonic element whether they realize it or not. The musical term for this is called a "rest." But rest isn't always easy. Maybe you've witnessed a musician who is "too busy," fills all the open space, and consequently overplays. Similarly, in life we often resist rest and feel the need to fill in the silence: our minds like to wander, race, agonize over the past, stress about the future, fabricate hypothetical conversations, and more.

Imagine how shocked, devastated, lost, frustrated, maybe even angry the disciples must have felt after Jesus' crucifixion. Imagine how surreal that Silent Saturday must've been for them. That day unfolded in real time; they didn't get to hit fast forward or skip to chapter 24. I suppose Jesus could have risen immediately, but God allowed there to be a rest between the crucifixion and the resurrection. I wonder how they filled that space.



REFLECTION

What are you currently waiting for God to do? What do you tend to fill the space with when it seems like God isn't taking action on what concerns you?

What are some things that help you rest during times that God seems silent?



PRAYER

God, as I live in the space between Jesus' ascension and His second coming, help me to rest in Your presence and continue the work You have for me. Amen.



SUNDAY'S DEVOTION

He is not here; he has risen! Luke 24:6a

by Brian Rayburn



READ Luke 24:1-12

What the resurrection offered was not clarity– it was hope.

Notice the two words that describe what the followers of Jesus understood about the resurrection. In verse eleven, the word “nonsense” is used, and in verse twelve, Peter is described as “wondering” or marveling at what had happened.

What is apparent is that the resurrection was the resolution for our sin; but the outworking of God’s plan remained obfuscated, cloudy, and confusing.

This Easter, place your faith (again, if you have before) in the resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin. But do not demand that you understand what will happen next; you cannot. We must move forward amazed at the nonsensical truth that Christ would die for us, while living in a story that is not yet finished.

We must move forward, amazed at the nonsensical truth that Christ would die for us, while living in a story that is not yet finished.

God is not done writing your story.



REFLECTION

How is God inviting you into trust and wonder in this season of your life?



PRAYER

Lord God, blessed are we who stretch out our hands to You

*In doubt and grief, in sickness of body, and mind, and spirit,
Our prayers are not fully realized,
Rejoicing....anyway.*

For that is what makes us Easter people:

*Carrying forth the realized hope of the Resurrected One,
Singing our alleluias great and small,
While it is still dark.*

Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Alleluia. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Note: This prayer is adapted from, “The Lives We Actually Have” by Kate Bowler