



holy week

Holy Week

Readings & Reflections

“Holy Week is a way to practice the most holy and sacred rhythm of our faith—death, burial and resurrection.” - Ruth Haley Barton

We have prepared daily readings to take you through each day this week and to accompany each reading we have a written reflection from someone in our church. We encourage you to take time each day this week to slowly read or listen to the passage of Scripture, to carve out a portion of time to pray and reflect on what you've read and to allow each written reflection to stir your imagination and stimulate your thinking.

Let us walk with Jesus through this week, inviting him to do a work of resurrection in each of our lives and rejoicing in what he has accomplished for us.

Sunday 24th March: Palm Sunday

Read: Mark 11:1-33 | Reflection by Ruth Jeremie

Throughout the gospels, Jesus demonstrated servanthood and humble holiness but with His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Jesus allows the people to celebrate Him as a king. His colt awaited. The crowd lined His path with branches and clothing while chanting: “Hosanna (save us)!”. This fulfilled prophesy regarding Jesus' kingship (Zechariah 9:9). But what the crowds did not realize was that Jesus' ability to save was not a matter of military conquest and overthrow of Roman oppression but a much greater spiritual one.

John 5:4 reminds us that “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.” And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” (John 5:4). Therefore, because of Jesus and our faith in him, our unavoidable debt to sin no longer damns us. Christ's payment to death with his sinless life, allows us to escape the consequences of our sins through faith in Him and by God's grace ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). Because Christ won the spiritual battle for humanity, if we believe in him, death has no sting, and the grave has no victory over us. Our eternal life has been secured through Christ, who always causes us to triumph in His name. Hosanna in the Highest Indeed!

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Monday 25th March

Read: Mark 12:1-44 | Reflection by Abigail King

Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

As we enter Holy Week, we enter the final stretch of Lent and look forward to the joy of Easter. During Lent, we're encouraged to give something up – be it a habit of social media, or a snack of chocolate – and give back that time or money to God. It prompts me to think about what I'm holding on to that belongs to God. What has He given me, to give back to Him through worship? Just the word “back” reminds me that God has already provided everything I have, all that I am belongs to Him.

As I fix my eyes on the arrival of Easter, I remember what God gave me, and continues to give to me, through the His sacrifice at the cross. A new hope, a new life. The forgiveness of sins and the assurance of salvation. In light of this, what I have to offer in return seems small. And so, I draw comfort from the later verses of chapter 12, where we see Jesus honour a widow giving her all. Am I giving all I can, or am I holding back?

Tuesday 26th March

Read: Mark 13:1-37 | Reflection by Steve McLeister

In our house the jury's out as to whether Ocean's 11 is the best heist movie ever but as a good heist should, it sets things up to appear the action is happening in one place when in fact the real action is happening elsewhere. You need to have your wits about you to work out what is really happening; you need to be on your guard and keep watch: The message of Mark 13 where all the drama seems to be in one place - magnificent buildings; wars and rumours of war; nations rising against nation; earthquakes; big personalities attempting to take centre stage. But in fact, we are told to guard ourselves against being overly alarmed by world-shattering events (v7,8); and guard ourselves against such imposter messiahs (v22). We watch and guard ourselves against being duped, looking instead towards Jesus.

Central to a heist movie is who has the upper hand. In Mark 13 Jesus is revealed to be the one who has been in control all along. If we keep on our guard and keep watch to the end (v13) we not only get to see the great reveal with Jesus as the ultimate winner (v26), but we also get to be a part of this new reality (v27) starting now by doing what he's asked us to do (v34).

Unlike a heist movie, Jesus didn't come to steal anything, he came to put everything back the way it should be so at last Jesus' kingdom of love will be all there will be.

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Wednesday 27th March

Read: Mark 14:1-31 | *Reflection by Sam Rae*

This is not a moment of scripture we can behold truthfully at pace.

The spirit of pharisaical self-interest is our temptation, the enemy's weapon of choice. Blinding us to the Beauty of Jesus.

Suffocating our deep-seated soul from The Way, The Truth, The Life himself.

Like Mary, we too breathe in a cultural air of divided motives. Hollow words and fractured hearts. Oh, the burden is heavy. The claustrophobic lack of clarity. Disorientated by clouds of confusion as I seek to find life on my own. The compass spinning. My head and heart, spinning.

Indeed, this is how Jesus first found Mary.

The outlines of YAHWEH glimmering through the hazy tears of lostness as God in flesh grieves with. Then resurrects our death.

Where breakthrough isn't a cold aesthetic rather,
Hope himself reclines with us.

Everything is different now.

Who is this God who raises the absolute raging fury of hell itself into abundant lush life? Who is this heavenly king who fights, through cross and nail, to redeem our lost battles into victories? Who is this gracious Father who runs to us while we are a long, long way from home. And all so freely? All so intimately? All so lovingly? What kind of thank you could we ever bring to such a person? What kind of offering could we ever bring to such a God?

May we be ones who break the bottle.

Bringing what I can. Alongside Mary. Alongside you. Alongside our families. Alongside our friends. Alongside our nation. Alongside, one day, all creation.

I will break the bottle.

Pour it out.

Leave nothing behind.

Everything,

at the feet of Jesus.

Thursday 28th March

Read: Mark 14:32-15:15 | *Reflection by Erin Walker*

During his most painful time of suffering, Jesus takes Himself away from the crowds and the busyness of life, and says before God, 'My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death.' Showing extreme vulnerability and honesty, Jesus doesn't hide away from hard emotions, but admits them, and involves God through prayer.

He goes on to say in verse 36 that everything is possible for God, and so 'take this cup of suffering away from me.' Jesus doesn't waste time with acting or false pretense but continues to be honest before God, asking Him to take away His pain, making His requests clearly known to God.

And yet, he ends with 'Yet I want your will to be done not mine'. Despite the pain He's going through and His desire for it to end, Jesus knows that the Father has a purpose in this and knows best.

Therefore, we should use how Jesus prayed to help us pray. With honesty, vulnerability, requests, but also an awareness that He is working with whatever is going on in our lives. So, as we continue through today and pray, we can think of Jesus and His way of praying to help connect with God and involve Him in our lives -even when things get tough- and trust Him.

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Friday 29th March: Good Friday

Read: Mark 15:16-41 | Reflection by George Hazel

Every Good Friday I feel a mixture of emotions. I feel sadness and guilt at what it cost to secure Grace and restore my relationship with Father God. I feel wonder at God's plan of Grace from before time to this moment. I feel thankfulness that God loves and values me enough to send His Son to secure my salvation and I am now His adopted son. As Jesus approached His death, I imagine the universe and the heavens holding its breath. As Jesus cried out to His Father, the world went dark, and the reality of the enormous cost was felt.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son..."

As I ponder these thoughts and emotions, I think of Revelation 1:18 – "I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." In the beginning we disobeyed God and lost that relationship. Symbolically, we lost the keys to the Garden of Eden and death entered our lives. But this verse declares that through the cross and Christ's death, He holds the keys of death and Hades. Our relationship with the Father has been restored through the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God. Death is not the end. Jesus rose on Easter Sunday and is alive for ever and ever. Death and sin were conquered on Good Friday!

Saturday 30th March: Silent Saturday

Read: Mark 15:42-47 | Reflection by Penni Brown

The very little that we know about Joseph of Arimathea is nonetheless significant. Mentioned in all four gospels we can glean the following composite picture of this man. He was a rich and influential man, a Pharisee who was friends with Nicodemus. He was part of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Council), he was a secret believer or disciple of Jesus. It was risky and took guts for him to approach Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. Jesus' death must have affected him in a big way because he then chose to come forward and risk everything at this seemingly late stage in the story. Joseph's act of devotion can read like a grand gesture but perhaps he felt bitterly that his actions were, "too little, too late".

There are many secret believers in the world today, (e.g. Muslim background believers in [Egypt](#)). Are we, or people we know harbouring a secret faith in Jesus that we haven't dared go public with yet. Don't write yourself, or anyone else, off. God's disciples are in unexpected places. Be ready for surprises! Let's pray that God emboldens each one of us to seize opportunities which express our devotion and to act in obedience to his promptings. Joseph could have believed that he was too late, but he was right on time and by following God's lead, his act of devotion fulfilled the prophecy and provided the backdrop (an empty tomb) for the greatest event in history, the resurrection of Christ!

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Sunday 31st March: Easter Sunday

Read: Mark 16:1-9 | Reflection by Claire Wilson

Salome

You appear as just a name,
hidden between others with more important qualifiers.
Your back story is left open to conjecture
with some recalling only the dancing girl
exploited for pleasure
as well as execution.

Some have you as wife of Zebedee
and mother of the Sons of Thunder;
a woman who followed
and cared for Jesus' needs
yet bold enough to ask
a special place for your boys.

Others paint you as midwife on an icon,
easing Jesus into this world,
standing as witness at his death
and, as myrrh bearer, into the next.

Would we be content to find
the details of our stories
misrepresented,
misinterpreted,
open to conjecture?

For all our focus on our own lives,
our choices, our loved ones,
let's lift our eyes
with this witness to the resurrection.
Let's understand
that it is not all about us
but about salvation and redemption,
about who God is,
and how we are connected
to the unfolding of God's story.

Alleluia! He is risen!
To Him be all the glory!