

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

APRIL 3 - 8, 2023



HOLY WEEK AT GLENKIRK 2023



HOLY MONDAY

Read [Mark 11:15-19](#); [Luke 19:45-48](#)

In the Christian calendar, the week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday is known as Holy Week. It is common during Holy Week for believers to reflect upon Jesus' last week before His crucifixion, to walk with Him to the cross, so to speak. In light of this, each devotion this week will take some time to reflect on Jesus' activities each day leading up to the cross.

On Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. We remember that day by celebrating Palm Sunday.

On Monday of Holy Week, according to Mark's Gospel, Jesus went to the temple. When He saw what was happening there, He began to overturn the tables and drive out the merchants. Scholars explain that Jesus was angry at the merchants—not because they were selling items, but because they were selling them at such a high price.

Jewish people were coming into Jerusalem from all over to celebrate Passover and to offer sacrifices to God at the Temple. Many traveled very far, and because they couldn't carry the sacrifices with them, they often had to purchase the items once they arrived. The merchants knew this and were exploiting the system. They were charging a small fortune, knowing many had no choice other than to pay it. This upcharge mostly affected the poor and the widowed because they could not

even afford the grain or the birds that were supposed to be the cheaper of the items to sacrifice.

Only five days left on this earth and Jesus was still trying to show the people how to take care of the marginalized, the poor, and the widowed. Jesus constantly stood up for the oppressed, even during His last week before the cross. I have to think that Jesus, knowing the end of His earthly ministry was coming, wanted to show us just how important it is to advocate for the less fortunate.

God of Justice, may we seek to be a people who shine Your light into the world, help the oppressed and marginalized, and be committed to furthering Your kingdom. May we be a people who seek to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly in this world. Amen.

QUESTIONS

Take some time to meditate on the reasons behind Jesus' acts in the temple. Ask yourself, "How can I be a beacon of light to the oppressed, the marginalized, the poor? How can I help bring about justice on this earth as Jesus did?"

PRAYERS

For Bryant and Anne Wilhelmsen and Global Grace Ministries

Pray for the Wilhelmsens as they carry the tension from so many refugees who need their help and expect that they have the answers for them. The Wilhelmsens work with the German authorities as advocates, but they do not always receive the clear or prompt answers these people desperately need.

HOLY TUESDAY

Read **Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31**

The Gospel of Mark tells us that on Tuesday Jesus traveled from Bethany to Jerusalem, spent some time at the temple, and then hung out on the Mount of Olives before heading back to Bethany that night. While He was at the temple, the religious leaders of His day tried to trap Jesus by asking Him difficult religious questions, hoping to catch Him giving a wrong answer.

Jesus often answered their questions with parables, and His answers showed the true heart of God. On that day a particular religious teacher was listening to Jesus. He was intrigued at Jesus' teaching and asked Him, *"Which commandment is the most important of all?"* (Mark 12:28). Jesus replied by saying, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these"* (vv. 30-31).

Here's the interesting part about Jesus' response. He was asked to name the greatest commandment, but He felt compelled to name two: love God and love people. Many Jesus followers have no problem following this first commandment. We read our Bibles, pray, attend church, and strive to love God more and more every day. What many of us have trouble with is the second commandment: loving people. After all, people are difficult. They can be rude, and stubborn, and selfish.

It is interesting that Jesus added this second commandment to His response, but I think He did it to remind us that we cannot love God without loving those around us. Everyone around us was made in the image of God. Everyone around us is a child of God. We, as Jesus followers, are called to be God's hands and feet in the world. Love God, love people.

God of Love, when asked what was the greatest commandment, You responded: *love*. Help us today, on this Holy Tuesday, to learn how to love You and others well. Give us an opportunity today to show Your love to someone around us. Amen.

QUESTIONS

If you were asked what the greatest commandment was, what would be your answer? Would your answer differ from the one Jesus gave? Why or why not? Love God, love people. What would it look like for you to step further into these two commandments: loving God with everything you do and everything you are, and loving those around you as yourself?

PRAYERS

For Bryant and Anne Wilhelmsen and Global Grace Ministries

Pray that more German churches and Christians will become open to helping uprooted people. It is not easy to get even strong churches to accept this dimension of helping. They know that this work is time-consuming, and not everyone in the congregation is willing to get involved.

HOLY WEDNESDAY

Read **Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8**

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus often traveled to Bethany, two miles outside Jerusalem. Jesus visited Bethany so frequently that some scholars refer to it as Jesus' "Judean home." Jesus was in Bethany when He sent for a colt to ride into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1); He spent His last few nights on earth in Bethany (Matthew 21:17; Mark 11:11-12), and to Bethany He returns before His Ascension (Luke 24:50-51). Jesus likely stayed in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus when He was in Bethany. After all, Jesus had a special bond with these three (John 11:5). They were among His closest friends and disciples.

So it is no surprise when, on Holy Wednesday, we find Jesus in Bethany, dining in the home of His friends. Matthew 26, Mark 14 and John 12 share this story. While Jesus was having dinner, the party was interrupted by Mary, who took a jar of scented oil and anointed Jesus' head and feet and wiped His feet with her hair. Some around the table were offended by Mary's worshipful act, but Jesus was moved by it, saying, *"Let her alone. ... She has performed a good service for Me. ... She has anointed My body ... for its burial"* (Mark 14:6-8).

This passage stands out for two reasons. First, Mary is the only disciple showing a deep understanding of the impending cross. While many believed Jesus was the Messiah, none seemed to grasp that Jesus was going to die—except Mary, who prepared Him for His burial.

Secondly, in Jewish tradition, anointing with oil was a way of marking people who were set apart for a specific purpose. Samuel, the priest and prophet, anointed Saul and David with oil, commissioning them as kings. This is where we get the title “Messiah,” meaning “One anointed with oil.” This title is given to the coming King and Savior of Israel: Jesus! And the only time in the Gospels where Jesus’ head is literally anointed with oil is in this story.

Mary not only prepares Jesus for His burial, she anoints Jesus with oil—a priestly act—commissioning Jesus into the work God was sending Him to do on the cross, and proclaiming who He is: Israel’s King, the Messiah!

Jesus Our Messiah, show us today how we might honor You in our worship. Amen.

QUESTIONS

On this Wednesday of Holy Week, who do you say Jesus is? And what special act of worship might God be inviting you into?

PRAYERS

For Bryant and Anne Wilhelmsen and Global Grace Ministries

As we help one family, many more families come forward hoping for equal help, which is not always possible. We often have to protect any pastor and church that has stepped up to offer assistance or asylum. They fear being completely overwhelmed!

HOLY THURSDAY

Read [Mark 14:12-25](#); [Luke 22:14-20](#); [John 13:1-30](#)

On Thursday of Holy Week, the Jewish people celebrated Passover, and Jesus and His disciples gathered for a meal—His last meal before the cross.

John's Gospel tells us that Jesus knew the time had come for Him to return to the Father. That means He knew that pain and suffering were coming. I wonder if Jesus had trouble eating that last meal, knowing what was to come—that one of those sitting with Him would betray Him, that at the cross all but one of the twelve would leave Him, and that one of His most beloved disciples would deny Him, not once but three times.

It was on that Thursday night that Jesus took the bread and cup and instituted the Lord's Supper. Breaking the bread He declared, *"This is My body broken for you."* Taking the cup He said, *"This is My blood of the new covenant shed for the forgiveness of sins."*

John tells us that during the meal Jesus gathered a towel and a basin of water and began washing His disciples' feet. Jesus spent this precious time before His death teaching them, once again, about love. The Son of God washed His disciples' feet—something that normally only a servant would do. This was an act of humility, service, and selflessness. This was an act of love, a sign of Jesus' upside-down kingdom. And Jesus told His followers to do as He had done.

“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13:13-15)

Just two days before, Jesus had proclaimed the two greatest commandments: love God and love people. And here, on Holy Thursday, Jesus showed what that looks like. Jesus set an example for us to walk in when He washed the feet of even those who would betray, leave, and deny Him.

Serving God, You have shown us the kind of love and service You call us to. Empower us today to follow Your example and love those around us who are not easy to love that we might show the world Your love. Amen.

QUESTIONS

Who are the people in your life who are difficult for you? In what ways can you “wash their feet” and show them God’s love?

PRAYERS

For Bryant and Anne Wilhelmsen and Global Grace Ministries

Pray for two festive programs the Wilhelmsens have planned for Persian-speaking refugees to celebrate their culture’s new year, *Noruz*. They need supernatural assistance to buy the food and provide transportation for all the refugees who want to attend and need something to bring a bit of joy!

HOLY FRIDAY

Read [Luke 22:63-23:56](#); [John 18:28-19:37](#)

On the Friday of Holy Week, Jesus was betrayed, denied, arrested, tried, sentenced to death, tortured, ridiculed, crucified and buried.

Ironically, this day is called “Good Friday.” But as we remember the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, it is difficult to wrap our minds around any of this being “good.” It is traditional on this day to sit in the pain and darkness of this day, to ponder Jesus’ suffering.

But today is called “Good Friday” because we know we will not stay in that place. On Good Friday we know that the depth of Jesus’ sacrifice—the pain and ridicule He endured—was actually part of the greater work of God paying the cost for our sins and breaking down the barrier between us and God. On this day, we remember that in our times of suffering, pain and loneliness, we have a God who knows intimately how we feel and meets us there. And we also know that Easter is coming.

As you read the story of Jesus’ crucifixion, I encourage you to reflect on the love of Jesus, who laid down His life for you, not only to be free from sin, but also to bring you into the freedom of a life lived with God.

Suffering God, You gave Your life that we might live. Thank You for saving us from our slavery to sin and death. Help us to more fully understand Your sacrifice and the love that brought You to the cross. Amen.

QUESTIONS

Why do you think Christians memorialize the day of Jesus' crucifixion as "Good Friday"? Many claim that "there are many paths to God." Are you ever tempted to believe that? Some maintain that Jesus was only a "good man and great teacher," simply "one favored by God." If there are "many paths" and Jesus was merely a man, why would the Father have subjected the Savior to such a brutal, humiliating death? The true and living God is not cruel, nor is He cowardly and uncaring. He did not create another to endure such an execution for our salvation—our God did this Himself!

PRAYERS

For Bryant and Anne Wilhelmsen and Global Grace Ministries

Pray for healing of the tensions that arise among the people with whom the Wilhelmsens work. It is common that refugees are dealing with depression, fear, jealousy, and so much more after the trauma they've experienced. The Wilhelmsens also need to consider security concerns.

HOLY SATURDAY

Read [John 19:30](#); [Matthew 27:62-66](#); [Luke 23:55-56](#)

Holy Saturday is about uncertainty. On that Saturday, the disciples had just lost Jesus. They were confused. They were scared. They didn't know what Sunday would bring. Years earlier they had left their lives of predictability and safety to follow an unknown rabbi they believed to be the Messiah. But on that Saturday Jesus, and all their certainty, lay dead.

Scripture is largely silent about what happened on Holy Saturday. We are left without answers. We are uncertain, just as the first disciples were. In some traditions, this day is known as "Silent Saturday," due to the very few words that Scripture has to say about it and God's seeming silence.

It can sometimes feel as if we are experiencing our own Silent Saturday, where we encounter difficulties, not knowing what comes next, and praying to God, getting no immediate response. Sometimes we feel as if we are right there, stuck between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The silence of God can be confusing and heartbreaking.

But on that Silent Saturday, when it seemed all was lost, God was at work. And God is at work still. If you are experiencing your own Silent Saturday, take comfort for Sunday is coming!

QUESTIONS

Why do you think God permits uncertainty? Why does He allow us to feel sometimes that He is far away or that He has abandoned us? The Bible says little about what happened on Holy Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath Day—perhaps because in silence, expectancy, and rest we can be more ready to commune with God and receive His blessings. Do you practice stillness and silence before the Creator of the universe? Do you make Sunday a day to worship the true and living God with joy, supplementing this with the ongoing practice of “[being] still and knowing that [He] is God”? (Psalm 46:10). Jesus was not “abandoned” for long on Calvary’s cross and then in the tomb—He rose victoriously on Easter Sunday, defeating death, sin and Satan’s opposition! How will you celebrate all that God has done for us in Christ, which we commemorate tomorrow on Easter Sunday? With whom will you share such good news, this best news?

PRAYERS

Please pray today for hearts and minds to be touched on Easter. Pray for people all over the world, from our community, those impacted by our missionaries, and others, to know the truth of Christ and salvation. Pray for a revival to happen on this day.

HE IS





Risen!



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