

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

MARCH 25 - 30, 2024



HOLY WEEK AT GLENKIRK CHURCH



HOLY MONDAY

Read **Matthew 21:18-22**

People praising Jesus with singing and tree branches on the road was over, and what a day it had been. This was indeed the Son of David entering the most Holy of cities, Jerusalem. It seemed it could not have been better—but after Sunday came Monday, and how different a Monday it was to be!

Jesus, returning to Jerusalem after a night in Bethany—a place of friendship and joy with some of His best friends—is hungry and goes to a fig tree and finds no fruit, just bunches of leaves. What a strange thing for Jesus to do. It was not a long walk from Bethany to Jerusalem (about 2 miles) and surely Jesus would have enjoyed the hospitality of His host before the journey. Why did Jesus go to this particular tree if there was no fruit? Why on this day? We enjoy the perspective of having Bibles today, and we can interpret this action in the context of the entire Scripture.

Throughout the Bible, the fig tree is used as a metaphor for the Jewish nation. It is thought that this action was symbolic of the Jewish nation rejecting Jesus as the Son of God. Just a few verses later (Matthew 21:43) we read, *“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.”* Jesus was reminding the nation of Israel, as He

reminds us today, that a relationship with Him is a living relationship. A relationship that goes beyond just looking good, but a relationship that is expected to bear fruit. A relationship that is not limited to the laws of nature, but grows a faith and belief beyond what we could know or expect. A relationship that is not one of doubt, but beyond what we could even imagine if we could be in constant communion through prayer with our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we ponder this Holy Week, and especially this first day after celebrating Palm Sunday, what could we change in our spiritual lives that would cause us to bear more fruit? If Jesus was to pass you on the road today, would He see fruit?

QUESTIONS

What distractions in our busy lives hinder a closer relationship with our Lord and Savior? As we reflect on what Jesus did for us this particular week in the Christian calendar, what should we be doing to strengthen our faith in Jesus?

PRAYER

Holy Week

On Monday of Holy Week, Jesus was angered by merchants charging exorbitant prices for sacrifices at the Temple during Passover. He overturned their tables because they were exploiting the poor. Pray that the Church would be a people who shine God's light into the world by helping the poor, oppressed, and marginalized as we act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God.

HOLY TUESDAY

Read **Mark 14:1-9**

Two days before the feast of the Passover, the Tuesday of that amazing week, we find this unusual story of Jesus relaxing with friends and a woman bringing an alabaster jar of nard that was first broken and then the perfume was poured over Jesus' head.

This was a significant act for a woman in those times, as historically an alabaster jar would have been saved for at least a generation to be used as a marriage dowry of a woman yet to be wed. In ancient times and in the Jewish culture, this was often considered the “worth” of their daughter to the prospective groom. In many cases, this might even be held for the next generation—what we might consider a family heirloom today. Nard was a type of herb, rich in oil, which was only grown in India. Thus, it was an imported and scarce product that would have been transported thousands of miles and was of great value.

Consider the aloe perfume and the value of the very ornate “marble-like” jar. It would not be a stretch to understand that this was a major sacrifice—the woman was giving her future to Jesus. And then there was the act of anointing Jesus. Anointing was an ancient custom usually performed by shepherds who poured oil on their sheep's heads to protect them from lice and other insects. How appropriate it is then for this woman to pour oil on the Chief Shepherd's head.

The reactions were quick and powerful. Some considered it a waste; their perspective was that this was a material waste. Why couldn't it be sold and given to the poor? Easy to criticize these voices as we can read what Jesus' reaction was, but how many of us would have thought the same? Giving to the poor isn't a bad thing, right? And then we see Jesus' response—tender and loving: “*Leave her alone. ... She has done a beautiful thing*” (Mark 14:16). This woman was a precious child of Christ—she had given her all to her Lord.

QUESTIONS

Where are you today in your relationship with Christ? Are you giving Him your all? Do you value what He values, or do you align more with the values of the world?

PRAYER

Holy Week

On Tuesday of Holy Week, Jesus proclaimed that the greatest two commandments are “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength,*” and “*love your neighbor as yourself*” (Mark 12:30), reminding us that we cannot love God without loving those around us. Pray that we would be a church that actively loves God and others *well*.

HOLY WEDNESDAY

Read **Matthew 24:3-51**

Today's passage, commonly called the "Olivet Discourse," is often overlooked in the many events of that Passover week. However, with only a few days to Christ's crucifixion (and resurrection), this "last lecture" has to be significant and an important message for the disciples then, and for us today.

This week in history had "book ends" that are quite different. The week started with the people welcoming Jesus with shouts of "*Hosanna*," an appropriate welcome of the people and fit for an earthly King. The week ends with those whom we assume are the same crowds shouting in unison to "*Crucify Him*." This is a caution worth noting for us on how easy it is to wander or be persuaded away from the faith when being a Christ-follower begins to get tough.

In the many significant statements that Jesus states of the end times, two might help us to be encouraged today as we reflect on Christ's journey in this last week of His earthly life. Matthew 24:12 states that before the end of time (and no one knows the time), "*the love of most will grow cold*." A sober warning to each of us. Not "some" will lose their faith, or "a few," but "*most*."

As we pause to reflect on His Word in the midst of this Holy Week, may we be intentionally encouraging and supportive of one another, praying that we may never be the one who loses or causes someone to lose his or her love for the Lord. Instead, may we with joy and praise be *“the one who stands firm to the end”* (v. 13). Do something active to make this happen today. Call or meet with others walking in the faith and encourage them; perhaps pray with them for a strengthening of their and your walk with the Lord.

Secondly, be encouraged with these words from our Lord in verse 35, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”* Even in the dark days when Christ’s disciples were to face that week, and the Lord knowing His death was imminent, He encouraged them (and us) that His Word is not bound by time or death. Everything that we are familiar with on this earth may go “upside down,” but His words are eternal promises. Let that thought be a constant companion today—go back to it over and over again: *“but My words will never pass away.”*

QUESTIONS

Have you ever felt your love for Jesus cool? How did you rekindle it? Have you ever helped another who was struggling here?

PRAYER

Holy Week

On Wednesday of Holy Week, Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus, proclaiming Him to be Israel’s long-awaited King. How does Jesus as King affect your everyday life? Spend time praying about how you can worship Jesus as King this week.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Read **Mark 14:12-42**

Maundy Thursday is the day in Holy Week where we reflect on the commands given at the Last Supper, the evening arrest of Jesus, and the myriad of events leading to Jesus' last hours before His crucifixion.

The day started for the disciples with a simple question by the disciples to Jesus as to how they were to prepare for the Passover feast. Jesus' precise instructions as Mark 14:16 records: *"The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them."* This is a reminder that even in the smallest details Jesus has prepared the way. When we obey Him explicitly, the future is assured.

We are then drawn into the events of the meal, many of which we are reminded through the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion. Each moment of the evening is a time of learning and Jesus showing His deep love for us as He eats and converses with His disciples. A sometimes-missed question in the events of the evening is from Jesus as recorded in Luke 22:35: *"Then Jesus asked them, 'When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?' 'Nothing,' they answered."* Why did Jesus ask that question in the last few hours He was to share with His disciples? Jesus knew then, as we should be reminded today, that when He sends, we lack for nothing.

The evening continues to the Garden of Gethsemane and Jesus asks His disciples to stay and keep watch while He prayed. Three times He returns and finds them asleep. The disciples are forlorn and we read in Mark 14:40, *“When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to Him.”* For many of us this makes us angry—this was Jesus; did the disciples not know the anguish He was going through? Three times John, three times Peter! And they were speechless: *“They did not know what to say to Him”* (v. 40). Then we sit back and realize that many times we are no different. How often Jesus asks us to do one small thing, and then busy lives takes over. *“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”* (v. 38). When He asks, we must obey.

QUESTIONS

Are you where Jesus has sent you? Do you sometimes feel that He wants you to do something, but the resources are not there? When He sends, we lack for nothing.

PRAYER

Holy Week

On Thursday of Holy Week, Jesus washed His disciples' feet and proclaimed, *“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet”* (John 13:14). Pray and ask Jesus to show you ways to serve others this week as He would have you do.

GOOD FRIDAY

Read **Mark 15:1-41**

The day started very early in the morning and it was to be a day that would impact many lives in many ways. The chief priests, the elders, and the Sanhedrin were to hand Jesus to Pilate, thinking they had stopped Jesus. Wrong! Pilate plays his political game to avoid a decision, but ultimately he sends Jesus to His death, thinking it was the end of a simple civil unrest matter. Wrong! Jesus died a human death with all the anguish, pain, and suffering as a substitute for you and me so that we might be reconciled with God. For this we are forever different!

This is a real day in history that had to happen so that we might be reconciled with Father God. A day that had to happen so that the fall of Adam and Eve would no longer be a barrier to being in a perfect relationship with God. A day that had to happen so that even the most hard-hearted would have an opportunity to know Jesus. In Mark 15:39 we read, *“And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how He died, he said, ‘Surely this Man was the Son of God!’”* A warrior, a disciplined military man, was changed forever through Jesus dying on the cross.

Every Sunday we have the opportunity to stand in front of the “cross” in our place of worship. Every moment of each day we have the opportunity to stand in front of the cross as the cornerstone of

our belief in Jesus Christ. This is a cross that is more than a symbol on our Bibles or around our necks, but a cross that changes hearts and minds, just like this centurion. Let's remember today the sacrifice that was made so that we have the privilege of standing before a cross, an empty cross, as we love, worship, and serve a Risen Lord.

As terrible as this day was, the cross had to happen so that you and I could have an eternal relationship with God. Without Friday, there is no Sunday. This really is a "Good Friday."

REFLECTION

Use this day to reflect on what Jesus did for you and then find an opportunity to share this love with someone who may not have made the proclamation of the centurion, "*Surely this Man was the Son of God!*"

PRAYER

Holy Week

On the Friday of Holy Week, Jesus was betrayed, denied, arrested, tried, sentenced to death, tortured, ridiculed, crucified, and buried. Spend time pondering Jesus' death and pray that God would help you to more fully understand Jesus' sacrifice and the love that brought Him to the cross.

HOLY SATURDAY

Read **1 Peter 1:18-19; Mark 15:42-47**

It was the eve of Sabbath. Joseph of Arimathea had “*boldly*” (Mark 15:43) asked Pilate for the body of Christ. He and Nicodemus (John 19:39), using strips of linen and seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes, embalmed Jesus. The tomb was sealed by placing a large stone over the entrance. We read in Matthew 27:62-67 that the tomb was then to be sealed and a guard placed at the entrance so that the possibility of a “stolen corpse” could not support the prophecy of Jesus of rising on the third day. The promise of God paying a ransom, the life of His only Son, was now fulfilled. The world waited. Was this a hoax? Was this really the Messiah?

It is easy for us today to skip over Saturday because we know the ending. We have this day as a short “interlude” to the real story. But—think about what it might have been like for those in Jerusalem at that time. How did Mary, Jesus’ mother, feel? Was her Son really the “Son of God” that the angel had promised her (Luke 2:29-33)? Where was Peter, the “rock” who could not get out of his mind his denial of knowing Christ the previous evening? Was it all over, as we read later in Luke 24, as the two men on the road to Emmaus thought when they recount to Jesus the events of that weekend (vv. 33-35)?

The tomb had to be occupied on Saturday for us to have eternal life through what was to happen on Sunday. For many this is sometimes the place where we find ourselves at a crossroads in life. We know the story, we see the facts, but we are in the time of life of not fully understanding the power of tomorrow, the day when we will celebrate the “Risen Lord”!

In the Garden Tomb, a garden museum of remembrance in Jerusalem, there is a rock tomb that is believed to be one of the possible burial sites that might have been the tomb of Jesus. After entering the tomb and viewing the possible place where Jesus was laid, visitors turn to exit and above their heads, inscribed on the rock, are these words: “He is not here—for He is risen.”

QUESTIONS

Like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, does the sacrifice of Christ and His paid ransom cause us to be more public with our belief in the Risen Christ? What can we be doing to be public witnesses of Christ’s resurrection?

PRAYER

Holy Week

On Holy Saturday the disciples were left without answers. Jesus lay dead in the tomb and God was seemingly silent. Sometimes we face difficulties and unanswered prayers, and Holy Saturday reminds us that God is at work in the silence. Spend time praying for strength in whatever season of waiting you are in presently.



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CELEBRATE
EASTER *with us!*

9:00am & 10:45am

Easter Services



Jesus is *Risen*

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.

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