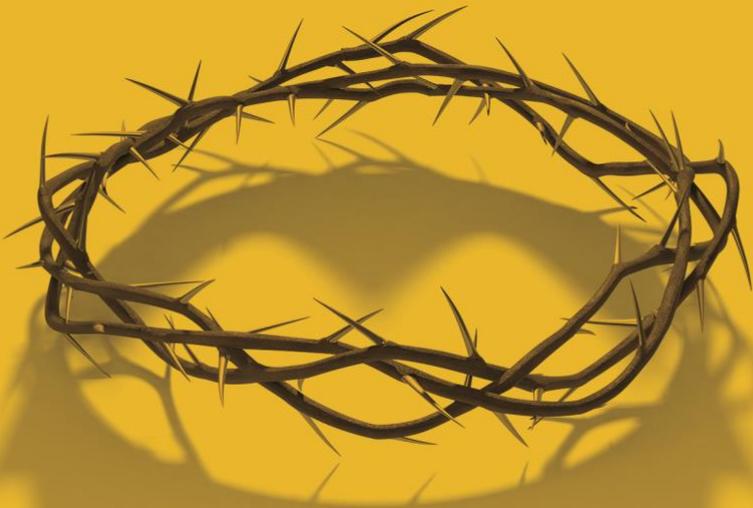


new hope



A HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL

APRIL 9-12, 2020

New Hope

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Introduction

In many contexts, Holy Week is traditionally a time for reflection on the suffering, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. In this season where most of the world is reeling from a pandemic, as believers, we can take this time to be in God's Word like never before. Here is a four-day devotional that can help you understand and appreciate Christ's finished work on the cross and his resurrection.

The Last Supper

READ | Luke 22:14–23

14 And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. . . ." 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

LUKE 22:14–15, 19–20

REFLECT

This meal with Jesus came to be known as the Last Supper, but originally, the disciples were simply going to have the Passover meal with him. The Passover meal was an annual feast that the Jews held to celebrate the time that God delivered them from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12). At that time, the plagues were happening in Egypt, culminating in the death of their firstborn. But God's people obeyed his command to place the blood of a lamb on the sides and tops of their door frames so that the angel of death would "pass over" them and spare them.

The Passover feast was celebrated yearly to look back on that story, but the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples looked forward to what Christ was going to do on the cross as the ultimate Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). The God who had spared his people from the destruction of the plagues in Egypt gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age (Galatians 1:4).

Jesus is the Passover Lamb for everyone who puts their trust and faith in him—then and now. Jesus is our covering, protection, and healing. The person and work of Christ is what brings salvation to all.

RESPOND

- 1. In your journal, write about the times when God came to your rescue. Thank him for his protection and salvation.

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- 2. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 11:23–28 and write your insights.

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- 3. Thank God for sending Jesus to be the Passover Lamb of the world. Pray for protection and covering on you and your family. Ask him to refresh your spirit. Thank him for his sovereignty even beyond your lifetime.

The Crucifixion

READ | Luke 23:32–43

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

LUKE 23:39–43

REFLECT

The example of Jesus toward the two criminals who were crucified with him clearly shows Jesus' readiness to forgive sinners. In the other Gospels (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32), we know that both criminals shouted insults at first. But then the heart and attitude of one changed. He realized that Jesus had done nothing wrong, and he concluded rightly that Jesus was the Messiah, the King of the coming kingdom.

As he was about to die, he cried out to Jesus: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” This was his petition and the confession of his faith, and Jesus welcomed him into his kingdom.

It's never too late to turn to God. The criminal was saved, though already on the cross. There was no more chance of him coming down and offering the traditional sacrifices to God for the forgiveness of sins. There was no more time for him to confess his sins or make disciples. This is the message of Jesus to all—from then until today—that salvation is by faith in Jesus

Christ, and not by good works. Jesus gives the assurance of eternal life to all who place their full trust and faith in him.

RESPOND

- 1. Read Ephesians 2:4-5. What does this passage teach us about who God is and who we are?

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- 2. Everyone is at a point of need in some way or another. How can you minister to others even from your own home? How can you minister when you yourself may feel helpless at times?

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- 3. Thank God for Jesus 'death on the cross and his free gift of righteousness. Ask God for freedom from guilt, knowing we cannot earn our salvation. Pray for your family and friends to be open to receiving the mercy and grace of God in this season.

The Burial

READ | Luke 23:50–56

*⁵⁰Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, ⁵¹who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. ⁵²This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. **LUKE 23:50–53***

REFLECT

According to Scriptures, the suffering, death, and burial of Jesus all happened on the same day, traditionally known as Good Friday. He was buried quickly before the Jewish Sabbath, a time when no one could work. He remained in the tomb for three days. As believers, we need to realize that Jesus lived a perfect life and died an excruciating death for our salvation. Today, we will look at the significance of Christ's burial.

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man, a respected member of the Sanhedrin council. This was the group of Jewish religious leaders who had demanded Jesus' death. Though Joseph was one of the Pharisees, he was described in the Bible as a good and righteous man. John also mentions in his writing that Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple (John 19:38).

When Jesus had died, Joseph boldly asked Pilate for Jesus' body and buried it in a new and expensive tomb. He no longer hid the fact that he was a disciple. He risked everything when he asked Pilate for Jesus' body. The word used in Mark 15:43 to describe what he did is *tolmao*, meaning

“to be so bold as to challenge or defy possible danger or opposition.” Joseph may not have realized it, but what he did was instrumental in fulfilling a prophecy about Jesus: “And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth” (Isaiah 53:9).

After Jesus' death and burial, we can assume that the disciples were in a dark place in their faith. The man they had devoted their lives to was in the tomb, and they did not know what was going to happen the next day. Despite this, Joseph of Arimathea courageously gave Jesus a proper burial. Jesus had taught his disciples that “whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” (Luke 9:24). Since Jesus' words had already taken root in Joseph's heart, he acted on them. As disciples of the living God, we can do the same. Even when we don't know what tomorrow may bring, we can respond in faith and believe. We can choose to do the right thing at the right time to take a courageous stand for Jesus.

RESPOND

1. Read Luke 23:50–53 again, and put yourself in the shoes of Joseph of Arimathea. What do you think he was feeling? What prayers do you think he prayed? Why do you think he responded that way?

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2. Everyone is at a point of need in some way or another. How can you minister to others even from your own home? How can you minister when you yourself may feel helpless at times?

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3. Thank God for the courage and boldness He gives you to follow Him. Pray that you would fully rely on His Spirit, beyond what the world expects of you or how the world sees you. Ask God to speak to you clearly and for the grace to obey Him quickly.

The Resurrection

READ | Luke 24:1–53

1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. 5 And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” **LUKE 24:1–7**

REFLECT

The story of Jesus thankfully does not end with his death. The Resurrection happened, and Jesus is no longer in the tomb. He is alive! This is the bedrock of our Christian faith.

Jesus had told his disciples time and again that he would be delivered into the hands of sinful men, die, and rise from the dead on the third day (Luke 9:22,44–45; 18:31–34). In spite of this, they were perplexed that he had risen. The women who visited his tomb were intending to continue with the burial rites after the Sabbath, which meant they fully expected that he would still be dead. But he wasn't. Jesus was alive, and the angels asked them not to look for the living among the dead.

The significance of the Resurrection cannot be separated from what Jesus foretold about his death and resurrection. When we remember and

understand the Word of God, our faith will not be swayed by fear or uncertainty, for it is his Word that makes sense of everything. Our faith is based on the living Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ who conquered sin, death, and the grave!

In the story, the two angels also told the women to remember. The Greek verb *mimneskomai* used here means “to remember, to recall information from memory, but without necessarily the implication that persons have actually forgotten.” It means not just to think about again, but is about gaining insight leading to an appropriate response. The women responded properly by staying on mission and reporting to the apostles what had just happened. Even though the disciples did not initially believe them, they had their own encounters with Christ on the road to Emmaus and when he appeared to them in Jerusalem. While all three encounters started off with the disciples being perplexed about the Resurrection, they ultimately led to the advancement of God’s mission. Many others came to know about the risen Christ. In fact, we too stand as witnesses of this today, and we are to joyously proclaim the good news to others: “He is not here, but has risen.”

RESPOND

1. Why is the resurrection of Christ important? What does it mean for us that Christ rose from the dead?

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2. Get your creative juices flowing. Write out a verse or note that will remind you of our victory in Christ.

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3. Thank God for his Word, which helps us make sense of everything. Pray that you will be committed to read and obey his Word every day. Pray that you will proclaim the good news of the resurrection of Christ to many others.

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