

Holy Week

Holy Week..the culmination of Jesus' ministry on Earth. So many events happened in this last week of Jesus' life. This week split history in two. Split our lives in two. This week, and all its implications, is the reason we can say, we are a NEW CREATION... the old is gone! It is our prayer that you would allow yourself to be immersed in the events of Holy Week in a new and fresh way. We pray your time here would be full of sacred moments between you and your Savior.

At each station, you'll be prompted to read a passage. Many of them are too long to display at the stations. You can scan the QR code (just hover your camera over it with your camera app open) to bring them up on your phone. If you have your Bible with you, you can read them that way.

You'll also be prompted to interact with God's Story in a personal way at each station. Before you get started, spend some time in prayer, allowing your heart to open more fully to make room for God's power, truth, and love on display during Holy Week.

a triumphant entry

Read Mark 11:1-11



Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, “*Hosanna!*” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Picture the scene. Jesus and his disciples head toward Jerusalem for the annual Passover celebration. Jesus knows the risk. I mean, he JUST raised a guy from the DEAD. All eyes are on him. He knows that once he enters the Holy City it will trigger a series of events that will culminate with his death and resurrection.

The people are shouting HOSANNA! They are laying garments and palm branches before him. They are praising Jesus...expectant for what he is going to do. This was a KING’S parade. This would be how villagers would welcome an conquering king, inviting him to rule over them.

And yet. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. A young donkey. A borrowed, young donkey. Not a white stallion. Not wielding a sword. Not draped in royal cloth. No medals around his chest. Shouldn’t that have been an indication that Jesus wasn’t going to be exactly what they expected?

THE JUXTAPOSITION HERE IS NOT ACCIDENTAL. IN FACT, IT’S PROPHECY-FULFILLING.

Whether they were looking to Jesus in worship or looking for ways to bring him down before he could ascend his throne...Everyone in this crowd had expectations of Jesus. Expectations of liberation. Expectations of political salvation and revolution. The eternal redemption of their souls wasn’t even on their radar.

How can we be like the crowd on Palm Sunday? Praising Jesus, laying offerings before him, praising God for what Jesus has the power to do in our lives. AND YET also be UNLIKE these crowds by holding loosely to our expectations of Jesus? How can we hold in tension our praise and our expectations?

Spend some time here praising Jesus for WHO HE IS. While we are grateful for what he can do for us, we need to be careful that we aren’t worshiping the blessings rather than the Person. Let’s be intentional about letting go of some of our personal requests and expectations and simply worship Jesus because he is worthy to be praised.

Jesus clears the temple

Read Mark 11:15-19



‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.”

Ok. Jesus knows that entering into Jerusalem...and especially the temple...will trigger his betrayal and his death. Seems like a great time to keep a low profile, right?

Wrong. Not Jesus’ style.

When Jesus witnesses injustice and the defilement of that which belongs to God, he can’t sit idly by and keep quiet. Even if it means drawing more attention and ire from the religious leaders and others who are ALREADY plotting to kill him. Might as well give them more fuel for their fire, right?

So Jesus sees God’s holy temple being used for profit. He sees the religious preying upon the devout looking to make a quick buck (or denarius). He can’t let this continue on. He flips over tables and drives merchants out. He disrupts completely.

In light of this, read 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys

God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.”

You are where God’s Spirit chooses to dwell. Collectively together, as the Church, we are a sacred place to be treated as such. However, there are times that we, like the temple, need to be cleared out and purified. That is what we have been doing all during this season of Lent! Taking inventory of our temple and identifying that which doesn’t belong... that which is hindering us in our goal of becoming fully alive.

Let’s be clear. Jesus isn’t angry at you. In fact, scripture doesn’t state that he was angry with the temple merchants. Any righteous anger he holds is directed at the enemies who deceive us (the devil, the world, and the flesh...not human souls). However, he is willing to flip over a few tables and disrupt your life if it leads you closer to the life you were made to live. A life of abundance and purpose and holiness.

Jesus is anointed

Read Mark 14:1-9



She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. I tell you the truth, wherever the *Good News* is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered..."

Another scene of Holy Week that deserves some pause and some imagination to picture the events that are taking place.

A woman, undignified in her devotion, bursts into a room of men eating. She breaks open a jar of perfume and pours TWELVE OUNCES of the fragrant liquid over Jesus' head. 12 ounces. This isn't a light little spritz of body spray to cover up the odor of a light workout. No. This is DRENCHING Jesus. This is the amount of perfume necessary to potentially cover up the stench of death.

Another beautiful disruption.

Although not all in the room see it that way. In fact, this is the final straw in the proverbial camel's back for Judas. DEATH? BURIAL? No. Jesus, you were supposed to come to Jerusalem, kick some booty and take names, and drive the Romans out. Dying is not a part of my plan for you.

And yet, this woman knows what's coming. In her grief and her devotion she accepts Jesus for the Messiah that he is, not who she wants him to be. And she pours her heart and her expensive perfume out for him.

At the feet of Jesus...

We lay down that which doesn't belong. We let go of our expectations. We pour out our devotion. We display our grief. We experience the freedom to be who God created us to be. We allow ourselves to be undignified. We bring our offerings.

We worship him.

Spend sometime at the feet of Jesus, pouring out whatever is necessary to express your devotion.

Jesus washes feet

Read John 13:1-17



And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.

Our King...who rode into his inaugural parade on a borrowed young donkey instead of a majestic white stallion. Now, he willingly lowers himself even further by getting down on the ground and washing his disciples feet.

Maybe you can tell by the indignant protests from Peter...washing someone's feet was definitely one of the lowliest tasks. In a society that walked everywhere...in sandals...on roads marked by the commuting animals...you can use your imagination.

And yet...this is one way our Savior King chose to put on display his great love for his friends, his people, and us. As Paul writes in Philippians: "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too."

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being."

Jesus may not have been the Messiah people expected or wanted...but he sure is the Messiah we need. Living not in an unattainable high tower, but living among us (Emmanuel God with us) as a tangible example. An example Jesus explicitly asked us to follow. Have we allowed our pride to creep in? Have we been unwilling to humble ourselves enough to take on the lowliest tasks?

Let's face it. No matter how talented you are, how famous you are, how rich you are...you do not possess equality with God. And the One who did freely gave himself away.

Let us have the same attitude the Christ Jesus had. If we are setting life-goals...let that be the one we strive after.

the last supper

Read Mark 14:12-26



And he said to them,
“This is my blood,
which confirms the
covenant between
God and his people.
It is poured out as a
sacrifice for many.”

If you knew it was going to be your last meal on earth, what would you choose to eat? It's a question we ask often as an ice-breaker...and the answer is obvious.

Mason Bar. Duh.

However, this was no ordinary last meal. This was the start of a new covenant and a new tradition, and it would throw open the doors to God's family. Jesus and his disciples weren't just having dinner. They were partaking in the Passover meal together. A tradition that was so rich with meaning and history for the Jewish people. If you remember the story... the enslaved Israelites were to smear the blood of an unblemished male lamb over their doorways so that the angel of death would PASS OVER them in the night. Their identity, their salvation, and their freedom was all defined by the blood. It symbolized the covenant God was making with HIS people. And just when escape seemed hopeless, Moses turned to the Israelites and said, “Don't be afraid. God will rescue you today. He will fight for you.”

Jesus could say the same thing to his disciples that night. Rescue was coming through a brand new covenant with a different kind of blood.

Covenant. This would have been a familiar word to the disciples. While the Israelites broke their end of the solemn agreement many times...God never did. This is why a new covenant was necessary. We couldn't live up to the terms.

Now, we still find our identity in the blood. The blood of Jesus himself. The ultimate sacrifice. Unblemished. Unbroken. The perfect and once-and-for-all Passover lamb. Open to ALL who want to enter into this covenant.

At the end of the day, a last meal becomes more about who you share it with. And Jesus shared it with those closest to him...even if one was about to betray him. This meal would define them...as it defines us. We are a community marked by the blood and body of Jesus, our willing and complete sacrifice.

the Crucifixion

Read Mark 15:1-41



At noon, darkness fell
across the whole land
until three o'clock.

Then at three o'clock,
Jesus called out with a
loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi,
lema sabachthani?"
which means "My God,
my God, why have you
abandoned me?"

Betrayed.
Arrested.
Robbed of justice.
Denied by friends.
Mocked.
Beaten.
Crucified.
Abandoned.
Forsaken.
Killed.

This was the fate of our Savior, our King, our Lord, our Friend. In the darkest moments of his earthly life, as he took on the sin of the world, Jesus felt abandoned and forsaken. Being fully divine, Jesus knew that his present suffering wasn't the period at the end of his story. However, being fully human, he also experienced the deep, agonizing emotions of abandonment, shame, and despair. With this phrase, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani," Jesus

taught us an important lesson: it is possible... even spiritually mature, to have faith and hope at the same time we have doubt and sadness. As the people of God, we are not immune to pain. Even Jesus wasn't immune to pain. We are not people who gloss over the tragedies of this world with hollow platitudes. We grieve. We cry out, and we even shake our fists at God. However, we are also people who hold on for dear life to the hope that the gospels didn't end at the cross, that God was setting things right...even if all we see is darkness in the moment.

In the very next moment, when things felt darkest. Jesus YELLED out: "It is finished!" The earth quaked and the veil was torn with this shout of victory.

It. Is. Finished.

the Burial

Read Mark 15:42-47



Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance.

Silent Saturday.

The greatest ellipses in human history.

Maybe you can tell...the ellipses is my very favorite symbol of punctuation.

A pause...a very long pause. HOWEVER...the very presence of an ellipses means that there's more story to tell.

Silent Saturday. Jesus is dead. He's been buried in a donated tomb. A heavy, virtually unmovable stone has been rolled in place to seal the entrance. Story over, right?

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Three little dots. One for each day Jesus spent in the grave. At first glance they even look like a period at the end of the story. And yet...

Hope is not lost.

Hear this! Hope. Is. NOT. Lost.

When moments seem darkest. When all human strength, wisdom, and spirit have been spent. Those are the moments when God shows up and proves everyone wrong.

Think about your own life. What seems dead? Where have you been waiting to see resurrection? Clinging to hope that God would show up and change everything? A relationship? A dream? Victory over addiction?

Is there something in your life that feels buried... three days stinky dead?

Place it in the mighty hands of Jesus. Hold loosely to your expectations of Jesus. Trust in the sometimes slow process of God. You just might find...

Some resurrections take time...