



BELIEVE

HOLY WEEK
REFLECTIONS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

GLACIAL COMMUNITY YMCA

Watertown Area YMCA
YMCA at Pabst Farms

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,
that whoever **believes** in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16 (ESV)

Palm Sunday

April 10, 2022

A TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Read Luke 19:28-38

“Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’” Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” They replied, “The Lord needs it.” They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

This day, the day we celebrate a triumphal entry of our king, isn't really what we think it is, or was. We often picture it as a glorious day, a shining moment in Jesus' life and ministry. But it was very different. His response to the praise and celebration wasn't joy, but weeping. He wept over what was to come, but more than that, he wept over the condition of the hearts of the people.

If we were to continue reading the verses to follow in Luke 19 we would see that, “As he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep.” Why was Jesus weeping over Jerusalem? Sin. Jesus came for one reason and one reason only. That was to rescue humanity from sin and restore us back to God. He was, and still is, the only way to redeem what was lost at the time of creation, when sin entered the picture through Adam and Eve. This moment in history, the triumphal entry as we know it, was the beginning of that restoration. And it would cost the earthly life of Jesus. His sacrifice made our salvation possible. And that path would lead Jesus to tears on Palm Sunday.

The story of redemption is drawing to its climax. And it begins the week on a donkey. A humble servant, being celebrated on this day, but soon to be handed over by those same people to be killed, crucified on a cross.

Additional readings: Matthew 21:1-11; Zechariah 9:9; John 12:12-19

Family Craft: Create a Palm Sunday Paper Cross: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hzHfhXSDYk>

Reflection: As we enter this Holy Week, reflect on Jesus' purpose of his sacrifice: to rescue us from sin and restore us back to God.

Monday

April 11, 2022

WHO IS THIS JESUS?

Read Matthew 16:13-20

He asked His disciples, "...What about you? Who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" Matthew 16:15-16

Controversial, yet penetrating. Truthful, and still loving. Inviting, but never compromising. This is who He was; the Man, Jesus, who claimed to be the Son of God. He was predictable, but in an unpredictable way. He challenged tradition with truth and turned the world upside down. He was God's new covenant wrapped in human flesh. He didn't come to abolish the old law, but was simply as the fulfillment of it. His words were truth. And in those words, people found life. And so, it is the same today. In His words we find peace for today, and hope for tomorrow. He came that you and I could have life.

This Man, Jesus, was called by some a hypocrite. Many say He was a liar. For some, He was simply a fraud. But for many more, He was exactly who He claimed to be. He was, and is, Messiah. He was, and is, Savior. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. He was fully God, yet fully human. And by stepping onto earth, in human form, He not only became our Teacher, more than that He became our Redeemer. He was, and still is, the Way. He has been, and will always be, the Truth. And He will always remain the Life. He is our only hope. He is our final answer.

Easter is quickly approaching and you are most likely contemplating a new outfit, a family gathering, or simply the start of spring. Maybe this year could be different. None of that is bad. Like many, I look forward to seeing family and the arrival of much warmer temperatures. But could it be that this year, this Easter, we can completely turn our focus on the only One who can provide all that He said He was. That we can push aside the commercialization, and despite what those around us say, we can celebrate Jesus. Simply celebrate Jesus. He is Easter. And He is enough reason to celebrate.

- Bruce Osborn, Director of Spiritual Development, Glacial Community YMCA

Additional Readings: John 14:1-14; John 17; Isaiah 53

A Quick, Virtual Message of Who this Jesus is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2i_clw413Yg

Reflection: How will this Easter be different for you? Will you celebrate this Jesus who came to redeem fallen mankind? Will your celebration create in you a different outlook on your life as you roll into the routine that next Monday will bring? May you remember that this Jesus, our Savior, changes everything.

Tuesday April 12, 2022

A MESSAGE OF FAITH Read Matthew 21:19-22

¹⁹Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered. ²⁰When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked. ²¹Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. ²²If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

It's Tuesday of the final week of Jesus' physical life. Many scholars will disagree on the chronological order of the events in this final week. But make no mistake, the messages of this final week, no matter what day they happened on, were relevant to the culture of the day, and are still applicable to our culture today.

Faith. Jesus used the simple lesson of a fig tree and the miracle he performed as he and his disciples were traveling back to Jerusalem to make the point of faith. And this day required a lot of it from his followers. He was attacked on every side from those who wanted nothing to do with this man from Nazareth. The wheels were beginning to be set in motion for how they might quietly rid themselves of this self-proclaimed Son of God. It was on this day that Jesus would confront those in opposition to his ways with a discourse of what was to come; the end of time events, his second coming, and the final judgment. But before that, a message of faith.

According to Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." For the Christian, it is the belief that Jesus is who he said he is, and that he will come once again to make the wrongs of this world right. And for those who have faith in him, we will no longer live with hope, as our faith will make the questions, the doubts, the unseen clearly seen. "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." I Corinthians 13:12. Faith makes the impossible, possible. It makes the intangible, tangible. And it brings heaven to earth.

Go interactive, and worship Jesus in this song, "Give Me Faith":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNwt7LQiYck>

Reflection: In this Holy Week, you can make a difference in the life of someone in your neighborhood, your family, or your workplace, just by living out your faith in action. What will you do to make that difference?

Wednesday

April 13, 2022

HOLY WEDNESDAY

A Day of Betrayal

Read Luke 22:3-6

³Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. ⁴And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. ⁵They were delighted and agreed to give him money. ⁶He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

Wednesday. Midweek. It's a day in Holy Week that seems a little obscure. Nothing in Scripture mentions this day. But it is believed to be the day that Judas conspired with those who wanted to get rid of Jesus, offering a betrayal of his teacher and rabbi for thirty pieces of silver. And on this same day, on this Holy Wednesday, while Judas gave his heart over to Satan, Jesus was believed to be in Bethany being anointed by Mary with costly oil of spikenard. The days leading up to his arrest and death were passing quickly, and the events were growing in intensity.

Betrayal is not an easy word to hear. It evokes feelings of distrust, fear, or loneliness. And it usually comes from those who are closest to us. Maybe you have sat in that place of betrayal; a betrayal toward someone, or you have been on the receiving end of it. Either way, it's not a good place to be. And that's exactly where Jesus was on this Holy Wednesday, soon to be betrayed by one of the men closest to him. But even this was all part of God's plan for complete redemption of mankind, the restoration of God's people unto himself.

We might not want to celebrate this day, a day of betrayal. But we can be thankful for the part this day played in God's plan of redemption.

Additional Readings: Matthew 26:6-16; Mark 14:10-12; I John 1:9

Go interactive with this video: Holy Water, by We The Kingdom,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KLQ2AXQmtA>

Reflection: As the events of the week now begin to slip into the final days of Jesus' earthly life, prepare your heart for those final days with this prayer:

Lord God,

We tremble to think that it was one of Jesus' own friends who betrayed him. One who sat by him, who broke bread with him. Give us strength, we pray, to walk faithfully with Jesus, even when the road we walk is rocky, even when the message of the cross seems like foolishness. And even when we feel betrayed.

You, Lord, are always faithful. We stumble, we become lost, but you are steady and sure.

Give us the grace to endure our troubles, and reveal to us the glory of your kingdom, through your son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thursday

April 14, 2022

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Read John 13: 1-5

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Good Friday, we know. And Easter most certainly. But what is Maundy Thursday? Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter, believed to be the day when Jesus celebrated his final Passover with His disciples. Most notably, that Passover meal was when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples in an extraordinary display of humility. He then commanded them to do the same for each other.

Did you know that Maundy is a word derived from the Latin word *mandatum*, meaning "commandment?" Maundy refers to the command Jesus gave his disciples during the Last Supper to love each other with humility by serving others, and he demonstrated that by the washing of his disciples' feet.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35

Thursday was an important day in the week leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection. It prepared his followers for what was to come. At this point in the week, the disciples were starting to understand the reality and the weight of these days. For on the very next day, Good Friday as we know it today, their leader would give his life for them, and for all mankind to be the final sacrifice for those who would respond in faith to him for their eternal forgiveness of sin.

For a visual depiction of this evening, go here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjogHX4TwQg>

Reflection: A Prayer for Today

Lord God, you sent your Son into the world, and before his hour had come, he washed his disciples' feet. You had given all things into his hands. He had come from you, and was going to you, and what did he do? He knelt down on the floor, and washed his friends' feet.

He was their teacher and their Lord, yet he washed their feet. Lord God, help us learn from his example; help us to do as he has done for us. The world will know we are his disciples if we love one another. Strengthen our hands and our wills for love and for service. Keep before our eyes the image of your Son, who, being God, became a Servant for our sake. All glory be to him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Good Friday

April 15, 2022

Read John 19: 16b–18 for the story of the crucifixion

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. 17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

What's so good about Good Friday? Why do we call it "good," when we know it's the day that our Savior was crucified?

I Peter 2:24 might shed some light on that: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."

While Good Friday is a dark day in history, for the Christian it is a crucial day because it commemorates what we hold to be the most momentous day, leading into the most important weekend in our journey of faith. The cross and the resurrection (which we celebrate on Easter) of Jesus is the turning point for all of God's creation. Good Friday is the day when Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice, his life, so that we might find life, forgiveness, and reconciliation back to God. He shed his blood so that we can be cleansed of our unrighteousness, and made right with God through his sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:22 says, "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." The Old Testament tells the story of God's people sacrificing a spotless animal to receive God's forgiveness. This went on and on. Jesus came as the spotless Lamb of God, offered himself as the once-for-all sacrifice for sin, for all who would receive him.

This Good Friday, remember that we are made complete, perfect, before a holy God because of the blood that was shed by his Son, Jesus. And that makes this Friday, every Friday of Holy Week, good!

For additional reading: Hebrews 9

Go interactive: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9bB7nE3PZI&t=20s>

Interactive for children; an Easter animation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HL8R158Ujp4>

Reflection: A Prayer Today:

Lord God,

Jesus cried out to you on the cross, "Why have you forsaken me?" You seemed so far from his cry and from his distress. Those who stood at the foot of the cross wondered where you were, as they saw Jesus mocked and shamed and killed. Where were you then?

Lord God, we, too, ask where you are, when there is trouble and suffering and death, and we cry out to you for help. Be near to us, and save us so that we may praise you for your deliverance.

We wait, on Friday, for the resurrection of Sunday and sometimes our lives seem a succession of Fridays and we cannot see what is "Good." Teach us to call your name as Jesus did. Make us to trust in you like little children.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Holy (Silent) Saturday

April 16, 2022

Read Luke 23:55

“As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.”

Some facts about Holy, or Silent Saturday:

- Generally observed by the Catholic Church, Holy Saturday is a 40-hour vigil between Good Friday and Easter Sunday
- Just as the family and friends of Jesus spend Saturday waiting and praying, we too can use Holy Saturday as a day of meditation and reflection
- Holy Saturday is the end of Lent and fasting

Source: Crosswalk.com

The term “holy” that we have referred to this week is more pertinent today than maybe any other day of the week. The term, “holy” actually means “to set apart.” God’s people in the Old Testament, following God’s command, set aside one day each week as Sabbath. In Exodus 20:8, God commands his people, “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping in holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God.” On this Holy Saturday, as Christians we can set aside our tasks and remember what God is doing, and has done, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Just as Jesus’ followers waited the tedious hours of that Saturday to see what would occur Sunday, so we wait to see the hand of the Lord in our own lives. The prayers that are yet to be answered and the hopes left lingering still can all be placed at the throne of God as we rest and abide in His presence. Exodus 14:14 shared to, “be still and wait for the Lord” as the Israelites stood at the banks of the Red Sea waiting for the Lord to act, and so in that they yielded their fears, their worries, and their own actions to the Father for movement. When it was time to move, the Lord made it clear to them, but there came a time of trusting in being still before He revealed what was next.

Holy Saturday is a time for us to lean into being present in the Lord, placing our own agendas at the door, and coming before Him to simply be with Him. The Lord desires a relationship with us, and a requirement of a relationship is time together. Holy Saturday is a great day not to ask for anything, but to simply spend time within the Spirit of the Lord.

Source: Cally Logan, Author

Additional Readings: Matthew 27; Mark 15; John 19

Reflection: A Holy Saturday Prayer

Father, We recognize the significance of Holy Saturday for the Easter season. It is not merely a day between Good Friday and Easter, but it is a day to observe in consecration of what You did for us. We leave our own agendas, our own desires, and our own pleas at the door and crave today to be still and rest in Your presence. We are so grateful for the ability to quiet our hearts and stand in Your presence, we want to come to know Your heart more this day. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus to die for us, and thank You that You kept Your promise that Easter Sunday. Let us not be so hurried in our own lives that we forget the glory that You brought forth that day. In Jesus name, Amen

Easter Sunday

April 17, 2022

RESURRECTION SUNDAY

“He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.”

- Matthew 28:6

Read Luke 24:1-8

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷“The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.”” ⁸Then they remembered his words.

Easter is not generally celebrated as a traditional day of Holy Week. But how can the Christian not recognize the importance of this day?! It is Resurrection Day! It is the day that seals our future hope of a sacrificing Savior, gaining victory over death, rising to life and one day returning to reign again. He is our forgiveness. Jesus is our hope in this life, and our hope for the life to come. He is risen! He is our conquering king, our victor! Easter reminds us that the work of redemption is finished!

What is our response to this risen Savior? The women, on their way to the tomb, show us how we should respond. In Matthew 28:9-10, we are told this, “And behold, Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.”

Easter is a time of worship. But in reality, for the believer, every day is a day to worship Jesus. And every Sunday is a day we could refer to as Resurrection Sunday! We celebrate our Savior each time we gather corporately to worship. We worship in how we do our work each day. We worship by the way we treat our family, friends, coworkers, and those we meet each day. Our lives should be lived in worship of our Savior.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for man.” Colossians 3:23.

This Easter, commit your life to live, and worship, and do all for the glory of the One who gave his all for you.

Go interactive with the beautiful Celtic worship song, “In Christ Alone”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kvFtXphmMU>

Happy Easter!

Thank you for taking time this week to reflect with us during this year's Holy Week through the Glacial Community YMCA Spiritual Development program.

May God bless you this Easter with His eternal presence and peace.