



# BCC UCC HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL

Holy Week 2024



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# HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL

## HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL

SUNDAY, March 24, 2024

**Mt. 21:8-9 ( NCV) 8Many people spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The people were walking ahead of Jesus and behind him, shouting, "Praise[a] to the Son of David! God bless the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise to God in heaven!"**

### WATCH OUT FOR THE CROWD'S RED-CARPET TREATMENT: JESUS' WORK ON PALM SUNDAY

I get a lot of takes on Palm Sunday, but what hits me most is the laying down of Palm Leaves in Jesus' path as he entered Jerusalem. That practice is basically the equivalent of the Red-Carpet Treatment used to mark the route taken by heads of state on ceremonial and formal occasions, and has in recent decades been extended to use by VIPs and celebrities at formal events. But what scripture shows us in these two quoted scripture reference/encounters is "WARNINGS" about the CROWD:

1. In a word, these scriptures demonstrate that in one instance the "Crowd" is applauding and praising Jesus and later, that same CROWD is screaming for his crucifixion/execution. The point being that we must all stay mindful that the very same people that we are sent to help, educate and assist in liberation; that same crowd of people that give us accolades and applaud us can wind up being the very same people that seek to destroy us. In other words, Crowds are fickle.
2. Remember Beloved, it was the CROWD that Moses liberated from slavery/bondage who flipped on Moses when he went up to Mount Sinai to commune with God and receive the 10 Commandments. It was the CROWD that petitioned that the 3 Hebrew boys be thrown into the fiery furnace. It was the was the CROWD that lied on, and had Stephen murdered. Likewise, it was the CROWD/MOB of Republican supporters of the former US President that stormed the US Capital on 1/6/2021 and rebelled against the country they say they loved. So again Beloved, STAY WOKE! Don't be deceived and WATCH OUT FOR THE CROWD'S RED CARPET TREATMENT.

PRAYER: Dearest, Omniscient and most Merciful God, help us to maintain the Mind of Christ in all that we say and do; as the song goes, PRECIOUS LORD, TAKE OUR HAND AND LEAD US ON, HELP US STAND. Even when we are set up, deceived, or taken advantage of by those we are sent to minister to, as Jesus demonstrated, we must FORGIVE them even when they "know what they are doing." And help us to be obedient to your word, your will and your way. Amen.





# HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL



Holy Week Devotional  
MONDAY, March 25, 2024

Mark 11:12-14 12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. 14 Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

Jesus Thoughts/Work on Monday:

Yesterday was a big day. The people had thrown down palms and coats in the street and shouted, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna!" But today, is business as usual.

The Israelites thought Jesus had come to overthrow the Romans. They were waiting for Jesus to do something spectacular and restore Jerusalem back to the Israelites. After all, God had given them the land of Israel as their Promised Land. But Jesus didn't do anything they had expected! What a disappointment Jesus turned out to be for the people who heard the words of Jesus but hadn't understood. He was talking about restoring the Kingdom of Heaven, not Israel.

Jesus had talked about making people whole spiritually, not just physically. Jesus told them about restoration. They were expecting to have their land restored. Jesus was talking about restoring them to their relationship with God. As Jesus was walking towards Jerusalem, he was hungry from all of the walking and sought a Fig tree for some fruit. Disappointed that the tree had no fruit, Jesus cursed the tree - taking away its purpose on this earth.

When Jesus encounters us along the journey we call life, what does he receive from you when he enters the place where you have grown roots? Does Jesus receive the fruit of your purpose, passions, and love that you have so freely given away from your heart? Does Jesus become overwhelmed by the fruit our hands and feet have produced with the seeds that were planted by our words of encouragement, the physically feeding and clothing of the less fortunate, and/or the shelter that was provided? Or does Jesus find a dry, bristled, and thirsty terrain.

A relationship with Jesus should nourish our soul and have us producing unconditional love, mercy, grace, forgiveness, empathy, kindness, understanding, patience, and the list could go on and on. The nourishing relationship with Jesus should be more impactful and have far more bearing in our lives than the current challenges the world presents to us. The seeds that are planted in others should come from our nourished souls. Others should be so impacted by how we treat and nourish them, that they want to know and have a relationship with Jesus!

Prayer: God, we ask that you change our focus from being on the things of the world, to towards our relationship with you. In order for us to be a Dangerous Church on a mission, we ask that you pour into us so that we are overwhelmed with goodness, love, mercy, kindness, and grace, along with empathy, patience, understanding, longing, gratefulness, and a spirit of giving. This so that everyone in our presence, receives an abundance of fruit that makes them want more. Allow us to be nourishment for the stale soul of your children who are thirsting for you. Have us be so Dangerous that everyone who comes nears us is impacted by the fruit that you provide them, through us. Amen.

M  N D A Y



# HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL



Holy Week Devotional  
Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Mark 11:21-22, 24-25a-b 21 Peter remembered the tree and said to Jesus, "Teacher, look! The fig tree you cursed is dry and dead!" 22 Jesus answered, "Have faith in God. NCV

24 So I tell you to believe that you have received the things you ask for in prayer, and God will give them to you. 25 When you are praying, if you are angry with someone, forgive him so that your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins. NCV

JESUS' WORK ON TUESDAY: BELIEVE, NO DOUBT, FORGIVE

Jesus' teaching continues on Tuesday reminding the disciples and us that any attempt to "Show" one believes in our God by going through the motions, practicing rituals and/ or traditions only, devoid of heart and mind CHANGE will never count to the Lord as being a believer! In fact, the true believers will be able to Effect change by choosing to to Pray always Believing:

1. you acknowledge that God is indeed greater than you you will humbly yield to the sovereignty of God.
2. You choose to Believe despite what you see ( i.e. No Doubt).
3. And most importantly, you clear your heart and mind of unforgiveness. Just as God forgives us, we too are to FORGIVE ALL!

All of these are essential so our Prayers can be affirmatively answered, every time!

Prayer: Our Lord thank you for forgiving us even before we utter the words. Thank you for giving us the gift of answered prayer if we believe, not doubt and forgive. We need this to be your disciples in this Dangerous Church. So Lord please help remove anything and anyone that Blocks out our clear communication with you. Amen, Asé.



# HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL

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Holy Week Devotional

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

Matt 26:14-16 (Spy Wednesday)

(14) Then one of the Twelve – the one called Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests (15) and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. 16 From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over. [NIV]

There seems to always be one amongst us who just doesn't want to do right and is always considered the bad one, even though they claim to be a follower of Jesus. We're living in a society today where right is wrong and wrong is right, however, we that know the Lord and the Word of God know better! We can't expect others to think like we think or do as we do in following Christ. In our broken society and as the word of God says "we're a work in progress" ....everyday!

So, as we go forward as ambassadors for Jesus the Christ, let us not give in to the nay sayers, or sacrifice our belief in God's word as an Indian giver and loose our souls. Understand, in God's perfect plan, he allowed Judas to betray Jesus for pieces of silver. God is not surprised about the evil things that are done and will use it to bring about exactly what God has planned all along: Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross of Calvary!! We must always remember it's never about us and all about Jesus the Christ!

Prayer: Lord, please give us peace, as you made peace with your destiny. Give us the courage to trust in you and not give in to what other people think, say, or do. I know you have a plan for our lives and not one to hurt us but to prosper us. Let us continue to be reminded of your love so that we don't betray you. Also let us be reminded to overcome evil with good and that you have victory even over death. It is in the matchless name of Jesus the Christ, Amen.



# HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL



Holy Week Devotional

THURSDAY, March 28, 2024

John: 13:34 NRSV

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

Maundy Thursday also called Holy Thursday is a significant day in the Christian calendar. It marks the beginning of the most severe passion week suffering sacrifice of our Lord and Savior. The word "Maundy" originated from the Latin word called "mandatum," which means "commandment." This day is named after Jesus' commandment to his disciples to love one another. It is the day of the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the eucharist and washed His disciples' feet in an exemplary act of love. The night of Maundy Thursday is the night on which Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane

In honor of Maundy Thursday, today's pericope reminds us of the ultimate sacrifice made by you and for all of Gods beloved community. It also reminds us of Jesus' sacrificial mandate to serve and love one another. In serving and loving others (even our enemies!), we not only bless another's life, but we bless our own as well. Most important of all, we honor the precious mandate given to us by our Lord, Jesus Christ, on this most solemn Maundy Thursday.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, on the night before you suffered, you showed your disciples the extent of your love, you gave them this sacrament of forgiveness and remembrance. I pray this day that we will do likewise and not forget your ultimate sacrifice as we live move and have our being in you. Amen.

A large, 3D, gold-colored cursive script spelling out the word "Thursday". The letters have a metallic sheen and are set against a light beige background with a subtle gradient.



# HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL

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Holy Week Devotional  
FRIDAY, March 29, 2024

Matthew 27:32 NRSVUE

32 As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross

On the surface, there is nothing Good about Good Friday for Jesus. At some point of the day, he probably only knew abuse as his body was ravaged and his character besmirched. Ultimately, Jesus knew why this Friday had to come, but that didn't make the experience enjoyable. Ultimately, he knew this sacrifice was necessary, it was mandatory, it was Divinely planned. BUT it still hurts. Yet during his journey to Golgotha, he was shown kindness by a man from Cyrene. I imagine the brief relief Simon gave the abused Jesus by just lifting the burden off his back.

In honor of Good Friday, let's focus on Simon's act, voluntary or not, of relief. There are times when we have the opportunity to provide someone relief, to put on display just an iota's worth of kindness. Imagine how that small amount of relief given to Jesus that fateful day may have helped him complete his mission. And we're all blessed because he finished his mission. Simon's actions of carrying Jesus' cross is an example for us all. You see We all have a cross to bear if we are to be part of the beloved community Jesus created for us. The issue we must contemplate is how will we bear our cross and come along side our siblings in Christ to help carry theirs as well. That's when we'll be able to show that we love God, and we love our siblings as we love ourselves.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, on the day you gave your life for us, Simon the Cyrene carried the cross for you. In the midst of your abuse, he became a short time respite. Help us Lord to use Simon as an example of being our sibling's keeper. Help us recognize that even a short respite from the pain and suffering some endure is a blessing like water on a sore throat. Help us Lord to walk along beside our sisters and brothers and ease their burden. When we do that Jesus, we'll find relief for ourselves as well. In the name of the one who gave all for me, I pray.

Amen



# HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL

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Holy Week Devotional  
Saturday, March 30, 2024

Matthew 27:57-61 Message Bible

57-61 Late in the afternoon a wealthy man from Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, arrived. His name was Joseph. He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate granted his request. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in clean linens, put it in his own tomb, a new tomb only recently cut into the rock, and rolled a large stone across the entrance. Then he went off. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary stayed, sitting in plain view of the tomb.

Can you imagine how hopeless the disciples must have felt after they witnessed the crucifixion of the messiah along with all their hopes and dreams. Even though they'd walked with him for 3 years, witnessed all types of miracles, and learned from the wisdom he gave through his living, they were stunned by the violent ending of the one they knew was sent from God. How could this have happened? Was he really the messiah or was he only a fraud? What will they do now?

Holy Saturday is a day of quiet reflection and anticipation for Christians around the world. It is the day between the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Holy Saturday, also known as Easter Eve, is a time to mourn the death of Jesus and to prepare for his resurrection. But, the disciples didn't realize what they were waiting for. As a matter of fact, they thought they were alone. But the women, who were disciples, watched the burial and then watched the grave. It is their commitment and hope that we can cling to today. Even when it seems hopeless, we can rest in the words of Matthew 19:26 - But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible." We must cling to this hope as we anticipate the resurrection of the one who came to save us all. Through him all things are possible.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, on the day you slept in the grave to conquer death we have such mixed emotions. We believe in you and believe you are the one who came to save us. Help us Lord to hold onto the hope you bring even in the midst of our confusion and frustration. Help our faith as we wait with tip to anticipation for your return. In the name of the one who gave all for me, I pray. Amen



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