



HOLY WEEK

OPEN THE HOLY WEEK
DEVOTIONAL GUIDE



MARCH 29, 2026
FBCSPARTA.ORG

Using This Guide

This devotional guide is written as an original resource for Holy Week worship at First Baptist Church Sparta. Its devotional tone and theological emphases are intentionally shaped by themes such as the glory of Christ, the seriousness of sin, the beauty of substitutionary atonement, and the hope of resurrection.

A simple rhythm for each day: read the passage aloud, walk through the observation, interpretation, and application, linger over the Christ Connection, and close with prayer. These pages are meant to slow us down so that we can follow Jesus thoughtfully from His entry into Jerusalem to His resurrection triumph.

Daily Reading Overview

Date	Day	Passage	Theme
Sunday, March 29	Palm Sunday	Luke 19:28-44	The King Comes in Peace
Monday, March 30	Holy Monday	Mark 11:12-19	The King Cleanses What Is Corrupt
Tuesday, March 31	Holy Tuesday	Matthew 22:15-46	The King Silences His Critics
Wednesday, April 1	Holy Wednesday	Matthew 26:6-16	Worship or Betrayal
Thursday, April 2	Maundy Thursday	Luke 22:14-20	The Final Passover, the New Covenant Meal
Friday, April 3	Good Friday	John 19:16-37	The Cross Where Love and Justice Meet
Saturday, April 4	Holy Saturday	Matthew 27:57-66	Waiting in the Silence
Sunday, April 5	Easter Sunday	John 20:1-18	The Risen Christ Calls His Own by Name

Palm Sunday - Sunday, March 29, 2026

PASSAGE

Luke 19:28-44

THEME

The King Comes in Peace

OBSERVATION

Jesus does not drift into Jerusalem accidentally; He enters deliberately. He sends for the colt, fulfills prophecy, receives the crowd's praise, and accepts royal language that earlier in His ministry He often muted. Yet Luke places celebration beside sorrow. The multitude shouts, the Pharisees object, and Jesus weeps over the city. Palm Sunday is therefore both triumphant and tragic. The King has come, but many do not understand the kind of King He is or the kind of peace He brings.

INTERPRETATION

Jesus enters as the promised Messiah, but not as a political revolutionary. He comes lowly, righteous, and saving. The crowd wants deliverance, but they do not yet grasp that their deepest enemy is not Rome, but sin. Jesus's tears reveal His heart: He is not cold toward those who reject Him. He sees judgment coming because they have missed 'the things that make for peace.' The peace they want is outward ease; the peace He brings is reconciliation with God through His coming cross.

APPLICATION

It is possible to shout 'Hosanna' and still misunderstand Jesus. We too can welcome Christ as helper, fixer, or mascot while resisting Him as Lord. Palm Sunday calls us to lay down more than branches; it calls us to lay down self-rule. Receive Him as He truly is. Worship Him not only with emotion, but with surrender. Let His tears move you to repentance and His kingship move you to obedience.

Christ Connection

Old Testament Shadow / Prophecy: Zechariah promised a humble King riding on a donkey, and Psalm 118 anticipated the blessed One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Fulfillment in Jesus: Jesus fulfills those hopes as David's greater Son, entering Jerusalem to make peace not by the sword, but by His blood.

Kingdom Consummation: The King who entered humbly will return openly, and the peace rejected by earthly Jerusalem will be fully enjoyed in the New Jerusalem.

Supporting cross references: Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:25-26; Philippians 2:9-11

Holy Monday - Monday, March 30, 2026

PASSAGE

Mark 11:12-19

THEME

The King Cleanses What Is Corrupt

OBSERVATION

Mark places the cursing of the fig tree beside the cleansing of the temple, and the two scenes interpret one another. The tree has leaves but no fruit. The temple has noise, commerce, and movement, but no holiness. Jesus overturns tables and drives out corruption because worship has been twisted into something man-centered and unjust. What should have been a house of prayer has become a marketplace of exploitation.

INTERPRETATION

This is not a loss of temper; it is a prophetic act of judgment. The leafy tree pictures outward religion without inward fruit. The temple activity pictures sacred things being used for selfish gain. Jesus reveals Himself as Lord of the temple and Judge of false worship. Holy Week is not sentimental. The same King who receives praise on Sunday confronts hypocrisy on Monday. He loves worship too much to let corruption stand unchallenged.

APPLICATION

We should ask honest questions. Are there leaves in our lives but no fruit? Are we active in church but cold in prayer? Have we learned to look religious without loving God deeply? We should also ask this as a congregation: are we protecting reverence, prayer, holiness, and gospel access for all peoples? Invite Christ to overturn whatever we have normalized that does not belong in His house. Better to be cleansed by Him than left undisturbed in dead religion.

Christ Connection

Old Testament Shadow / Prophecy: The temple stood as the meeting place between God and His people, while the prophets warned against hollow worship and unjust religion.

Fulfillment in Jesus: Jesus cleanses the temple because He is the true temple, the final meeting place between God and man. Through His death, access to God is opened.

Kingdom Consummation: In the new creation, no corrupted temple remains, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple, and the nations draw near forever.

Supporting cross references: Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11; John 2:19-21

Holy Tuesday - Tuesday, March 31, 2026

PASSAGE

Matthew 22:15-46

THEME

The King Silences His Critics

OBSERVATION

On Tuesday, Jesus is surrounded by traps. The Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees all come with questions, but they are not seeking truth; they are seeking advantage. They test Him about taxes, resurrection, and the law. Jesus answers every challenge with clarity and authority. Then He asks His own question: How can the Christ be both David's son and David's Lord? At that moment, the questioners have nothing left to say.

INTERPRETATION

Jesus is not merely good at debate. He is the wisdom of God standing in the temple courts. He shows that every category - politics, eternity, ethics, and messianic identity - finds its proper place in relation to Him. He upholds God's rightful claim over every sphere of life, affirms the resurrection, summarizes the law in total love for God and neighbor, and reveals Himself as more than a human deliverer. He is David's son, yes, but also David's Lord. The One they are testing is the One before whom all will stand.

APPLICATION

Many people still come to Jesus with questions meant to control Him rather than to submit to Him. We do it whenever we reduce Him to a talking point, a party symbol, or a safe religious figure. Come to Christ to be taught, not to make Him fit your system. Let His Word correct your loves, your loyalties, and your thinking. Love God fully. Love your neighbor concretely. Let your theology become worship and obedience.

Christ Connection

Old Testament Shadow / Prophecy: The Law called for wholehearted love of God and neighbor, and Psalm 110 promised a Messiah greater than David.

Fulfillment in Jesus: Jesus perfectly fulfills the Law in His love and obedience, then redeems lawbreakers by His death.

Kingdom Consummation: The enthroned Lord will reign until every enemy is under His feet, and in His kingdom His people will love God perfectly forever.

Supporting cross references: Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18; Psalm 110:1

Holy Wednesday - Wednesday, April 1, 2026

PASSAGE

Matthew 26:6-16

THEME

Worship or Betrayal

OBSERVATION

In Bethany, a woman pours costly ointment on Jesus. Some call it waste. Jesus calls it beautiful. He interprets her act as preparation for His burial. Immediately afterward, Judas goes to the chief priests and agrees to betray Him for silver. Matthew intentionally places these scenes together. One person gives lavish love; another sells the Lord for gain. One sees beauty in Christ; the other calculates what Christ is worth to him.

INTERPRETATION

Holy Wednesday exposes the heart. The woman's act is extravagant because Jesus is worthy. Judas's betrayal is chilling because it grows in the soil of hidden unbelief. It is possible to live near Jesus, hear His teaching, and still never treasure Him. Jesus is already moving toward death, and true devotion senses that He is more precious than anything we could keep for ourselves. The contrast in this passage is not merely between two people, but between two kinds of response to Christ: adoration and self-interest.

APPLICATION

What do you consider 'too costly' to give Jesus? Time? Reputation? Money? Obedience? Public allegiance? The woman teaches us that real worship is glad, costly, and unembarrassed. Judas warns us that secret compromise hardens into open betrayal. Bring Christ your best, not your leftovers. Ask the Lord to expose any divided loyalty in your heart. The fragrance of worship still fills a life surrendered to Jesus.

Christ Connection

Old Testament Shadow / Prophecy: Kings and priests in the Old Testament were anointed, and Scripture also anticipated betrayal by a close companion and suffering for the righteous servant.

Fulfillment in Jesus: Jesus is the true Anointed One who moves willingly toward burial and sacrifice. He is betrayed, yet not defeated; handed over, yet sovereign in redemption.

Kingdom Consummation: The Lamb who was once despised will receive ceaseless worship from every tribe and tongue, and no rival affection will remain in His people.

Supporting cross references: Psalm 41:9; Isaiah 53:3-7; John 12:1-8

Maundy Thursday - Thursday, April 2, 2026

PASSAGE

Luke 22:14-20

THEME

The Final Passover, the New Covenant Meal

OBSERVATION

Jesus tells His disciples that He has earnestly desired to eat this Passover with them. That language is tender and intentional. He then takes bread and cup and places Himself at the center of the meal: 'This is my body,' 'This cup ... is the new covenant in my blood.' The ancient feast of Israel's deliverance is being interpreted anew by the very One to whom it always pointed.

INTERPRETATION

The Passover is not being discarded; it is reaching its fulfillment. The lamb, the deliverance, the blood, the covenant meal - all of it finds its meaning in Jesus. He is the true Lamb who will be given for His people. His blood will secure forgiveness, not merely ritual remembrance. The new covenant is not grounded in human resolve, but in Christ's sacrifice. And even here, at the table, Jesus points beyond the cross to the kingdom. This meal looks backward to Exodus, outward to the church, inward to the heart, and forward to glory.

APPLICATION

Come to the Lord's Table with reverence and joy. Remember that Christ gives Himself before He asks anything of you. Receive grace before you speak of service. Let communion train your heart to rest in Christ's finished provision, confess sin honestly, and pursue unity with fellow believers. In a fractured world, the Table teaches the church to live as one redeemed family under one saving Lord.

Christ Connection

Old Testament Shadow / Prophecy: The Passover lamb, the covenant blood at Sinai, and the promise of a new covenant all prepare the way for this night.

Fulfillment in Jesus: Jesus is the final Passover Lamb whose blood secures forgiveness and brings His people into the new covenant.

Kingdom Consummation: Every faithful observance of the Supper points ahead to the marriage supper of the Lamb, where redeemed saints will feast in the kingdom without sin, distance, or sorrow.

Supporting cross references: Exodus 12:1-14; Jeremiah 31:31-34; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Good Friday - Friday, April 3, 2026

PASSAGE

John 19:16-37

THEME

The Cross Where Love and Justice Meet

OBSERVATION

John's account is full of solemn detail. Jesus is crucified publicly. Pilate's inscription names Him King. Soldiers divide His garments. He entrusts His mother to the beloved disciple. He says, 'I thirst,' then, 'It is finished.' His legs are not broken, but His side is pierced. Nothing in the scene is random. Shame, suffering, fulfillment, and sovereignty all meet at the cross.

INTERPRETATION

Good Friday is the darkest day and the brightest revelation. The sinlessness of Christ is on display, but so is the guilt of the world. Yet Jesus is not a helpless victim. He lays down His life in obedience to the Father. 'It is finished' is not the sigh of collapse, but the declaration of completion. The work of atonement has been accomplished. Scripture is fulfilled. The Passover Lamb has been offered. Justice has not been ignored; it has been satisfied. Mercy has not been made cheap; it has been purchased with blood.

APPLICATION

Do not try to add to what Christ has finished. Bring your guilt to the cross and leave boasting there too. The cross kills pride and silences despair. It tells the self-righteous that they cannot save themselves, and it tells the broken that they need not save themselves. Stand at Calvary long enough to hate sin more deeply and to love Christ more dearly. Then go live cruciform lives - humble, forgiving, holy, and grateful.

Christ Connection

Old Testament Shadow / Prophecy: The Passover lamb, the sacrificial system, and the suffering servant all cast their shadows toward Calvary.

Fulfillment in Jesus: Jesus bears sin in our place, fulfills Scripture in His suffering, and secures cleansing by His finished work.

Kingdom Consummation: The crucified Lamb is also the enthroned Lamb, and the One pierced on Friday will be worshiped forever by the redeemed from every nation.

Supporting cross references: Isaiah 53:4-6; Exodus 12:46; Zechariah 12:10

Holy Saturday - Saturday, April 4, 2026

PASSAGE

Matthew 27:57-66

THEME

Waiting in the Silence

OBSERVATION

Jesus is truly buried. Joseph of Arimathea courageously asks for the body. A new tomb is used. The stone is rolled into place. The women watch. The authorities, still fearful of Jesus even in death, secure the tomb and post a guard. To human eyes, the movement appears over. The King is buried. The disciples are scattered. Heaven seems quiet.

INTERPRETATION

Holy Saturday matters because burial matters. Jesus did not merely seem to die; He entered fully into death. The gospel includes not only that Christ died and rose, but that He was buried. The silence of Saturday is not meaningless delay; it is part of God's wise design. Even the sealed tomb and posted guard will serve the truth of resurrection. What Christ's enemies intend as final closure becomes, by providence, a stage for vindication. Saturday teaches us that God is still working when all visible momentum has stopped.

APPLICATION

Many believers know what Saturday feels like. Promises have been spoken, but the stone still seems shut. Prayers feel unanswered. The sky feels quiet. This passage teaches us to wait with faith - not passive unbelief, but steady trust. Honor Christ publicly, as Joseph did, even when courage is costly. Keep watch, as the women did, even when you do not yet understand the full story. Silence is not abandonment. The God of resurrection is still at work in the dark.

Christ Connection

Old Testament Shadow / Prophecy: Isaiah foresaw the Servant with a grave among the rich, and the Sabbath rhythm of Scripture prepared God's people to understand holy rest after completed work.

Fulfillment in Jesus: Christ rests in the tomb after finishing redemption, entering the depths of death so that death might be undone for His people.

Kingdom Consummation: Because Jesus lay in the grave and rose again, the grave for believers becomes temporary sleep, awaiting resurrection and the everlasting Sabbath joy of God's kingdom.

Supporting cross references: Isaiah 53:9; Psalm 16:10; Hebrews 4:9-10

Easter Sunday - Sunday, April 5, 2026

PASSAGE

John 20:1-18

THEME

The Risen Christ Calls His Own by Name

OBSERVATION

The tomb is empty. Mary Magdalene runs in grief and confusion. Peter and the beloved disciple inspect the grave clothes. Mary remains weeping until Jesus Himself speaks her name. In a moment, sorrow turns to recognition, and mourning becomes mission. The resurrection is not presented as vague inspiration or the survival of an idea. It is bodily, historical, and personal. Jesus is alive.

INTERPRETATION

Easter is the Father's vindication of the Son and the beginning of new creation. The cross was not defeat; the empty tomb proves it. Death has been broken from the inside out. Jesus is not merely alive again in the way Lazarus was resuscitated; He is risen in triumph, never to die again. And the risen Christ is no distant abstraction. He comes near to Mary, calls her by name, and sends her with news for His brothers. Resurrection means forgiveness is accomplished, adoption is secured, and mission has begun.

APPLICATION

Live as a resurrection people. Do not treat Easter as a seasonal emotion. Let it reshape your fears, your griefs, your witness, and your hope. The risen Christ still calls His people by name through His Word. Hear Him. Follow Him. Go and tell others that the tomb is empty and the Savior lives. In a world full of death, Christian faith is not optimism by temperament; it is hope rooted in a risen Lord.

Christ Connection

Old Testament Shadow / Prophecy: The Scriptures anticipated that God's Holy One would not see corruption, and the pattern of firstfruits and deliverance after descent pointed forward to resurrection.

Fulfillment in Jesus: Jesus rises as the firstfruits of His people, proving that His sacrifice was accepted and that death no longer has the final word.

Kingdom Consummation: The risen Christ will raise all who belong to Him, swallow death forever, and dwell with His people in the new creation where sorrow and graves are no more.

Supporting cross references: Psalm 16:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; Revelation 21:1-5

*May the Lord deepen our repentance,
steady our faith, and fill us with resurrection joy in Christ.*