



HOLY WEEK

SUNDAY: JESUS RIDES INTO JERUSALEM

Read: Matthew 21:1-11

Reflect

Imagine yourself in this scene. You're watching this crowd of people celebrate the arrival of a man whom you've heard rumors about. You hear people shouting "Hosanna," and see them waving palm branches. You've heard that He heals sicknesses and brings people back from the dead, and you've heard people say that He is the Messiah – the promised King who would save God's people. What's going through your head as you watch Jesus enter Jerusalem?

When the citizens of Jerusalem saw that Jesus' arrival was accompanied by cheering and celebration, they couldn't help but ask, "Who is this?" How would you answer that question?

Respond

Spend a few minutes in prayer telling Jesus who He is to you.

What do you need today? What are you grateful for today? Is there anything you need to get off your chest? Tell Jesus about it.

MONDAY: JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE

Read: Matthew 21:12-17

Reflect

Flipping tables seems uncharacteristic of Jesus. At least, it seems uncharacteristic of the Jesus we sometimes imagine. Jesus is not a weak, timid man afraid of confrontation. Jesus is a bold King who came to confront sin and remove the things that stand between Him and His people. Is there a “table” in your life that needs to be “flipped” – an obstacle that is keeping you from Jesus that needs to be removed?

Respond

What is keeping you separated from Jesus? Spend a few minutes telling Jesus about it.

What do you need today? What are you grateful for today? Is there anything you need to get off your chest? Tell Jesus about it.

TUESDAY: JESUS RETURNS TO THE TEMPLE / THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

Read: Matthew 22:34-40

Reflect

For the Pharisees, worshiping God meant following every law perfectly. But over time, their intentions became twisted, and following the rules became more about status than worship. On the outside, the Pharisees were perfect, but their hearts weren't in it. Sometimes we go through the motions of following Jesus – going to church, singing worship songs, reading our Bible – because it's what we're *supposed to do*, but our hearts aren't in it. Why do you think Jesus cares more about your heart than your actions?

Take a few minutes to reflect: What does it mean to love Jesus with all your heart? All your soul? All your strength?

Respond

Spend a few minutes talking to Jesus. Tell Him about your answers to the questions above, and ask Him to help you in areas where you might need it.

What do you need today? What are you grateful for today? Is there anything you need to get off your chest? Tell Jesus about it.

WEDNESDAY: THE PLOT AGAINST JESUS

Read: Matthew 26:14-16

Reflect

Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus knew what was going to happen to Him before it happened? He knew that He was going to be betrayed by Judas for 30 silver pieces (about \$600), that He would be beaten and humiliated, and that He would be crucified. Jesus knew what was coming, and yet He didn't try to escape it.

If you could see a few days into the future and know that all of this would happen to you, what would you do?

Jesus knew what was going to happen but chose to keep moving towards pain and suffering because He knew it would mean freedom and life for you. How does that make you feel? What does it say about how Jesus sees you?

Respond

Spend some time thanking Jesus for the incredible love He has for you.

What do you need today? What are you grateful for today? Is there anything you need to get off your chest? Tell Jesus about it.

THURSDAY: THE LAST SUPPER

Read: Matthew 26:17-30

Reflect

If you knew that you only had a few hours of freedom left, who would you eat a meal with and what would you eat? Jesus spent His last few hours with His best friends (the disciples) eating bread and drinking wine. That might seem like a strange last meal, but the bread and wine symbolized what Jesus was about to do. The bread represented His body, which was about to be broken; the wine represented His blood, which would be spilled as payment for the sins of the world. When followers of Jesus gather to eat bread and drink wine (or juice) to honor Jesus' sacrifice, it's called taking communion – something you may have heard of or participated in before!

Why do you think Jesus chose to have His followers remember His sacrifice with food and drink?

Why do you think communion is something we do in the presence of other followers of Jesus and not by ourselves?

Respond

Spend some time thinking about what it would have been like to be at the dinner table with Jesus that night. What are some things you would say to Him? Pray those things to Him. What do you need today? What are you grateful for today? Is there anything you need to get off your chest? Tell Jesus about it.

FRIDAY: THE TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION

Read: Matthew 27:45-54

Reflect

Imagine for a moment that you're at Jesus' crucifixion. You see Jesus on the cross alongside two criminals who are also being crucified that day. You can hear the Roman soldiers hurling insults at Jesus. Some of the people around you are crying, some are laughing and insulting Jesus. What's going through your mind as you watch all of this unfold in front of you?

Friday of Holy Week is known as "Good Friday." That's kind of a strange name because, on the surface, there's nothing *good* about it. We call this Good Friday because this was the day that Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us. This was the day that Jesus endured the cross because He knew that His pain meant our freedom. He went to the cross with you on His mind.

Reflect on this thought today: Jesus was thinking about me on the cross.

Respond

How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus was thinking about you on the cross? Tell Jesus.

What do you need today? What are you grateful for today? Is there anything you need to get off your chest? Tell Jesus about it.

SATURDAY: JESUS IN THE TOMB

Read: Matthew 27:57-65

Reflect

Imagine that you're one of the disciples. You've been following this man Jesus around who claimed to be God, and who you thought was a King. You thought that all the miracles and sermons were leading up to something big. But now there's just silence. Jesus is dead; you're on the run from the same people who killed Him, and there's no sign that He's coming back. What would you be feeling?

Have you ever felt like Jesus was silent or distant? Maybe He seems silent right now?

The truth is that Jesus does answer our prayers, but it's not always the answer we want or in the timing we expect. Jesus doesn't promise that we'll get everything we ask for, but He does promise to be with us in the waiting.

Reflect on this thought today: Jesus is with me in the waiting.

Respond

Are you waiting on an answer to prayer? Are you losing hope that an answer will come? Does Jesus feel distant? Tell Him about it. What do you need today? What are you grateful for today? Is there anything you need to get off your chest? Tell Jesus about it.

SUNDAY: THE RESURRECTION

Read: Matthew 28:1-10

Reflect

Picture yourself in this story. You head over to Jesus' tomb to grieve, only to find that the giant stone blocking the entrance of the tomb has been rolled away. Not only is the tomb open, it's empty! Just as you're about to leave, an angel appears and tells you that the tomb is empty because Jesus is alive! What would you be feeling and thinking?

What comes to mind when you think of a tomb? A tomb is a symbol of death. But the empty tomb is a symbol of the greatest hope the world has ever known. On Resurrection Sunday, Jesus rose from the dead and proved that He was who He said He was. On Easter, Jesus defeated death forever, allowing us to have eternal life and a relationship with Him.

Spend today reflecting on the truth that Jesus is alive, and that because He is alive, you can experience a life that is full of purpose, truth, and love.

Respond

Spend a few minutes expressing gratitude to Jesus for what He did 2,000 years ago, and that you can have a relationship with Him. What do you need today? What are you grateful for today? Is there anything you need to get off of your chest? Tell Jesus about it.