

Holy Week Devotions—April 3-8

Holy Monday, April 3—Matthew 21:12-13

¹²Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a den of robbers.”

Reflection

We tend to focus on the fact that Jesus drove merchants and money changers out of the Temple, with the emphasis on the merchants and money changers. But what if we focused instead on the fact that he drove them *out of the Temple*? This is the heart of Israel’s worship, the center of holiness on earth! And yet it needs to be cleansed. So also, we, the people of God, are the living Temple of Christ. And we need to be cleansed as well. This is the week, above all other times, to pay attention to the ways in which we need to repent and be forgiven. What does Jesus need to cast out of your soul during this Holy Week?

Read Psalm 132-135

Today’s Prayer

Lord Jesus, come and cleanse my heart of all sin. Teach me to follow you with more complete devotion, and to cast aside everything that would draw me away from you. Amen

Holy Tuesday, April 4—Matthew 21:23-27

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

Reflection

The chief priests and elders couldn't answer Jesus' question because they lacked the courage to face the consequences of their answer. Jesus calls us to stand up to integrity, and not base our thoughts and actions on how we think other people will respond. This can feel risky. How are you being called to greater integrity? Where do you need the Holy Spirit to give you more courage of your convictions?

Read Psalm 136-138

Today's Prayer

O Holy Spirit, breathe your truth into me, and into your whole Church. Help us to stand on your revelation and to walk in your ways, especially when it would be easier to go along with the ways of our world. Amen

Holy Wednesday, April 5—Matthew 24:13

¹³“But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

Reflection

Matthew chapters 21-25 record Jesus' teaching during the week before his arrest. Chapters 24 and 25 are “apocalyptic:” they look ahead to the end of time and Jesus' return in glory. But this teaching does not ask us to ignore this world and think of a heavenly future. No, the future shapes our present. We can expect resistance, trial, and struggle. But we can be confident that in the end, the love of God in Christ Jesus will be victorious. “Apocalyptic” teaching calls us to endure all things, being faithful to God's call, and finding strength in the hope of Christ's triumph. What is difficult for you to endure? What challenges you to want to retreat or hide? Many of life's battles can only be won by patient endurance, trusting in God's timing. How can you seek God's help to endure?

Read Psalm 139-140

Today's Prayer

Gracious God, give me endurance to persevere through all trials and to resist all temptations. May the struggles I encounter draw me closer to you and make me more reliant on your saving power; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen

Maundy Thursday, April 6—John 13:33-35

³³[Jesus said,] “Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Reflection

The theme of love is carried through Maundy Thursday from the foot washing to Jesus giving his disciples a new commandment: that they love one another. As we prepare to experience again the depth of Jesus’ suffering on Good Friday, let’s keep awake to the undercurrent of love that is woven throughout Maundy Thursday and all of these holy days. There are many elements to our Maundy Thursday worship service. Notice how God pours out his love to you through each one as you worship him and get ready to witness the crucifixion of His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Read Psalm 141-143

Today’s Prayer

Lord Jesus, I thank you for your obedience to the will of your Father, for my sake and for the sake of the whole world. Open my heart to experience the depths of your love. Help me grow in my faith during these holy days. Amen

Good Friday, April 7—John 19:16-18

¹⁶Then [Pilate] handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; ¹⁷and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

Reflection

The day is here. It’s the day that makes the new life of Easter possible. It’s the day when it looks like sin and death have won. It’s the day where we gather as a church family and bear witness to Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. It’s a day of ritual, of hearing the old, old story, of singing the most somber hymns in our hymnal, of extinguishing the candles, one by one. It’s a day to be completely honest about our sin and our fear of death, and our need for a Savior.

“Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” We gather together on Good Friday to watch and wait and witness the Son of God nailed to the cross. We leave worship in silence, trusting that even though we grieve, Jesus’ story isn’t over yet. God has not forgotten his Son, or us. And so, we wait with expectation for what God will do next.

Read Psalm 144-156

Today’s Prayer

Holy God, guide us to come before you with honesty and humility about our sin and our need for a Savior to rescue and redeem us. Help us to look at your crucified Son with the eyes of faith. Show us how to wait with hope for you to complete Jesus’ story, and our salvation, according to your will and your ways. Amen

Holy Saturday, April 8—Matthew 27:57-61

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Reflection

On Holy Saturday, Christ is in the tomb. It is a day of grief and lament. It is a day of silence and stillness. God himself is in the grave. We wait. Sometimes, it appears that sin and death have won. But Sunday’s coming. That “great stone” doesn’t look too steady, does it?

Read Psalm 147-150

Today’s Prayer

Gracious God, be with us when we weep and worry. Support us when our strength is gone. When there is nothing left that we can do, give us the faith to wait on you, and the hope to know that even in the stillness, you are at work, and even in the silence, your Word of mercy abides. Amen

