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**THE JOURNEY**

**of**

**JESUS**

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**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!**

**April 5, 2020**

**Who Is This?**

By Seth Schouten

[**Matthew 21: 1 - 11**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21&version=NIV)

The story of Palm Sunday begins our journey into Holy Week. Jesus has arrived in Jerusalem for the last time before his death. He is met with cheers from an excited crowd. Branches are cut and waved and cloaks adorn the road Jesus travels on. Those who walked ahead of him and those who traveled behind him shout “Hosanna!” in his praise. The whole city has been stirred.

“Who is this?” they ask one another. Some call Jesus the “son of David”, others call him a “prophet”. The scriptures Jesus fulfill call him “king”. The people have gathered to praise the man they revere, yet don’t fully understand. Who is Jesus?

Matthew is intentional with introducing the Holy Week narrative with this question. He puts us in the mindset of those around Jesus at this moment: we aren’t sure of who he really is. He could be a prophet, or a king, or a messenger from God. However, in the events of the next week, Jesus will prove his true nature, his divinity, to us.

Jesus does what no human prophet or messenger from God or earthly king has ever done. He won’t offer us some temporary salvation that will not sustain. He gives us salvation that is everlasting. He is going to defeat death once and for all.

Who is Jesus? We may not know it at this moment in the story, but soon it will become obvious to us - Jesus is the Son of God.

**April 6, 2020**

**JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE**

by Dan Shakelford

[**Matthew 21: 12-17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+21&version=NIV)

Picture the scene. Christ enters the temple courts with His disciples. Put yourself in the place of one of the disciples. You hear normal sounds, the sounds of birds chirping, coins clinking, the sounds of crowds of people. It all seems so normal.

But all of a sudden, Jesus starts to turn over the tables and he even makes a whip and then drives the sellers out of the temple court! Maybe you’re embarrassed. But then,

maybe, you think you’ve become a little too numb to the profiteering that was going on in the temple courts.

Fast forward to today. Things have changed so much, even in the last month. COVID-19 has made its stamp on the world, and we continue to see people trying to profit from the sale of hand sanitizer, toilet paper, and disinfectant wipes, among other things.

As a church, particularly with all that is going on in the world, and at this time, as we celebrate the ONE who came to die for us, let’s seek His glory in all we do and work to spread His love to those in need during this time. Ask God how you can show His love to others today.

**April 7. 2020**

**JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES FEET**

by Samuel Dominques

[**John 13: 1 -17**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+13&version=NIV)

The biblical passage from John 13, verses 1 to 17, when Jesus washed the disciples' feet, teaches us that the best way to be like Him is to serve as He served. And he himself said: I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. (Verse 15).

Jesus actions on verses 4 and 5 teaches us that:

(1) Serving is an action. Note that the towel, the basin and the water were available to everyone, but Jesus took action as a servant.

(2) Serving requires humility. In the context of that time, washing the feet of visitors was a task for people considered to be of no social importance. Jesus reveals all his humility by washing the feet of his disciples.

(3) Serving is a proof of love. “Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (verse 1).

You can even serve without loving, but you can never love without serving. By washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus demonstrate his love.

May our hearts yearn every day to be true.

**April 8, 2020**

**JUDAS**

by James Bender

[**Luke 22: 7 - 23**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22&version=NIV)

Put yourself/us in the story. Who are you in the crowd? What are the sights, sounds, smells, emotions you might feel? What might you have done?

The Rabbi sent two of us to get a room for the Passover meal. The money purse was ready, but apparently there was someone He already had in mind. Someone was going to give the Rabbi another extravagant gift just for free, and He was going to take it. Peter and John went away with His strange instructions. Neither of them bat an eye. They never did. The Rabbi chose them because they were his obedient chosen; his unwavering, bleating, unthinking sheep. The Rabbi thought it was genuine, that these two really understood Him and His message. Peter even tried talking like the Rabbi sometimes, when the Rabbi was not around; Taking on the same airs. Peter didn’t understand what he was saying, but it sure sounded like something Rabbi might say. Even the Rabbi bought it. Even the Rabbi thought they were on his side, that they understood him.

If only they did. Surely they would turn if they could see what the Rabbi was doing? At the dinner things were going well. We were feasting properly. It felt like the beginning. It was a relief, that at least here, on this day, when all Jews are truly brothers, there could be camaraderie between us. Then it happened again. The Rabbi took our most sacred ceremony and made it all about Him. The Rabbi once again claiming to be… No. It is still unthinkable. Even as He does it in plain sight, it is still too outlandish to conceive. He needs help, these people need help. This cannot continue. This must end.

This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me My God my God, how do you permit this blasphemy? This is my blood, which is shed for you My God, how long will you endure this Heresy? My betrayer is at this table. God is betrayed by this blasphemer “

Those who do not learn from History are doomed to repeat it” Most, if not all, of us understand and appreciate the value of learning history. However, I think we often miss out on learning from history. To learn from history, we must put ourselves in the shoes of every agent, and every bystander. To do this, we need to know a lot more than dates and names; we need to know and challenge ourselves.

To explain myself, I find most helpful to recall the Nazis during The War. We all, it seems, have made up our minds that in this historical drama, should we have played any part, we would have played the part of the victorious allied hero on Juno Beach, or the freedom fighter in Occupied Paris. Perhaps we identify with great men such as Willem Arondeus, who risked life and freedom to rescue Jews from Occupied Netherlands.

Identifying with such people does not teach us much. Most of us think of ourselves as good, decent people already, and so to identify with the heros and underdogs is easy. I would like to suggest we learn more from the history, and about ourselves, if we put ourselves into the shoes to the “bad guys” of history. In history, there are far more people who perpetrated evil than resisted it. More still who stood passively and averted their eyes while it was carried out. By putting ourselves in the shoes of these people in the story, we can better understand two things; the circumstances that allow evil things to occur, and the possibility for all of us to be party to such evils.

What was it about Judas which could not let him accept Christ as Lord, despite all he had seen? How similar are he and I? If I always identify myself with Peter, I will never know how close I am to Judas. If I never know how close I am to Judas, I will not know of what I need to repent, and then fix my eyes on Him.

**April 9, 2020**

**JESUS, OUR COMFORT**

by Pastor Angela

[**Luke 22: 39 - 63**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+22&version=NIV)

Anguish, alone, betrayed, rejected; these are but a few words that describe what Jesus experienced in this passage. This is the beginning of his horrendous ordeal that lead to his dying on the cross.

Later he would be stripped of all human dignity; he would be mocked, spit upon, whipped, crowned with thorns and finally made to carry his own cross, actually nailed to it and suffered the painful and agonizing death of crucifixion.

It’s hard to really face the suffering of Jesus. To let it’s severity sink into our hearts and minds. To even let a little of Jesus’ suffering flood our imagination. After all, in a few days Easter is coming.

So why then take the time over the next few days to focus on the cross. There are many reasons but lately I’ve been thinking a lot about the fact that Jesus was not only divine, he was human. It’s where I find so much comfort, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jesus didn’t go through a pandemic and maybe he didn’t endure the exact situation that you are dealing with, but he knows human suffering. He knows it from personal experience. Jesus understands our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:14-16) and he intercedes for us. (Hebrews 7:23-25)

This gives us reassurance to tell him our deepest sorrows, fears and sin. He knows. He understands. He calls us the “Beloved” and loves us completely. May that be a comfort to you this day.

**April 10, 2020**

**GOOD FRIDAY**

by Grayson Bain

[**John 19: 16 - 30**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+19&version=NIV)

**Before the cross is anything else, it is a catastrophe.** It is the unjust lynching of an innocent man.

**God did not kill Jesus.**Jesus was offered as a sacrifice in that the Father was willing to send his Son into all our sinful system (world) in order to expose it as utterly sinful, and provide us with another way.

I know for me, **I brutally cram sins into this life, and Jesus revealed the motive of God by forgiving me.** When Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them,” he was not asking God to act contrary to his nature. When Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them,” he was, as always, revealing how much God loves me!  He’s willing to have me back, again and again.

Jesus shouted *“It is finished.”*
Not *“I am finished.”*

No, this was a shout of the triumphant winner!

Spend a few moments, eyes closed tight…and imagine how you are implicated by your explicit or tacit endorsement of the systems that support the world. Ponder the part you play in the world’s appalling selfishness and pride and jealousy and envy and bitterness.

The cross is the great victory over our sin and our death and our trip to hell.

Sin has been punished, Death has been conquered, and Hell has been plundered.

Now ponder the Man on the cross, the place where you get rescued.

Maybe this is the time to shout, **“You won!”**

**April 11, 2020**

**VIGIL SATURDAY**

by Paul Fieber

[**John 19: 38 - 42**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+19&version=NIV)

“After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pounds weight. They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.”

Joseph of Arimathea. Nicodemus of the Sanhedrin. Two men who followed Christ in secret while he was alive yet came forth and revealed themselves in the disaster following the crucifixion. All the disciples had scatted in fear. Peter denied knowing him, and his closest friends were in hiding.

Yet these two men, when the cause they had hoped for was lost, decided this was the perfect moment to proclaim themselves as followers of Jesus. We must ask “Why then?” We may never know. But what I notice is that when all the other followers of Jesus were fleeing in the face of the disaster they had witnessed and the end of all their hopes, Joseph and Nicodemus came forth and claimed the body of Christ and honoured it with their preparations.

Today in this comparatively peaceful land, with disaster nowhere near, I can find myself unwilling to be forthright about my faith. I might be ridiculed by those whose opinions don’t really matter to me or ignored or looked down upon by others. The cost is not very great compared to the consequences faced by Joseph and Nicodemus, yet it seems a terribly hard thing. They owned Christ when to all appearances the battle was lost. Why can’t I own him now the battle’s won?

**April 12, 2020**

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

by Arina Poriuncula

[**John 20: 1 - 18**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20&version=NIV)

Easter is a time to celebrate life and feel safe as we celebrate that Jesus is risen!

As child I remember that just before Easter day, we talked about needing to be cautious about our behaviour as Jesus is dead, and we are vulnerable and we must be careful with all temptations as evil is more powerful on the days before Easter. Now I know that Jesus lives forever never to die again!

I do remember the sacrifice Jesus went through on the day of his death. But how wonderful that Jesus rose, conquering death to save the world from evil.

Easter means that all darkness is left behind and all our fears are replaced with love and faith as Jesus rose from the dead to bring us salvation.

Easter is life, is love and salvation. We must pray for all the people who have not found Jesus in their heart yet, that during the coming year they too can be saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and set free from fear.

Today (Easter Day) is a time to be united, to pray in the name of Jesus thanking him for saving us from death and darkness.



*Dear Family at Nelson Avenue Community Church;*

*It is our deep hope that the reflections written for Holy Week by different members of our congregation has blessed you as you’ve reflected on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ this Holy Week. It is our hope that your faith has been strengthened and renewed.*

*I John 3: 16 declares:*

*“This is how we know what love is: Jesus laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters”*

*These are difficult times as we live through the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, we know that Jesus Christ has conquered death and that He lives to walk with us wherever the road may lead us.*

*Receive this benediction:*

*Go now as God’s chosen witnesses*

*to testify that Christ has been raised*

*and that we are raised with him.*

*Do not look for him among the dead*

*but be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

*And may God raise you from all that would entomb you;*

*May Christ Jesus call you by name and go ahead of you;*

*And may the Holy Spirit empower you for all that is good.*

*Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,*

*In the name of Christ our Lord*

*AMEN*

*(Written by Nathan Nettleton. accessed on “re:Worship”* [**https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/04/easter-commission-benediction.html**](https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/04/easter-commission-benediction.html)*April 4, 2020*)