

Cross Connection

LENTEN & HOLY WEEK

Devotional Guide W6

New Life in Christ Church

*Down at the cross where my Savior died,
down where for cleansing from sin I cried,
there to my heart was the blood applied.*

Glory to His name!

-E.A. Hoffman



Resources



Holy Week-themed Youtube video and music playlist

Holy Week-themed Spotify playlist.

The Savior

Week 6

March 25- April 5



The Hour Has Come

I don't know about you, but as we have journeyed through Lent together, I have had a mixture of emotions. In many ways, my reflections have led to a deeper gratitude for the cross - a relief and indebtedness for the sacrifice and payment I could never make. I also carry the excitement and anticipation of celebrating Jesus' resurrection with my church family on Resurrection Sunday.

Still, in the midst of these "positive" feelings, I am also burdened with dread. Holy Week is approaching, and this means I will have to come face-to-face with the brutality and graphic nature of the cross. It's holy, weighty, beautiful, and traumatic all at the same time. I think of Christ's journey to Jerusalem and what had to have been an emotional rollercoaster from a King's welcome on Palm Sunday to a criminal's condemnation just days later.

This last installment of our devotional guide is designed to help you center Jesus's journey as told directly through the Holy Scriptures. For the first few days leading up to Holy Week (Palm Sunday), we will close out our "Cross Connection" -themed verse meditation practices, centering on one final theme of our connection to the cross - *justice*.

Beginning on Palm Sunday, the guide will shift formats to a more reflective reading plan. Each day will feature scripture that places you in Jesus' footsteps and interactions in the bustling holy city of Jerusalem during Passover. Read slowly, reflect deeply, and make room for the Holy Spirit to draw you into fellowship with His suffering.

Finally, check out the following page to connect with music and video playlists that the whole family can engage in during these final days of Lent.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Pastor Mo

Wednesday, March 25

Week 6 (part 1) Passage: Isaiah 61:1-3 *The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.*

Today's Practice: Lectio Divina (this means "Divine Reading") Our practice today is Lectio Divina, which means Divine Reading. It is a slow and intentional way of reading Scripture where we listen for what God may be saying to us.

Step 1 – Read this week's passage slowly: Become still and read the passage out loud twice. Do not analyze – simply listen.

Step 2 – Notice the word or phrase that stands out and write the word down below. It may be "good news to the poor", "bind up the brokenhearted", "freedom for the captive", "comfort all who mourn", "a crown of beauty instead of ashes". *Write down your word or phrase*

Prayer: "Jesus, open my eyes to the kind of justice You bring."

Live it out today - Repeat your word or phrase during the day and reflect on it.

Thursday, March 26

Week 6 (part 1) Passage: Isaiah 61:1-3

Today's Practice: Confession - Our practice today is confession. Confession simply means agreeing with God about our sin.

Step 1 – Begin with this prayer: "Jesus, because of the cross, I can be honest with You."

Step 2 – Read this week's passage.

Step 3 – Practice agreement with God. Where have I ignored the needs of others, been indifferent to injustice, prioritized my comfort over compassion, or failed to reflect God's heart toward people? Write those things down

Reflection/Prayer: How does the cross challenge the way you have responded to the needs around you? "Lord, forgive me for where I have turned away instead of leaning in."

Friday, March 27

Week 6 (part 1) Passage: Isaiah 61:1-3

Today's Practice: Reframing

Reframing means allowing God to reshape how we see people, situations, and injustice.

Step 1 – Read this week's passage

Step 2 – Reflect: What situation in my life or in the world feels broken, unfair, or discouraging?

Step 3 – Reframe it: How might God be at work bringing restoration in ways I cannot yet see?

Prayer: "Help me remember that because of the cross I can trust that You are restoring what is broken."

Saturday, March 28

Week 6 (part 1) Passage: Isaiah 61:1-3 *The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.*

Today's Practice: Intercession

Intercession means praying for others and asking God to bring His justice and restoration into their lives.

Step 1 – Read this week's passage again.

Step 2 – Ask Yourself - Who in your life is hurting, overlooked, in need of restoration, experiencing injustice? Write down their names.

Prayer: "Jesus, reveal your sacrificial love, presence, and justice to those in my life who are in need."

HOLY WEEK

Sunday, March 29 | Palm Sunday

Today's Passage: Luke 19:28-40 ²⁸ After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'" ³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴ They replied, "The Lord needs it." ³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen. ³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" ⁴⁰ "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

Today's Reflection: On this day, Jesus enters Jerusalem as King, welcomed with praise, while knowing He is walking toward the cross. The crowd celebrates Him for what they believe He will do. As you watch Him move forward, what do you notice about the difference between their expectations and His true mission?

As Jesus continues toward the cross, are you willing to follow Him for who He is, not just for what you hope He will do?

Prayer - Jesus, as You are welcomed as King, You are also walking toward the cross for me. Help me to follow You with understanding and trust, not just excitement. Teach me to stay with You, even when Your way is different than what I expect.



Monday, March 30 | Holy Monday



Today's Passage: Mark 11:15-18 ¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'^{1a1}? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

Today's Reflection: On this day, Jesus enters the temple and confronts what has been corrupted, restoring it to what it was meant to be. He does not ignore what is wrong, He turns over tables and calls His people back to truth.

As you watch Jesus do this, what does it reveal about what matters to Him?

As He continues toward the cross, what might He want to make right in your life, not to push you away, but to restore you?

Prayer: Jesus, You care about what is right and true. As You move toward the cross, search my heart and show me what needs to be restored. Give me the courage to let You do Your work in me, and the humility to trust Your correction.

Tuesday, March 31 | Holy Tuesday

Today's Passage Matthew 25:1-13 NIV *"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.² Five of them were foolish and five were wise.³ The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them.⁴ The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.⁵ The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.⁶ "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'⁷ "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.⁸ The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'⁹ "No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'¹⁰ "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.¹¹ "Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'¹² "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'¹³ "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.*

Today's Reflection: On this day, Jesus teaches about being ready, reminding His followers that not everyone who is waiting is truly prepared. Some were ready when the moment came, others realized too late. As you hear this parable, what stands out to you about the difference between those who were ready and those who were not?

As Jesus continues toward the cross, how is He inviting you to stay spiritually awake and ready for what He is doing?

Prayer: Jesus, as You move closer to the cross, help me not to drift or become distracted. Keep my heart attentive and ready for You. Teach me to stay close, to walk with You daily, and to be prepared for what You are doing in my life.



Wednesday, April 1 | Holy Wednesday

(Spy Wednesday)

Matthew 26:3-5, 14-16 NIV ³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ⁵“But not during the festival,” they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.” ¹⁴Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests ¹⁵and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Today's Reflection: On this day, while Jesus continues toward the cross, others are quietly making plans against Him, and one of His own chooses to betray Him. Judas walks closely with Jesus, yet looks for an opportunity to hand Him over.

As you sit with this moment, what stands out to you about how betrayal unfolds?

As Jesus continues toward the cross, are there places in your life where you are tempted to choose something else over Him, even in subtle ways?

Prayer: Jesus, as You move toward the cross, You are fully aware of what is being done against You, yet You continue forward. Search my heart and reveal anything in me that pulls me away from You. Help me to remain faithful, to stay close, and to choose You above everything else.



Thursday, April 2 | Maundy Thursday

The Last Supper [Morning Reading]

Matthew 26:17-30 ¹⁷ On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"¹⁸ He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.²⁰ When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."²² They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"

²³ Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."²⁵ Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said so."²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the^[a] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."³⁰ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.



Reflection: On this day, Jesus sits at the table with His disciples, sharing a meal, knowing that His body will soon be broken and His blood poured out. In the middle of this moment, He speaks of betrayal, yet still offers the bread and the cup. As you sit at the table with Him, what do you notice about the way Jesus responds to those around Him, even knowing what is coming?

As He breaks the bread and lifts the cup, how does this moment help you understand what He is about to do on the cross?

Prayer: Jesus, as You sit at the table, You know the cost of what is ahead, yet You still offer Yourself. Help me to receive what You are giving, not just with my hands, but with my heart. As You move toward the cross, draw me closer to You and help me understand the depth of Your love.

Maundy Thursday Cont. | Gethsemane [Evening Reading]

Matthew 26:36-46 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along

with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled.³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter.⁴¹ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy.⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.⁴⁶ Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Reflection: On this night, Jesus goes to Gethsemane and feels the full weight of what is ahead, sorrowful, troubled, and yet choosing the will of the Father. He asks His disciples to stay with Him, but they fall asleep as He prays and surrenders.

As you watch Jesus in this moment, what stands out to you about the way He faces what is coming?

As He moves toward the cross, are you willing to stay with Him in the hard moments, or do you find yourself pulling away when it becomes heavy?

Prayer: Jesus, in Gethsemane You did not turn away from what was before You. You stayed, You prayed, and You surrendered. Help me to stay with You, even when it is uncomfortable or difficult. Teach me to trust the Father the way You did, and to follow You as You continue toward the cross.



Friday, April 3 | Good Friday



[Morning Reading]

Matthew 27:27-32, 38-42, 45-46, 50-54 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him.²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said.³⁰ They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.³¹ After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus³² As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.³⁸ Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads⁴⁰ and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.⁴² "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

The Death of Jesus⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land.⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli,^[a] lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and^[c] went into the holy city and appeared to many people.⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who

were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Reflection: On this day, Jesus is mocked, beaten, and crucified, enduring rejection, suffering, and separation as He gives His life on the cross. As you watch what He goes through, what stands out to you about what Jesus is willing to endure?

As He remains on the cross and does not come down, what does this reveal about His love and His commitment to you?

[Evening Reading]

The Burial of Jesus

Matthew 27:57-60 *As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.*

Reflection: On this evening, Jesus' body is taken down, wrapped, and placed in a tomb, and the stone is rolled in front. The movement stops. The voices fade. Everything grows quiet.

As you sit with this moment, what do you feel as Jesus is laid in the tomb?

As the stone is rolled into place, what does it mean to remain here, in the silence, without rushing past it?

Prayer: Jesus, as Your body is laid in the tomb, everything feels still and uncertain. Help me to stay present in this moment and not rush ahead. Teach me to trust You, even in silence, even when I do not see what You are doing. Keep my heart with You as I wait.

The blood that Jesus shed for me
Way back on Calvary
The blood that gives me strength
From day to day
It will never lose its power
It reaches to the highest mountain
It flows to the lowest valley
The blood that gives me strength
From day to day
It will never lose its power

Saturday, April 4 | Holy Saturday

Find 5 minutes today to sit in silence. Thank God for the sacrifice of Jesus and sit with the reality that Jesus lay dead in the tomb on this day.



Resurrection Sunday

Jesus Has Risen

Matthew 28:1-10 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.² There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."⁸ So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Praise and Thanksgiving: Jesus, You are alive! What once seemed finished has been made new.

As You stepped out of the tomb, You changed everything.

Help me to see You clearly, to respond with worship, and to follow You in the new life You have made possible. Remove my fear and fill me with the joy of knowing You are alive!

He is Risen,
He is Risen, Indeed!