

THE JOURNEY *of* HOPE

*A daily devotional to reflect on
Jesus' last week on earth*



CROSSROADS
Community Church

THE JOURNEY OF HOPE

Part of the excitement of a trip is the journey to the final destination; the experiences along the way usually make the trip more memorable and unforgettable. I wonder, though, if we would make the journey—much less eagerly anticipate the trip—if we knew that before we reached our destination we would experience pain, heartbreak, disappointment, and tragedy.

In the last week of His life, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ knew what lay ahead. Yet, because of His great love for us, He turned His face toward Jerusalem and made a lonely journey up the hill to Golgotha.

For most people, the week before Easter is just another week, but for the Christian, it is one of the most significant weeks in the calendar year. Yet, most of us will barely give events of Jesus' last week on earth a passing thought. We may be so wrapped up on our own journeys that we forget the significance of the week and fail to realize its powerful message, relevance, and application to our own lives.

The message of Easter is one of hope. We come to realize that no matter what happens to us on our journey in this world, Jesus has overcome. Out of the tragedies and disappointments in our lives, He will bring new life; life more abundant and free.

The Journey of Hope has been designed to guide you on a path through the last week of Jesus' life. Come walk with us on this journey through the last 7 days of Jesus' life. Relive His Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. Reflect on His final lessons and admonitions to His disciples and to us. Experience His pain as He faces painful crucifixion and death. Celebrate the victory and anticipate what is yet to be. It is our desire that as you read the written Word, it will come alive for you and that on Easter Sunday you will be spiritually prepared for worship and celebration.

1 Sunday—Triumphant Entry MATTHEW 21:1-9

When they neared Jerusalem, having arrived at Bethphage on Mount Olives, Jesus sent two disciples with these instructions: "Go over to the village across from you. You'll find a donkey tethered there, her colt with her. Untie her and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you're doing, say, 'The Master needs them!' He will send them with you."

This is the full story of what was sketched earlier by the prophet: Tell Zion's daughter, "Look, your king's on his way, poised and ready, mounted On a donkey, on a colt, foal of a pack animal."

The disciples went and did exactly what Jesus told them to do. They led the donkey and colt out, laid some of their clothes on them, and Jesus mounted. Nearly all the people in the crowd threw their garments down on the road, giving him a royal welcome. Others cut branches from the trees and threw them down as a welcome mat. Crowds went ahead and crowds followed, all of them calling out, "Hosanna to David's son!" "Blessed is he who comes in God's name!" "Hosanna in highest heaven!"

PRESCHOOL

What would you say to Jesus if you saw Him? How would you show Jesus that you loved Him?

CHILDREN

The people showed Jesus respect by laying down their cloaks on the street. What is one way you can show respect for Jesus in the things you do and say?

STUDENTS

Suppose you are one of the people watching Jesus ride into town. How would you be responding at this moment? Would you pick up a branch, or throw down your clothes to welcome Jesus? Why would you do this?

ADULTS

The crowds waived palm branches and sang. How will I praise Jesus this week? The people cried, "Hosanna! Save us now!" What do I say to the Savior?

2 Monday—Temple Closing MATTHEW 21:10-19

As he made his entrance into Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken. Unnerved, people were asking, "What's going on here? Who is this?"

The parade crowd answered, "This is the prophet Jesus, the one from Nazareth in Galilee."

Jesus went straight to the Temple and threw out everyone who had set up shop, buying and selling. He kicked over the tables of loan sharks and the stalls of dove merchants. He quoted this text: My house was designated a house of prayer; You have made it a hangout for thieves.

Now there was room for the blind and crippled to get in. They came to Jesus and he healed them.

When the religious leaders saw the outrageous things he was doing, and heard all the children running and shouting through the Temple, "Hosanna to David's Son!" they were up in arms and took him to task. "Do you hear what these children are saying?"

Jesus said, "Yes, I hear them. And haven't you read in God's Word, 'From the mouths of children and babies I'll furnish a place of praise?'"

Fed up, Jesus turned on his heel and left the city for Bethany, where he spent the night.

Early the next morning Jesus was returning to the city. He was hungry. Seeing a lone fig tree alongside the road, he approached it anticipating a breakfast of figs. When he got to the tree, there was nothing but fig leaves. He said, "No more figs from this tree—ever!" The fig tree withered on the spot, a dry stick.

PRESCHOOL

Jesus said that the temple (Church) should be a house of prayer. God loves to hear us pray. What are 3 things you can thank God for?

CHILDREN

Jesus called the temple a house of prayer. What are some ways you can worship at Crossroads? Do you join in the singing and praying?

STUDENTS

Reading this part of the story, we see Jesus frustrated. What 2 things do we see Jesus frustrated with? What are the similarities between cleansing the temple and cursing the fig tree? Reflect on this passage again. Could there be any area of your life that is unclean or unproductive?

ADULTS

First Corinthians 6:16 says, "You are the temple of the living God." What is unclean in my temple? What would Jesus "drive out" of my life if I would let Him?

3 Tuesday—Widow's Mite

MARK 12:41-44

Sitting across from the offering box, he was observing how the crowd tossed money in for the collection. Many of the rich were making large contributions. One poor widow came up and put in two small coins—a measly two cents. Jesus called his disciples over and said, "The truth is that this poor widow gave more to the collection than all the others put together. All the others gave what they'll never miss; she gave extravagantly what she couldn't afford—she gave her all."

PRESCHOOL

The poor widow gave the church all she could. What would you give to the church? It does not have to be money.

CHILDREN

What was the biggest difference between the money the rich people gave and what the widow gave? Would you be willing to give part of your allowance or birthday money to the church?

STUDENTS

We see this passage and instantly think of money and giving. And it's true, the widow did give all that she had financially. What else could Jesus be talking about when he says "she gave extravagantly what she couldn't afford—she gave her all"? Think about how Jesus gave His all.

ADULTS

Which is greater, a mite or a million? What does Jesus say about my offering of time, talent, and resources? How much do I have to have to give everything to Christ?

4 Wednesday—Feet Washed

JOHN 13:1-17

Just before the Passover Feast, Jesus knew that the time had come to leave this world to go to the Father. Having loved his dear companions, he continued to love them right to the end. It was suppertime. The Devil by now had Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, firmly in his grip, all set for the betrayal.

Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron. When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, "Master, you wash my feet?"

Jesus answered, "You don't understand now what I'm doing, but it will be clear enough to you later."

Peter persisted, "You're not going to wash my feet—ever!"

Jesus said, "If I don't wash you, you can't be part of what I'm doing."

"Master!" said Peter. "Not only my feet, then. Wash my hands! Wash my head!"

Jesus said, "If you've had a bath in the morning, you only need your feet washed now and you're clean from head to toe. My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene. So now you're clean. But not every one of you." (He knew who was betraying him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you.") After he had finished washing their feet, he took his robe, put it back on, and went back to his place at the table.

Then he said, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You address me as 'Teacher' and 'Master,' and rightly so. That is what I am. So if I, the Master and Teacher, washed your feet, you must now wash each other's feet. I've laid down a pattern for you. What I've done, you do. I'm only pointing out the obvious. A servant is not ranked above his master;

an employee doesn't give orders to the employer. If you understand what I'm telling you, act like it—and live a blessed life.

PRESCHOOL

Jesus washed His disciples' feet because He was kind and good. What is something kind and good you can do for your parents? How about your next-door neighbor?

CHILDREN

Jesus washed His disciples' feet to show servanthood. That means serving others, even when it is not fun. What is something that you don't like to do that you can do for someone else to show you care for them?

STUDENTS

For His entire ministry, Jesus was modeling to the disciples how they were to carry on after He was gone. Here we see Him wash their feet and model service to each other. How will you serve your family as an act of obedience to Jesus? Remember, washing feet was the symbol of a greater act.

ADULTS

My life has been walking in the world this week. Does Jesus need to wash the world off? Maybe I'm just like Peter, "Wash all of me!"

Thursday—Lord's Supper

MATTHEW 26:26-29

5 During the meal, Jesus took and blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples: "Take, eat. This is my body."

Taking the cup and thanking God, he gave it to them: "Drink this, all of you. This is my blood, God's new covenant poured out for many people for the forgiveness of sins."

I'll not be drinking wine from this cup again until that new day when I'll drink with you in the kingdom of my Father.

PRESCHOOL

Jesus ate a special meal with His disciples and thanked God. What are 2 things about Jesus that you can give thanks to God for?

CHILDREN

The bread and wine represented Jesus' death on the cross. Why did Jesus die on the cross? How do we get our sins forgiven?

STUDENTS

Have you ever thought about what was happening here? Jesus is symbolically demonstrating salvation to the disciples. When you take the last supper or communion meal, what are you thinking about? Do you see how the body and the blood connect with the bread and the juice?

ADULTS

The Lord's Supper Table is inscribed with "This do in remembrance of me." What does Jesus want me to remember about His life and death? Like the thief on the cross, what do I want Jesus to remember about me?

SUNDAYS

Worship @ 10am
LifeGroups @ 9am & 11am

WEDNESDAYS

Fellowship Meal @ 5:30pm
Bible Study @ 6:30pm

EVERY DAY

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6 Friday—All Alone

MATTHEW 27:45-46

From noon to three, the whole earth was dark. Around mid-afternoon Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

PRESCHOOL

Draw a picture of a cross. The cross reminds us that Jesus loves us. Write under your cross, "I love you, Jesus".

CHILDREN

Jesus felt all alone on the cross even though He was surrounded by people. Who are 3 people you can go to when you feel alone, afraid, or upset?

STUDENTS

There is real pain happening in Jesus' life right now. Many of His followers ran away and hid. He's suffering on the cross, and now He realizes God is turning away. But why? Remember, Jesus has felt every emotion you have too. He felt alone. And we see clearly in Scripture He declared it. God turned away from sin. He never abandoned His Son. And God will never abandon you. Think of a time when you felt alone. Can you see that God was really there at that time?

ADULTS

Has the pain of life, the unfairness and uncertainty of this world, ever caused me to think that God has forsaken me and left me alone? Praise God, He will never leave me or forget me! I wonder if the disciples saw the same eyes when Jesus looked down at them from the cross that they had seen when He looked up at them while washing their feet? I guess love does have different faces!

7 Saturday—Hope . . . Anticipation

MATTHEW 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, as the first light of the new week dawned, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to keep vigil at the tomb. Suddenly the earth reeled and rocked under their feet as God's angel came down from heaven, came right up to where they were standing. He rolled back the stone and then sat on it. Shafts of lightning blazed from him. His garments shimmered snow-white. The guards at the tomb were scared to death. They were so frightened, they couldn't move.

The angel spoke to the women: "There is nothing to fear here. I know you're looking for Jesus, the One they nailed to the cross. He is not here. He was raised, just as he said. Come and look at the place where he was placed.

"Now, get on your way quickly and tell his disciples, 'He is risen from the dead. He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.' That's the message."

PRESCHOOL

We do not know what Jesus was doing the day after His crucifixion, but we do know what happened on Sunday. What did the women find when they went to the tomb?

CHILDREN

Saturday is a bit of a mystery in the Easter Story, but we do know what happened on Sunday. Why is important that Jesus is alive?

STUDENTS

What emotions do you think you would have if you had been one of these women? "He's ALIVE!" That statement changes everything for the World. What has it changed in you?

ADULTS

Did the angel roll the stone away so that Jesus could get out or so that I could get in to know the reality of the resurrection? Now that I know what happened, who am I going to tell?

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

No, the journey doesn't end here, but it continues and will continue until Jesus' return. In the meantime, we are to do what He commanded, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23

Where are you on this journey called life? Do you personally know this one we call Jesus, Our Savior and friend? Are you a disciple who makes disciples?

Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH longs to be the place to help you discover the next steps for the journey of your life.

Come worship with us each Sunday in April as we celebrate The Cross and The One who covers sin, destroys fear, transfers strength, and gives assurance.

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