



MEADOWVIEW
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Holy Week Devotional 2020



**Remembering the Cross of Christ
Celebrating the Resurrection of Christ
Living in the Grace of Christ**

*Devotionals written and compiled by Rev. Dr. G. Michael Saunders, Sr.
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Saturday Before Palm Sunday -- April 4, 2020

Saturday, Nisan 9

Moses gave the Law of God regarding the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:15). The cleaning of all leaven from the house was required. Only eating of unleavened bread was permitted. Historically on Friday, Jesus arrived in Bethany and stayed at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus and on this day Mary anointed Jesus for burial despite Judas protests (John 12:1-8).

Historical

From the beginning God told the Jewish people to clean all the leaven (yeast) out of their homes in preparation for the Passover. This is in remembrance of their leaving Egypt without any leaven. Over the centuries leaven came to represent sin just as Passover came to represent salvation. So six days before Passover, the people of Israel cleaned out their homes of anything that had leaven in it. They were symbolically casting out the sin in their lives in order to be prepared for Passover.

Exodus 12:15 - Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

I Corinthians 5:7-8 - Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before Passover and stayed with His cousins, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Mary anointed Jesus for His burial with a pound of very expensive Spiknard ointment, was fussed at by Judas for wasting such a valuable item that should have been given to the poor and was then defended by Jesus.

John tells us that Judas did not care about the poor but wanted the money for himself. Jesus knew that she was preparing Him for His burial and told Judas to leave her alone.

Suddenly people from Jerusalem began to come to Bethany (just over the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem). They were coming to see Lazarus because Jesus had raised him from the dead. They wanted to see if it was real and hear what he had to say. As a result many people returned to Jerusalem believing in Jesus and declaring Him to be the Messiah. Immediately, the religious leaders began planning to kill Lazarus so that he could not testify about Jesus any more. They probably would have succeeded except for what Jesus did the next day.

John 12:1-8

(1) Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. (2) So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. (3) Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (4) But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, (5) “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?” (6) Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. (7) Therefore Jesus said, “Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. (8) For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.”

Devotional

Jesus began the final part of creating salvation for us on this day so many years ago. He knew that He was coming to Jerusalem to suffer and die to create salvation for all who would believe in Him. As we think about this first day of the end of His ministry, let us rejoice that this is also the first day of the beginning of the sacrifice for our salvation. But even more than that, let us rejoice that today our salvation is completed and accomplished, that our Savior Jesus is alive and at the right hand of God the Father Almighty! That as we celebrate the Resurrection this year we are looking forward to the glorious Second Coming of our Lord!

Holy Week Hymn - And Can It Be

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain — for me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? Amazing love! How can
it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father's throne above so free, so infinite His grace—
Emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free, for O my God, it found out me!
Amazing love! How can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th' eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own.
Amazing love! How can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Lyrics by Charles Wesley, 1738

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, we praise You and thank You for this journey to Bethany,
Jerusalem and the cross that You willing made for us.
Thank You that, even though You knew this was about Your death,
You came to Bethany anyway because You loved us.
We thank You dear Lord, for the forgiveness of our sins
and for our perfect relationship with our Heavenly Father
through Your great work during this last week
before Your death and resurrection. We love You Lord,
Amen.

Benediction

Christ is Risen: The world below lies desolate
Christ is Risen: The spirits of evil are fallen
Christ is Risen: The angels of God are rejoicing
Christ is Risen: The tombs of the dead are empty
Christ is Risen indeed from the dead, the first of the sleepers, Glory
and power are His forever and ever!
St. Hippolytus (AD 190-236)



Palm Sunday of Holy Week – April 5, 2020 **Sunday, Nisan 10**

In Exodus 12:3 the congregation of Israel is clearly taught that on this the day the people bring their lambs for Passover to the temple to be approved by the Priests.

Also, on this day in history Jesus rode into Jerusalem on his *Triumphal Entry* ending at the Temple (John 12; Luke 19; Mark 11; Matthew 21).

Exodus 12:3-5 - (3) *Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household. (4) Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. (5) Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.*

Zechariah 9:9 - *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is [a]just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Matthew 21:1-11 - (1) *When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, (2) saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. (3) If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.” (4) This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: (5) “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold your King is coming to you, Gentle, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’” (6) The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, (7) and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats. (8) Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. (9) The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!” (10) When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, “Who is this?” (11) And the crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.”*

Mark 11:11 - *Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.*

Luke 19:37-44 - (37) *As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles*

which they had seen, (38) shouting: "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 Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." (40) But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!" (41) When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, (42) saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. (43) For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, (44) and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

John 12:12-15 - (12) *On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, (13) took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." (14) Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, (15) "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."*

Historical

On this day, 5 days before Passover, all the people brought the lamb that they were going to sacrifice for Passover to the Temple or local synagogue to be examined by the Priests and be declared blemish free and acceptable. Then the people took the lamb home and took care of it for four days. The point is that they are supposed to have some attachment to the lamb by the time it is sacrificed. The reason is because we are not supposed to give to God something that cost us nothing.

Approximately 50% of everything we read in the four Gospels takes place the last week of Jesus life before the crucifixion in locations around the Temple courts and on the Mount of Olives. On this Sunday Jesus is doing more than just riding into Jerusalem to the cheers of all the people. He is fulfilling all that must be accomplished for our salvation.

Accordingly, Jesus is presenting Himself to the people and the Priests as the unblemished Lamb of God and the Passover sacrifice for salvation. He is presenting Himself as the fulfillment of everything Passover stood for. Just as Passover was freedom from slavery in Egypt, so Jesus would be freedom from sin and hell.

Over the next four days, Jesus was "examined" by the Chief Priests, Teachers of the Law, Elders, Pharisees, Sadducees, and even Herodians, as He taught, preached, and did miracles, etc. They could not find fault with Him but would not accept Him as the Lamb of God and so, called on false witnesses in order to get Him arrested and convicted.

Devotional

Jesus, the perfect and unblemished Lamb of God is our substitute. He has no sin of His own but all our sins were put on Him. We have no righteousness of our own but all His righteousness is put on us. He rides into Jerusalem as the suffering servant, to be the sacrifice and final solution for all our sin problems. One day He will come again as the King of Glory to transform all of

creation - including us - into the perfect image of God to spend eternity in His presence. May the Lord Jesus always be triumphant in our hearts and glorious in our lives.

Palm Sunday Hymn - Hosanna, Loud Hosanna

Hosanna, loud hosanna the little children sang;
Through pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang.
To Jesus, who had blessed them, close folded to his breast,
The children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

From Olivet they followed mid an exultant crowd,
The victory palm branch waving, and chanting clear and loud.
The Lord of earth and heaven rode on in lowly state,
Nor scorned that little children should on his bidding wait.

"Hosanna in the highest!" that ancient song we sing,
For Christ is our Redeemer, the Lord of heaven, our King.
O may we ever praise him with heart and life and voice,
And in his blissful presence eternally rejoice!

Lyrics by Jennette Threlfall, 1873

Prayer

Almighty God,
Who through Your only begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death
And opened to us the gate of everlasting life:
Grant that we, who celebrate with joy
The day of the Lord's resurrection,
May be raised from the death of sin by Your life giving Spirit;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever.
Amen.

From the Book of Common Prayer, © 1979

Benediction

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
In His great mercy He has given us a new birth
To a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
And to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.
It is reserved in heaven for you, who because of your faith in Christ
Are being preserved by His power until the salvation
That is ready to be revealed at the end of time.
From New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book



Holy Monday of Holy Week – April 6, 2020 Monday, Nisan 11

On this day in history Jesus Cleared the Temple of money- changers. Also, Jesus performed many healings at the Temple. According to Exodus 12 the congregation of Israel had to care for their lambs to be slain and eaten at Passover in their homes.

Historical

On this day Jesus comes from Bethany to the Temple and there he overturns the tables of the money changers and whips them and says *“It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.”*

It was actually not a bad thing for the money-changers and animal sellers to be there. The Jewish people lived all over the Roman Empire, which means they had all different kinds of currency. However, all tithes, offerings and Temple taxes had to be paid with only one kind of currency. So the money-changers would change your currency into Temple currency. This was not wrong, in fact it was helpful. It was even ok for them to charge a fee for this service so they could make a living. Additionally, travelers from far away would not have the proper animals for sacrifice with them. So there were merchants there who would sell you the proper animal according to the sacrifice you wanted to make. Again, this was not a problem spiritually.

The problem was that over the centuries this system had become corrupt. Under the Romans the High Priest was appointed and controlled by Rome. Rome wanted more money and this was a way to get it. So essentially the Priesthood had become corrupt. They were taking part of the profits of the merchants so the merchants charged more. Before long the money-changers and merchants were charging such exorbitant fees that the average person could no longer afford to change their money or buy their sacrifices. To make matters worse, all this commerce was supposed to take place outside the Temple Courts but they had all moved inside the Temple courts. The system had become fully corrupted and Jesus exposed them publicly.

The Priests were very angry and embarrassed by this disclosure of their corruption of the Temple. They hated Jesus even more than ever and plotted to accelerate their execution of Him.

Matthew 21:12-17 - (12) *And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. (13) And He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a robbers’ den.” (14) And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. (15) But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, “Hosanna*

to the Son of David,” they became indignant (16) and said to Him, “Do You hear what these children are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself ’?” (17) And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

Mark 11:15-26 - (15) Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who were selling doves; (16) and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. (17) And He began to teach and say to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a robbers’ den.” (18) The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching. (19) When evening came, they would go out of the city.

Luke 19:45-48 - (45) Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, (46) saying to them, “It is written, ‘And My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a robbers’ den.” (47) And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him, (48) and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said.

Devotional

If we are honest we have to admit that there are teachings in the Scriptures that we do not like just like the priests in the Temple. Teachings that confront our sins, teachings that we do not want to follow, solutions to problems that we do not want to use and more. The religious leaders despised Jesus teachings and plotted to kill Him. When we refuse to follow the teachings of Scripture we “kill” the conviction of the Holy Spirit on our conscience. This always hurts us and our lives are never as wonderful, successful or happy as they can be by living according to the Scriptures. Jesus perfect obedience and refusal to compromise took Him to the cross for us. May we respond with confession, repentance and obedience to the teachings of the Lord and the leading of His Holy Spirit.

Holy Week Hymn - I Am Thine, O Lord

I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, and it told Thy love to me;
But I long to rise in the arms of faith and be closer drawn to Thee.

Refrain:

*Draw me nearer, nearer blessed Lord, to the cross where Thou hast died. Draw me nearer,
nearer, nearer blessed Lord, to Thy precious, bleeding side.*

Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord, by the power of grace divine;
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope, and my will be lost in Thine.

Refrain

O the pure delight of a single hour that before Thy throne I spend, When I kneel in prayer, and
with Thee, my God I commune as friend with friend!

Refrain:

There are depths of love that I cannot know till I cross the narrow sea;
There are heights of joy that I may not reach till I rest in peace with Thee.

Refrain:

Lyrics by Fanny Crosby, 1875!

Prayer

We bless You, O God, as the God of our redemption, for You have so loved us as to give even Your dear Son for us. He gave Himself, His very life for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and separate us unto Himself to be His peculiar people, zealous for good works.

Never can we sufficiently adore free grace and undying love. The wonders of Calvary never cease to be wonders, they are growing more marvelous in our esteem as we think of Him who washed us from our sins in His own blood. Nor can we cease to praise the God of our regeneration who found us dead and made us live, found us at enmity and reconciled us, found us loving the things of this world and lifted us out of the muck and mire of selfishness and worldliness in the love of divine everlasting things. *Charles H. Spurgeon*

Benediction

The Savior is coming! He is on the way to you, to me, to us all, in all circumstances of our lives. Even when things are as they were in Noah's time, even if the whole world apparently is concerned with nothing but earthly things... we should not give up. We must be a living presence at all times. Our faith must be alive – a light of hope, a light in the midst of an indifferent world. It must be a light even in the midst of all the wonders of this world. We expect greater things than new technologies and inventions.

We expect the overcoming of the powers of evil, of all the sin that still prevails. We expect the victory over all the misery that binds so many people, over all the evil and hostile powers that seek to torment us. This is our expectation. And this certainly will far surpass any apparent triumphs that the world flaunts through the work of its own hands.

In this expectation we will not become weary. In all our activities, we must live in Jesus Christ's future. *Christoph Blumhart (1842-1919)*



Holy Tuesday of Holy Week – April 7, 2020

Tuesday, Nisan 12

On this first month in the Jewish calendar, the month in which the Passover is observed the lambs to be slain for the Passover are selected and prepared. The houses are cleansed of leaven again. Jesus disputes with the Priests in Matthew 12-25 and He also taught on the Mount of Olives on this day. The Priests plot to arrest and have Him executed and they convince Judas to betray Him.

Historical

On this day Passover preparations continue. The families are caring for the lambs and the adults are cleaning the house of leaven again. The people are quite excited and happy about the coming festival.

In Matthew 12-25 we are told that Jesus spent time debating with the Priests in the Temple. Jesus taught the people to do what the Priests teach because they teach the Scriptures, but do not do what the Priests do because they do not live the Scriptures. Jesus taught that we have only one master - the Messiah. All of us therefore are equal brothers and sisters in the eyes of God. We have only one Father in Heaven. None of us are greater than any other one of us.

Then Jesus gives a sermon attack against the Priests. He condemns them for obeying the letter of the law but without mercy, grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation to God. He condemns them for their outward show of religious faith but no faith in their hearts. He condemns them for killing the prophets and others that God sent to them with His words and instructions.

Then Jesus left the Temple to go to the Mount of Olives. As He was leaving the disciples showed Him the beautiful Temple and wanted to discuss its glory. But Jesus said that there would not be one stone left on another of this Temple. This statement came true in AD 70 when the Romans destroyed the Temple and literally tore it down to the ground leaving no stone on top of another.

Arriving at the Mount of Olives the disciples asked Jesus when the end of the world would come. Jesus began to teach them about the last days - what the signs would be, the false Messiahs that would arise and more. He taught them about His second coming and how they needed to be prepared for it. How the world would be eating, drinking and making merry and be unprepared for His return. Then He exhorted the disciples to make sure they were ready and prepared for the return of the Messiah. Jesus continued to teach them about the second coming with parables such as the 10 Virgins and more. He also taught them about the last judgment and the separation of the sheep and the goats - the faithful and the unfaithful.

Exodus 12:3,6 - Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers household, a lamb for each household. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.

Devotional

Now because all these teachings are in the scriptures, we must realize that they are for us today as well since God's word never changes. May we spend this season of the year casting away legalism and hypocrisy. May we love one another truly, sincerely and faithfully putting all others above ourselves. May we pray to have spiritual lives that are the same outside and inside. That is, may the love of God in our hearts be transparent and visible to all outwardly as well. And may we prepare our hearts and be ready for the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Messiah.

Holy Week Hymn - There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.
Be saved, to sin no more, be saved, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.

Lyrics by William Cowper, 1772

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as you shine on us by your word, we may not be blind at midnight, nor willfully seek darkness, and thus lull our minds asleep.

But may we be roused daily by your words, and may we stir up ourselves more and more to fear your name and thus present ourselves and all our pursuits, as a sacrifice to you, that you may peaceably rule, and perpetually dwell in us, until you gather us to your kingdom, where there is reserved for us eternal rest and glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *by John Calvin*



Holy Wednesday of Holy Week -- April 8, 2020

Wednesday, Nisan 13

Nisan 13 is the day on which the *Fast of the First Born Sons* is observed to remember those who were spared by the blood of the lamb in Egypt. This was a tradition created by the Rabbis. So on this day Jesus rested and fasted thus fulfilling the tradition of the Rabbis.

One day before Passover the house is cleansed of leaven by candlelight just after nightfall. On this day all the people bring their lambs to the temple where they are killed. Then the families take the lambs home, roast them in their entirety, and eat them with *Matzah* (the unleavened bread) and bitter herbs. Jesus not only fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, but He also full filled all the traditions of the Rabbis and even fulfilled the religious superstitions of the people. In this way no one could honestly say He was not the Messiah because He had fulfilled everything!

Historical

The people are continuing their Passover preparations by caring for their lambs. One more time, after dark, by candlelight, the people clean the house of leaven and they will take whatever they find outside and burn it.

This day is frequently called “Silent Wednesday” because the Scriptures do not tell us anything that Jesus did on this day. In all probability He did not do anything. He did not go to the Temple and did not do any recorded teaching.

However this was also part of Jesus fulfilling all the law. This day was the day before Passover in which the people were to stay at home and rest and pray and prepare for Passover by remembering those who died in Egypt when Death passed over the land. The Jewish people are not allowed to rejoice over the death and suffering of their enemies. So this day is set aside to mourn for all the first-born of Egypt who died. However, it is also a time to remember all those first born who did not die. To give praise and worship to the Lord for those who were covered by the blood of the Lamb and who lived to walk out of Egypt to freedom.

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?” And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, *‘The Teacher says, “My time is near; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.”’*” *The disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.* Matthew 26:17-19

Devotional

There are many occasions to worship and reflect on the mighty acts of God that are not specifically commanded in the Scriptures. We should take advantage of these as much as we can. It's the worship of the Lord that keeps us refreshed in His service as well as aware of His leading. Here Jesus is participating in a feast of love. Loving sorrow over those who died and loving praise over those who lived. Both reveal the glory and power and will of God. The good and the bad, the sad and the happy all cause us to turn to our Heavenly Father in worship and praise.

Holy Week Hymn - When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

By Isaac Watts, 1707

Prayer

Almighty God, Who through the death of Thy Son hast destroyed sin and death, and through His resurrection hast restored innocence and eternal life that we, being delivered from the power of the devil, may live in Thy kingdom.

Grant that we may believe this with our whole heart and steadfast in this faith, ever praise and thank Thee, through Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grant, dear Lord God, that the blessed Day of Thy holy advent may come soon, so that we may be redeemed From this bad, wicked world (the devil's dominion) and freed from the terrible plague that we must suffer from without and within (from wicked people and our own conscience.)

Do Thou dispatch this old maggot sack That we may finally get a different body, which is not full of sin, Inclined to unchasteness and to everything evil (as this present one is) but one that is redeemed from all bodily and spiritual misery and made like unto Thy glorious body, dear Lord Jesus Christ, that we may at last come to our glorious redemption. *Amen. From Martin Luther's prayer on Easter Sunday, 1533*



The Feast of Passover
Maundy Thursday of Holy Week -- April 9, 2020
Thursday, Nisan 14

At twilight on this day in Bible times occurred the “Slaughter of the Lambs” for Passover. This is the night of the Passover Meal with Jesus and His disciples and it's the night when Jesus changed the Passover to the Lord’s Supper. After the supper, Jesus was betrayed, arrested and tried before Annas and Caiaphas.

Exodus 12:6 You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.

Exodus 12:13 The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

Mark 14:22-26 “While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take it; this is My body.’ And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, ‘This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

1 Peter 1:18 “...knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers...”

Isaiah 53:3 “He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Luke 3:2 In the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

John 18:13 “...and led Him to Annas first; for he was father- in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.”

Historical

At Mt. Sinai God gave the people lots of instructions about sacrifices. God commanded that every morning and evening of every day there should be a sacrifice of a lamb, some flour & oil (bread-like) and wine.

Here at the Last Supper the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, takes bread and wine to represent His body and blood and tells the disciples that He is the perfect and final sacrifice.

The next day Jesus is crucified at the time of the morning sacrifice and dies at the time of the evening sacrifice. In everything Jesus fulfills all the sacrifices and everything that the Passover symbolized. After all the Passover had always been about and pointed to the Messiah who would deliver us from the ultimate slavery to sin, death and hell!

It is from the Passover meal that we get the term Maundy Thursday. Maundy is short for the Latin word *Mundatum* which means mandate or commandment. Jesus says during the Passover “*A new command I give you; that you love one another!*”

After the supper Jesus and the disciples sang the Hallel, Psalm 118. They went out walked through the city, across the Kidron Valley, to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. There Jesus prayed and cried out to His Father “*Let this cup pass from me!*” or in other words “is there another way to accomplish salvation?” The Father sent an angel to comfort Him in this horrible time of fear and grief. I imagine the angel said something like this “Master, there is no plan B.” This was one of the Lord Jesus’ toughest moments because He knew that in order to secure our salvation, His own Father would have to turn away from Him. It was almost more than He could bear!

On this night Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. This was the price of a slave in the Roman Empire in that day. In today’s money this was about \$18.00. Jesus is betrayed, run all over Jerusalem from court to court, arrested, beaten, imprisoned, judged and condemned all illegally (see the *Broken Laws of the Trials of Jesus* page 20).

Devotional

It is my belief, based on the Scriptural account of Jesus death that the worst and most horrible thing that Jesus went through was when His own Father turned His back on Him because even though He was sinless He was covered in the blackness of my sins and yours. Though He was completely innocent, His beloved Father could not even look at Him and allowed Him to die a criminals death alone. Jesus could have stopped all this at any time and just let us be condemned for our sins. But He chose to go through with it and because He did we can have a perfect and eternal relationship with our Heavenly Father today. How is your relationship to your Heavenly Father today? What will you do to live in the perfect relationship with our Father that Jesus acquired for you? The Lord Jesus lost everything, so that you could have everything. Live in the glory of this eternal relationship today with total gratitude to our Lord Jesus for giving you the glories of heaven, which you do not deserve but are now yours.

Holy Week Hymn - Beneath The Cross of Jesus

Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand;
The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land;

A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat, and the burden of the day.

Upon that cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One Who suffered there for me;
And from my stricken heart with tears, two wonders I confess;
The wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain or loss,
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.

By Elizabeth Clephane

Prayer

Father, thank you for your endless mercies, measureless grace and steadfast love, all lavished on us in Jesus. Thank you for a most certain inheritance, kept in heaven for us - the legacy, heirloom and new-birthright of the life in the new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3:13). Everything broken will become unbroken, Every tear will be wiped away - no more death or mourning, only life and the perpetual new morning of a grace-full eternity.

Through the riches of this living hope, may we live and love to your glory; may we suffer and wait patiently by your grace; may we love and serve Jesus increasingly (1 Peter 1:8) and fret and fear less and less. So very Amen we pray, in Jesus' bold and beautiful name. *From Scotty Smith*

Benediction

My brothers and sisters, look for Jesus! Seek him as a treasure in this great wide world. Seek him in the eyes of your loved ones and in the eyes of strangers. May your heart burn within you as the Lord draws close to you this week.



The Broken Laws of the Trial of Jesus

1. There could only be a conviction for a capital crime when there were at least two witnesses. One witness alone was the same as no witness at all. In addition their testimony had to agree in *every* detail. The Priests and Sanhedrin acquired 2 false witnesses who gave differing testimonies. Jesus should have been acquitted and released. Mark 14:57-59
2. The accused had the right to employ counsel, or if unable, the court was required to provide it for him (precursor to the 6th amendment). Yet not only was no counsel provided – it was forbidden in Jesus case. Jesus should have been acquitted at this point
3. The accused could not be required to testify against Himself (5th amendment). And yet Caiaphas and Herod demanded that He speak in defense of Himself. He admitted to being the Son of God and was condemned on His own testimony. Not only was the demand unlawful – but...
4. ... Even a voluntary confession was not sufficient for a conviction under Jewish law. We have the Miranda Laws today so volunteer confessions can be admissible. But under Jewish law – they could not allow a personal confession to be used against the accused.
5. Circumstantial evidence was not admissible. Today most cases are decided on circumstantial evidence.
6. “Hearsay” evidence was inadmissible. Yet that was all the Jews had to offer Pilate.
7. The accused was presumed innocent until proven guilty. Jesus was presumed guilty and basically required to prove His innocence.
8. The accused in a capital case was required to be tried in daytime and in public. Much like our constitutional guarantee to a public trial. Jesus was tried at night and privately.
9. No evidence could be produced except when the accused was present. Today’s right of the accused to be confronted by his accusers. Jewish leaders hatched up charges before Jesus was even arrested.
10. Although witnesses were not administered an oath (they felt the 9th commandment was sufficient) - there were two strong deterrents to perjury. 1) the perjurer was subject to the death penalty. 2) Witnesses were required to attend the execution of the guilty.

11. Any members of the Sanhedrin with an interest or personal knowledge of the parties involved was required to disqualify themselves. Guilt or innocence was to be decided solely on the basis of evidence. The entire court should have recused itself and Jesus acquitted on lack of evidence.
12. The Sanhedrin acted as judge and jury. They were required by Rabbinical Law to protect and defend the accused. The trial procedure was to be as follows:
 - a. Following the preliminary trial, a summary of the evidence was given by one of the judges.
 - b. Spectators were removed.
 - c. Judges cast their votes. They went from youngest to oldest, so the young were not influenced by the elders.
 - d. If the majority voted to acquit, the trial was over, and the accused was set free.
 - e. If guilty – a different procedure was followed. The court adjourned for a full day. They were to spend the time deliberating on their vote and the evidence. They reconvened 24 hours later to revote. Any who had voted to acquit could not vote. Those voting guilty could change their vote. None of this was done for Jesus. So there should have been a mistrial.
13. There was another peculiar provision of the law of great importance. A unanimous vote of guilty resulted in the automatic acquittal of the defendant. This is because some Members of the court were to act as the accused's defendant and protector. They had to vote for an acquittal. A Unanimous vote of guilty showed that this had not happened. This meant a conspiracy so the verdict was invalid and acquittal was automatic. Mark 16:64 says, "they all condemned Him to be guilty of death". He should have been set free.
14. It was against their law to arrest a suspect at night. It was also illegal for an arrest to be made through the efforts of a conspirator – which Judas was. His arrest was not the result of a legal mandate in violation of the Mosaic code.
15. The first step of His trial should have been the reading of the charges against Him in open court. This was not done.
16. The trial before Pilate was also an act of great illegality. When the Sanhedrin brought Jesus to Pilate he correctly asked, "What crime is He charged with?" This was exactly the question that an impartial judge should ask and showed Pilate intended to fulfill that office. But the Sanhedrin said "If He were not guilty we would not have brought Him to you." They did not answer Pilate's question. They only wanted Pilate to rubber-stamp their decision.

17. It was against the law to change the charges during the trial. But they knew they needed Pilate for the death penalty and they would settle for nothing else. They know if they admitted the charge was blasphemy against their God, Pilate would discover the whole affair. So right in the midst of the trial they changed the charge and accusation. They told Pilate that Jesus was claiming to be the King of the Jews. This was treason (not blasphemy).

Pilate interviewed Jesus and declared Him not guilty. So far, Pilate has followed the law and done the right thing. He was acting as an impartial judge. So the priests change the charge again! They said “He stirs up the people from Galilee (to the north) to Jerusalem (in the south). Now the charge becomes sedition and insurrection. This is more serious than treason. It also required a corrupt motive to convict. But no evil motive could be found in Jesus.

18. At the mention of Galilee, Pilate sees a way out of his dilemma. The Tetrarch of Galilee, Herod Antipas, is in Jerusalem for Passover. Herod had jurisdiction to try the charge of sedition. So Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. Jesus refused to answer Herod’s questions, which was His legal right. Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate without rendering a decision. In our terminology, he threw the case out of court. Jesus should have been released and the trial over with.

19. Pilate again proclaims Jesus to be innocent, but offers to have Him scourged to placate these vengeful Jewish leaders. Here Pilate makes his first mistake. If Jesus were innocent, he had no legal right to have Him beaten. Even Roman law prohibited it. However, once the judgment was carried out, the punishment was complete. Any further punishment would be double jeopardy; prohibited by Roman law and by Jewish law.

But they still insist on His crucifixion. Pilate asked Jesus “who are you?” Jesus refused to answer. Pilate says “I have the power to set you free or execute you.” Jesus replies, “You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from heaven.”

Again Pilate tries to release Jesus. The Jews respond, “If you do you are no friend of Caesars’.” Under the threat of having Caesar find out Pilate could not maintain peace in Judea, he finally relented and gave the order for Jesus’ crucifixion.

There have been many injustices committed in the history of man. The holocaust ranks near the top. But none comes close to this one. Two of the most enlightened systems of law – Rome and Israel – were prostituted to destroy the most innocent man who ever lived. Psalm 76:10 “*Surely the wrath of man shall praise you.*”



Good Friday of Holy Week -- April 10, 2020 Nisan Good Friday, Nisan 15

On this day Jesus was tried before Sanhedrin, Pilate & Herod. He is returned to Pilate, and finally sentenced and scourged. Jesus was led to Calvary and there suffered a Roman crucifixion. Jesus died after suffering about six hours. His body is requested by Joseph of Arimathea, and hurriedly laid in a tomb.

Historical

When we read the below the Old Testament scriptural passages we see everything that the Gospels tell us that Jesus went through, in detail, centuries after these passages were written. There can be no doubt that these words were written about Jesus - even the very words He said on the cross. Jesus was scourged and crucified (his hands and feet were pierced, you could see his bones from the scourging, people came to watch and the soldiers cast lots for His clothing). The Lord did not defend Himself when He stood before those who were judging Him (He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth).

Jesus was executed on the cross (*He was cut off out of the land of the living*), He was executed with criminals (*He was numbered with the transgressors; His grave was assigned with wicked men*), and He was buried in a rich man's tomb (*He was with a rich man in His death*). Jesus told one criminal that he would be saved that very day (*interceded for the transgressors*).

Psalm 22:1 - *My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.*

Psalm 22:16-18 - *For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*

Isaiah 53:4-12 (4) *Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. (5) But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. (6) All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. (7) He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. (8) By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? (9) His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His*

death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. (10) But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. (11) As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.

Devotional

The most significant part of the prophecy in Isaiah and the most poignant part of what Jesus did on the cross is when we read that “He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering...He will bear their iniquities...He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors...He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.” All that Jesus went through He did not deserve. He did it for us – just because He chose too. No one made Him do it. As Jesus Himself said “No man takes my life from me. I lay it down!” Jesus willing went to the cross for you and me. Praise Him!

Also important is the fact that the very second Jesus died on the cross the Veil in the Temple separating us from God the Father was torn from the top to the bottom. That veil was 30 feet high, 90 feet long, 4 inches thick of tightly woven linen which could not be ripped by two teams of oxen pulling in opposite directions. On the day it was installed in the Temple it took 300 priests to hang it. At Jesus death something happened that no human could've ever done - the veil of separation between man and God was instantly removed and was torn from top to bottom and all those who know Jesus as their Savior can now walk directly into the very presence of our Holy, Righteous, Heavenly Father because Jesus death has removed our sins as though they had never existed and the Father NEVER sees any sin in us!

Oh praise the Lord Jesus for His insurmountable gift of love, forgiveness, mercy and grace! How we love you dear Lord Jesus! Thank You, thank You, thank You!

Good Friday Hymn - What Wondrous Love Is This?

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing.
To God and to the Lamb, Who is the great “I Am”;

While millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be;

And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;

And through eternity, I'll sing on.

Attributed to Alexander Means

Prayer

Jesus, your death is the death of death, and your resurrection is the resurrection of all things. O the wonder, the glory, the grace of it all! By your compelling love, free us from the emptiness of living for ourselves. Bring your resurrection power to bear in our homes, churches and communities. Capture our children early and re-capture our hearts when they drift. May the rest of our days be spent for your glory and financed by your gospel. (2 Cor. 5:14-15). So very Amen, we pray, shout and dance, in your most glorious and worthy name! - *Scotty Smith*

Benediction

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so; For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow, Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me. From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be, Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow, And soonest our best men with thee do go, rest of their bones, and soul's delivery. Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men, And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell; And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then? One short sleep past, we wake eternally, and death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.
- *By John Donne*



Holy Saturday of Holy Week -- April 11, 2020

Saturday, Nisan 16

Following his crucifixion Jesus' body remained in the tomb. Jesus defeated the *Gates of Hell* and sets the elect spiritual captives free. Jesus goes to the Heavenly Sanctuary, and puts His own Blood on the *Heavenly Mercy Seat*. This finalizes our salvation forever.

Hebrews 8:1,2 - "*...we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.*"

Hebrews 9:11-14 - *(11) But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; (12) and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (13) For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, (14) how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Hebrews 9:24, 26-28 - *(24) For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself... (26) He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (27) And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, (28) so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.*

Hebrews 10:10-14 - *(10) By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (11) Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; (12) but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, (13) waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. (14) For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*

Hebrews 10:19-23 - *(19) Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, (20) by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, (21) and since we have a great priest over the house of God, (22) let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (23) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful...*

Devotional

While His body was in the tomb our Lord went to the Heavenly Sanctuary (the Wilderness Tabernacle and the Temples were patterned after this Heavenly Sanctuary made by God and not man) and there He put His own blood on the mercy seat of the Heavenly Mercy Seat and removed all the sins of those who will believe in and follow Him. This sacrifice was accepted by the Heavenly Father. In fact, no sacrifice was ever need, wanted or accepted again by the Heavenly Father ever again. All other sacrifices were completely useless and unnecessary. Everything that was required for salvation to be accomplished and applied to the people of God had been fully completed. Nothing else was ever needed. Praise the Lord for this wonderful truth!!

Holy Week Hymn - Just As I Am

Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not,
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871)

Prayer

Almighty God, who through your only begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.
Book of Common Prayer, 1979

Benediction

Jesus, we wait here by your tomb carrying our grief;
The grief of the betrayer, the grief of the denier, the grief of the crucifiers.
We carry the grief of the lost, the heartbroken, the bereft.
Upon you was laid the grief of us all.
It is finished.
God of endings, God of darkness, God of the tomb,
God of dark days and great loss,
Be with us now as we wait with Jesus.



Easter Sunday -- April 12, 2020

Resurrection Day

The Lord is risen. The Lord has risen indeed; Hallelujah! With cries of joy all believers throughout the world join their voices to exclaim the Good News of our Risen Savior. The apparent sadness of His death has been transformed into the joyful hope of a Risen Conquering Savior!

Luke 24:1-12 - *(1) But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices, which they had prepared. (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, (3) but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. (4) While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; (5) and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? (6) He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, (7) saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." (8) And they remembered His words, (9) and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. (10) Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. (11) But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. 12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.*

Devotional

On that blessed Sunday morning as the sun was rising there was great singing and noise coming from the Temple - after all, it was the Feast of First Fruits and thousands were bringing their sacrifices into the Temple. At that very moment the Lord Jesus the Messiah burst forth from the Tomb and instantly the Kingdom of Heaven became a reality to all who believe. AND also in that very moment everything that was happening in the Temple became null and void. Why? Because with the resurrection of God's Son, no other sacrifice was ever needed, wanted or actable by God our Heavenly Father ever again. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was the very last sacrifice and accomplished everything necessary for our salvation. The resurrection was the visible sign of the Heavenly Father's acceptance of that sacrifice. No other sacrifice - ever again!

Now it was to faithful, dutiful, believing women that it was first announced that Jesus was risen. They came to the tomb, as soon the dawn broke the darkness. To their great surprise the heavy stone had already been rolled away – a burden they did not have to bear. Jesus' body was not in the tomb. Two angels appearing as men, yet dazzlingly clothed, spoke words of assurance, "*Why do you seek the Living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen.*" They were reminded of what Jesus had taught and promised, so they quickly went to tell the other disciples.

We too need to be reminded of what Jesus taught and the hope we have in a Risen Savior. We gather weekly on Sundays to rejoice in the resurrection life given to us by His Spirit. We come to celebrate His resurrection life offered to us by grace through faith. Let us come to the empty tomb, then quickly and joyfully tell others the Good News, *The Lord is risen. The Lord has risen indeed; Hallelujah!*

Easter Hymn - Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!
Suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
Unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
Sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

But the pains which he endured, Alleluia!
Our salvation have procured. Alleluia!
Now above the sky he's King, Alleluia!
Where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
Praise eternal as God's love. Alleluia!
Praise our God, ye heavenly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

*Anonymous Latin Hymn, 14th Century. Translated by J. M. Neale Stanza 4
by Charles Wesley, 1740*

Prayer

O God,
who through the mighty resurrection from the dead of Thy Son, Jesus Christ;
Thou hast delivered us from the power of darkness
into the Kingdom of Thy Son;
Grant that that we may die to sin, and live to righteousness
by the power of Thy abiding Spirit; Raise us up with Christ to heavenly joys
that we might seek the things above,
Where Christ is seated far above all powers and principalities.
Grant that we might set our minds on things above;
For we have died with Christ and our life is hid with Christ in God.
Grant us perseverance in this life looking unto Jesus the author of our faith,
So that when Christ who is our life appears,
we also will appear with Him in glory. *Amen.*

Adapted from the *Book of Common Worship*, © 1946. p. 306
and *Colossians* 3:1-4.

Benediction

Go in peace and joy and hope;
And may God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit;
Be upon you, and remain with you, and preserve you
This day and forevermore.

Alleluia! Amen.

Adapted from the *Book of Common Worship*, © 1946. p. 350





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