



Holy Week 2002

A Devotional
Guide from
Mark's Gospel

Lexington Avenue
Baptist Church
Danville, Kentucky

A Word from Our Pastor

The devotional thoughts you find inside this booklet are designed to help you fully experience Holy Week. From the triumphal entry to the Last Supper, the betrayal, the crucifixion, and the resurrection, Holy Week is filled with the emotions of life.

We do well to experience the full impact of Holy Week on our lives and understanding how those events shape our outlook on life today. The hope of the resurrection gives us a hope to face the living of these days with all the unanswered questions we may have.

So read the passages, reflect on these insights, and pray as you journey with Christ through Holy Week 2002.

By His Grace,
Tommy

Palm Sunday, March 24

The Triumphal Entry

(Mark 11:1-11)

by Keith Stillwell with Children's Sunday School

Daily Reading: Mark 11:1-11

Jesus is given the “red carpet” treatment. In Jesus’ day instead of rolling out the red carpet they laid leafy branches and cloaks upon the road to show honor and respect. With shouts of praise the people welcomed Jesus as a king.

The cloak that the people spread on the road before Jesus, was an outer garment or wrap. It could also be used to carry things and as a blanket at night. The color and quality of the cloak indicated a person’s status. Most people owned only one or maybe two cloaks. The people laid before Jesus something that was valuable and important to them.

On, Sunday, March 10, our children’s Sunday School teachers asked the children what thing of value they would lay before Jesus?

My bracelet. (Madison Karsner, age 3).

My special necklace. (McKenzie Wash, age 4)

My baby doll. (Ashley Rice, age 5)

My dog, “Dakota.” (Caleb Tarter, age 4)

My doll house people. (Jessie Whittaker, age 3)

My shoes. (Micah Price, age 4)

My heart. (Zach Tarter, age 5)

My basketball. (David Valentine, age 6)

My marble collection. (Sam Price, age 5)

My Bible and palm branches. (Megan Rice, age 6)

Lots of flowers or my quilt. (Michael, age 7)

Palm branches. (Luque Benthall, age 7)

An American flag. (Madeline Rector, age 6)

The blanket I’ve had since I was a baby. (Kelsey Rector, age 8)

My book collection. (Kelly Horn, age 10)

(Cayle Crown-Webber, age 9)

My books (John David Robertson, age 9)

My pony named “Dolly.” (Jessica Johnson, age 9)

My dog. (Andrea East, age 12)

My family and my Bible. (Kayla Burns, age 12)

My porcelain doll set and my old tea set. (Brandi Burns, age 11)

A lock of hair from when I was a baby, my hospital bracelet, and a collection of things my grandmother passed on to me. (Kelsey Stillwell, age 11)

On this Palm Sunday, what will you lay before Jesus to show him honor?

Monday, March 25

The Cleansing of the Temple

(Mark 11:15-19)

by Alberta Moynahan

Daily Reading: Mark 11:12-19

This festival day is over. No one, who is here, will ever forget it. Time now to go home or to lodgings, and still the milling crowd talks excitedly about the triumphal ride of Jesus through Jerusalem. Tired, Jesus and his disciples go to the nearby village of Bethany to rest with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Jesus prays most of the night, while the disciples sleep.

On reaching Jerusalem the next morning, Jesus and the disciples went immediately to the temple. Instead of the quiet of worship, they find clamor, baskets of birds, shouting, the clink of coins, a carnival air. The Money Changers and those who sold doves for the sacrifices were busy.

The money changers were necessary. Jews from all over the world came to the Passover, and most must pay the half shekel temple tax, which must be paid in Jewish coin. Women, minors, old men and the Levites were not taxed or counted. The law written by Moses said that the rich man and the poor man would pay the same tax, and it was not a voluntary tax. This half shekel was the ransom paid for the souls and lives of the people. If not paid, one could not worship in the sanctuary.

The money changers did not trade evenly or fairly, but charged a high premium. The dove sellers copied the over pricing tactics. Much money was made.

Jesus became angry. With his strong carpenter hands he overturned the tables, opened the baskets throwing them around, and with his staff he drove these people out—out of the temple into the streets. Those who had come to worship gathered in groups to question, “Who is this Jesus?”

Then, as always, Jesus took time to teach the disciples, this time quoting Isaiah 56:7, “my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations,” and then he added, “but you have made it a den of robbers.”

We are not required to pay a tax before we can go into the sanctuary. Not only men, but women and children are free to worship. We must be careful to keep our house of worship a house of prayer for all time for all nations.

Tuesday, March 26

The Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-25) by Tim Rice

Daily Reading: Mark 11:20-13:37

In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered!” (Mark 11:20-21, NIV).

The King James Bible refers to figs or fig trees forty-one times in thirty-nine different verses, several of which describe the fig tree as a place of worship. In the Old Testament, it was often used as a symbol of godly living. For the ancient Jews, it seems, the shade of a fig tree was a special location for secluded prayer. The fig tree, a popular source of inexpensive food, required three years from the time it was planted until it could bear fruit. Each tree would yield a great amount of fruit twice a year, in late spring and early autumn. It is believed that this exchange between Jesus and Peter occurred in early spring when the leaves were just beginning to bud. While the figs normally grow as the leaves fill out, and this tree looked promising, it offered no fruit.

During this Holy Season, we will hopefully ask ourselves if the harsh words of Jesus apply to us. Are we fruitful in appearance only but spiritually barren?

Jesus response to Peter was “Have faith in God.” Jesus later tells him, “Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” Mark 11:22-24.

The kind of prayer that moves mountains is prayer for the fruitfulness of God’s kingdom. While our prayers are often motivated by our own interests and concerns, we need to pray as Jesus prayed which was with God’s interests in mind. If we are sincere in our prayers, we can’t help but sense God’s response and reaction to the desires we express. As we continue to shape and mold our desires, we may find ourselves pursuing spiritual riches more avidly than material riches. Prayer for our own selfish interests is indeed fruitless.

Wednesday, March 27

“She Did What She Could”

(Mark 14:3-9)

by Dave Garrett

Daily Reading: Mark 14:1-11

It happened before anyone could stop it. It was spontaneous. It was unpopular. It was reckless. It was costly. It was misunderstood. It was what she could do.

What happened that day at the home of Simon the Leper? Who was this unnamed woman and how did she come to be with Jesus and the others? Was she a faithful follower of Jesus or was this her first encounter with Him? Was her past life filled with struggle and sin and pain or was her life marked by commitment, service and devotion to Christ? Had this woman performed a great act of worship and honor or was this a wasteful and worthless deed done in haste without thinking?

When the jar was broken and the very expensive perfume was poured on Jesus' head all that were present stopped and noticed. As the sweet smell of pure nard perfume filled the room, it happened. It happened just like it had happened many times before in that day.

It happened just like it happens today. Her effort, her offering her sacrifice, her worship was harshly rebuked by those who were present. They began to say indignantly to one another—“Why this waste...”; “It could have been...”; “more than a year’s wages”; “money given to the poor.”

While many hurled hard words of reproof, Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. *She did what she could.* She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.” In the mist of insults, disapproval and rejection Jesus not only welcomed this woman’s act of worship but he stated “. . . whenever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” Wow!

Being misunderstood can be one of life’s most frustrating occurrences. Many times we are questioned and even rebuked for our actions as we serve Christ. Others often have opinions and many are more than happy to share them. During this Holy Week our challenge is

to ignore the religious norm of today and do what we can. Our challenge is to be spontaneous in our worship. Our challenge is to sacrifice as we serve our Lord even while hearing words of indignation. Our struggle is to—in spite of our past, in spite of our status, in spite of the criticism, in spite of the expectation, in spite of our unworthiness—do what we can to worship and serve Christ.

Be The Best!

Thursday, March 28

Gethsemane

(Mark 14:32-42)

by Phil Rector

Daily Reading: Mark 14:12-72

Recently, I went on a prayer retreat to the Abbey of Gethsemani with a group from our congregation. It started out as a windy and rainy day. It seemed that the closer we got to the Abbey the darker the clouds got and the stronger the winds blew. It was looking like the day would be spent indoors perhaps reading and praying. During the orientation we were told about “the statues” that were located near the end of a wooded path across the road. It was a good walk to the statues and on a day like we were experiencing it was doubtful that we would see them. Then all at once the rain stopped and the winds subsided. I decided to take my chances. I walked the muddy winding path through the woods thinking about various things, not really knowing what to expect at the other end of the path. I only knew that there were statues but I did not know of whom or what. I was finally at the base of the hill where the statues were located and began the walk up when I came to the first of two statues. It was a statue of Peter, James, and John - they were asleep. It hit me all at once – GETHSEMANI or Gethsemane as we are used to seeing it. I did not even have to see the next statue to know what was coming. Just a few yards from these sleeping figures was a solitary image of Christ praying. There was obvious anguish on his face. I stared at the statue for a long time and thought about what that moment must have been like. Here was Jesus Christ, God incarnate, agonizing over what would be his fate; Pleading with God the Father to do something: “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want but what you want.” Meanwhile, the friends he brought along to keep watch and to pray with him were sleeping. A flood of emotions and thoughts came over me. Perhaps the thought that has troubled me the most, however, is about the sleeping disciples. These were the closest companions Jesus had on earth. They knew everything about him. They were with him 24 hours a day for most of his ministry and yet when Jesus needed them most they slept. It makes me angry to think of the

abandonment that Jesus must have felt. I think why couldn't these guys, of all people, stay awake? Why couldn't they be there for Jesus? Why did they fall asleep not once, but three times? according to the Gospel of Mark. Then, much to my dismay and humiliation, I saw myself there sleeping. How many times have I turned my back on God when asked to do the simplest thing? Too many to count. And while I do not wish to diminish the importance of following God's call in our lives, I understand the message of grace perhaps more than before. We will never get it right no matter how hard we try, but we will always be given another chance and will always be forgiven through the loving, merciful, and saving acts of Christ who suffered for us. Thanks be to God.

Friday, March 29

The Crucifixion of Jesus

(Mark 15:1-41)

by Dr. Tommy Valentine

Daily Reading: Mark 15:1-41

As you read Mark's account of the crucifixion one aspect stands out—Jesus is silent. He is silent before Pilate, silent before the crowd, silent as he is led away by the soldiers, silent as he is dying on the cross. Mark does record Jesus crying out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” But mostly there is silence.

Silence is not something most of us are very comfortable with. Silence seems filled with uncertainty, fear, anxiety, and pressure. Yet there are times silence is indeed golden and filled with peace and serenity.

When I hear the silence in this passage, I hear God making a way for me. I hear in the silence God through Christ proclaiming his love for me.

Find some silence today and listen as God speaks to you. Even in the deepest, stillest silence God is present for you.

Saturday, March 29

The Burial of Jesus

(Mark 15:42-47)

by Edward Clark

Daily Reading: Mark 15:42-47

The trauma of murder was over. The Cross held the body of Messiah. The faithful women, Mary, Jesus' mother, and Mary Magdalene were stunned and remained as the crowd dispersed. The body was limp and void of movement. The criminals, on crosses beside that of Jesus, were alive and waiting for death.

No provision had been made for the burial of Christ's body. The Jewish officials had no interest and the Roman Governor, Pilate, had ceased to think any more about Jesus, having washed his hands of the episode. The body had to be taken down and it had to be buried. Jesus had no pre-arranged funeral instructions. He had no grave site and had instructed no one as to His wishes. Burial, with no preparation, would normally include a quick trip to some pauper's field and internment.

Two men claimed the body and according to Jewish custom, prepared it for burial. This done, they put it in a tomb and closed the entrance. Jesus was not in His body and was not buried. What had died that day, was the world's inability to attain a lasting relationship with God. Jesus had revealed the Father and had, by His voluntary death, buried the sins of the world.

Easter Sunday, March 31

He Has Risen!

(Mark 16:1-8)

by Brittany Chidester

Daily Reading: Mark 16:1-8

He has risen! This is something that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus and Salome were not prepared to hear. As these three people were bringing spices to anoint Jesus' body they probably never thought that He wouldn't be there. The only question that was going through their minds was who would roll the stone away for them to be able to enter. As they came upon the tomb they were astonished by a young man sitting on the right side who said, "you are looking for Jesus of Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here." As they left with his instructions they were not only trembling but also bewildered and afraid.

The resurrection stands for life, eternal life, something to look forward to. Jesus spent time on earth just like all of us but what he did at the end of His life reassures us with hope for the future. Often times in life we aren't looking forward and are stuck in the past with our mistakes. This is the whole reason why Jesus died on the cross, to forgive us, and the cross is a symbol of that. But the empty tomb is a symbol of everlasting life with which we are granted a life in heaven forever and EVER! Hallelujah Christ has risen!