



THE HOLY WEEK JOURNEY

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INTRODUCTION

Every year since the Jews followed Moses in exodus of Egypt, they have called the week during that time of the year - Passover. Each day of Passover Week starting with Sunday, the Jewish people make precise preparations for the Passover meal and The Feast of the Unleavened Bread, to commemorate God delivering them from Pharaoh's bondage, and to remember their mutual covenant with God. For hundreds of years, it was mandatory for all male Jews to go to Jerusalem for the feasts of Pentecost, Tabernacles, and Passover, but Passover was the priority. Passover was the celebration of freedom and deliverance for the Jews, and in the political and religious turmoil during the time of Jesus, there were desperate expectations that God (as He had promised) would again raise up another great leader (like Moses or David) to once again free their land and the Jewish people from the cruel oppression imposed by the Roman occupation.

For centuries Palm Sunday has signaled the beginning of the Christian Holy Week for believers around the world - naturally this week coincides with the Jewish Passover.

For Christians, Palm Sunday commemorates the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on the first day of the Passover, and leads us through the circumstances, events, and movements of Jesus' week. Christian gatherings are focused around His suffering, death, and resurrection. This should be one of the most illuminating and gratifying times in the life of a Jesus follower.

During the week we have an opportunity to worship, observe, and celebrate the triumph, the sorrow, the suffering, the silence, and finally the power of the risen Christ! As followers of Jesus, we know that our worship was never meant to be confined to just this one week - but Christians everywhere, in any language, can experience the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ the Son of God as gatherings of communion, singing, praying, meditation, mourning and celebration take place during this entire week. Join us...



PALM SUNDAY - PRAYING FOR MERCY

Father... Thank you for the amazing gift of Your Only Son, Jesus Christ. You sent Him to us without blemish or flaw, the complete definition of beauty and perfection. We shouted His name in the streets, and we cried out Hosanna; we sang His praises, and made Him famous... and then realized we did not truly know Him, or why He came. Lord, forgive us that we did not understand that His mission was not for just a few, but for all. In Your Mercy You included us. Dear Father, reveal Your Son... reveal Your Son that we may know the truth and not the lie. Let us follow our King in Spirit and in truth as faithful followers and not merely as part of the unknowing crowd!

Amen

"BY ANNOUNCING HIS
TRIUMPHANT ENTRANCE, AND
PROCLAIMING HIM JESUS THE
MESSIAH – THE CHRIST! "KING OF
KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS...
HOSANNA! HOSANNA IN THE
HIGHEST!"

MEDITATIONS

Everyone and everything has a beginning. What is most curious is how the outcome can oftentimes be so different from how the whole thing started! On what we call Palm Sunday the Jews celebrated the triumphant presentation of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. Matthew's biography of Jesus describes this event as the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy of Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9). For the Jews, this the first day of Passover, was called the "day of presentation" as each family presented the lamb they had chosen for the Feast of the Passover (a lamb without blemish or flaw). The population of the city had increased from 50,000 to 150,000 people at Passover time. Huge caravans of faithful Jews and extended families had come, despite the high tolls (paid to Rome) on the main access roads and city entrances.

As Jesus the Lamb of God, (without blemish or flaw) rides into the city, His reputation precedes Him, and the news of His healing the sick, compassion for the poor, and the claims of being the "Son of God" had spread rapidly throughout the entire region. Like a storm, the stories of His commanding and charismatic teaching, His calm and discerning wisdom, and His gentle and deep compassion, swept the highly populated shores of the Sea of Galilee. But it was in the temple courts where all Jesus had said and done had been critically and cynically documented by those who felt most threatened by Him... the Pharisees and Sadducees.

By mid-morning, the frenzied streets were filled with shouts and praises for the arrival of Jesus from those who gathered. They actually began to cry out the words “Hosanna” (Hebrew – meaning; save us now), and “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.” As they shouted, they laid down their cloaks and waved palm branches, symbolizing that an enemy of the Jews had been defeated. Ironically, on the first day of the Passover Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a young donkey being proclaimed a Savior and celebrity – before the next Sabbath He would be led out of the city to his death through the same streets - being proclaimed a criminal and imposter. With the public entry of Jesus into the city, Passover week would become something different than it ever had before - nothing would ever again be the same.

Let’s begin our Holy Week journey with believers of all ages, from all times and places, by announcing His triumphant entrance, and proclaiming Him Jesus the Messiah – The Christ! “King of kings and Lord of lords... Hosanna! Hosanna in the Highest!

LUKE 10:11-44

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN MINAS

11As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. 12He said therefore, “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. 13Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’ 14But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ 15When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. 16The first came before him, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.’ 17And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ 18And the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made five minas.’ 19And he said to him, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’ 20Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; 21for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ 22He said to him, ‘I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? 23Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’ 24And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’ 25And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten minas!’ 26‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 27But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.’”

28And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, 30saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. 31If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” 32So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. 33And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” 34And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” 35And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. 37As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the

LUKE 10:11-44, CONT.

whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” 39And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” 40He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Can we identify how we have proclaimed Jesus as Savior in our own lives?

Have we also welcomed Him, only to push Him away through what we think, say, and do?

Can we also identify some other practical ways we are actively seeking to know who Jesus really is?

In the context of Jesus and the Passover, what does the term “a lamb without defect or blemish” mean according to (1 Peter 1:19)?

A WORD OF WISDOM

"MOVE FORWARD IN FAITH - UNAFRAID.

THE WAY WILL OPEN FOR YOU

AS YOU GO IN MY NAME.

IT IS ONLY YOUR FEAR THAT

CAN STOP MY WAYS AND PLANS FOR YOU

HAVE NO FEAR. KNOW THAT IN ME

ALL IS WELL, AND YOU ARE SAFE - STAY IN ME.

IN ME, NO DEVICES OF MEN,

NOR OUTCOMES OF EVIL,

CAN HARM YOU IN ANY WAY.

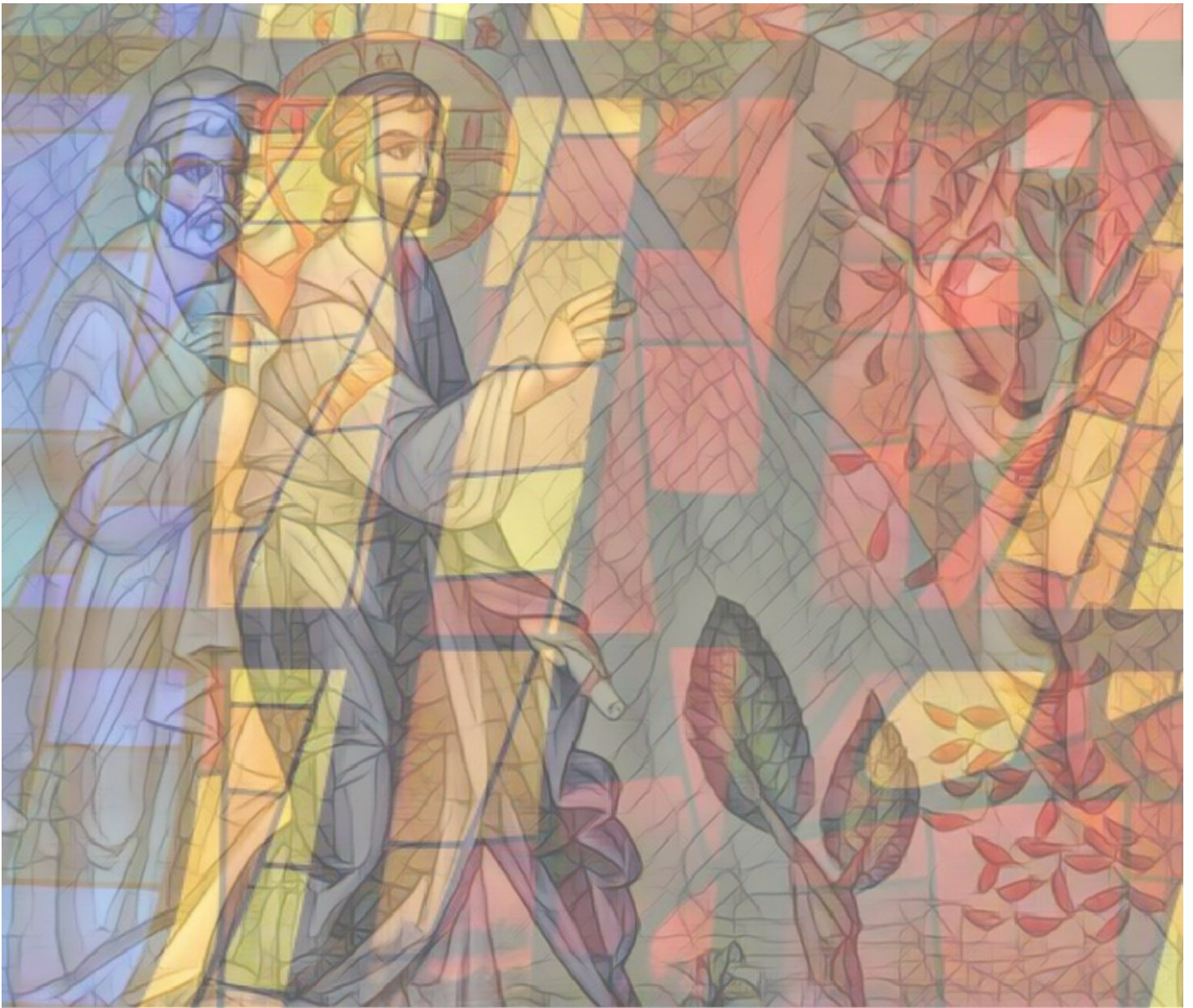
EACH STEP TO ME WILL PROVE

TO BE A STEP OF PROGRESS,

AS LONG AS YOUR HEARTS ARE FIXED ON ME,

"TRUSTING IN THE LORD,

I KNOW NO CHANGE."



MONDAY

PRAYING FOR TRUST

Father, we know that by the gift of Your Only Son, Jesus Christ - You gave to us all that we need. In humble and small ways we seek to walk with Him this week. You have asked us to embrace His suffering, so please teach us then Father to trust You, and to trust Your will, above our own. We have so much – and often times it is difficult to trust completely in something other than our many earthly possessions and our own resources. Help us today Lord, to discover more about our Savior Jesus than we knew yesterday. Father, You Jesus to us to show the way to You. Our prayer is that we open our hearts to Your Holy Spirit, and shut ourselves out from the things in us, and about us, that keep us from completely following Him. But then again Father... which of us is complete without Your Son? So we come to You as the finisher of our faith... we come because of Your love... and we come only in His blessed name... Jesus.

Amen

MEDITATIONS

The Word Becomes Flesh... In spite of all that Jesus knew about us as God, He still came to us as a man – that is outrageous love, and amazing grace... right? The bible says in Colossians chapter one, that Jesus is the living word – the Son of God, the firstborn over all creation, and that in Him all things consist, yet he came freely and openly to us as a humble servant. The gospels say that John baptized Jesus as man—and then publicly recognized Him as Lord; declaring Him “the coming Messiah.” Scriptures say that Satan tempted Jesus the man, but after His crucifixion, Jesus conquered His enemy as God; encouraging followers, “be of good cheer for I have overcome the world.”

Jesus hungered, but He fed thousands; indeed, He is the bread of heaven that gives life to all mankind. He was thirsty—but He cried, “If any man thirsts let him come to Me and drink.” He promises that fountains will flow from all those who believe. He was weary and tired—but He is comfort, rest, and a hiding place to those who are tired, afraid, and overwhelmed. He wept bitterly for the lost—but He promises to dry every tear from our eyes. Jesus asked, “Where is Lazarus laid?” Why? Because He grieved the loss of someone He loved—but He raised Lazarus from the dead because He is a compassionate and merciful God. Jesus was betrayed by a close friend, and sold out for a cheap thirty pieces of silver –but He redeems the world through the great price of His own death and the sacrifice of His life-blood. Jesus was led like a sheep to slaughter—but yet He is the Good Shepherd and His sheep know His voice.

As the Lamb of God, He was silent before His accusers—but He is the “Living Word” and is proclaimed by the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Jesus was bruised and wounded— but He heals every disease and sickness. He willingly laid down His life—but He had the power to take it back again. He died—only so He could give us life. He was buried—only so He could rise again. Jesus would make the journey into death and darkness— but only so He could redeem and lift the souls of men, and become forever the Light of World.

MATTHEW 21:18-44

JESUS CURSES THE FIG TREE

18 In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. 19 And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once.

20 When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?"

21 And Jesus answered them, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen. 22 And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHALLENGED

23 And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" 24 Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

28 "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' 29 And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. 30 And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him."

MATTHEW 21:18-44, CONT.

THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS

33 “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. 34When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. 35And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. 37Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ 39And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” 41They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.” 42Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? 43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. 44And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

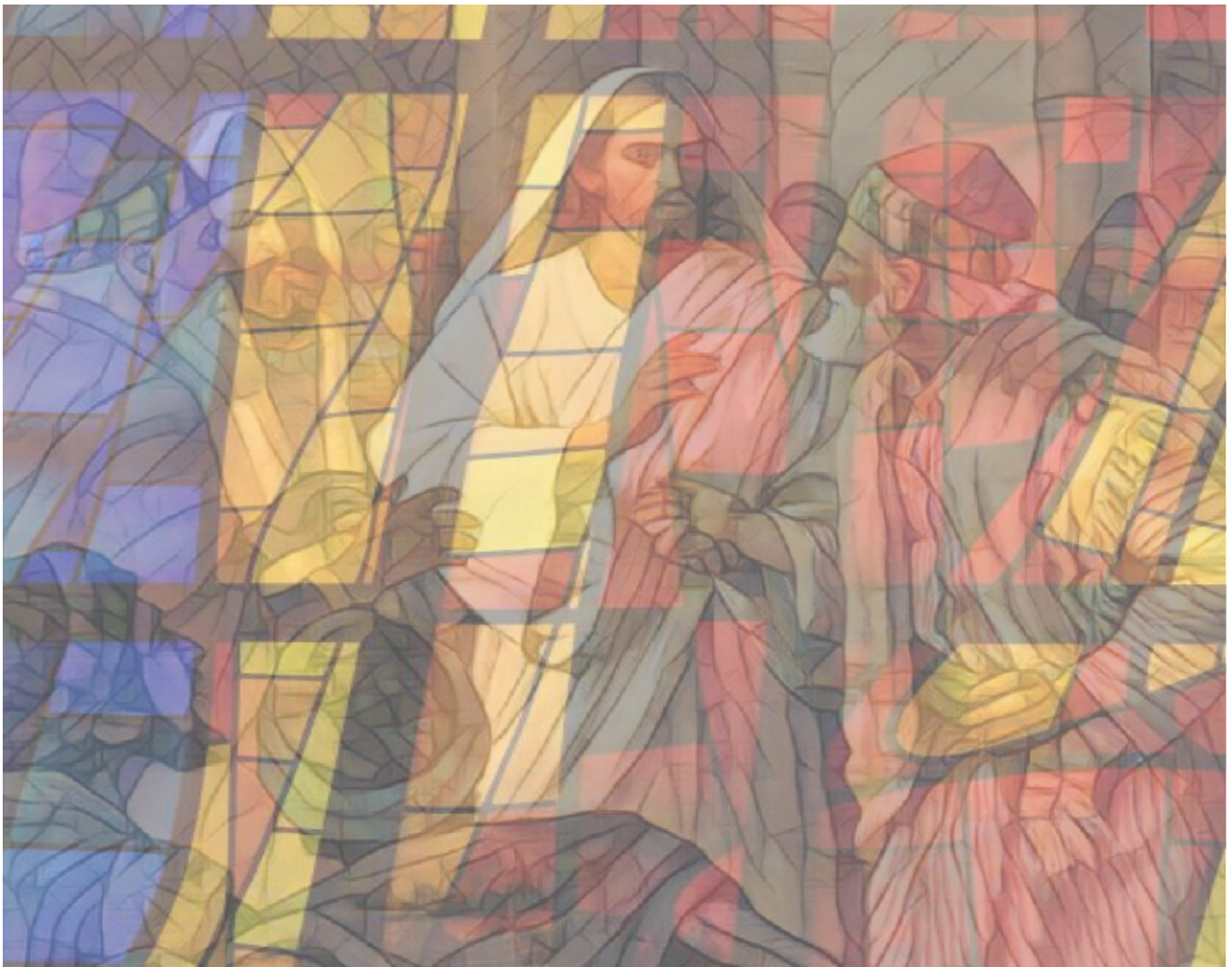
How do we wrap our minds around the fact that God would come for us, or that Jesus would die for us even while we were still sinners?

How can we explain that God still loves us, in spite of knowing what He knows about us?

In that context, what are we learning about ourselves, and what are we learning about God?

A WORD OF WISDOM

"THE FIRST STEP IN YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
IS TO BEGIN ACCEPTING ME AS YOUR NEW REALITY.
IT WILL NOT BE EASY TO LEAVE YOUR OLD EVERYDAY REALITIES!
REALITIES THAT SO QUICKLY CHANGE MOMENT TO MOMENT
IN EACH SITUATION AND CIRCUMSTANCE ,
LEAVING YOU TO FEEL AS IF WHAT YOU WERE EXPERIENCING
WAS ABOVE OR BEYOND THE REALM OF REALITY AND POSSIBILITY.
REACH DEEPER INTO ME.
KNOW THAT DOUBT AND NEGATIVE AND FEELINGS ARE NOT TRUE.
TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP, AND KNOW THE TRUTH –
HE A PERSON, HE IS MY SON,
HE IS REAL AND HE IS YOUR SALVATION."



TUESDAY

PRAYING FOR TRUST

PRAYING FOR KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

Father, there is so much that we do not know of You, and there is even more that we do not fully understand. But yet there are those moments when we know that you have intimately shared with us everything about who You are. Search our hearts and know that our questions about You come from our deep love for You, and an even deeper desire to fully know You, and to honor You any and every way we can. Since You have sent us Your Son Jesus - we have a teacher to teach us... Move upon us Lord, and with Holy Spirit lead us to the truth that He is, and has, for our lives. Our world is filled with many who resent You and reject Your love. They question and doubt Your Word on every front, and hate those who speak Your message. Something's never change; Your enemies are still Your enemies—evil is still evil! Lord! Deliver us from evil... and let us boldly proclaim Your power and hope to those who are powerless and hopeless. Give us grace and wisdom as we—feed those who are hungry, pray for those who are sick, and visit those who are lonely. Help us, Lord, to faithfully do the work of Your Kingdom so indeed Your Kingdom will come! For Yours is the power and glory forever...

MEDITATIONS

There are people in our lives who no matter what we say or do, we just can't seem to please or make peace with them. It is usually a clear sign that there is an entirely different agenda going on within them – in their insecurity and pride they see us - the real problem and threat. So in all truth, there will never be a way to please them, and there will never be peace. Jesus had more than His share of those kinds of people and religious critics, so it did not take long for the Pharisees in their arrogance and jealousy to plot against Jesus the Rabbi and teacher.

Remember how on Sunday, His first day in Jerusalem, Jesus had “shown the passion of His mission” by abruptly clearing the temple of money- changers, healing the blind and the lame, and then publicly ordaining that the children be allowed to praise Him. By Tuesday, everything that He said and did had become confrontational and a personal offense to the Pharisees and their world of “religious fraud.” In a planned attempt to stop their own public embarrassment and exposure, the Pharisees followed Jesus around the city and openly called Him out trying to publicly discredit Him with the people while He taught them. But they really only succeeded in discrediting themselves.

Next, they attempted to catch Jesus in some kind of heresy or blaspheme towards the Law of the Prophets (this would give them just cause to silence Him, or better yet, have Him arrested). But Jesus calmly quieted each scheme by using their attacks as an opportunity to give life, bring hope, and create an understanding of the spirit of the Law. They also tried to trick Him into committing a public offense against the Roman law, but Jesus quickly saw through their deceit, and in a very matter-of-fact style endorsed Caesar's money as Caesars. The people followed and gathered around Jesus for hours. So He continued to interact and to teach them in parables so what He taught would bring relevance and new life to the words of the prophets and those things that were yet to come.

The Rabbi Jesus found favor with the people, further confounding and infuriating the Pharisees. **They did not like this messenger or His message, and so their pride and arrogance kept them from hearing the truth that He taught.** They did not want their authority or positions challenged by anyone; particularly someone who was now in the Temple and on the streets claiming to be God. After this day, the Pharisees would no longer just be harmless antagonists or religious critics, they would now become evil conspirators against Jesus - knowing they must stop Him and end the threat to their place of power and piety.

MATTHEW 22:15-46

PAYING TAXES TO CAESAR

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. 16 And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. 17 Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. 20 And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

SADDUCEES ASK ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

23 The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, 24 saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.' 25 Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. 26 So too the second and third, down to the seventh. 27 After them all, the woman died. 28 In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her." 29 But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." 33 And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

MATTHEW 22:15-46, CONT.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Whose Son Is the Christ? 41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, 42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." 43 He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 44 "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"? 45 If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" 46 And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

ZECCHARIAH 9:9-10

THE COMING KING OF ZION

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How do we respond when critics confront our own faith; and how can we change our response when it is less than we know it should be?

When we hear the truth do we accept it, or do we fight against it, much like the Pharisees?

What has been our strategy for dealing with our enemies? What does that look like compared to the strategy of Jesus?

A WORD OF WISDOM

"PERSEVERE WITH PATIENCE
IN YOUR PRAYER,
AND REPULSE THE CARES AND DOUBTS
THAT ARISE WITHIN YOU.
THEY DISTURB AND TROUBLE YOU,
AND SLACKEN THE INTENSITY
OF YOUR PRAYER."

...THE PHILOKALIA



WEDNESDAY

PRAYING FOR REVELATION

Father, we confess in our hearts that we often hear what we want to hear, and do not listen to the things we do not like or want to hear. You are merciful O Lord, and You continue to reveal who You are through the love of Your Son Jesus Christ. Help us to listen! Lord, please help us to listen! We want to know the plans You have made for us. We are human and so we want to know what will become of this world, and we want to know about the world to come. Help us to listen for Your voice! When we pray O Lord, let our mind be at peace and our mouth be silent; so that when You speak we can hear and then listen! When we read and reflect on Your word, grant us wisdom and stillness... so we can listen! We know our world is crumbling and that violence fills our land; the nations of this earth plot against one another, and the sounds of contempt and hostility are loud and deafening. But these are the times in which we know that You speak to Your people—so help us listen... You are speaking, O God, let us just listen...

MEDITATIONS

Sometimes we are hearing, but not listening – they are not the same. It seems as though everyone close to Jesus was hearing Him talk, but almost none of them were listening to what He was saying. For three days, Jesus had been in the temple teaching, and for three days the Sadducees, Pharisees, and the Chief Priest had tried nearly everything to discredit and humiliate Jesus in front of the people. Silenced by His wisdom and discernment, they finally went away to re-group, and to conspire His murder.

Jesus had taught many things during the short time with His disciples, and the people who gathered with them, and in every parable, prophecy, and lesson, He was telling them in one way or another that He was going away - leaving them; leaving as in “His death.” They all heard him say the words as He spoke, but they were not listening. They heard Him talk about the end of the age - the destruction of the temple - the coming of false Christ” – the midnight cry of the bridegroom - the Son of man being lifted up - and the kingdom of God being taken away. He had even told them straight out on that Wednesday, “As you know the Passover is two days away – and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

Sometime later that evening after supper, in the home of Simon (whom Jesus had healed from leprosy), it became quite apparent that none of His disciples had really been listening to the important things that Jesus had been saying. Mary of Bethany apparently among the guests of Simon, approached Jesus (who was reclined from the table) and pours into His hair an expensive mixture of perfume and oil. The disciples still clueless about Christ’s message express their frustration (in particular Judas) with what she has done to Him. They grumbled under their breath and protested to Jesus about how inappropriate her behavior was, claiming that by her pouring something so expensive on His head she was wasting valuable resources for their ministry. Jesus uses the situation as a “teachable moment” by further revealing the magnitude of His mission. He says, “Don’t bother this woman, for me, she has done a beautiful thing. She pours the perfume of preparation for my burial, and wherever this gospel is preached she will be remembered.” But this too went right over their heads. Many had heard the words of Jesus during the week, and at this point, it seems as though she was the only one of the few who had listened.

JOHN 12:17-50

17The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. 18The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. 19So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

SOME GREEKS SEEK JESUS

20Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." 22Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."

THE SON OF MAN MUST BE LIFTED UP

27 "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." 29The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." 30Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. 31Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. 34So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" 35So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. 36While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."

MATTHEW 26:6-16

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

6 Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. 8 And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? 9 For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor." 10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. 11 For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. 12 In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. 13 Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

JUDAS TO BETRAY JESUS

14 Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

EZEKIEL 2:1-10

EZEKIEL'S CALL

1 And he said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you." 2 And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. 3 And he said to me, "Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. 4 The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' 5 And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them. 6 And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. 7 And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house. 8 "But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Be not rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you." 9 And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out to me, and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. 10 And he spread it before me. And it had writing on the front and on the back, and there were written on it words of lamentation and mourning and woe.



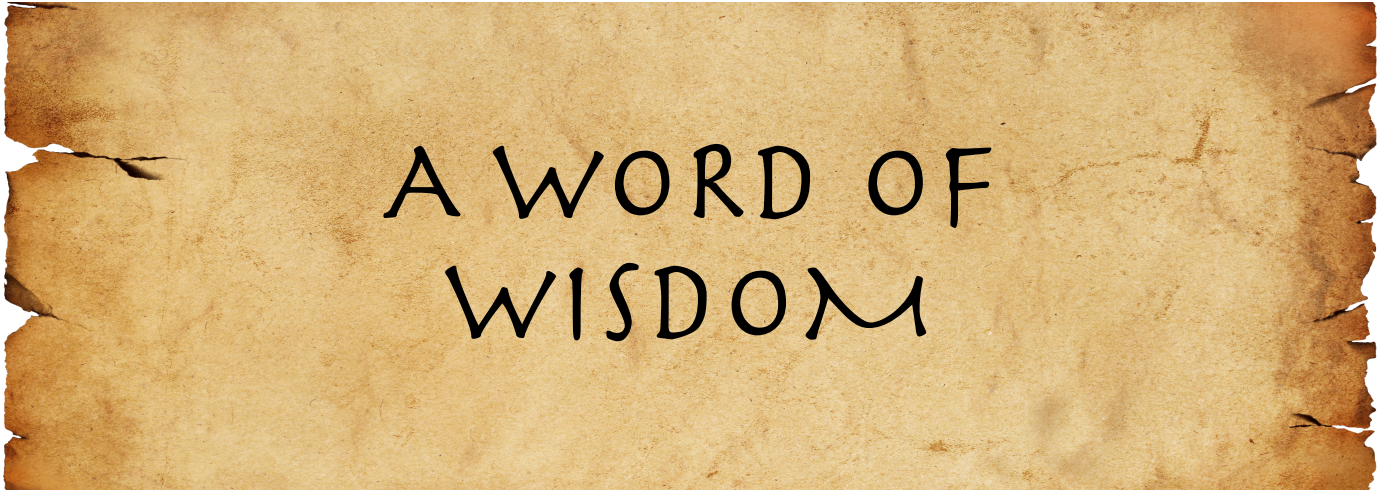
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Would our friends and family say that we are good listeners?

How important is listening in our relationship with Jesus and our journey of faith?

How can we improve our listening skills?

Have you ever prayed in silence?



A WORD OF WISDOM

IF YOU SEEK PRAYER ATTENTIVELY
YOU WILL FIND IT;
NOTHING IS MORE ESSENTIAL
TO PRAYER THAN ATTENTIVENESS.
SO DO ALL YOU CAN TO ACQUIRE IT...
THE PHILOKALIA



THURSDAY PRAYING FOR PATIENCE

Father, seldom are the times when darkness seems too dark. As I fall down on my knees it is so dark I feel as if I am almost blind. Where is the light O God? Where is the glimmer of hope and the glow of Your saving grace? Am I supposed to hide as well? My conscience is not clear... my hands are not clean. There is evil in this darkness and I can feel its terrible presence. I fear that I too would have done the same as Judas, Peter, and the rest—or even worse. Lord, this one thing I do know; I am truly sorry, please forgive me! Father God, I know You are here. I know my Savior Jesus is here in this darkness with me, somewhere in the shadows doing what He had to do so that I might live in the light. You are my true Light O Lord, so who do I have to be afraid of? I will wait here patiently for the Light to come. I will wait here patiently for the Light to call me out of this darkness. I will wait here for the Light that I know is coming. I will trust in You to direct my feet and Light my path. This darkness will not overtake me. Jesus sweet Lamb of God, You are the Light of the World... Amen

MEDITATIONS

O' DARK NIGHT! THE SINISTER AND SHADOWED NIGHT WAS STILL YOUNG—EVIL HAD JUST BEGUN ITS WORK OF CONTEMPT, AND MORE DARKNESS WOULD SOON COME. ON THIS OMINOUS PASSOVER, THERE TRULY WAS THE SMELL OF INNOCENT BLOOD IN THE AIR—THE LAMB OF GOD, APPEARED TO BE CAUGHT IN SATAN'S SNARE—O' DARK NIGHT!

There is both darkness and evil in our world – both are very real. For Jesus, it was not just irony or chance that would bring about the events that would take place on the eve of the Feast of Unleavened Bread – it was the revelation of a new covenant and a new freedom, for a new people. Jesus was the new way and now had become the true Light of the world – the city set on a hill that cannot be hidden. There were many evil characters and greedy accomplices who would play key roles in shaping the course of history and the face of eternity on this dark Thursday night of Passover. Jesus obediently walked on into the shadowed night, knowing that more darkness and evil were to come.

First, there was a final Passover meal with His closest friends and His beloved disciples. Secondly, sometime during the meal, Jesus revealed to his twelve that He is aware of the desertion, denial, and betrayal that had already begun in their heart and would continue on that night. After supper there is a late-night visit to the Garden of Gethsemane for prayer, where the God-man struggle of Jesus turns into a brutally intense battle of human (flesh) and divine (Spirit) will.

The honesty and agony of the garden struggle is both staggering and disturbing. And finally, from out of the shadows would come the predicted betrayal of Judas, with his money, fellow-conspirators, and his kiss of death to the cheek of Jesus. Sensing that the final part of His journey has come and that His time of suffering has begun, Jesus seems to almost willingly surrender to the evil-plot of His enemies.

The High Priest, now eagerly played the role of a puppet, as he danced to Satan's diabolical tune of hypocrisy and the lust for power. Quickly he called together a court of the corrupt and religious against Jesus. There they orchestrated a cascading narrative of wild and unfounded accusations. Caiaphas presented false charges of blasphemy validated by the testimony of several pre-scripted false witnesses. And finally, Caiaphas incited the erratic and volatile mob by crying out in a loud voice and ripping his clothes in front of Jesus, proclaiming Him to be a blasphemer of "the law", a fraud, and an imposter. Chaos ensued, Jesus was immediately blind-folded, and in the shadows of their darkened hearts they slapped Jesus in the head, and spit in His face. To the enemies of Jesus, it seemed on the surface that in the shelter of the evil shadows' things were going just as they had planned. As the night surged ahead into the early hours of the morning (before the sun had come up), one could barely hear a closing exchange of just a few simple words between Jesus and His accusers. "Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus answered, "Yes, it is as you say." This truly was a dark and evil night!

LUKE 22:1-53

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. 2And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people.

JUDAS TO BETRAY JESUS

3 Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. 4He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. 5And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

THE PASSOVER WITH THE DISCIPLES

7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." 9They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" 10He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters 11and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 12And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." 13And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

14 And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. 15And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19And 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." 20And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. 22For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" 23And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

LUKE 22:1-53, CONT.

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

24 A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. 27 For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. 28 "You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, 29 and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, 30 that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

JESUS FORETELLS PETER'S DENIAL

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." 33 Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." 34 Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."

SCRIPTURE MUST BE FULFILLED IN JESUS

35 And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." 36 He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. 37 For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment." 38 And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough."

JESUS PRAYS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

39 And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. 40 And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." 43 And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he rose from prayer, he

LUKE 22:1-53, CONT.

BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF JESUS

46and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.” 47 While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, 48but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” 49And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” 50And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him. 52Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”

JEREMIAH 11:18-23

18The Lord made it known to me and I knew; then you showed me their deeds.19But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. I did not know it was against me they devised schemes, saying, “Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more.” 20But, O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously, who tests the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause. 21Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the men of Anathoth, who seek your life, and say, “Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, or you will die by our hand” — 22therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: “Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine, 23and none of them shall be left. For I will bring disaster upon the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment.”

ISAIAH 50:4-11

4The Lord God has given me
the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.

Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear
to hear as those who are taught.

5 The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I turned not backward.

6 I gave my back to those who strike,
and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face
from disgrace and spitting.

7But the Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like a flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

8 He who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me.

9 Behold, the Lord God helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

10Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant?
Let him who walks in darkness and has no light
trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.

11Behold, all you who kindle a fire,
who equip yourselves with burning torches!
Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled!
This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

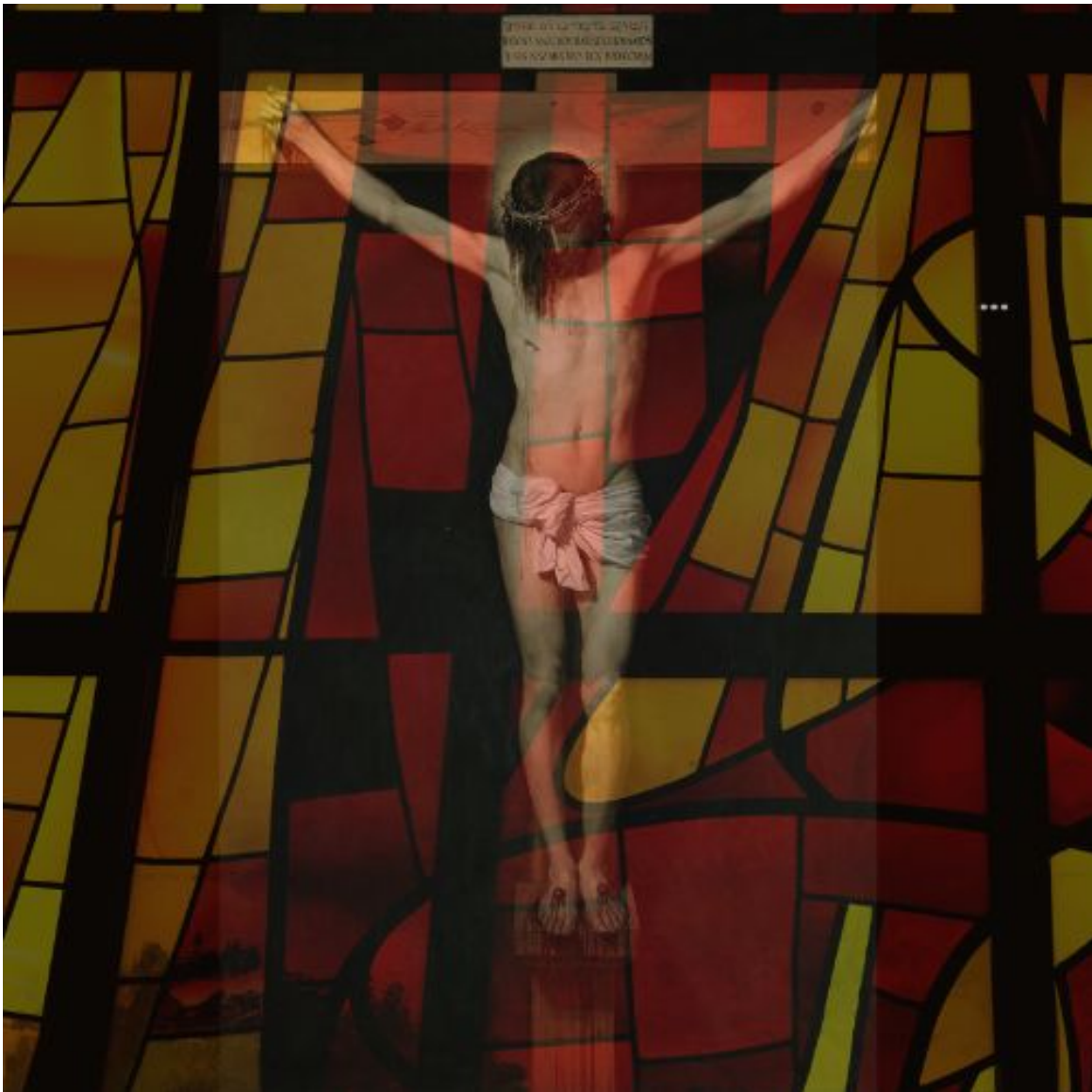
Have you ever been falsely accused of something you did not do?

If so, how did you respond?

In what context is it wrong to defend ourselves in the face of unjust accusations?

A WORD OF WISDOM

"PRAYER FROM WITHIN COST NOTHING
MORE BUT THE EFFORT TO SINK DOWN
IN SILENCE INTO THE DEPTHS
OF ONE'S HEART AND CALL
MORE AND MORE UPON
THE RADIANT NAME OF JESUS.
EVERYONE WHO DOES THAT
FEELS AT ONCE THE INWARD LIGHT!
HE EVEN CATCHES SIGHT
IN THIS LIGHT A REVELATION
OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD."
- THE WAY OF A PILGRIM



FRIDAY

PRAYING FOR GOD'S WILL BE DONE

Father, as we look back at history in hindsight, we confess that we are ashamed. In spite of our vantage point, and all that has been written and said about the “great sacrifice” of Your Son Jesus; our shame is that we know we probably would have done the same as all the others. Forgive us, and help us use what we have learned of You, to trust You, and to erase all doubt and disobedience in us. O God, we know Your mission and are a living witness to the life it brings to all people. Let us see through the darkness that once again covers this world - into the fullness of Your marvelous light. Once again, evil men gather with destruction in their heart, and death on their minds. We pray for Your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Today, we remember how our precious Jesus did suffer and die - they say it is most important to remember. But Father God... please help us now, to remember what is most important. Help us to pray that Your will be done, and Your Kingdom come... Amen

MEDITATIONS

One of the worst feelings in the world is to feel as if we have been rejected or forsaken. When Jesus (as he was dying on the cross) asked God His Father “why have you forsaken me”? His words were a quote of King David who had prophetically asked the helpless question centuries earlier in his Psalms (22:1). In His despair Jesus was reciting the entire passage of David from memory as a source of comfort and strength in the face of uncontested suffering. The Psalmist goes on to say that he is “scorned by men and despised by the people.” Jesus is near to death at this point on Friday, and those around him started to divide His garments.

“A company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and my feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them and for my raiment they cast lots.” **Many evil-doers were gathered to witness the destruction of Christ our Lord.** The devil had already failed in his attempt to overcome Jesus by luring Him with false promises; so he moves then to discredit and destroy Him through the judgment and condemnation of evil men by a dishonorable humiliating death on the cross. This prophecy could refer to no one else in history more clearly than to the crucified Savior Jesus Christ. Even during the time of His most intense suffering and affliction Jesus knew why God would turn His back on Him. That was always the plan.

And no, the words of Jesus spoken to the Father from the brutal cross “why have You forsaken me” were not the doubtful confession that His enemies wanted to hear; but rather it was Jesus reciting the great hope foretold... everything promised of old was being fulfilled and now coming full-circle. Knowing all this did not make it easier for Christ, it just made it more meaningful for us. This was an unparalleled act of courage, love, and mercy – a sacrifice never seen before, and never seen again. Was Jesus truly forsaken and forgotten? No, not in our way of understanding - not even for a moment. But yes, for a moment... He hung suspended and timeless in the darkness that exists between two worlds. He was suspended between heaven and earth to make the only way possible to a world without sin and sorrow, death and suffering, to a world without end. Jesus was in that moment, carrying everything that is evil upon Himself to create eternal hope, and new life for people such as you and I.

HOPE FOR ALL PEOPLE FROM ALL TIMES, AND ALL PLACES. AND AS WE KNOW FIRST HAND – BECAUSE HE DID WHAT HE DID, HE WILL NEVER EVER BE FORGOTTEN.

MATTHEW 27:32-54

THE CRUCIFIXION

32 As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. 33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), 34 they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. 35 And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. 36 Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. 37 And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." 38 Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. 39 And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads 40 and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." 41 So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, 42 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 47 And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." 48 And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. 49 But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. 54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

PSALM 22:1-18

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.

3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.
4 In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.

5 To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

8 “He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts.

10 On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother’s womb you have been my God.

11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

12 Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

13 they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;

15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

16 For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—

17 I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me;

18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

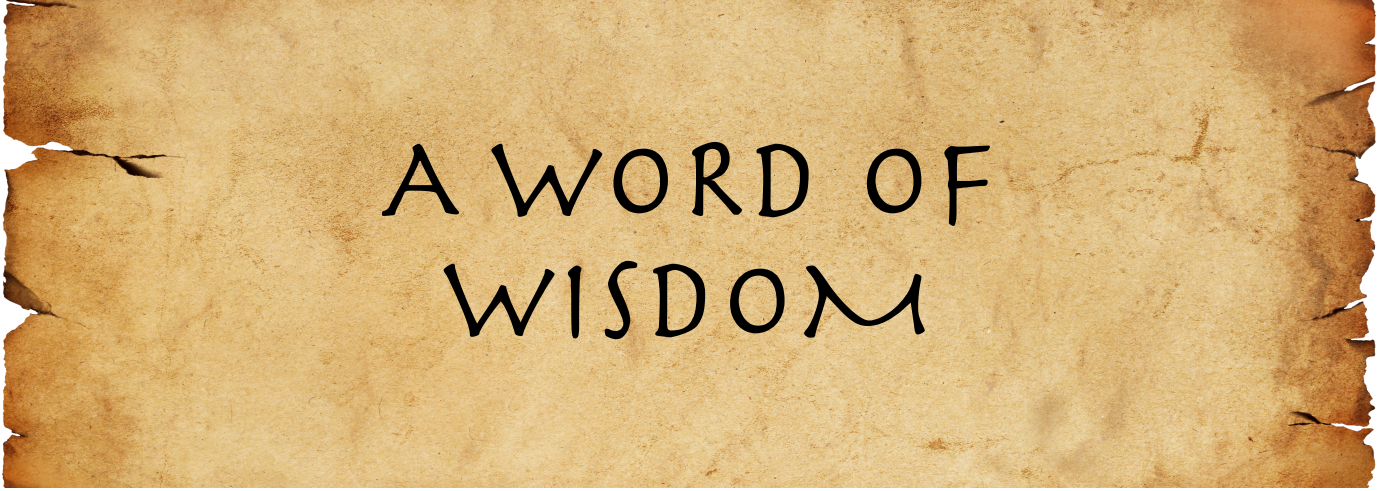
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Did you know that ancient prophets predicted the death of Jesus over five hundred years before it happened? Which prophets were they?

If this is true, how does this impact the life and death of Jesus to those who see Jesus as fictitious, or as just a mere coincidence?

Did God really forsake His only Son when Jesus was crucified?

In what ways have we forsaken and forgotten the crucified Jesus?



A WORD OF
WISDOM

BLESSED IS THE MIND
AND INTELLECT
THAT DURING PRAYER
IS FREE
FROM ALL MATERIALISM
AND STRIPPED OF
ALL POSSESSIONS...

THE PHILOKALIA



SATURDAY

PRAYING FOR FAITH

Father God, it is in times like these that we test and build our own faith in You. There are moments where it seems as if we cannot find or feel you, yet we know You are there. Our fears are at war with the truth that we know. Our doubts fight against the promises You have given us. All around us we are continually told that You are not real, or no longer alive; yet this yearning deep within us pulls us to you, reminding us that You are the only true life we will ever know. Lord, we know that You are alive, and by Your Spirit lead us to the place You want us to go. In that place, O Lord, let us hear Your voice and listen to Your words. It is there with You that we remember that You did not forget - all is not lost - the whole world is kept within Your hands. We are also reminded to faithfully wait on You, for joy truly does come in the morning! By faith, we surely know that this restless night will end, and we who wait will see Your glory and know the full power of the resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ!

Amen

MEDITATIONS

It is always humbling and almost embarrassing when someone we know sacrifices or goes to great measures to do something extraordinary and exceptional for us. It is almost more than we can process to think that they thought of us enough to do something so gracious just for us. Yet, it is true, Jesus was thinking of you and I when He made His great sacrifice. And yes, He came into the world for the sake and salvation of all, and was thinking of all – when He died for all. That would mean that He suffered and died for us, for certainly we too, are one of His “all.” But, who are we and what are we? Well, in spite of our sometimes inflated sense of self-worth we (without God) are unfortunately nothing more than mere ashes and clay... we are one who has sinned against His own master.

But by grace, in His sacrifice of love, there are indeed miracles beyond belief! There is undeserved mercy like no other! There is amazing grace beyond all reason! There is time for our soul to wake up and come out of our sleep and be filled with awe and wonder. While there is still time to give thanks and humble ourselves we should do just that. Bow low, and fall down at the feet of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We should sing to Him a new song of thanksgiving, and should not sing that same old song that no longer has any meaning or life. We should acknowledge His complete sovereignty, and that He has suffered in our place. The servant sinned - the Master took the punishment; the servant made the mistake - the Master took the blame; the servant stole - the Master replaced what was taken; the servant owed a debt - but the Master paid for it in full. He was beaten for what He did not do; sold and betrayed so that we might be free. He was bound so that our bonds might be broken. He was crowned with thorns so that we might receive the crown of life. They called Him King, only to mock Him so that you and I might come into His Kingdom. His lost sheep has been found! He is our Great Shepherd! He has called to Himself the ones like us who have been rejected! He has restored life to the ones like us who were once dead in our trespasses and sin! We are not alone! He has redeemed and resurrected us all - the fallen ones; He is our strength; He has sacrificed for our weakness... so that in Him we may be strong.

O' DARK NIGHT!
HE WAS BEATEN
FOR WHAT
HE DID NOT DO;
SOLD AND BETRAYED

MATTHEW 27:62-66

THE GUARD AT THE TOMB

62The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ 64Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” 65Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” 66So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

ISAIAH 60:1-15

THE FUTURE GLORY OF ISRAEL

1 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.

3 And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

4 Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.

5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of
the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good
news, the praises of the Lord.

7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;
they shall come up with acceptance on my altar,
and I will beautify my beautiful house.

8 Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows?

9 For the coastlands shall hope for me, the ships of Tarshish first,
to bring your children from afar, their silver and gold with them,
for the name of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel,
because he has made you beautiful.

10 Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you;
for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you.

11 Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut,
that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.

12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish;
those nations shall be utterly laid waste.

13 The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine,
to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

14 The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you
shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the Lord,
the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15 Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through,
I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age.

ISAIAH 61

THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR

1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3 to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.
5 Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers;
6 but you shall be called the priests of the Lord; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast.
7 Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy.
8 For I the Lord love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
9 Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed.
10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

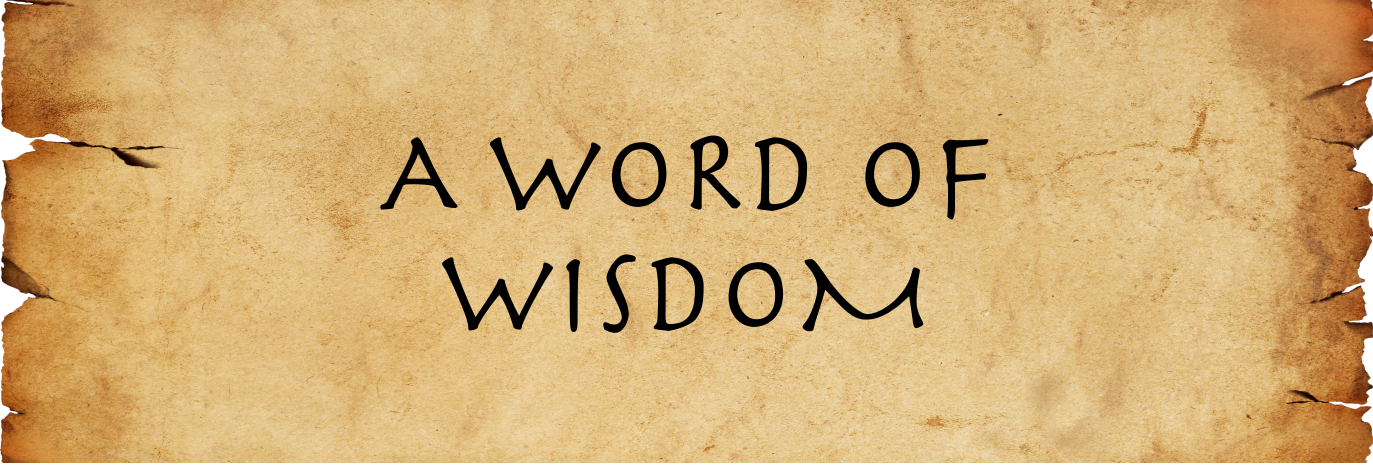


QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How does it change your perspective, knowing more intimately what Jesus experienced while here on this earth and what was done just for you?

Since He had a choice, and with it He chose us. Can you take a few moments to reflect on the implications of being His choice?

Can you list some specific ways that in turn, you could honor Christ with your life for what He has done for you?



A WORD OF
WISDOM

IF YOU SEEK PRAYER
ATTENTIVELY
YOU WILL FIND IT;
NOTHING IS MORE ESSENTIAL
TO PRAYER THAN
ATTENTIVENESS.
SO DO ALL YOU CAN TO
ACQUIRE IT...

THE PHILOKALIA



IN CLOSING

The traditions and observances of the early Church are certainly not all Biblical mandates. They are however a way for us to remember the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus (tenets of our Christian faith). This is also a time to be confronted both personally and as a community with historical and eternal truths and values that bought and paid for our spiritual liberty and life in Christ Jesus. We at Reunion Church may freely choose to participate in these traditions or we may not. We will however recognize and learn the heritage and history of our faith, so as the Lord leads us we might have the wisdom to know what He wants from us as we move forward towards Him.

THE TRADITIONS OF HOLY WEEK

We will also acknowledge the Christian procession and spiritual journey that we are all on. We want to travel as did those who have gone before us; in truth, faithfulness, courage, humility, and always loving those who God sends with us. If you have further questions, please ask myself or one of our elders for a moment of our time. We are here to serve you.

God's Peace to you always...

Dr. Steve Isaac
Sr. Pastor
The Reunion Church



WELCOME TO THE REUNION CHURCH

loving God, serving people, building families of faith

ABOUT THE REUNION CHURCH

The Reunion Church is a non-denominational Christian church located in Peoria, Arizona. We are a flourishing community of faith called to love God, teach His truth, and care for one another in fellowship, communion, and prayer.

We invite you, your family and friends to join us on the faith journey, growing closer to one another, the Christian community of believers at Reunion, and most importantly with our Saviour.

The Reunion Church prioritizes teaching from Scripture, discipleship, children, youth, and outreach. Most importantly, we prioritize loving God and those around us. We are an elder led community of faith that believes in the biblical model of plurality of leadership and the calling of every believer to be a part of the mission of the Church.

We are conveniently located just off the 101 Freeway on 83rd Ave and Cactus Rd. Join us on Sunday mornings, Weds. evenings, and throughout the week at our small groups, meeting in homes around the Valley, including Surprise, Glendale, Peoria, Phoenix, Goodyear, Litchfield, and more.

Find out more at www.thereunionchurch.life