

A 6-DAY HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL

How Jesus Spent His Final Days Before the Cross

How To Use This Guide:

The purpose of the packet is to draw not only you and your family closer to Christ as we recognize his sacrifice. But is also a way in which you and your family can grow closer together as you experience Jesus.

Each day read the opening scripture with everyone in your household, then read through devotion together and participate in the follow up questions and activities.

Each day watch the video devotion from Mike as it will follow along with the devotion each day. You will receive these via email every morning. Just click on the link and it will take you straight to it. If you are not on the email list simply go to 17scc.com, click RESOURCES, click ARTICLES, then you will see links to every video along with this devotional packet.

Day 1: Jesus Cleanses the Temple (Holy Monday)

Read Matthew 21:12-19

Who is this Jesus?

There are many things we could say about him, but first and foremost He is the holy King. A prophecy made around 500 years before Jesus came witnesses to Christ's holiness and purity. Based on the prophecy in [Malachi 3:1-4](#), the Jewish people expected the Messiah to come and purify the temple and the people of Jerusalem. Here is what we read:

“See, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. Then the Lord you seek will suddenly come to His temple, the Messenger of the covenant you desire—see, He is coming,” says the Lord of Hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who will be able to stand when He appears? For He will be like a refiner’s fire and like cleansing lye. He will be like a refiner and purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver. Then they will present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will please the Lord as in days of old and years gone by.

**Jesus fulfills these expectations
in a way the people never could have expected.**

Malachi speaks of God's messenger restoring the worship life of the people of God and purifying the priests. But once again, Jesus fulfills these expectations in a way the people never could have expected. He walked into a scene where people were bustling in the outer court of the temple, known also as the court of the Gentiles, a place for the nations to meet with God in worship, praise, and prayer. Instead of such worship, however, Jesus found a commercial business filled with scores of people selling sacrifices and exchanging money. People were profiting off of one another and even taking advantage of one another, all while ignoring the purpose of the temple. So Jesus, in righteous anger, drove them all out, overturning their tables and their seats ([Matthew 21:12](#)). He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer.’ But you are making it a den of thieves!” In [Isaiah](#)

56:7, God says that His house will be called a “house of prayer for all nations.” Yet here in Matthew 21, the people of God were *preventing* the nations from praying.

In the second part of verse 13, Jesus says that God’s house has been made into a “den of thieves.” This is likely a reference to [Jeremiah 7:10](#), a temple address in which God disciplined His people for offering ritual sacrifices while living in total disobedience to Him. Jeremiah’s wider context is worth quoting here:

“Do you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and follow other gods that you have not known? Then do you come and stand before Me in this house called by My name and say, ‘We are delivered, so we can continue doing all these detestable acts’? Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your view? Yes, I too have seen it.” This is the Lord’s declaration. (Jeremiah 7:9-11)

**This hideout for criminals *against* God
needed to be restored to a house of prayer *for* God.**

God’s people were offering worship in Jeremiah’s day, yet they did not behave in obedience to God. Jesus walked into a similar situation in Matthew 21, and as a holy King, He came to cleanse and to purify God’s temple. This hideout for criminals *against* God needed to be restored to a house of prayer *for* God. Jesus does not deal with sin lightly, but in righteous anger. This leads to the next attribute of Jesus.

Jesus has the right to cleanse the temple because He is the authoritative King. In this chapter and the chapters that follow, Jesus’ authority is put on display. This section of Matthew’s Gospel has been referred to as Jesus’ final break with Judaism, for He takes the religious leaders of Jerusalem head-on, making claims that they considered blasphemous—claims that would lead them to crucify Him.

Consider the authority Jesus demonstrates Jesus had made clear in Matthew 12:6 that He is greater than the temple. Indeed, He is Lord of the

temple, and He has the right to do in it whatever He desires, including throwing it into disarray. It must have been quite shocking for Jewish leaders who prided themselves in religious practices at the temple to have Jesus come in and turn it upside down. Who does He think He is? Is He in charge of this place? Yes, as a matter of fact, He is.

Challenge:

Scripture tells us that our bodies are also to be a temple, therefore we should take care of them. (*1 Corinthians 6:19*) We are also told in scripture that if you are a true follower of Christ you will stand out in the crowd (*Romans 12:2*). So if we are suppose to be a temple and also be different than the rest of the world, the way we live our lives should display that to everyone we encounter. But the issue is that allow ourselves to become distracted.

Answer this:

What are some things you can do as a family to make sure your homes and your lives stay clean? What can you change to make sure that every time someone encounters your family they experience Jesus. In other words, what do you as a family need to get rid of, stop doing or start doing?

NOTES:

Day 2: Jesus rebukes the Pharisees (Fig Tuesday)**Read Matthew 21:23-46**

Jesus knew that God the Father had given Him the authority to do everything He had done up to this point in His life and ministry (**John 5:19-29**). Matthew 21 has already presented several aspects of this authority: Christ came to Jerusalem and received praise and worship from the people, cleansed the temple, and taught in the temple courts. These actions led the religious leaders to ask, “By what authority are You doing these things? Who gave You this authority?” (v. 23). The religious leaders were questioning Jesus’ authorization to do what He did. They essentially asked, “Is it from God or from man?” Today people still wonder whether Christianity is from God or whether it is just another man-made religion.

More than just innocent questions...

Lest we think these were just innocent questions by the religious leaders, remember that they had already rejected John the Baptist’s message (v. 32); these questions often come from unbelief. They had already rejected earlier revelation from God, so their rejection of Jesus was not altogether unexpected.

Will we let unbelief and the opinions of others control us?

Unbelief isn’t the only reason people question Jesus’ authority. These questions often come from misplaced fear, which is what we see in verse 26. Instead of fearing God, which the Bible says is the beginning of knowledge (**Proverbs 1:7**), these leaders had an unhealthy fear of man. This misplaced fear is what led them to question Jesus, and it leads many people to question Jesus’ authority today. The question for us is, Will we let unbelief and the opinions of others control us, or will we submit to God and His Son Jesus Christ?

Their professed agnosticism was a smoke screen.

Jesus responded to the questions of the chief priests and the elders by posing a question of His own. To force their hand, He asked them whether John's baptism was from heaven or from man (v. 25). John had made Jesus' identity as the Messiah clear, and the people respected John as a prophet. Therefore, the religious leaders couldn't reject John, or the people would turn against them. However, if they claimed that John's authority was from heaven, then they would be guilty of rejecting God, since they denied that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus knew that His question would uncover their hearts. Their professed agnosticism—"We don't know"—in verse 27 was simply a smoke screen.

Challenge:

Unbelief is something we do not enjoy talking about, the reason why is so many of us are quick to say I have full 100% faith. And for many of us your faith may be EXTRAORDINARY, but for some we have our doubts, and when the rubber meets the road we struggle with faith. It may be awkward but with your family be honest, let's talk about our own disbelief concerning God. One thing so many people struggle with when it comes to God, is they can't have faith in something they don't understand, I think that's the whole point. We have to have faith because it's impossible for us to understand everything there is about God and who He is. Sometimes we have to stop searching for answers, and just search for Jesus.

Answer This:

Where are you at with your faith that Jesus is the son of God. You may be quick to say yes I believe, but for a moment with your family, in a safe environment, open up about some things you find yourself doubting about when it comes to God. Talk about things that you really don't understand. How can we every grow, if we won't talk about the things that confuse us.

NOTES:

Day 3: Signs Of Things To Come (Spy Wednesday)**Read Matthew 24:1-36**

We've seen in Matthew 24 that we are to trust in the authority of Christ and persevere in the power of Christ. Based on the portrait of Christ we see throughout Matthew's Gospel, we should long for the coming of Christ. The realities of tribulation, deception, temptation, and persecution create anticipation. The more we live *in* this world, the more we will long for Christ to come back *to* this world.

**The more we live *in* this world,
the more we will long for Christ to come back *to* this world.**

This text leaves no doubt that the day of Christ's return will be evident to all. His coming will be no secret: the angels of heaven will let out a trumpet blast, and every eye will behold the Son of Man in the sky (vv. 29-31). How different this will be from His first coming! The first time He came to a remote, obscure town just outside Jerusalem, where He went largely unnoticed, save for a few shepherds and some farm animals. He came the first time lying in a manger; however, He will come the second time riding on the clouds. This is what Daniel prophesied centuries before:

And I saw One like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before Him. He was given authority to rule, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

**He will come on the clouds
in power to execute judgment.**

Just as surely as He came the first time in humility to provide salvation, so He will come the second time in glory to execute judgment. Matthew's reference to "the clouds of heaven" in verse 30 is not just an allusion to Daniel 7. Throughout the Old Testament, God reveals His glory in the image

of a cloud. It was a pillar of cloud that led God's people in the exodus from Egypt ([Exodus 13:21](#)). Then, at the end of the book of Exodus, God's glory was revealed in a cloud that covered the tabernacle ([Exodus 40:34-38](#)). [Psalm 104:3](#) says that God makes the clouds "His chariot," and [Isaiah 19:1](#) depicts the Lord riding on a "swift cloud." The picture we get in Matthew 24 is of the glory of God revealed in the glorious Son of God, who will come on the clouds in power to execute judgment.

In verse 30 Jesus says that the tribes of the earth will "mourn" when they see Him coming. That day will be a day of judgment, and all who are not ready for that day—that is, those who have refused to turn from their sin and to trust in Christ as Savior and King—will come face to face with the Holy One whom they have rejected.

What if this happened today? Would I be ready?

This text should cause us to ask ourselves, "What if this happened today? Would I be ready?" If not, then repent and believe in Christ today. If you are a genuine follower of Christ, are there things in your life that you still need to repent of, sins that you're holding on to and toying with? What are you doing today that would cause you to be ashamed before Jesus if He were to come this moment? If so, let go of these things. Confess your sin and find mercy in Your Savior, so that you will be ready for His coming.

Following Jesus' description of His second coming in verses 29-31, He tells the parable of the fig tree in verses 32-33. The lesson of this parable is that Christians confidently watch, for they see the leaves on the tree (the signs Jesus has spoken of) indicating that the Lord's return is near. In a very real sense, we keep our eyes on the sky and our hearts prepared, even though we don't know the exact timing of His coming. Yet we know that His timing will confound our wisdom. When the Son returns, we will see that the Father's timing makes perfect sense, so we watch with confidence in the sovereign control of God.

We watch and we wait.

Challenge:

Life really is all about waiting, whether it be for a job, promotion, kids to come, kids to grow up and we wait patiently and anxiously for Jesus to return again one day. The idea of Jesus retuning may scare many of us, may even make you feel uncomfortable, if we're being honest death is never a fun conversation to have, but we have faith there is life after death. So its a conversation we must have.

Answer This:

It may be tough, but if today was possibly your last day here on earth, are you satisfied with how you lived your life, the faith you had and with your relationship with Jesus? If not, what do you need to do to fix that?

NOTES:

Day 4: The Significance of the Last Supper (Maundy Thursday)

Read Matthew 26:20-75

Jesus is celebrating the Passover meal with His disciples, a meal they ate every year to remember God's deliverance from Egypt (see [Exodus 12](#)). For Passover, the Israelite homes were instructed to slaughter a spotless lamb and then put its blood above their doorposts. When God came in judgment on the homes of the Israelites and the Egyptians, He would put to death the firstborn son in any home that did not have blood over the doorpost. God provided the blood of a lamb, a substitute sacrifice, to save His people from the payment of sin. God's people would celebrate this meal every year, taking these lambs to be slaughtered. The Israelites would gather together in their homes and remember the original Passover night in Egypt. With that backdrop, Jesus refers to the cup in the Last Supper as signifying "My blood," which is "shed for many for the forgiveness of sins" (26:28; emphasis added). He is the Passover lamb ([Exodus 12](#)) who saves us with His blood. When God's wrath and judgment come, we hide under the blood of a substitute sacrifice, Jesus the Lamb of God.

He is our substitute sacrifice.

The account of the Last Supper also connects Jesus' death with the law God gave to His people. He is the covenant keeper ([Exodus 24](#)) who seals us with His blood. Jesus refers to "My blood that establishes the covenant" in [Matthew 26:28](#), and this is the only time the word "covenant" is used in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus is alluding to [Exodus 24](#), when the law-covenant that God had given His people at Mount Sinai was confirmed. In [Exodus 24:8](#) Moses sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you concerning all these words." This was a picture not only of God's forgiveness, but also of His binding of the people to Himself in relationship.

Now, with Jesus' death, we have a new covenant ([Jeremiah 31:31-34](#); [Ezekiel 36:25-27](#)) sealed not with the blood of an animal sacrifice, but with the blood of the Son of God Himself ([Hebrews 10:1-18](#)). He is our substitute sacrifice, and He has died the death we deserved to die.

Challenge:

The reason we partake in this meal every single Sunday isn't as much as to remember the Israelites escape from Egypt and God's goodness. But it's because of Jesus we are able to escape sin because of God's goodness. This is the reason we take this meal every single week during worship. It is to act not only as a way to worship but also a time where we can reflect on how much Christ loves us and what he did for us.

Sometimes we may feel pressured or even rushed when taking this meal in public. So today instead of answering questions, we challenge you as a family to partake in communion at home. Spend some time in prayer, and reflect with each other how much Jesus loves you.

How:

If you are unfamiliar with how to take communion, here is some more direction:

A Simple Guide for Communion

Here are the basic requirements:

1. Have the Communion elements (bread/wafer for Christ's body) and juice (for Christ's blood) If you don't have these elements handy its fine just substitute, God cares more about your heart during communion than he does the physical elements.
2. Search your heart for unconfessed sin (1 Corinthians 11:23-30).
3. Confess your sin to God (1 John 1:9).
4. If there is unresolved conflict in your life, seek reconciliation (Matthew 5:23).
5. Reflect on all Jesus did and went through to pay the penalty for your sin (1 Corinthians 11:23-30).
6. Read Matthew 26:26-28 or 1 Corinthians 11:23-30.

Day 5: Jesus' crucifixion (Good Friday)**Read Matthew 27:1-61**

When Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?" in verse 46, He was suffering separation from God for our reconciliation. The cry on the cross is *not* a cry of unbelief, confusion, or despair. Jesus was not doubting the Father, and He wasn't confused about what was happening to Him. We shouldn't understand His cry from the cross as if He were saying to His Father, "Why are You doing this to Me?" He knew everything that was going on at that moment; in fact, He had foretold this moment ([Matthew 17:22-23](#); [Mark 9:31](#)), and He had willingly submitted Himself to it ([John 10:17-18](#)). He was confident in the Father even as He experienced abandonment.

Jesus' cry on the cross was a cry of physical agony, spiritual anguish, and relational alienation. He quoted from [Psalm 22](#), and understanding that psalm is key to understanding this cry. Much could be said about the themes in this psalm and their relation to the crucifixion, but for now we should note that this was a cry of physical agony as Jesus physically hung on the cross. Psalm 22:14-16 captures this physical anguish:

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are disjointed; my heart is like wax, melting within me. My strength is dried up like baked clay; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You put me into the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; a gang of evildoers has closed in on me; they pierced my hands and my feet.

Jesus' physical anguish was very real and His suffering was intense. However, as we noted earlier, Jesus' cry on the cross was also a cry of spiritual anguish. Jesus experienced the wrath of God, and not just for a moment, but for hours. Shrouded by darkness and seared with pain, He experienced the cup of God's wrath.

Jesus was given the full recompense of our disobedience.

In addition, this was also a cry of relational alienation. In a mysterious way, Christ was alienated not only from His friends, but also from the Father. This is the curse of the cross (see also [Galatians 3:13](#)). As He came under the sentence of sin, Jesus was cut off from the Father's favorable presence. God's presence was real at the cross, but it was His presence in judgment and wrath toward sin. Jesus was given the full recompense of our disobedience. This is what Paul speaks to in [2 Corinthians 5:21](#): "He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Martin Luther spoke of this exchange:

Our most merciful Father, seeing us to be oppressed and overwhelmed with the curse of the law [so that] we could never be delivered from it by our own power, sent his only Son in the world and laid upon him all the sins of all men, saying: Be thou Peter that denier; Paul that persecutor, blasphemer and cruel oppressor; David that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and briefly, be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men; see therefore that thou pay and satisfy for them [all]. (As cited in Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 345)

Jesus experienced the separation that we as sinners deserve, so that we might receive reconciliation. That is the effect of the cross for all who trust in Jesus. Before the cross, we were cast out of God's presence; because of the cross, we are now invited into God's presence.

The barrier separating man from God was ripped away by God so that hell-deserving sinners could be welcomed safely into the presence of the infinitely holy God.

This entrance into God's presence is why, right after Jesus died, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). The barrier separating man from God was ripped away by God so that hell-deserving sinners could be welcomed safely into the presence of the infinitely holy God of the universe.

Do you see now why the cross is so significant? What happened on the cross was so much more than a naked man dying on a wooden post on the

side of the road in a non-descript part of the world. This was the holy God of the universe giving His Son to die our death, endure our condemnation, and suffer our separation so that we could be declared righteous and welcomed into His presence.

Excerpts from *Exalting Jesus in Matthew* from the *Christ-Centered Exposition* commentary series.

Challenge:

When I personally read or listen to more and more about the death of Jesus it makes me uncomfortable, makes me almost guilty, because I know my sins were on his shoulders during those moments. The Crucifixion of Jesus is one of those events that we have really made to “picture perfect” through out the years. Show some pretty pictures of crosses on a hill with a majestic background. But we forget the complete terror of that moment.

Answer This:

Thinking about Jesus dying should make us all more appreciative of who he is and what he did for us. Today reflect on this moment. I encourage you with your family to take a few moments today with complete silence and not only think of what Jesus did (die) but why he did it, he did it for you. We love to give moments of silence in schools and at ball games after terrible tragedies in order to give honor to those people who lost their lives. For a few minutes today I challenge you to give a moment of silence for what Christ did. Reflect on what emotions you experienced during this below.

NOTES:

Day 6: Responding to the Cross (Black Saturday)**Read Matthew 27:57-61**

All history revolves around this scene in Matthew 26–27, and all our lives are determined by what we do in response to this scene. At least two responses are appropriate as we think about the cross.

Surrender your heart

First, surrender your heart to God. If you are an unbeliever, turn from sin and trust in Christ. Do not seek to add to His infinitely gracious and worthy sacrifice, but instead repent and embrace this free gift of salvation. If you are a believer, continue daily to trust in Christ, your substitute. Stop toying with sin and pursue the One who died to set you free from it.

Proclaim hope

Second, the cross ought to compel us to proclaim the hope of the gospel. The gospel is the greatest news in all the world. Many people know that Jesus died, but they don't know why. They don't know why the cross is the centerpiece of all history and the determinant of our eternity; but you do! So tell them, and pray for their salvation. Let everyone know that the Son of God came to save sinners, and that He has given His life on the cross for those who deserve His wrath. This is the good news, and it is our great privilege to proclaim it.

Challenge:

This week we have spent a considerably large amount of time discussing Jesus's last week here on earth before he died. I pray that you have drawn not only closer to Jesus through these activities but also closer to your family. Make sure to be at church tomorrow to celebrate the conclusion of this experience.

Answer This:

What's your next step? After diving deep into the significance of Christ dying for our sins, what do you need to do now?

NOTES:

References

A 7-day holy week devotional. (2019, April 15). Retrieved March 24, 2021, from <https://csbible.com/holy-week/>

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