

HOLY WEEK

— A GUIDE FOR REFLECTION —



As we spend this week moving towards Easter, Christians throughout the world are celebrating “Holy Week.” This is typically a time of reflection on the life of Jesus, his work on the cross, and his resurrection. As a church, we usually create space on Good Friday to come to our building for prayer, reflection, and communion. But this year things will have to look differently, given our current season. We have created this brief reflection guide to help us focus on Jesus — even in the midst of staying at home, reorganizing our lives, and trying to find some stability through all of the uncertainty.

Below are seven daily devotions centered on the last seven words of Jesus before he died. Each day, we will read the short saying and consider its meaning for us today. To help us do this, we’ll have the main thought behind the reflection, a question to ponder, and a daily video from one of our staff members to help guide us. Finally, we’ll end our time of reflection with a prayer.

Many blessings and may God’s grace and peace be with us all.

MONDAY

*Luke 23:34 - And Jesus said,
“Father, forgive them, for they know
not what they do.”*

Jesus shows us that, behind his life, work, and death, lies a heart that forgives. Today, reflect on how God forgives you of all of your sins. And his forgiveness is so lavish that he even forgives us for the things we do that are wrong that we aren’t even aware of. He offers us complete forgiveness.

REFLECTION: Take time to look back at your own story and God’s forgiveness along your journey. How does God’s forgiveness impact your own ability to forgive others? Remind yourself of what God has forgiven you of, and tell someone about it this week.

PRAYER: Father, remind me daily of your extravagant offer of forgiveness. Help me to not be slow to bring my faults, mistakes, and sins to you, and to bring them with a confidence that you will always forgive me. On this day, may I be a living example of a changed life because of your forgiveness. Amen.

TUESDAY

Luke 23:43 - And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

As Jesus hung on the cross, one of the thieves hanging next to Him asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom. When Jesus replies that the thief would join him in paradise, He is showing us how grace works — we surrender to God and ask him to take us wherever he is going. Today, reflect on the surrender this thief shows us, and the promise of grace that Jesus provides.

REFLECTION: What would it look like to open your hands in surrender to Jesus and receive his gift of grace today? What do you need to surrender to Him? Take a moment today to record what God is revealing to you about surrender and grace.

PRAYER: Father, thank you for the gift of grace! Help me surrender to your will and receive your grace. Help me extend the grace you show to me to those around me. May I open my hands and surrender my life to You and walk in the grace you offer. Amen

WEDNESDAY

John 19:26-27 - When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

The life and work and death of Jesus are meant to not only connect us with God but to connect us with others, too. Out of the all-encompassing grace of God, we can join others and their stories instead of remaining isolated and alone. Today, reflect on how God's forgiveness of your own heart can lead to connecting with others.

REFLECTION: How do I connect with others, when being physically distanced from them? Are there ways to explore and demonstrate this connection to others in community, even on the days that their presence may be far from me?

PRAYER: Father, help me feel the connection that can only come when you connect me with others. Let today be a day that the faces and names of those you've joined me with are at the forefront of my mind. Today I pray specifically for those that He has connected me to. Amen.

THURSDAY

Matthew 27:46 - 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?"

Even the Son of God felt abandoned and forsaken by God the Father. When we feel that God is no longer with us or has given up his care for us, we can look to Jesus and know that he has felt the same thing. But then we can look deeper still and see that, because Jesus faced the temporary abandonment of his Father, we no longer have to. Today, reflect on God's promise that he will never leave us or forget about us. Ever.

REFLECTION: These were words originally from Psalm 22:1. They come from the depths of Jesus in a moment that he felt abandoned by the Father. Take some time to consider that Jesus was abandoned by the Father so that you would not have to be? What does it mean to you that He took this pain on your behalf?

PRAYER: God, may I never forget the sacrifice Jesus made for me. Help me have a heart of gratitude for this sacrifice today and every day. May I never take for granted that I did not get what I deserved and that Jesus took my place. Remind me today that you will never leave or forsake me. Amen

FRIDAY

John 19:28 - After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst."

This small detail shows us that Jesus died as a human being . He felt every lash of the whip, every painful step, every stab of the nail. He did not get a pass out of his bodily suffering. And he did all of this so that we, as human beings, can be confident that he knows what it means to suffer in our bodies, as well. Today, reflect on the fellowship we have with Jesus through our suffering. He knows our pain. Every inch of it.

REFLECTION: Why are we so often tempted to imagine Jesus as far away from our everyday lives? What can we do to impress on our minds his sharing of our pain and suffering?

PRAYER: Father, I thank you today for a savior so intimately acquainted with what it means to be a human being. I put my trust in Jesus, knowing that my life, with all of its ups and downs, are not details he does not already know. May I go throughout my day with the comfort of not feeling alone. Amen.

SATURDAY

John 19:30 - When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished."

When Jesus said these words, he made a declaration that everything was now over. What does "everything" mean? It means that we no longer owe God anything. His life, work, and death paid the cost that each of us owes to God the Father. Now, the books are closed. And there is nothing else that we need to add to them. Today, reflect on the sufficiency of Jesus' work. We are saved by his grace alone. We cannot add to or take away from any of it. And this should be the greatest of assurances for our anxious souls.

REFLECTION: Do you live as if the work is finished? Do you find yourself feeling the need to add to his finished work on the cross?

PRAYER: Lord, I come before you, humbled at the work you did on the cross for me. May I remember that it is finished and that nothing I can do will add or take away from your finished work. Help me to rest in You and allow that assurance to fuel my heart toward a life that brings you glory. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY

Luke 23:46 - Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

Jesus volunteered for his sacrifice. And he didn't face the pain of the cross unknowingly. Why would he willingly suffer this fate? Because he loves us. He feels compassion for us. Instead of staying away from us, he runs toward us, embraces us, and pays the cost of our sins — even though it meant deep pain for him. Today, reflect on how much worth you have in God's eyes. So much worth that he endured the cross, with joy, so that you could be forgiven, known, and loved.

REFLECTION: What is your value in God's eyes? If you had to answer that question for someone that doesn't know God, what would you say?

PRAYER: Father, today I celebrate the life I live in your freedom. Because of the sacrifice of your Son and because of the gift of his life, I can walk this earth knowing that I am fully known and accepted by you. Let my celebration of this life, be something worth talking to others about in the days to come. Amen.

