

April 1, 2007



# Palm Sunday/ Holy Week

**Luke 22:1-13** Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present. Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked. He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there." They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

## ***How Did It Come to This? We Grieve, We Wait...***



**Palm Sunday** celebrates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem amid

praising crowds who'd gathered for the Passover celebration. How and why, then, did everything end so badly by Friday? A closer look reveals that, even though there was a hint of triumph for Jesus on that day, danger was simmering beneath the surface. Jesus, the humble Servant-King, was not at all the type of king the people had anticipated. The Jewish authorities resented Him, and the Roman government felt threatened by Him. Those cheering crowds would be calling for His execution within just days.

Over the next couple of days, Jesus further incited and frustrated religious leaders as He taught and warned the crowds about the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders. The tension was mounting steadily.

As Jesus and His disciples gath-

ered on what we call **Maundy Thursday** to celebrate the Passover (now known as the Last Supper), the shadow of the cross loomed large. No one understood this kingdom of which Jesus spoke; they had never considered a kingdom based on humbly serving others. He astonished His disciples by washing their feet during their last meal together. Later that night, as Jesus was praying and the disciples were sleeping in Gethsemane, Judas betrayed Him and He was arrested. While Judas is the most infamous traitor, his betrayal was different only in degree from what the other disciples would do over the next twenty-four hours: every one of them eased away into the darkness, leaving Jesus to face His grim reality on His own.

Jesus, abandoned by his closest friends and with his prayers in Gethsemane unanswered, was utterly alone and anguished. And yet, He did not insist on His own will, but instead submitted to the Father's plan. Jesus had the power to skip the sacrifice and

save Himself, and yet He did not. This was the reason that He came to earth, and He chose to accept and lean into His fate.

On **Good Friday** we remember Jesus' trials, beatings, and, finally, His death on a cross in Calvary. As He endured it all, He forgave his enemies, arranged care for His mother, and welcomed the thief hanging next to Him into paradise. Jesus, as always, thought of others before Himself.

And so on Friday, we remember and we mourn. While we grieve, though, we also wait. We wait with the hope of the coming resurrection — the hope that Jesus will keep His promise.

### **What's on page 2?**

- This week's Scripture readings, prayers, and reflections
- Family Corner: talking to children about Holy Week
- Suggested resources

## Sunday, April 1

Matthew chapters 21-27

*Prayer: Lord, prepare us to walk through this Holy Week with open eyes, listening ears, and receptive hearts that will understand the Passion in a fresh, new way.*

## Monday, April 2

Mark chapters 11-15

*Prayer: Jesus, we live in a sinful world. With Your boundless grace, reach out your wounded hands to heal our world. We pray for families and nations at war, for all those who suffer, for all who do not know You.*

## Tuesday, April 3

Luke chapter 19:28 through chapter 23

*Prayer: Lord, we fall far short of your example. We often think of ourselves first, and we fail to serve others with humility. Forgive us. Continue to draw us to You; help us to be more like You.*

## Wednesday, April 4

John chapter 12:12 through chapter 19

*Prayer: Lord we pray that Your teachings in Jerusalem will touch our hearts in a new way this week. We pray for new understanding, renewed hope, and a more fervent resolve to live more as You would have us do.*

## Thursday (Maundy Thursday), April 5

Matthew 26:47-56; 69-75

Judas was part of Jesus' inner circle, a witness to miracles. Even so, he betrayed Jesus, and although remorseful, was unwilling to receive what Christ had come to offer him. On the other hand, Peter, who was humiliated by his own betrayal of Jesus, was still open to the Gospel message of grace and forgiveness. He went on to become the Rock on which the Christian church was built, and through him, Christ's message has reached millions. (*The Jesus I Never Knew*, Yancey, p. 194)

*Prayer: Lord, forgive us for our every day betrayals of You. May we remain open to Your message of grace and forgiveness, and be willing to heed Your call in our lives.*

## Friday (Good Friday), April 6

Luke 23:32-43

The thieves who hung beside Jesus responded to Him in very different ways. One mocked Him for not saving Himself, and the other recognized Jesus for Who He was. He had nothing to offer Jesus except a faith-filled request that Jesus "remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." Even so, because of his faith, Jesus forgave his sins and invited him into Heaven.

*Prayer: Lord, we come to you with thankful hearts for your endless grace and mercy. Thank you for loving us when we're unlovable, and for continuing to draw us to You, even when we'd like to turn away.*

## Saturday, April 7

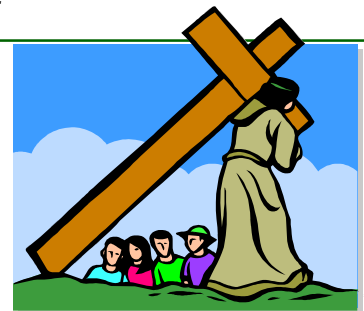
Psalm 42 and 43

*Prayer: Lord, tonight we wait in quiet hope for Your promised resurrection. We live with the hope that one day this fallen world will be restored and we will be united with You and with one another for eternity.*

## Family Corner

Some tips for talking to your children about Holy Week:

- Emphasize Jesus' love for us, His willingness to do whatever it took for us.
- Remind them of some of Jesus' miracles, and talk about Jesus' power to do *anything*.
- Talk about how Jesus forgave the criminal beside Him, which showed His boundless grace.
- Tell them the story of the Passion and Resurrection *together*, so they will see both His suffering and His triumphant return from the dead.



## Suggested Resources

[The Jesus I Never Knew](#) by Philip Yancey

[No Wonder They Call Him the Savior](#) by Max Lucado