



What is Holy Week?

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Simply defined, Holy Week is the week that leads towards Easter. Holy Week is a time (a week) set aside to remember the torturous events that took place in order for our salvation in Jesus to be possible. Throughout Holy Week, we are invited to remember Jesus' last supper, His prayers to God the Father in the garden of Gethsemane, His arrest, trial, torture, crucifixion, death, and ultimate resurrection on Easter Sunday. It is a powerful, heavy, and spiritually impactful week of remembrance and reflection.

David Matthis, Executive Editor of *DesiringGod.org*, in his meditation guide for Holy Week, explains the why behind Holy Week like this,

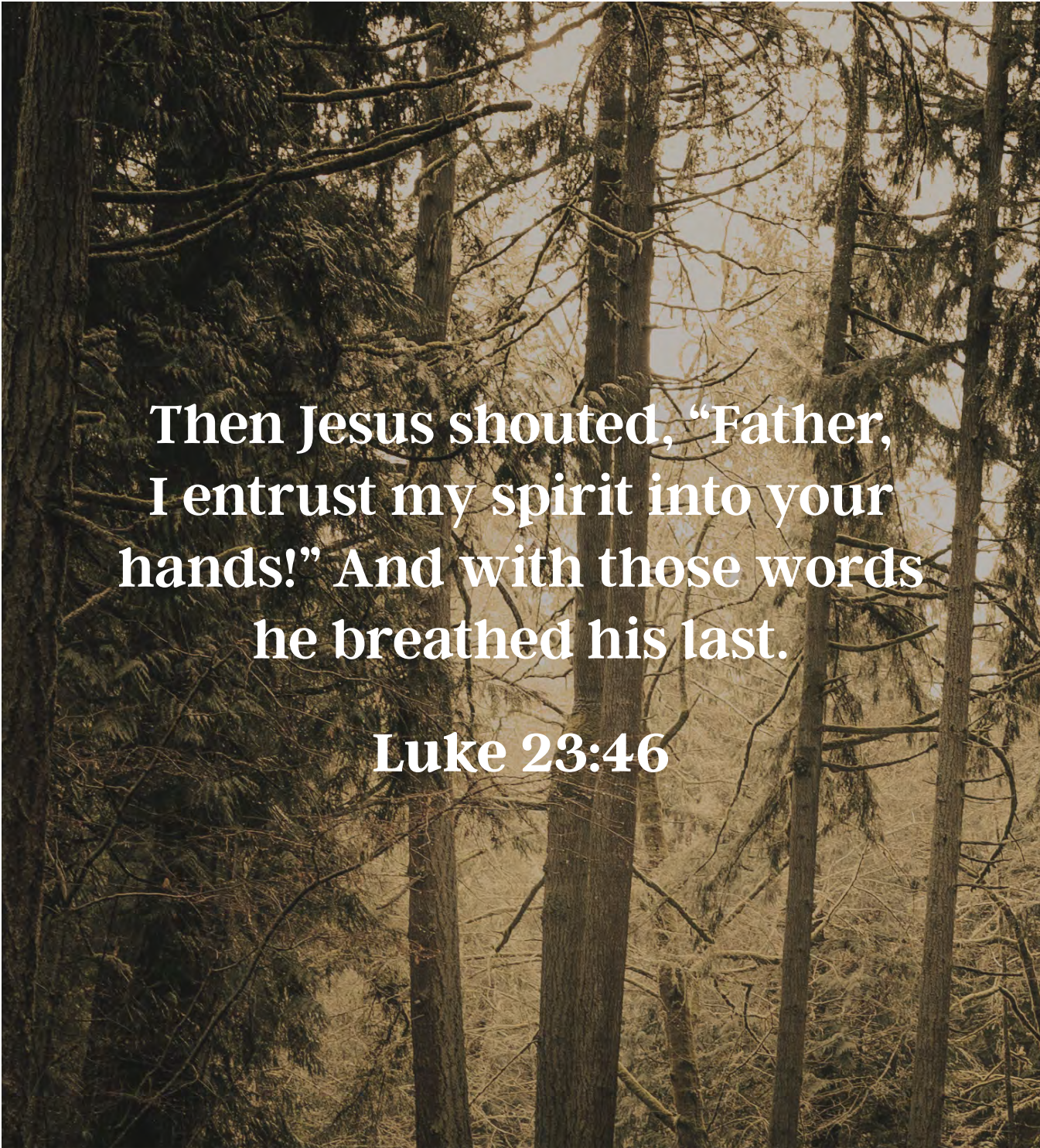
"In one sense, there's nothing special about "Holy Week." Just another sequence of eight days each spring—nothing is intrinsically holy about this Sunday to Sunday that moves around the calendar each year. We have no mandate from Jesus or his apostles to mark these days for particular observance. Marking Holy Week is not an obligation, but it is an opportunity. It is a chance to walk with the church, throughout time and through the world, as she walks with her Bridegroom through the most important week in the history of the world. It is a chance to focus our minds on, and seek to intensify our affections for, the most important and timeless realities."

While not mandating the observance, or even suggesting it, the New Testament does give us (indirect) reason, if we're looking for it. The final eight of Matthew's 28 chapters are given to this one week, along with the last six of Mark's sixteen and the final six of Luke's 24. Most significant, though, is John. Ten of the Gospel's 21 chapters—essentially half—deal with the final week of our Lord's life, his betrayal, his trials, his crucifixion, and his triumphant resurrection. Even Acts, which then narrates the life of the early church, returns to the events of Holy Week with frequency (see, for instance, Acts 1:15-19; 2:22-36; 3:11-26; 4:8-12, 24-28, among others).

Indeed, it could even be said that all the Old Testament anticipates this week, and the rest of the New Testament reflects it in theology and practical living." In the chaos of our increasingly fast-paced and hectic society, Holy Week is a reminder to pause and ponder, to carefully mark each day and not let this greatest of all weeks fly by us like every other." -David Matthis Your Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

This week, it is our prayer that as we walk into the final week of our study of Jesus' Last Words, you would treat this week as it is: holy. Remember, read, and reflect on Jesus' sacrifice this week. Remember how He poured out for you that you may be free and safe in Him. Praise God this week for the gift of His Son. Remember what this week means for your eternity.

Let us walk in nearness to Jesus this Holy Week.



**Then Jesus shouted, “Father,
I entrust my spirit into your
hands!” And with those words
he breathed his last.**

Luke 23:46



LAST WORDS.



Week 7

Week 7, Day 1

Monday

**“Father, I entrust my spirit
into your hands!”**

Luke 23:46

Luke 23:44-46

THE FINAL STEP

Throughout the last six weeks we have taken time to deeply study and meditate upon the seven final words that Jesus shared upon the cross. On this Holy Week, we look to Jesus’ final word. We look at the last words He uttered as He breathed His last. Before we unpack these words and their meaning, we need to understand the importance of His final words as a whole.

Hopefully, this study has shown you that Jesus’ final words pointed to the work He was accomplishing on the cross, but also how those words and work should radically transform how we see Jesus and our lives around Him. Jesus’ last words on the cross, “Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!” are the words that seal His sacrifice. As He says these words, it says He breathed His last, meaning He gave His spirit. This was the final step. These were the words that ended our eternity of hopelessness and secured an eternity of righteousness, gloriousness, and joyfulness in the presence of Jesus.

This week, as we study these words and their meaning for us today, remember that the work of the cross has been completed, and we will one day go home to Him.



REFLECTION

Take a moment and reflect or journal on what this study has meant for you. What is something you have learned? How has this study changed the way you see Jesus and His sacrifice? What do you plan to do with the lessons from this study?

Week 7, Day 2

Tuesday

**“Father, I entrust my spirit
into your hands!”**

Luke 23:46

Luke 23:46, Luke 2:41-49, Ephesians 4:6, Isaiah 64:8,
Matthew 26:36-56

FATHER

“This word, Father: What can we say about it? Not everyone has had a father who showed forth the fatherly love and care which Jesus knew. Some would want to substitute “Mother.” But as we know from many Scripture references, the concept of a loving, protecting, nurturing Father embraces the image of a mother also. We call God “Father” because Jesus did, and I confess that is enough for me. It means that we are related to God as a beloved child, one for whose welfare the parent pours himself out day by day. We know virtually nothing of Saint Joseph, but he must have given the young boy Jesus some idea of what a strong, tender father was like.

Through his early experience of father and mother, the child Jesus was enabled to put his trust in the One Father in heaven – the Father whom he would know so well at the age of twelve that he would be able precociously to say, “Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49) – as indeed he was, all the way to the final, dreadful, unthinkable moment, still trusting: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. A perfect life lived, a terrible death died, all for the sake of bringing you and me into the near presence of that same Father forever, with him.” - Fleming Rutledge The Seven Last Words from the Cross



REFLECTION

There’s power in seeing that despite all Jesus went through; He always looked at God as His Father. In life, we tend to become naturally distracted or distant towards God. Jesus never did this, even in the face of His death. In the end, Jesus died the way He lived, with His eyes turned toward God. The image of God our Father should invoke warmth and comfort. Take time this morning to pray to your heavenly Father. Specifically, ask Him to pour His comfort and warm presence on you and to bring you closer to Him today. Ask Him to help you see Him as your Father.

**“Father, I entrust my spirit
into your hands!”**

Luke 23:46

Luke 23:46, Genesis 2:7, Romans 12:2, Romans 14:8,
Ecclesiastes 12:7, Matthew 26:57-68, Matthew 27:11-26

LIFE AND DEATH

“...in this last saying from the Cross, Luke is teaching us how to die and how to live. Because we, by faith, are assimilated to Christ in his death, we also are assimilated to him in his life beyond death. In his suffering we find our redemption. In his abandonment we find our acceptance. In his dereliction we find our salvation. And at last we are able to say even in the midst of doubt and perplexity, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, even as the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said.” - Fleming Rutledge The Seven Last Words from the Cross

Jesus’ final words reflect a summation of life. Naturally, it leads us to reflect on Jesus’ life that was poured out as a sacrifice. We see that most clearly in His expression of these final words, but it also leads us to reflect on our own trajectory. We live, and we die. This is no mystery or surprise to us. It’s the flow of every living thing’s time on earth, but what we do with our life and how we walk into the mystery of death is what allows us to reflect Christ or repel Him. Jesus lived His life in consistent reflection and relationship with the Father. Even in His final moment, He prays to the Father.

There’s so much in life we can’t control, including our death, but what we can control is what we do with our lives and how we embrace the inevitable death that lies before us as the final act of leading us back to Christ. I know this is a difficult thing to think about. It causes great anxiety for us to think about our death, but Christ’s final words here are a reminder that, just as in life, Christ walks with us through the fear that comes with death. The question is: are we willing and ready to commend our entire lives over to Christ in order to feel this presence daily?



REFLECTION

The Book of Common Prayer has been a guide for prayer, liturgy, and church structuring for many, many years. In one part of the book, there is a prayer to be read at burial services. It has been read countless times at graveside funeral services and is known by many. It also perfectly sums up the hope of our lives and the future awaiting us at our deaths. We adjusted the prayer to read from a first-person perspective. Read this prayer over your own life to encourage you as you walk towards Jesus until the end.

For as much as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself my soul, may my body be committed to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change my vile body, that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.

Week 7, Day 4

Maunday Thursday

**“Father, I entrust my spirit
into your hands!”**

Luke 23:46

Luke 23:46, Matthew 26:26-29, 26:36-39, Colossians 2:13-15, John 5:30; 8:28-29

SWEET COMMUNION

With Jesus’ last words, He communicates a sweet intimacy and communion with His Father. Our Heavenly Father, who spared His people at the first Passover, is now preparing to spare His people again by sacrificing His Son as our Passover Lamb. Scholars believe Maundy Thursday was the day Jesus celebrated His final Passover with His disciples. Jesus led His disciples in the first act of communion, where He symbolizes His death and resurrection through the bread and wine of the Passover Meal. Still celebrated today as a part of many church traditions, communion represents the broken body of Christ and the blood that was shed for us. During this Passover meal, we see Jesus washing His disciples’ feet. After showing this example of humility, love, and service, Jesus commanded His disciples to go and serve likewise. He was pointing them towards a new kind of Passover; in addition to remembering the redemption of their forefathers in Egypt and the lamb’s blood on the doorpost allowing the angel of death “to pass over,” they were now to remember His broken body and shed blood. In Christ’s death, death itself is not just avoided; the power of sin and death is permanently defeated. After the meal, the disciples accompanied Jesus to the Garden at Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed in agony. “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”



REFLECTION

Throughout His entire life, we see Jesus continue to commune personally with His Father. What an example of what our communion with the Father can look like. Jesus was driven by a deep intimacy with the Father. If we wish to understand what motivated and guided Jesus daily, we must examine the intimate relationship He fostered with His heavenly Father. Jesus was listening to the Father to know what He was supposed to do and what He was supposed to say. Reflect on the passages from the book of John and what this means for your relationship with the Father.

What is Good Friday?

Often we wonder why the day of Jesus' crucifixion is called "Good Friday", Isaiah 53:5 gives us an indication of why it is good:

"But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed."

Eugene Peterson paraphrases Isaiah 53 in this way:

The servant grew up before God—a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look. He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum. But the fact is, it was our pains he carried—our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us. We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures. But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him—our sins! He took the punishment, and that made us whole. Through his bruises we get healed. We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him.

HE was beaten, so WE could be whole. HE was whipped, so WE could be healed... that is good news!

May we spend today reflecting not only on the good news, but also grieving the weight of our sin and the suffering it caused our Savior. May we spend today reflecting again on these seven words from the cross, soaking in all their meaning and all we have learned in our time together.

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

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

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!"*

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?"*

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

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

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.*

We hope you make plans to join us for our Good Friday service at Grace today, it is an intimate come-and-go time for your own personal reflection.

Week 7, Day 5

Good Friday

**“Father, I entrust my spirit
into your hands!”**

Luke 23:46

Choose one Bible account or read them all: Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19

THE ULTIMATE ACT OF LOVE

Following Jesus’ betrayal, arrest, desertion, false trials, denial, condemnation, beatings and mockery, Jesus was required to carry his cross to “the place of the skull”, where he was crucified with two other prisoners. Jesus’ body was placed in the tomb before 6:00 p.m. Friday evening, when the Sabbath began and all work stopped.

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.



Today is an ideal time for personal reflection to silently and prayerfully contemplate Jesus’ death and resurrection.

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.

Week 7, Day 6

Saturday

His Burial

Matthew 27:50-61, Luke 23:44-56

REFLECTION NOTES AND QUESTIONS

This week, we walked through Holy Week by looking at Jesus' last words from Luke 23:46, "*Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit!*". As we wrap up this week's study, go back and read Luke 23:46. Reflect on these words that Jesus spoke. Reflect on what they mean about His character, His work on the cross, and how it should change the way we see Him and live. Reflect/journal your thoughts on this or these following prompts:

- Write down what you learned about who God is this week.
- What is something you looked at this week that you want to receive from God in greater measure? Why?
- How can you begin to posture your life to receive more from Him?

Week 7, Day 7

Easter

Sunday

Luke 24

Use today to rest, pray, and catch up on any of this week's readings you may have missed. Use today as a preparation for your heart toward the next week's study of God and His word.

What Now?

As we have journeyed through these last seven words of Jesus together, we hope your heart feels closer to Jesus and to the heart of your Heavenly Father who laid out this beautiful plan of redemption from the very beginning.

Encyclopedia of the Bible says this:

Of all the ironies of the cross that bridge the centuries, none is greater than the idea that eternal life for human beings springs out of Jesus' death. By offering up his Son, God is able to make sons and daughters of all who respond to this work. Therefore, we must believe what God has done through Christ at the cross and respond to it with a life that honors God.

So as we move forward let's set our hearts on Romans 12:1-2:

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Father, today may we offer ourselves up as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable in your eyes. Because of the sacrifice of your Son and because of the gift of His life, we can walk this earth knowing that we are fully known and accepted by you. Let everything we do and say bring honor and glory to You.

Amen.