

FROM GARDEN TO GLORY:
THE KING WHO SAVES



AN **EASTER**

WEEK DEVOTIONAL

We live in a noisy world. Every day brings headlines, opinions, outrage, and endless distractions. We are told who to follow, what to fear, and where to place our hope. Yet beneath the noise, many hearts quietly ask the same question: Who is truly in control? Easter answers that question.

This week, we invite you to slow down and walk step-by-step through the final days of Jesus' earthly ministry as recorded in the Gospel of Mark. From the cheers of Palm Sunday to the silence of the tomb... from the darkness of Good Friday to the dawn of resurrection morning... we will follow the King who came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. Each day of Holy Week reveals something about who Jesus truly is.

He is the humble King who enters on a colt. He is the cleansing King who purifies worship. He is the watchful King who prepares His people. He is the anointed King worthy of costly devotion. He is the servant King who gives His body and blood. He is the crucified King who bears our sin. He is the silent King in the tomb. And on Easter morning, He is the risen Lord who conquers death.

This devotional is designed to help us see Him clearly — and respond faithfully.

Starting with Palm Sunday and ending on Easter Sunday, this eight-day journey includes one primary Scripture passage each day from Mark's Gospel, along with related passages for further study. You'll find extended commentary to help you understand what was happening and why it matters today. There are reflection and discussion questions for children, teens, and adults, along with simple hands-on activities to make the story tangible — especially for our kids, who remember what they experience. We've kept supplies simple and flexible (listed below), using mostly things you already have at home. Each day also includes suggested hymns and contemporary songs to guide your worship — all easy to find online.

Here's the simple rhythm for using this devotional:

Begin with Scripture. Read it aloud together if you can — God's Word was meant to be heard.

Move into the Commentary to deepen your understanding.

Choose Discussion Questions that fit your family or stage of life.

Complete one Activity to help the truth take root.

Close with prayer and a song of worship.

Most days will take about 20–30 minutes, but even 10 intentional minutes is a gift. Use it at the dinner table, before bed, over morning coffee, or whenever your household is most attentive. Join us for Easter week services when you are able, and let what you experience at church reinforce what you are walking through at home. This isn't about doing it perfectly. It's about fixing our eyes on Jesus.

Holy Week invites us to slow down enough to see the cross clearly — and the empty tomb gloriously. As we move from celebration to sorrow to astonished joy, our prayer is that you will not simply remember the story... but encounter the Savior. This devotional is for all of us at Berea — families, singles, grandparents, children, students. Gather in a cozy corner, around a table, or on the living room floor. Read slowly. Ask questions. Sit quietly when needed. Laugh during the crafts. Let the wonder build.

In a world of shifting ground, Jesus stands as the true King. In a culture of noise, His resurrection speaks the final word. In a world marked by death, He brings life that cannot be taken away. We are praying that this week strengthens your faith, deepens your worship, steadies your hope, and fills your home with resurrection joy. Let's walk to Easter together.

He is risen! He is risen, indeed!
Pastor Mark

Day 1: Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026

Theme: The Humble King

Scripture: Mark 11:1-11 (ESV)

“Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.”

Commentary/Application:

For the first ten chapters in Mark, Jesus has been moving steadily toward Jerusalem. Three times He has told His disciples that suffering awaits Him there. Yet they still expect glory without a cross.

Now He arrives. Mark shows us something remarkable: Jesus is completely in control of the moment. He instructs His disciples exactly where to find a colt. He describes what will happen when they are questioned. Everything unfolds precisely as He says. This is not a victim walking unknowingly into danger. This is a King orchestrating His own entrance.

But what an entrance it is. He rides a colt — an animal of humility and peace. In the ancient world, conquering kings rode war horses. But kings who came in peace rode donkeys. Jesus is declaring something without shouting it: His kingdom is not built by force.

The crowds spread cloaks and branches on the road — gestures of submission and honor. They shout: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna” originally meant “Save now!” It is both praise and plea. They recognize Jesus as the long-awaited Son of David — yet their understanding is incomplete. They long for political rescue. They do not yet understand the deeper bondage of sin.

Notice what Mark does next. After all the celebration, Jesus enters the temple, looks around carefully... and leaves. It is almost anticlimactic. Why? Because this week will not unfold according to human expectations. There will be no uprising. No throne seized. No Roman army overthrown. Instead, there will be betrayal, suffering, and crucifixion. The same voices shouting “Hosanna” will grow quiet. Some may even cry “Crucify.”

Palm Sunday confronts us with a personal question: Do we follow Jesus because He fits our expectations — or because He is Lord?

We all have subtle expectations of what Jesus should do: protect our comfort, fix our problems quickly, align with our preferences, and deliver visible success.

But the King of Mark 11 is not controlled by the crowd. He is humble. He is purposeful. He is heading toward a cross. The triumphal entry is not the peak of His glory — it is the opening step toward sacrifice. And that is precisely why He is worthy of our trust.

Related Passages for Further Study:

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:22-26; Philippians 2:5-11; John 12:12-19

Discussion Questions:

For Young Children:

1. Why did Jesus ride a donkey instead of a big horse?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is our King?
3. How can we show Jesus we love Him?

For Teens/Adults:

1. What kind of king were the people expecting?
2. Where are you tempted to shape Jesus into your expectations?
3. How does Jesus redefine leadership?

For Deeper Reflection:

1. Why do crowds often shift so quickly?
2. Where is it hard for you to follow a humble Savior?
3. How would your week look different if Jesus truly ruled your heart?

Activities:

Palm Praise

Cut paper palm branches and write one reason you praise Jesus on each leaf. Tape them somewhere visible.

Crown Contrast

Draw two crowns and discuss the difference:

- One labeled “Earthly Power”
- One labeled “Kingdom Power”

Hymns:

“All Glory, Laud, and Honor”
“Ride On, Ride On in Majesty”

Contemporary Songs:

“King of Kings” by Hillsong Worship
“Hosanna (Praise Is Rising)” by Paul Baloche

Day 2: Monday, March 30, 2026

Theme: The Searching Savior

Scripture: Mark 11:12-25 (ESV)

On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And he said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it. And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. And when evening came they went out of the city. As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Commentary/Application:

The next morning, Jesus approaches a fig tree in leaf. From a distance, it appears healthy and promising. But upon inspection, it bears no fruit. He curses it. At first, this feels surprising — even unsettling. But Mark intentionally sandwiches this story around the cleansing of the temple. The fig tree is not random. It is a living symbol.

The temple is bustling with activity. Merchants sell animals. Money changers exchange currency. Religious systems hum along. But Jesus sees something deeper. Worship has been commercialized. Prayer has been crowded out. The Court of the Gentiles — intended for the nations — has become a marketplace. So, Jesus overturns tables. This is not loss of temper. It is righteous zeal. He declares: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations."

God's heart has always included the nations. Yet religious leaders have turned the temple inward and self-serving. The fig tree looked alive. The temple looked active. But both were fruitless.

It is possible to have religious knowledge without repentance, activity without intimacy, and leaves without fruit. Jesus still searches hearts. The withered fig tree the next day becomes a vivid reminder: appearances do not fool God. But notice something beautiful in this passage. After confronting fruitlessness, Jesus teaches about faith-filled prayer. He is not merely condemning — He is inviting renewal. He desires living faith. Trusting prayer. Forgiving hearts. The searching Savior is also the restoring Savior. If there are tables to overturn in our hearts, it is because He desires true fruit — not to shame us, but to heal us.

Related Passages for Further Study:

Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:1-11; Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:1-8

Discussion Questions:

For Young Children:

1. What kind of fruit does God want in our lives?
2. What does it mean to pray?

For Teens/Adults:

1. Where can religious activity replace real devotion?
2. What fruit is God growing in you right now?
3. What “tables” in your life might Jesus want to overturn to bring you closer to Him?

For Deeper Reflection:

1. Why is prayer central to spiritual fruit?
2. What is the difference between spiritual leaves and spiritual fruit?

Activity:

Fruit Inspection

Place real fruit on the table. Ask: What makes fruit good? What makes it bad? Compare to spiritual fruit.

Hymns:

“Take My Life and Let it Be”
“Holy, Holy, Holy!”

Contemporary Songs:

“Only a Holy God” by CityAlight
“Refiner’s Fire” by Brian Doerksen
“Build My Life” by Pat Barrett

Day 3: Tuesday, March 31, 2026

Theme: The Rejected Cornerstone

Scripture: Mark 12:1-12 (ESV)

And he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this Scripture: "'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So, they left him and went away."

Commentary/Application:

Tension rises sharply in this chapter. Jesus tells a parable about a vineyard owner who leases his vineyard to tenants. When he sends servants to collect fruit, the tenants beat them. He sends more — they wound and kill them. Finally, he sends his beloved son. The tenants reason: "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him."

Jesus is not speaking vaguely. The religious leaders know exactly what He means. The servants represent the prophets — repeatedly rejected and mistreated throughout Israel's history. The beloved son is Jesus Himself. This is a devastating indictment. God has patiently sent messenger after messenger. Now He has sent His Son. And they plan to kill Him. Then Jesus quotes: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

Builders inspect stones carefully. If a stone appears flawed, it is discarded. Jesus is saying: You are rejecting the very stone that will hold everything together.

Rejection does not thwart God's plan. In fact, the rejected stone becomes the foundation of redemption. The cross — the ultimate act of rejection — becomes the very means of salvation. This passage presses us deeply. We may not openly reject Christ like the leaders did. But we can sideline Him. We can build lives around career, comfort, approval, reputation — and fit Jesus in when convenient.

A cornerstone determines alignment. Every other stone must conform to it. If Christ is truly the cornerstone, our decisions, priorities, relationships, and values will align around Him.

The leaders respond to the parable not with repentance — but with anger. Revelation often hardens hearts before it softens them. Holy Week forces a choice. Will we receive the Son? Or will we resist Him?

Related Passages for Further Study:

Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 8:14-15; Acts 4:10-12; Ephesians 2:19-22

Discussion Questions:

For Young Children:

1. Why was it wrong for the tenants to hurt the son?
2. Why do we need Jesus?

For Teens/Adults:

1. How do people still reject Christ today?
2. In what ways do we subtly sideline Him?
3. What does it mean to build your life on Him?

For Deeper Reflection:

1. Where are you building stability apart from Christ?
2. How does rejection deepen the beauty of the cross?

Activity:

Foundation Test

Build a small tower with blocks. Remove the bottom block. Watch it fall. Discuss: What happens when Jesus is not the foundation?

Hymns:

“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”
“Be Still, My Soul”

Contemporary Songs:

“Christ is Mine Forevermore” by CityAlight
“Even So Come” by Passion

Day 4: Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Theme: The Anointed King

Scripture: Mark 14:3-9 (ESV)

And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Commentary/Application:

The storm is building. Religious leaders are actively seeking a way to arrest Jesus secretly and kill Him. Darkness is gathering behind the scenes. And in the middle of this tension, something beautiful happens.

Jesus is reclining at table in Bethany when a woman enters carrying an alabaster flask filled with costly nard — pure perfume worth nearly a year's wages. Without hesitation, she breaks the flask and pours it over His head. She doesn't measure. She doesn't calculate. She doesn't hold back. She breaks the flask — a sign that this gift is total and irreversible.

Immediately, criticism erupts. "Why this waste?" "This could have been sold and given to the poor." It sounds spiritual. Responsible. Practical. But Jesus responds: "Leave her alone... She has done a beautiful thing to me." The Greek word translated "beautiful" carries the idea of something noble, fitting, and timely. She has perceived something others have not. Jesus says: "She has anointed my body beforehand for burial."

The disciples still struggle to grasp the coming cross. This woman sees it more clearly. She understands something profound: Jesus is worthy — even when death approaches. Worship that costs nothing rarely transforms us. This woman gives extravagantly because she loves deeply. Her act is not foolish. It is prophetic. Jesus promises: "Wherever the gospel is proclaimed... what she has done will be told in memory of her." While others plot betrayal, she practices devotion.

This scene invites us to examine our own worship. Do we love Jesus carefully — or completely? Do we calculate what obedience will cost — or trust that He is worth more? Holy Week is not merely about remembering the cross. It is about responding to the King who walks toward it. She “did what she could.” That phrase is deeply comforting. Jesus is not asking for what we do not have. He calls us to faithful devotion with what we do. The fragrance filled the house. True worship still does.

Related Passages for Further Study:

John 12:1-8; 2 Samuel 24:24; Romans 12:1

Discussion Questions:

For Young Children:

1. Why did the woman give Jesus something so special?
2. What can you give Jesus?

For Teens/Adults:

1. Why does true worship sometimes draw criticism?
2. What is something costly you could surrender to Christ?
3. Are you more concerned with reputation or devotion?

For Deeper Reflection:

1. What holds you back from wholehearted worship?
2. How can love for Jesus become more visible in your daily life?

Activities:

Costly Commitment Card

Write one thing you will give Jesus this week — time, forgiveness, generosity, obedience. Keep it private and pray over it.

Shine for Jesus Everyday

Look up “Shine for Jesus Everyday--Beacon Tunes” on YouTube. Listen to and talk about the ways you can shine for Jesus everyday as a family.

Hymns:

“I Surrender All”

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

Contemporary Songs:

“Jesus Paid It All” by Kristian Stanfill

“Nothing Else” by Cody Carnes

Day 5: Thursday, April 2, 2026

Theme: The Servant King

Scripture: Mark 14:22-26 (ESV)

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Commentary/Application:

Passover week is filled with memory. For centuries, Israel has remembered deliverance from Egypt in Exodus 12 — the night when lamb's blood shielded homes from judgment. Now Jesus gathers His disciples for that sacred meal. And He changes it forever. He takes bread. "This is my body." He takes the cup. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."

The language is stunning. He does not say, "This represents." He identifies Himself with the elements. The meal once pointed backward to the Exodus. Now it points forward to the cross. Jesus is both Host and Sacrifice.

The covenant He speaks of recalls Jeremiah 31 — a promised new covenant written not on stone, but on hearts. Animal blood covered sin temporarily. His blood removes it completely. Notice also the phrase "for many." It echoes the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 — the One who would bear the sins of many. Jesus knows betrayal is near. He knows suffering is imminent. And still, He gives thanks. That alone is astonishing.

Communion is not merely remembrance. It is proclamation. As 1 Corinthians 11 teaches, we proclaim His death until He comes. The cross was not an accident. It was covenant love. The Servant King does not demand our blood. He gives His.

Every time we eat and drink, we are reminded: We do not earn salvation. We receive it. And forgiven people are called to live differently. Gratefully. Humbly. Sacrificially.

Related Passages for Further Study:

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 9:11-15; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Discussion Questions:

For Young Children:

1. Why did Jesus share bread and juice?
2. What does it mean that Jesus gave His body for us?

For Teens/Adults

1. What does “covenant” mean?
2. How does communion shape your gratitude?
3. How should forgiven people live?

For Deeper Reflection:

1. Where do you still try to earn what Christ already secured?
2. How can the Lord’s Table become more meaningful to you?

Activities:

Covenant Chain

- Materials: Strips of paper (any color), pens, tape or stapler.
- Instructions:
Make a paper chain. On each strip, write one word or phrase about what Jesus’ sacrifice means to you (e.g., “love,” “forgiveness,” “new start”). Focus on the promises God gives to us. Write those on the chain links too! Link the strips into a chain by taping or stapling them together. Hang it somewhere visible (like over a doorway). Add to it during the week if you want!

Crackers and Juice

- Materials: Crackers or bread and juice.
- Instructions: Sit down together as a family and share your snack. Talk about why we have communion at church and what the elements represent.

Heart Stamp

- Materials: Paper, red marker/paint, fingers.
- Instructions:
Dip a finger in red paint (or use a marker) to stamp a heart on paper, writing “New Covenant” inside. Talk about God writing His love on our hearts—ties to Jeremiah 31.

Hymns:

“Let Us Break Bread Together”
“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

Contemporary Songs:

“In Christ Alone” by Keith & Kristyn Getty
“Behold the Lamb” by Passion
“The Power of the Cross” by Keith & Kristyn Getty
“Remembrance” by Hillsong Worship

Day 6: Good Friday, April 3, 2026

Theme: The Crucified King

Scripture: Mark 15:16-39 (ESV)

And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

Commentary/Application:

The irony of this passage is overwhelming. Jesus is mocked as a king — and yet He truly is one. The soldiers dress Him in purple. They press a crown of thorns into His head. They kneel in false homage. "Hail, King of the Jews!" They intend ridicule. He receives it as rightful identity.

Then darkness falls over the land for three hours. In Scripture, darkness often symbolizes judgment. The weight of sin is descending. Jesus cries out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He quotes Psalm 22 — a psalm that begins in anguish and ends in triumph.

In that moment, the sinless Son bears the weight of human rebellion. The Father does not

cease loving the Son — but the Son experiences the judgment our sin deserves. Then Jesus breathes His last. And something happens in the temple. The veil tears from top to bottom. Not bottom to top — as though humans ripped it. Top to bottom — as though heaven tore it open. The barrier between holy God and sinful humanity is removed. And who recognizes it? Not a disciple. Not a religious leader. A Roman centurion says: “Truly this man was the Son of God.” The cross reveals what power cannot. The King reigns from a tree. Good Friday is not sentimental. It is staggering. Our sin required death. His love provided it. The cross is where justice and mercy meet. And because of it, we may approach God freely.

Related Passages for Further Study:

Isaiah 53; Hebrews 10:19-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21

Discussion Questions:

For Young Children:

1. Why did Jesus die?
2. How does Jesus dying for us make you feel?

For Teens/Adults:

1. What does the torn veil mean?
2. Why is the centurion’s confession important?
3. How should the cross change your daily living?

For Deeper Reflection:

1. Where do you minimize the seriousness of sin?
2. Where do you minimize the greatness of grace?

Activity:

Cross Silhouette

- Materials: Paper, black marker or crayon, watercolors.
- Instructions: Draw or trace a simple cross on paper, and color it black. Color the background (sunset, sky) with watercolor, making the cross a silhouette. Talk about how Jesus’ death brought light to the world. Write “Paid in Full” across the cross in white or yellow.

Hymns:

“Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted”
“There is a Fountain Filled with Blood”

Contemporary Songs:

“It Was Finished Upon That Cross” by CityAlight
“It is Finished” by Sovereign Grace Music
“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” by Stuart Townsend
“Man of Sorrows” by Hillsong Worship

Day 7: Saturday, April 4, 2026

Theme: The Silent Day

Scripture: Mark 15:42-47 (ESV)

And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid.

Commentary/Application:

The noise of Friday is gone. The crowds have dispersed. The sky has cleared. The body of Jesus lies in a tomb. Joseph of Arimathea steps forward courageously. He asks Pilate for the body. He wraps it carefully and lays it in his own tomb. A stone is rolled into place.

For the disciples, hope appears buried. Saturday is the day between promise and fulfillment. Nothing dramatic happens. Heaven is quiet. But silence does not mean inactivity. God often works most profoundly in unseen places.

The disciples do not yet understand resurrection. They feel grief. Fear. Confusion. And many of us live in Saturday seasons. Waiting for healing. Waiting for answers. Waiting for clarity. Saturday faith is patient faith. It trusts that God is still sovereign when the stone appears final. The tomb is sealed — but God is not finished.

Related Passages for Further Study:

Lamentations 3:22-26; Psalm 130; Romans 8:24-25

Discussion Questions:

For Young Children:

1. How do you feel when you wait?
2. Can we trust God when things seem quiet?

For Teens/Adults:

1. What "Saturday" are you walking through?
2. How has God met you in waiting before?
3. What helps you trust during silence?

For Deeper Reflection:

1. What does mature faith look like in delay?
2. Where do you need patient endurance right now?

Activity:

Five Minutes of Silence

Sit quietly together. Afterward discuss what it felt like.

Hymns:

"Abide with Me"

"It is Well"

Contemporary Songs:

"The Silence of God" by Andrew Peterson

"Ancient of Days" by CityAlight

"Though You Slay Me" by Shane & Shane

"Still" by Rend Collective

"He Will Hold Me Fast" by Matt Merker

Day 8: Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026

Theme: The Risen Lord

Scripture: Mark 16:1-8 (ESV)

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Commentary/Application:

The women approach the tomb early, carrying spices. They are not expecting resurrection. They are expecting to finish burial work. Their primary concern: "Who will roll away the stone?" But when they arrive, the stone is already moved.

Inside sits a young man in white who declares: "He has risen; He is not here." Four words that changed history. He has risen.

Mark ends abruptly. The women tremble with fear and amazement. The resurrection is not tame. It is overwhelming. Death — the great enemy — is defeated. The King who was rejected now reigns. The Lamb who was slain now lives.

Because He lives:

- Sin no longer has final authority.
- Death no longer has final victory.
- Fear no longer has final control.

The resurrection is not merely proof of power. It is the beginning of new creation. The question is no longer whether Jesus is King. The question is: What will we do with the risen King? Mark leaves us at the edge of decision. Will we remain silent? Or will we go and tell?

Related Passages for Further Study:

1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Romans 6:4-9; Revelation 1:17-18

Discussion Questions:

For Young Children:

1. What does "He is risen" mean?
2. Why is this good news?

For Teens/Adults:

1. How does the resurrection change daily life?
2. Why do you think there is fear and amazement in Mark 16:8?
3. What will your response be?

For Deeper Reflection:

1. Where do you need resurrection hope?
2. How does the empty tomb shape your future?

Activity:

Sunrise Shout

- Materials: None required
- Instructions: At sunrise (or anytime), gather at a window or step outside. Face the light and take turns shouting something the resurrection means to you (e.g., "Jesus is alive!" "I'm forgiven!" "Hope wins!"). End with a big family cheer: "He is risen—Hallelujah!" If you can't do it at sunrise, just pretend the light is breaking through the tomb!

Hymns:

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"
"Jesus Christ Is Risen Today"
"Up from the Grave He Arose"
"Thine Be the Glory"
"He Lives"
"Crown Him with Many Crowns"

Contemporary Songs:

"Yours (Glory and Praise)" by Elevation Worship
"Resurrection Power" by Chris Tomlin
"Glorious Day" by Casting Crowns
"Living Hope" by Phil Wickham
"Because He Lives (Amen)" by Matt Maher

The Road Ahead: Easter as the Beginning

Scripture: Psalm 119:105 (ESV) and Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV)

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...”

Reflection:

Easter Sunday is not the end of the story. It is the turning point.

This past week, we’ve walked slowly through the final days of Jesus — from the cheers of Palm Sunday to the cries of Good Friday, from the silence of Saturday to the astonished fear of the empty tomb. We watched the humble King enter Jerusalem. We saw the Servant break bread and pour out the cup. We stood beneath the cross. We waited in the quiet of the grave. And on Easter morning, we heard the announcement that changes everything: “He has risen; He is not here.”

As the Gospel of Mark works to its conclusion, there is trembling and amazement. The women leave the tomb overwhelmed, confronted with a reality bigger than they expected. The stone is rolled away. Death has been defeated. But the story pauses there — almost as if inviting us into it. What will we do with the risen King? Easter is not merely a moment to celebrate. It is a call to follow.

The same Jesus who walked out of the tomb now calls His people forward. Because He lives, we do not return to ordinary life unchanged. We live differently. We worship differently. We hope differently. We endure differently.

Psalm 119 reminds us that God’s Word is still our lamp and light. The Scriptures that told of the suffering Christ now proclaim the risen Lord. They guide our steps in a dark world, steady our hearts in uncertain times, and anchor us in truth when everything else shifts. Hebrews 12 urges us to run with endurance — eyes fixed on Jesus. Not merely the teacher from Galilee. Not only the crucified Savior. But the risen and reigning King, who has gone before us and now perfects our faith.

The resurrection is not simply proof that Jesus conquered death. It is assurance that our labor is not in vain, our suffering is not wasted, and our future is secure. The empty tomb means the race is worth running. So don’t let this week become a memory. Let it become momentum.

As a family or as an individual, consider what following Jesus more intentionally looks like. Perhaps begin reading through the Gospel of Mark together to continue seeing Christ clearly. Or linger in the Psalms, giving voice to your praise and questions alike. Set aside regular time to read, pray, and talk about what God is teaching you.

Ask one another:

- Where is Jesus calling me to trust Him more?
- Where is He asking for obedience?
- Who needs to hear the hope of the resurrection from me?

The women were told, “Go, tell His disciples.” The resurrection moves us outward. Because He lives, we can walk into tomorrow with courage. Because He lives, we can endure trials with hope. Because He lives, we can proclaim good news with confidence. One day, the risen Christ will return in glory. Until that day, we run — not alone, not aimlessly, but with eyes fixed on Him.

He who conquered the grave will keep you. He who finished the work of redemption will finish His work in you. He who walked out of the tomb walks with you still.

Berea family, may this Easter not be a conclusion, but a beginning — a renewed commitment to follow the risen King with steady faith, deep joy, and unwavering hope. Let’s keep walking with Him.

Reading Plans to Guide Your Steps

The Bible in One Year (You Version Bible App)

Imagine a year-long walk through Scripture—Genesis to Revelation, one day at a time. With the free You Version app, you’ll weave through Old Testament, New Testament, and Psalms or Proverbs daily. Read it aloud together or let the app’s voice carry the words. For little ones, try “Bible for Kids” in the same app—short tales they’ll cling to.

Read Scripture Plan (Read Scripture App)

This app provides a path through Scripture’s heart, crafted to show its beauty and flow, with videos to set the stage. The free Read Scripture app, from The Bible Project offers a year-long plan blending Old and New Testament readings with Psalms and Proverbs. Watch a quick video as a family, read the day’s portion, and ask, “What’s God revealing?”

Book-at-a-Time Bible Reading Plan (The Navigators)

Think of dipping into a new book each month—Mark today, Genesis tomorrow, with Psalms woven in. This plan from navigators.org (a free PDF) offers 25 readings a month, leaving room for busy days. Print it, slip it in your Bible, and read together.

Through the Bible (Through the Word App)

This app takes you on a journey where every book of the Bible unfolds with a voice to guide you—short audio teachings paired with daily readings. The free Through the Word app offers plans like “Through the Bible in a Year,” breaking Scripture into bite-sized pieces with 5-10 minute talks. Gather to listen, then read together, asking, “What stuck with us?” like your devotional’s questions. It’s a gentle hand for busy days, leading you through His Word with care.

The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble (Also available as book)

Offers a chronological reading plan paired with a free podcast (or app) where each day’s 5-10 minute episode unpacks what you’ve read. Start with Genesis or jump in anywhere, reading the day’s portion from your Bible, then listen as Tara-Leigh highlights the “God Shot”—a glimpse of who God is. Gather as a family or on your own, and after each episode, ask, “What did we see about God today?” It’s perfect for all ages—simple enough for kids to follow, deep enough to stir adult hearts.

Devotional Books to Gather Around

The Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd-Jones

Open a book where every tale sings of Jesus—bright pages that pull kids close and stir adult souls. Read one story each night. It’s a warm embrace of His love, from beginning to end.

The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New by Marty Machowski

Think of a treasure chest of faith—big truths about God made simple, with pictures and Scripture for all ages. Read a short piece together, maybe over supper, and talk about what it reveals.

Indescribable: 100 Devotions About God and Science by Louie Giglio

Imagine marveling at God’s world—100 short devotions blending Scripture with wonders like stars and storms. It’s a great bridge between His Word and His works.

Exploring the Bible Together: A 52-Week Family Devotional by David Murray

Picture a year of weekly pauses—readings, questions, and prayers to share. Set aside 20 minutes, like you did this week, and let every voice chime in.

Long Story Short and Old Story New by Marty Machowski

Imagine ten-minute moments that draw you to Jesus—these are two different books, one for the Old Testament (Long Story Short), one for the New (Old Story New).

NOTES:



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