

Immersed



in God's
Word

HOLY WEEK

One of His disciples said to him, "Lord, Teach us to pray..."

-- Luke 11:1

Disciples intentionally immerse themselves in Holy Week to connect with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

We set aside our normal devotional routine and let the words of our precious Lord Jesus pour over us and into us as we meditate on what He said on the cross -- and later after rising from the grave.

Monday, April 15: Your Biblical Identity in Christ

Words from Jesus on the Cross: John 19:26 (The third word)

(spoken to His mother Mary) Dear woman, here is your son;

(spoken to His disciple John) Behold, your mother.



Pondering Point: What does Mary's presence at the crucifixion stir in you emotionally? What do you think it would be like for her to watch her son's suffering and death? As a backdrop, read this part of Jesus' birth story in Luke 2:21-40, where God foretells the redemption of Jerusalem and all of mankind. God also foretells a painful time for Mary herself.

Words from Jesus after the Cross: John 21:15-17 - Feed my sheep

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?”

He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”



Pondering Point: Much has been made of this conversation between Peter and Jesus post-resurrection. Many see the three questions as a parallel to the three denials Peter uttered the night of Jesus’ arrest. It makes sense to do so. Angels at the empty tomb tell the women specifically to include Peter in the summons to meet Jesus in Galilee (Mark 16:7). Jesus visits Peter personally the day of His resurrection (Luke 24:34). Jesus seems to be going out of His way to include Peter in the fold. Or maybe it is better expressed that Jesus is working hard to make sure that Peter **does not exclude himself** from Jesus based on his personal failures. Nor should you exclude yourself based on your past failures.



Prayer for the day: Father God, how many times have I failed to honor You in one way or another, yet Your love and mercy, your grace and kindness continue to flow to me in the name of Jesus. Let me become a faithful disciple, a faithful follower in the name of Jesus my Lord and Savior. Amen.

- As with all the sheep of Jesus’ fold, I am a beloved child of God through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection – and I celebrate our life in Him. Hallelujah!

Tuesday, April 16: God's Mission in Christ Jesus' Death

Words from Jesus on the Cross: Luke 23:43 (The second word)

*I assure you,
today you will be with me
in paradise.* ~ Jesus, to the thief on a nearby cross



Pondering Point: The word Gospel literally means “good news,” exactly what Jesus grants the thief on a nearby cross. The unholy thief joins the Holy One of God in paradise. By His sacrificial death, Jesus offers anyone who would believe in Him the same good news—with that same move from unholiness to holiness. As Hebrews 10:10 says, *we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*. That same letter of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95 and admonishes those hearing: *Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts* regarding God’s message in Jesus (Hebrews 3:7, 15). Let today be the day that you join the thief in celebrating your place with Jesus in paradise – even if you don’t see that place for awhile 😊.

Words from Jesus after the Cross: John 20:26-29 - Blessed

A week later Jesus’ disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; **blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**”



Prayer for the day: Lord Jesus, though not given the privilege to see You like the original disciples, I believe in You. I rejoice in the ‘not-seeing-yet-believing’ blessing You pronounce on me through faith in You. Let my faith not waver but grow stronger and stronger until the day I see You face to face in paradise. In Your name Jesus I pray. Amen.

Wednesday, April 17: Biblical Teachings on Prayer

Words from Jesus on the Cross: Luke 23:46 (The seventh word)

*Father, into your hands
I commit my spirit!*



Pondering Point: We find ourselves back in Jesus' conversation with Peter that we heard Monday. Here He calls Peter to commitment again. It's a good thing Peter stuck with Jesus; he became a wonderful follower of Jesus. Don't let your past keep you from becoming a faithful follower of Jesus either. Two questions for you to ponder today as we are nearly half way through Holy Week:

1

Have you prayerfully put your life in God's hands and committed your spirit to Him? If not, do so now. Seriously! If so, do it again -- seriously!

Have you prayerfully agreed to follow Jesus and let Him lead you wherever he desires to take you? If not, do so now. Seriously! If so, do it anew -- seriously!

2

Words from Jesus after the Cross: John 21:18-19 - Follow Me

Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then He said to him, "Follow me!"



Prayer for the day: Father God, I once again (or for the first time) commit my spirit – my life, my whole self – into Your hands. I step into the call to follow Jesus as Lord of my life, as Savior from my sins, as Master to my life of apprenticeship in becoming a disciple of Jesus. In His name I pray. Amen.

Thursday, April 18: Prayerfully Re-Center around God

Words from Jesus on the Cross: Mark 15:34 (The fourth word)

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?



Pondering Point: Many people take this prayer to be one of fear or confusion on Jesus' part, but that's not necessarily so – and likely the opposite. Why say this? Because these words of Jesus are a quote from Psalm 22:1. In fact, you can find many other allusions to His crucifixion in Psalm 22. Many informed hearers (and current readers) could pick up on such parallels. How this quote about abandonment relates specifically to Jesus has been debated by scholars for centuries. But Jesus Himself was likely not confused at all. He knew why He was there – for us. *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Words from Jesus after the Cross: Luke 24:36-39 – Peace; it's Me

While [the disciples of Jesus were still talking about the supposed resurrection], Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."



Pondering Point: After Jesus' death, the disciples could have easily felt the same sense of abandonment expressed by the words of Psalm 22:1. No wonder they were troubled, even startled and frightened at His appearance! Could this be real?!? It was as real the food He ate in front of them. And He gave them a real sense of peace to overcome their troubled hearts.



Prayer for the day: Lord Jesus, whenever I feel a sense of abandonment, come with Your presence and Spirit and bring me peace in my inner places, my heart and soul. Let me experience the same peace as those first followers of Yours. In Your name I pray. Amen.

FRIDAY'S BIT OF JESUS'



Words from Jesus on the Cross: John 19:28 (The fifth word)

I thirst (διψάω)

Words from Jesus after the Cross: Matthew 28:10 – go and tell

Jesus said to [the women leaving the tomb], “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”



Pondering Point: In this case Jesus literally spoke – in Greek – only one word. He is once again alluding to Scripture and prophetic insights (see both Psalm 22:15 and Psalm 69:19-21). Can you see this as a sign of humility? For some help with that, read Philippians 2. Today we keep a discipleship point and prayer connected to our devotional week. Appropriately, it is about redemption. As our *Words from Jesus after the Cross* remind us, the resurrection is not merely to be known, but shared as well.



Discipleship Point about Redemption: How did Christ reconcile the severed relationship between God and humanity? Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to be the one mediator between God and humanity (1st Timothy 2:5). Through Christ's substitutionary death on the cross the penalty of sin has been paid, and by His bodily resurrection from the tomb, death has been defeated (*Discipleship Essentials*, Ogden, p. 96).



Discipleship Prayer: Father God, thank You for the gift of reconciliation with You through Your Son Jesus. May all people hear this message of peace and joy. Secondly, may the thirsty souls of all such people – myself included – find satisfaction in this same Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.

Saturday, April 20: Scripture's Story for the Week

Words from Jesus on the Cross

John 19:30 (the sixth word)



It is finished! (Τετέλεσται)



Pondering Point: Like yesterday's statement from the cross, this phrase is also but one word. It is finished. Often when a story is finished, it is "the end". And it was an end to death's reign over man brought through sin. But this was also a beginning, which is why Jesus is called "first-fruits from the dead." He wasn't the first person recorded to rise from the dead. But He was the first to rise imperishable (see 1 Corinthians 15). Death no longer able to touch Him. In that sense, He is a first-fruit with many of us to follow, also rising to a new life in baptism as we are connected to Jesus' death and resurrection. And eventually the very bodies we will receive will be just like His: Imperishable.

"in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:52-57)



Prayer for the day: Father God, thank You for swallowing up death and giving me the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ. I look forward to the imperishable body in store for me in the new heaven and new earth. Till then, grant me optimal health in the current perishable body that I may honor You in thought, word and deed. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Words from Jesus after the Cross: Matthew 28:18-20:

Go, make disciples of all nations

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

That goal of Jesus to make disciples of all nations seems to have made it to your doorstep. Praise God! Through faith in God you have been invited into discipleship under Jesus. May you follow Him well, obeying all that Jesus commanded – included the call to make disciples of others. And do it, being sure Jesus is with you always, to the very end of the age.

Sunday, April 21: Call to Gather, Pray, and Worship God

**Words from Jesus on the Cross:
Luke 23:34 (First)**

*Father, forgive them,
for they don't know what they're doing.*

*I Am
Blessed...
To Be A
Blessing*

Every Sunday brings a blessing of the Bible to our minds. Is there a greater blessing than this – forgiveness from God our Father? How might this prayer relate to you? Do you know that in confessing your sins, there is also freedom with forgiveness? Do you need to experience that freedom in a new way today? Celebrate this blessing and extend it to others with these last set of *Words from Jesus after the Cross*.

Words from Jesus after the Cross: John 20:21-23 – I'm sending you

Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”