

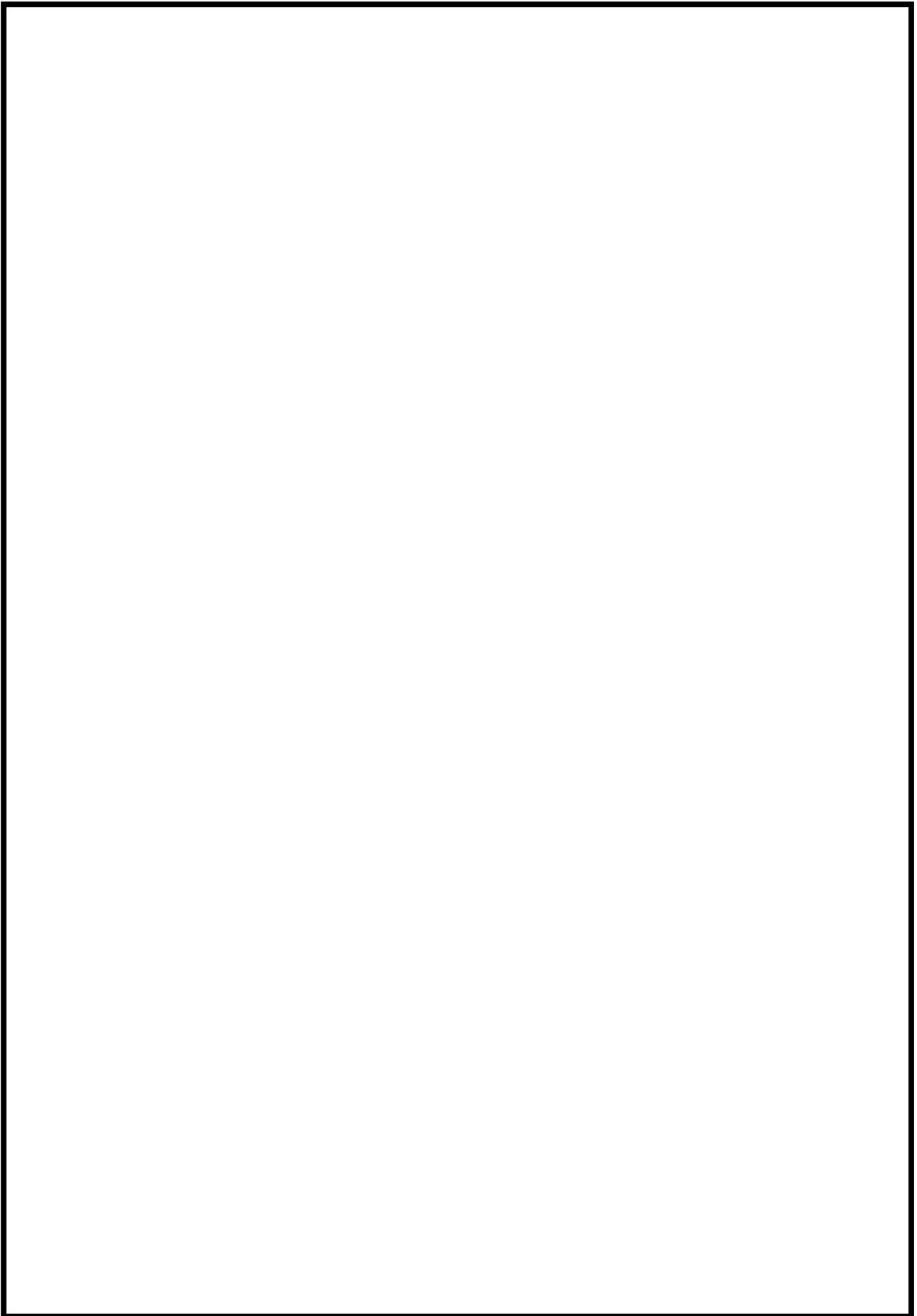
*Holy Week*

J O U R N E Y T O G R A C E

*Devotional*







# Sunday April 9

*Psalm 22:1-8*

*“God, my God!*

*Why would you abandon me now?*

*Why do you remain distant,*

*refusing to answer my tearful cries in the day*

*and my desperate cries for your help in the night?*

*I can't stop sobbing.*

*Where are you, my God?*

*Yet, I know that you are most holy; it's indisputable.*

*You are God Enthroned, surrounded with songs,*

*living among the shouts of praise of your princely people.*

*Our fathers' faith was in you –*

*through the generations they trusted and believed in you*

*and you came through.*

*Every time they cried out to you in their despair,*

*you were faithful to deliver them;*

*you didn't disappoint them.*

*But look at me now; I am like a woeful worm,*

*crushed, and I'm bleeding crimson.*

*I don't even look like a man anymore.*

*I've been abused, despised, and scorned by everyone!*

*Mocked by their jeers, despised with their sneers –*

*as all the people poke fun at me, spitting their insults.*

*Saying, “Is this the one who claims God is pleased with him?*

*Is this the one who claims God is pleased with him?*

*Now let's see if your God will come to your rescue!*

*We'll just see how much he delights in you!”*

## Where Are You , My God?

Perhaps you've asked such a question yourself: "My God, where are you?"

You lost your job and are staring down the barrel of a past-due mortgage payment, dental bills, tuition for your child, and next week's grocery list. You watch on the news as another natural disaster wipes a foreign village off the map. That pain in your back turns out to be much more than sore muscles.

And you wonder what this psalmist wondered: "God, where on earth are you?"

Did you know Jesus asked his heavenly Father the same question? "My God, My God," Jesus said from the cross, "why have you left me helpless?" (Matthew 27:46).

When Jesus quoted these words from Psalm 22 while hanging on those beams of execution, he was identifying himself not only as the One David wrote about in this psalm, but also with David himself – with all of us, really, who have felt abandoned and left helpless by God. It is a breathtaking portrayal of what Jesus endured through his suffering for us, his identification with us.

While it's not stated in the crucifixion narrative, I wonder if Jesus recited the rest of this psalm silently in his head? He would have learned it and perhaps memorized it as a boy – probably sung it, too, in the synagogue along with the rest of his people as a cry to Yahweh for help.

And now he's quoting it while hanging on the cross and looking out at those for whom he was suffering, bleeding, and dying.

It's striking how closely the description of the psalmist fits Jesus' own situation:

But look at me now; I am like a woeful worm,  
Crushed, and I'm bleeding crimson.

I don't even look like a man anymore.

I've been abused, despised, and scorned by everyone!

After the abuse, suffering, and trauma from the crucifixion, Jesus would have been unrecognizable – he wouldn't have even looked like a man anymore! The prophet Isaiah anticipated that the Anointed One would be "crushed for our sins," and it would be by those crimson-gushing wounds we would be healed. (See Isaiah 53.)

Isaiah also prophesied the Messiah would be "despised and rejected" by his people. To add insult to injury, Jesus had to endure the jeers and sneers of the crowd of Jewish onlookers who had come to Jerusalem for Passover, probably echoing the accusations of those who mocked the psalmist:

"Is this the one who trusted in God?  
Is this the one who claims God is pleased with him?  
Now let's see if your God will come to your rescue!  
We'll just see how much he delights in you!"

Imagine what was going through Jesus' mind as he hung listening to words very similar to these. Perhaps he chose to meditate on what else the psalmist declared in between these two stanzas:

Yet, I know that you are most holy; it's indisputable.  
You are God-Enthroned, surrounded with songs,  
Living among the shouts of praise of your princely people.  
Our father's faith was in you -  
Through the generations they trusted and believed in you  
And you came through.  
Every time they cried out to you in their despair,  
You were faithful to deliver them;  
You didn't disappoint them.

The author of Hebrews reminds us that Jesus "pleaded with God, praying with passion and with tearful agony that God would spare him from death" - prayers that perhaps you yourself have prayed. The writer goes on to say that because of Christ's "perfect devotion" - a devotion that extended even to the cross – "his prayer was answered and he was delivered" (Hebrews 5:7).

The next time you are suffering and feel abandoned by God, remember that Jesus did, too. And yet, he wasn't; neither are you!

God is still faithful, he still doesn't disappoint.

*Holy Week Prayer*

*Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

# Monday

## April 10

*John 12:23-26*

*He replied to them, "Now is the time for the Son of Man to be glorified. Let me make this clear: A single grain of wheat will never be more than a single grain of wheat unless it drops into the ground and dies. Because then it sprouts and produces a great harvest of wheat - all because one grain died.*

*The person who loves his life and pampers himself will miss true life! But the one who detaches his life from this world and abandons himself to me, will find true life and enjoy it forever! If you want to be my disciple, follow me and you will go where I am going. And if you truly follow me as my disciple, the Father will shower his favor upon your life.*

## Lose Your Life to Keep It

For the longest time, Burger King was known by “Have It Your Way.” Then in 2014 they ditched their forty-year-old slogan in favor of the more personal “Be Your Own Way.”

In news reports, a company representative for Burger King was quoted as saying that “[customers] can and should live how they want anytime. It’s OK to not be perfect . . . . Self-expression is most important and it’s our differences that make us individuals instead of robots.”

This updated corporate promise and attitude is similar to other well-known advertising slogans: Sprite’s “Obey Your Thirst” and Taco Bell’s “Live Más” - live more.

Notice a theme here? These taglines aren’t just corporate slogans; they’re our world’s slogans!

Whether through movies and TV shows, celebrities and artists, at every opportunity our culture urges us to love ourselves and advance our life at all costs. As modern people we believe that in order to truly live, we must hold onto our life by asserting our desires and interests, rights and agenda.

There is only one problem:

It’s not true!

Jesus makes this perfectly clear one day on his way to the cross. The time was growing near for him to suffer and die for the sins of the world. When he announced that the time was almost ripe for his glorification, he told a little parable to illustrate what he was about to do:

“A single grain of wheat,” Jesus said, “will never be more than a single grain of wheat unless it drops into the ground and dies. Because then it sprouts and produces a great harvest of wheat – all because one grain died.”

Makes sense, right? In order for farmers to reap a bountiful harvest of wheat, a single grain must be planted in the ground. Instead of living on in baked goods and around the world, the grain appears to suffer some sort of death.

Except Jesus says the exact opposite: The grain's "death" is actually the first step on its way toward life! It's only when the grain abandons itself to the ground that it can be fruitful.

In other words: death equals life!

Death equals life? Death *leads* to life? That's crazy talk! In our world, death equals death! Dying to self is thought of as a death, and holding onto ourselves is life. We think that we are actually losing something, that we are harming ourselves by denying ourselves.

But that's a lie! According to Jesus, in order to find life you must lose it; you must lose your life to keep it.

These slogans from Burger King, Sprite, and Taco Bell are diametrically opposed Jesus' way, which insists: "The person who loves his life and pampers himself will miss true life! But the one who detaches his life from this world and abandons himself to me will find true life and enjoy it forever!"

That's the point of Jesus' little parable about the grain. Death is exactly what's necessary for a fruitful life. And what looks like the grain's demise is actually the first step in an eventual bounty of life.

Same for Jesus: His resurrection – fruit came only after he suffered and died.

And the same is true for each of us. In order for us to find and experience true life - the kind of life that God offers us all - we must do the opposite of what our culture tells us to do.

So how would it look, right now, for you to detach your life from this world and abandon yourself to Christ alone?

*Holy Week Prayer*

*O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Help us to understand the glory of the cross of Christ, that we may gladly give our whole lives for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.*

# Tuesday

## April 11

*John 12:27-36*

*Even though I am torn within, and my soul is in turmoil, I will not ask the Father to rescue me from this hour of trial. For I have come to fulfill my purpose – to offer myself to God. So, Father, bring glory to your name!” Then suddenly a booming voice was heard from the sky, “I have glorified my name! And I will glorify it through you again!”*

*The audible voice of God startled the crowd standing nearby. Some thought it was only thunder, yet others said, “An angel just spoke to him!”*

*Then Jesus told them, “The voice you heard was not for my benefit, but for yours – to help you believe. From this moment on, everything in this world is about to change, for the ruler of this dark world will be overthrown. And I will do this when I am lifted up off the ground and when I draw the hearts of people to gather them to me.” he said this to indicate that he would die by being lifted up on the cross.*

*People from the crowd spoke up and said, “Die? How could the Anointed One die? The Word of God says that the Anointed One will live with us forever, but you just said that the Son of Man must be lifted up from the earth. And who is this Son of Man anyway?”*

*Jesus replied, “You will have the light shining with you for only a little while longer. While you still have me, walk in the light, so that the darkness doesn’t overtake you. For when you walk in the dark you have no idea where you’re going. So believe and cling to the light while I am with you, so that you will become children of light.” After saying this, Jesus then entered into the crowd and hid himself from them.*

## Father, Glorify Your Name!

Sometimes the suffering we experience in this life seems entirely pointless, purposeless, and random – like, what’s the point of such experiences?

From cancer to car wrecks, fires to foreclosures, depression to death itself, it seems preposterous to find a silver lining, some sort of reason for such hardship. In fact, some skeptics of Christianity have even wondered why Jesus had to suffer and die at all – accusing God of “divine child abuse.”

Remarkably, what Christ’s own experience with suffering shows us is that we, like him, can accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, being confident of the glory that will be revealed in and through them.

As we make our way to the cross during Holy Week through the gospel of John, we find Jesus praying to the Father in agony. Here, he is deeply depressed; he is “torn within” and his soul “is in turmoil.” Some of us can probably relate given our own experience with suffering.

Despite this agony, turmoil, and depression, however, Jesus is more resolved than ever to crawl up on those beams of execution as a sacrifice for your sins, my sins, and the sins of the entire world! Rather than praying for the remove of the cup, as he does in Gethsemane, Jesus prays, “Father, bring glory to your name!”

Because you see, that was the point of Christ’s own suffering and sacrifice.

It’s amazing when you think about it: by giving himself over in obedience to the Father’s plan to rescue us from our sins – even through suffering and death – the Son ultimately honored and exalted the Father! Perhaps another way of wording Christ’s prayer is this: “Father, may your Son be crucified!”

What a prayer to pray! In it we see Jesus' complete surrender and obedience to the will of his Father. Jesus is saying "May I suffer and experience the agony and turmoil of the cross, all for your fame, your honor – Your glory!"

In response, the Father told everyone around he had already been honored throughout Jesus' obedient life and ministry, yet his honor would reach greater heights through the cross: "Son, I have been honored and exalted throughout your life and ministry – and in a few days I will be so once more!"

And it was, precisely because Jesus was obedient to the Father's saving plan. As Jesus told the crowd: "Everything in this world is about to change" because of his suffering and death. The hour had dawned for two things to happen: both judgment and redemption. Judgment, "for the ruler of his dark world will be overthrown"; redemption, for Jesus would be "lifted off the ground" and he would "draw the hearts of people to gather them" to himself.

Not only did Jesus glorify the Father through obedience – he defeated Satan and saved humanity! So, you see, Jesus' sufferings weren't for nothing. Neither are ours.

When we experience hardship, is our impulse obedience? Is it to glorify and honor our heavenly Father's name in the midst of it?

Our suffering is never pointless, purposeless, and random. Paul reminds us that "every detail of our lives is continually woven together to fit into God's perfect plan of bringing what is good into our lives, for we are his lovers who have been invited to fulfill his designed purpose" (Romans 8:28). Ultimately, that purpose is the same purpose of Christ:

To bring God honor, to obey him, and glorify his name!

May we face suffering the same way Christ did: with unwavering obedience and honor of the One who weaves every detail of our lives together to bring us into our destiny!

*Holy Week Prayer*

*Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

# Wednesday

## April 12

*John 13:2-15, 34-35*

*Before their evening meal had begun, the accuser had already planted betrayal into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.*

*Now Jesus was fully aware that the Father had placed all things under his control, for he had come from God and was about to go back to be with him. So he got up from the meal and took off his outer robe, and took a towel and wrapped it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' dirty feet and dry them with his towel.*

*But when Jesus got to Simon Peter, he objected and said "I can't let you wash my dirty feet – you're my Lord!"*

*Jesus replied, "You don't understand yet the meaning of what I'm doing, but soon it will be clear to you."*

*Peter looked at Jesus and said, "You'll never wash my dirty feet – never!"*

*"But Peter, if you don't allow me to wash your feet," Jesus responded, "then you will not be able to share life with me."*

*So Peter the Rock said, "Lord, in that case, don't just wash my feet, wash my hands and my head too!"*

*Jesus said to him, "You are already clean. You've been washed completely and you just need your feet to be cleansed – but that can't be said of all of you." For Jesus knew which one was about to betray him, and that's why he told them that not all of them were clean.*

*After washing their feet, he put his robe on and returned to his place at the table. "Do you understand what I just did?" Jesus said. "You've called me your teacher and lord, and you're right, for that's who I am. So if I'm your teacher and lord and have just washed your dirty feet, then you should follow the example that I've set for you and wash one another's dirty feet. Now do for each other what I have just done for you.*

*"So I give you now a new commandment: Love each other just as much as I have loved you. For when you demonstrate the same love I have for you by loving one another, everyone will know that you're my true followers."*

## The Basin and the Towel

Today we celebrate Maundy Wednesday. No, not *Monday* Wednesday. Maundy. The name comes from the Old French word *mande*, which comes from the Latin *mandatum novum*, meaning “new commandment.” The day is associated with the new command Jesus gave his disciples shortly before the cross.

Here is the scene:

Jesus and the disciples have just sat down to enjoy what will be their final meal together. The disciples don't know it, but Jesus does. And he has something special in mind in order to teach an important lesson about how they are to live together – and also what's to come.

With his face set like flint toward the cross, and knowing who he was and what his mission was, he got up from the table, shed his clothes, wrapped a towel around his waist, stooped down, and started serving his disciples.

Wielding nothing more than a basin and a towel!

To fully understand what's going on here you need to understand something about the footwear of Jesus' day – or lack thereof. As you can imagine, they didn't have the same kind of fancy closed-toed shoes we have today. Back then they would have worn open-toed sandals, if anything at all. Over the course of the day they would have walked through lots of different things – dirt and dust, mud and stuff that looked like mud.

And all of that would have been caked on the feet of Jesus' disciples, in between their toes and underneath their toenails!

Yet here is Jesus, washing it off. With nothing more than a basin and a towel!

Now *that's* love!

Typically, this kind of task was left to either the housemaids or the woman of the house. The master or lord of the house, even men in general, would never have done such a thing. And yet, there is Jesus. Stooped down low, on the ground, with nothing on besides a large towel and armed with a bowl of water.

As you can imagine, the disciples are nearly choking on their meal once they see what Jesus is doing. Even Peter says, "Jesus, no way!"

So Jesus asks them, "Do you understand what I just did?" and then goes on to explain the significance of what just happened:

"You've called me your teacher and lord," he says, "and you're right, for that's who I am. So if I'm your teacher and lord and have just washed your dirty feet, then you should follow the example that I've set for you and wash one another's dirty feet. Now do for each other what I have just done for you" (John 13:13-15).

Jesus said the disciples would soon understand the full extent of what he was doing. He was loving his friends with two ordinary elements: a basin full of water and a silk towel. Later he would love them and the world with two extraordinary elements: his very own body and blood.

After Jesus washes his friends' feet, they resumed the meal. At one point Jesus reached over and grabbed a loaf of bread and cup of wine, offering them as symbols of the body he would break open and blood he would shed to wash them completely clean.

He also gave them a new command that would demonstrate to the world the love Christ had and would demonstrate for them: "Love each other just as much as I have loved you."

Why? Because when we love other as Jesus first loved us "everyone will know that you're my true followers," as he said.

The basin and the towel; the body and blood. Both remind us how we are to live with each other in this world – a life of self-sacrifice.

Just like Jesus.

*Holy Week Prayer*

*Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

# Thursday

## April 13

*John 19:17-30*

*Jesus carried his own cross out of the city to the place called "The Skull," which in Aramaic is Golgotha. And there they nailed him to the cross. He was crucified, along with two others, one on each side with Jesus in the middle. Pilate had them post a sign over the cross, which was written in three languages – Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. Many of the people of Jerusalem read the sign, for he was crucified near the city. The sign stated: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."*

*But the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "You must change the sign! Don't let it say, 'King of the Jews!'" Pilate responded, "What I have written will remain!"*

*Now when the soldiers crucified Jesus, they divided up his clothes into four shares, one for each of them. But his tunic was seamless, woven from the top to the bottom as a single garment. So the soldiers said to each other, "Don't tear it – let's throw dice to see who gets it!" The soldiers did all of this not knowing they fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among them and gambled for my garment."*

*Miriam, Jesus' mother, was standing next to his cross, along with Miriam's sister, Miriam the wife of Clopas, and Miriam Magdalene. So when Jesus looked down and saw the disciple he loved standing with her, he said, "Mother, look – John will be a son to you." Then he said, "John, look – she will be a mother to you!" From that day on, John accepted Mary into his home as one of his own family.*

*Jesus knew that his mission was accomplished, and to fulfill the Scripture, Jesus said: "I am thirsty."*

*A jar of sour wine was sitting nearby, so they soaked a sponge with it and put it on the stalk of hyssop and raised it to his lips. When he had sipped the sour wine, he said, "It is finished, my bride!" Then he bowed his head and surrendered his spirit to God.*

## It Is Finished!

We have arrived near the end of a forty-day Lenten march, and at the reason for that march in the first place: the suffering and sacrifice of Christ.

Because Lent is a season to consider and contemplate the gravity of what the cross entailed, I want to take you deep into this ancient practice to fully grasp what it was that Jesus experienced for the world – for you. The typical Christian painting depicting Christ's passion is a sanitary version of what really happened:

While crucifixion was widely practiced in the ancient world, it was the Romans who perfected the "art" of punishing someone by nailing or binding them to two beams placed at cross sections of each other, or simply a stake in the ground or tree.

This punishment was usually reserved for those who were a threat to the empire – for rebels and terrorists, for people Rome deemed "enemies of the stat." Often the empire would crucify people and groups of people along public roads and at the city gates. They wanted the maximum amount of people to see what would happen to *them* if they took on Rome.

Crucifixion was *the* worst death imaginable at the time. A famous Roman politician, Cicero, called it a "most cruel and disgusting penalty," given how sadistic and barbaric the practice had become under Roman rule.

It often began with torture: Before crucifying someone, Roman guards would flog their victims with a device that had a wooden handle with long strips of leather coming out at the top. Attached were pieces of metal and hooks that would tear at the flesh of victims. Destroying their backs. Ripping out their scalp or pieces of their face.

Jesus was flogged this way – and then beaten and spit upon and mocked.

Victims were typically forced to carry their own crossbeam of execution. Once they reached the crucifixion, Jesus was placed on those beams – naked. He was completely exposed, adding to the humiliation and shame.

Then spikes, similar to those you might find laying on railroad tracks, were pounded into both of Jesus' wrists and one through both feet.

And then he waited – for the moment when it would happen.

While he waited he couldn't swat at the flies crawling over his wounds. He wouldn't have been able to hold his bodily waste. The heat would have been suffocating – over one hundred degrees. And because spikes tore through tendons and bones Jesus had to use his back muscles to support himself. He would also have had to push up on that single nail pounded through his feet. So Jesus had to alternate between supporting himself on the single nail and arching his back – just to continue to breathe, to stay alive.

For you and me and every person on the planet!

This, brothers and sisters, was Jesus' entire mission: to suffer in this way by sacrificing himself to pay the penalty of our acts of rebellion against God, in our place.

He paid the price for racism and child sex slavery and the Holocaust.

He paid the price for pornography and gossip and divorce.

He paid the price for warlords and soccer moms, pimps and stay-at-home dads.

He paid *your* price. In *your* place.

And when he did, when he bore the full weight of God's wrath for all the sins committed by individuals and societies from ages past to ages future, he cried out those magnificent, beautiful, glorious words:

It is finished!

*Holy Week Prayer*

*Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

# Good Friday

## April 14

*John 19:38-42*

*After this, Joseph from the city of Ramah, who was a secret disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jewish authorities, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. So Pilate granted him permission to remove the body from the cross. Now Nicodemus, who had once come to Jesus privately at night, accompanied Joseph, and together they carried a significant amount of myrrh and aloes to the cross. Then they took Jesus' body and wrapped it in strips of linen with the embalming spices according to the Jewish burial customs. Near the place where Jesus was crucified was a garden, and in the garden there was a new tomb where no one had yet been laid to rest. And because the Sabbath was approaching, and the tomb was nearby, that's where they laid the body of Jesus.*

## A Day of Darkness...and Hope

We end this devotional the way we began it: In death.

At the beginning we contemplated our own eventual death, our mortality. And, while yesterday we celebrated Christ's death and all it means for you and me, at the end we contemplate the death of Christ. Yes, we know he has risen from the dead in full glory and splendor, but that will come tomorrow.

Today, through, we sit at the Lord's tomb, Jesus' body has been embalmed; it's been wrapped and laid to rest; the tomb has been sealed shut by the great stone.

And now we wait, called to sit and meditate on his passion and death, and on his descent into hell to rescue the dead, and await his resurrection with prayer and fasting.

We wait along with "Mary Magdalene and the other Marys, who watched all that took place" (Matthew 27:63) outside the tomb; we wait with others like Nicodemus, who first met Jesus early in his ministry.

Nicodemus's story is interesting, because John's gospel tells us that he was a Pharisee, one of the "separated ones" who were Jewish religious teachers. If you're familiar with Jesus' story, you know that the Pharisees had it in for Jesus. They were constantly after him, trying to trap him and discredit him.

There must have been something about Jesus that fascinated Nicodemus and piqued his interest, however, because John 3 reveals that one evening, under the cover of darkness, he sought Jesus out to better understand who he was and what he offered.

And then smack-dab in the middle of his story is this gem-of-a revelation by Jesus:

*"And just as Moses in the desert lifted up the brass replica of a snake on a pole for all the people to see and be healed, so the*

Son of man is ready to be lifted up, so that those who truly believe in him will not perish but be given eternal life. For this is how much God loved the world – he gave his one and only, unique Son as a *gift*. So now, everyone who believes in him will never perish but experience everlasting life.”

(John 3:14-16)

Of course, Jesus is speaking here of his death by being “lifted up” on the cross. In fact, Jesus reveals that God the Father gave the world his Son, Jesus, for the purpose of experiencing this “lifting up” - for the purpose of dying.

This is how much God loves the world; this is how much God loves you!

And it is when we believe in Christ’s death on the cross for payment of our sins and the defeat of death through his resurrection that we receive salvation and are made new!

It’s clear from Nicodemus’ story that he did believe. He wouldn’t have risked being publicly seen with Jesus carrying around nearly seventy-five pounds of spices for his body if he didn’t! Apparently, Nicodemus hadn’t forgotten Jesus’ sermon when they first met. He trusted in who Jesus was and what Jesus did. He was right there with Joseph caring for Christ’s body and helping bury it.

You see, when we first met him, Nicodemus was eager for the hope of the kingdom realm of God (John 3:3). When we meet him again, he has found the King of that kingdom and prepared a burial fit for a king!

Yes, this day is a day of darkness, because it was a day of death. But the hopeful truth of Jesus’ story is that he didn’t stay that way.

And neither will you! For the same hopeful promise Jesus gave Nicodemus is the same one he has for you, too:

Everyone who believes in him will never perish  
But experience everlasting life. (John 3:16)

*Holy Week Prayer*

*O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*