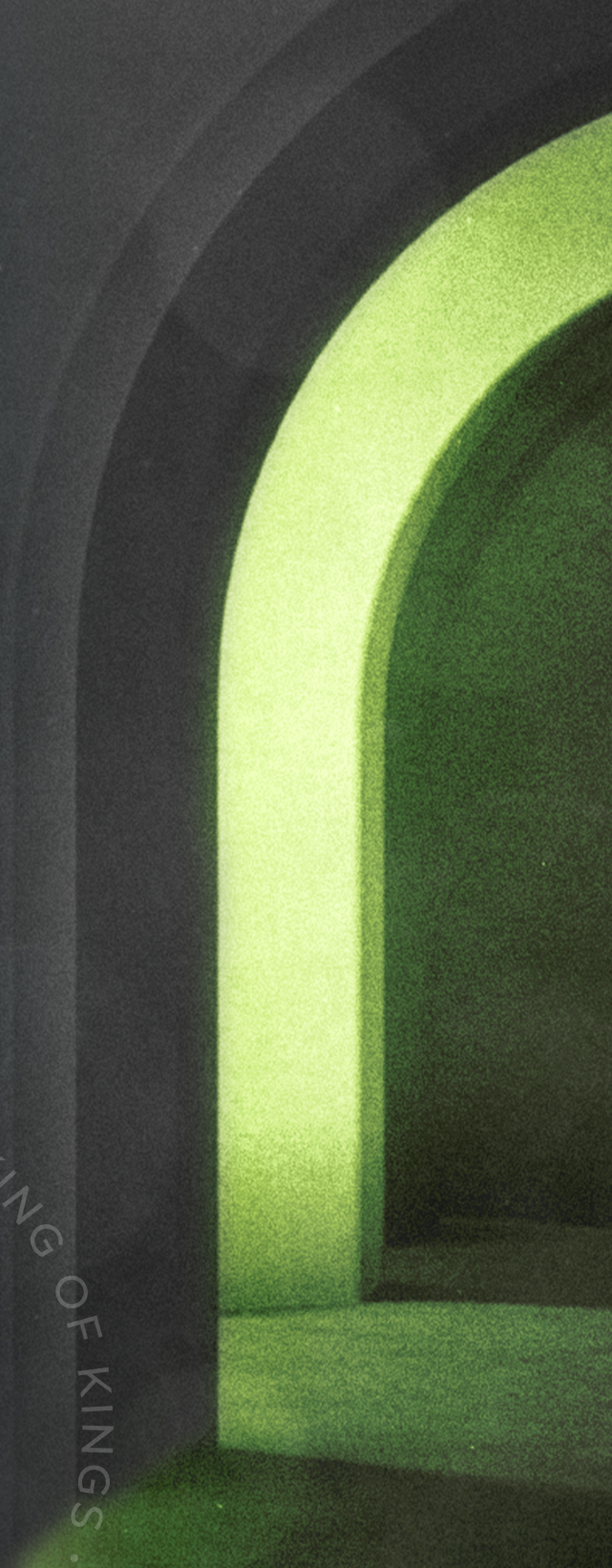


# 7 DAYS

HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL  
PALM SUNDAY - EASTER SUNDAY

PRINCE OF PEACE · LORD OF LORDS ·

KING OF KINGS · PRINCE OF PEACE · LORD OF LORDS ·





# 7 DAYS

HOLY WEEK  
DEVOTIONAL



**Holy Week**, one of the most sacred weeks of the Christian year. This week, lasting from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday, provides the opportunity for us to walk through Jesus' experience as he moves toward first crucifixion, and then resurrection.

As a church family we have been walking this path for the last several weeks in the sermon series, *7 Days*. In addition to reading the scriptures, reflections, and prayers within this devotional, you may find it helpful to listen to those sermons either for the first time or a second time through. Use the QR code above to access them all.

Finally, as a church family we will gather 4 times during the course of this devotional: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Times and locations are listed below as another opportunity to enhance your experience during this week leading to Easter.

**Palm Sunday | April 2 at 10am | All Locations**  
**Maundy Thursday | April 6 at 6:30pm | Sanctuary, Carlisle Campus**  
**Good Friday | April 7 at 6:30pm | Dillsburg Campus**  
**Easter Sunday | April 9 at 8:30 & 10am | All Locations**

# Palm Sunday

*Mark 11:1-11*

## **Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King**

1 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.' "

4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, 5 some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" 6 They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. 7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

10 "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Passover was a monumental time in the calendar of the Jewish people (think Christmas with less glitter). Pilgrims from all over the region were coming to Jerusalem to make sacrifice and to celebrate God's faithfulness to them as they remembered their ancestral story of God rescuing them from Egypt and setting them free as he brought them to the Promised Land.

But during this Passover week, Jesus experienced the rage and violence of the Roman Empire and the religious elite. They had grown weary of his teaching and of the growing crowd that followed his every move. He was a threat to the empire as well as the religious systems in Jerusalem. And when power is threatened, violence is often administered.

The week leading up to Passover would “squeeze” Jesus. All of Jesus’ teachings, proclamations, and ways of living would be on display through the week; and his actions and life would prove to be authentic to all that he taught. As he was riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, voices from the past prophets rang out. Voices like Zechariah, “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (9:9). The expectation of him overthrowing the Roman Empire through force and violence would be reimagined through the week as his love for people brought him to tears and his humble and self-sacrificing acts would ultimately bring about his death.

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***Jesus, thank you for your teaching and your actions as a model for our lives and the life of our church. Help us to be willing to give up dabbling in peacemaking and to move toward conflict with the goal of cultivating peace.***

Points for personal prayer:

1. Praise Jesus for his humble and self-sacrificing acts that led to the provision of new life for us.
2. Confess any false expectations of who Jesus is and what he has come to do in your life and in our world.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach us how to proclaim Jesus with the same humility and spirit of service that he showed during his ministry.

# Monday

*Matthew 21:12-17*

## Jesus at the Temple

12 Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 13 “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’ ”

14 The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.

16 “Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him.

“Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read,

“‘From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise’?”

17 And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

As Jesus enters into the temple in Jerusalem on Monday of Holy Week, we see an active peacemaking that's intentional and courageous. Perhaps we've been influenced by violent portraits of a whip-wielding Jesus as we come to this story. We'd be better off picturing Jesus with the fierce love of a mother who actively steps in to prevent her son from being bullied. As Jesus quotes the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah (v. 13), we are reminded that God has an inclusive and justice-oriented heart. The temple was supposed to reflect that. Instead, creating a worshipful space in the Court of the Gentiles was utterly disregarded, and pilgrims were being taken advantage of. As it often happens today, this building was filled with religious activity that was compartmentalized. The worship of God in the temple on Saturday was disconnected from loving one's neighbors throughout the week. And instead of being a place of inclusion and blessing, the temple became a context for exclusion and greed. Jesus' actions in the temple remind us that even our most holy and sacred spaces are not exempt from God's judgment. But Jesus isn't just turning over tables and moving the animals and animal sellers. He's building something: the Kingdom of God. The blind, lame, and children – all people with little to no social status – come to Jesus and experience healing and worship. As one New Testament scholar puts it, this moment “summed up everything Jesus had been doing throughout his ministry.”

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***Inclusive and justice-oriented God, please fill us with your fierce love that steps in intentionally, courageously, and peacefully in defense of those who are being taken advantage of. Please forgive us as your church for the times we have misunderstood this story of a whip in the temple and used the story to justify violence we have engaged in.***

Points for personal prayer:

1. Praise God for his inclusive desire for all to experience healing and worship.
2. Confess any ways in which your Sunday religious activity is disconnected from loving your neighbors the rest of the week.
3. Ask God how you can contribute to making our sacred spaces reflect a God of justice who longs to bless all people.

# Tuesday

*Mark 12:38-44*

## **Warning Against the Teachers of the Law**

38 As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39 and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 40 They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

## **The Widow’s Offering**

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.”



When you were growing up, who did you want to be like? Who was someone you wanted to look like, act like, talk like? Who did you want to emulate? Here in this passage, Jesus gives us two people to consider modeling our lives and actions after. One is spoken of highly, and the other is looked upon negatively. What is so interesting is that the expected roles of who deserves our praise are inverted. Typically teachers of the religious law should deserve our attention and praise – after all, they are the ones whose job it is to instruct us in the ways of life and faith. Yet, instead of being praiseworthy, they are looked upon with disgust: Jesus even goes so far as to say they will be punished most severely. But then we read about a poor widow, humbly making her way forward during the time when offerings were collected and giving only a couple of pennies while the people around her were throwing in huge sums of money. And in a moment of recognition, Jesus calls the disciples over to take note of this poor widow who gave everything she had, everything in her possession, her life savings. Jesus says that in this seemingly insignificant act the woman's sacrifice may have appeared small, but it was the totality of her being. This is awe-inspiring and evokes two realizations. The first is that Jesus was giving us the invitation to give all that we have, all that we are, every part of ourselves, from our finances to our imagination, to him in obedience and in prayerful hope of the Spirit of God changing our lives as we follow in obedient sacrifice. And second, Jesus is calling attention to the lengths to which he is going to show us the love of God. The sacrifice Jesus is going to make in a couple of days on the cross is total. In the obedient sacrifice of Jesus, all the powers of sin and darkness come undone through the crucifixion and the resurrection.

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***Father, your kingdom can often seem inverted to us. Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see those actions of others that deserve your praise and are worthy of our imitation. Transform us into people who routinely sow seeds of peace and find the strength to stand firm for peace.***

Points for personal prayer:

1. Praise Jesus for the great lengths to which he went to show us the Father's love for us.
2. Confess any ways in which you have been impressed by the wealthy, influential, and powerful, and have ignored or disrespected those of little power and means who have a heart for God.
3. Ask God to show you what it would mean to give him all that you have, and what next steps you can take in that direction.

# Wednesday

*Mark 14:1-11*

## **Jesus Anointed at Bethany**

1 Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. 2 “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

3 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

6 “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. 11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Right in the middle of Holy Week, Jesus is reclining at the table of Simon the Leper as he and the disciples enjoy an evening together. Imagine all the conversations going on, the retelling of stories from events of the last several days. There is a comfortability to the environment. And into this jumbled conversation the sound of a bottle breaking fills the air. At once every voice is quiet and every set of eyeballs moves in the direction of the sound.

Unnoticed by almost everyone, a woman had entered the house and had made her way toward Jesus. Almost to him, she had taken from her necklace and broken the alabaster container that held very expensive perfume. And in one quick movement she lifted the broken container above the head of Jesus, and the perfume poured out onto his head and ran down onto his face, beard, and clothes. It took no time for the scent of the perfume to fill the room and for questions to shatter the silence ...

“What are you doing?!” “Why didn’t you sell that perfume and give the money to those who needed it?!” “Why did you waste all that perfume?” “Don’t you know how much it was worth?”

Into this angry flurry of accusations and insult, Jesus breaks in and rebukes the hostile group. Jesus brings into focus what had been forgotten and overlooked. “She did what she could,” he says. And what she did was twofold: By pouring this perfume all over Jesus’ head, she has depicted the act of recognizing a king, and by pouring the perfume, she has prepared Jesus’ body for burial. Her act becomes the act all Christians are to replicate: to recognize Jesus as king and to recognize his self-sacrificial love, displayed through his death and resurrection.

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***Lord, we thank you for preserving a record of this beautiful act of devotion for all generations. Enable us by your Spirit to be equally extravagant in our worship. Help us to be like this woman and do what we can, in acts of total devotion to you.***

Points for personal prayer:

1. Praise Jesus as king, and thank him for his self-sacrificial love, displayed through his death and resurrection.
2. Confess any times when you rebuked extravagant forms of worship or valued a physical commodity over the presence of Jesus.
3. Ask God to help you to see the criticized and marginalized as he sees them, and to defend and affirm what is good in them.

# Thursday

*John 13:31-38*

## **Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial**

31 When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

33 "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

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

36 Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

37 Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

38 Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"

Thursday was to conclude with the Passover meal. We know the intimacy that we share over special meals with family or friends: We are eating with people we love, we're appreciating the work that has been graciously done so that we can have the food, we're connecting through story and history. These meals, and the time spent together, are sacred moments.

As Jesus and his disciples gather to celebrate God's faithfulness and presence from the past to the present, a scene of unmistakable beauty takes place. Jesus greets them with a towel and basin, gets on his knees and washes their feet – unthinkable. That is not the task of a rabbi. Peter declines the offer, only to have Jesus explain the necessity of this act.

The evening ends with Jesus proclaiming their way forward together: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (v. 34-35).

Each of the disciples had been the recipient of Jesus' love daily. They could each write volumes to recount what they experienced day in and day out over the three years they journeyed together. There was nothing theoretical about Jesus' love for them. At their worst and at their best, they encountered a consistent, humble, and passionate love expressed to them in word and shown to them in deed.

Every situation they encountered from that moment forward was to be marked with a replicated love from their very own existence. This love was to carry them as a group of disciples into a worldwide movement of repeating and selflessly displaying a Jesus-looking love to everyone they met. This love was the glue of their disciple community as well as the neon sign of invitation to the watching world.

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***Jesus, enable us to live as a community in such a way that the watching world will "know we are Christians by our love." Help us as your church to be committed to each other, so that in our community we embody peace and demand justice.***

Points for personal prayer:

1. Thank God for the ways in which you have experienced the love of Christ in community.
2. Confess any times when you have acted in unloving ways, either in the weakness of human nature or in the defense of religion.
3. Ask Jesus to explain to you, as he did to Peter, what it means for him to wash your feet, and how he wants you to wash the feet of others.

# Friday

*Matthew 27:11-26*

## Jesus Before Pilate

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"You have said so," Jesus replied.

12 When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" 14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge – to the great amazement of the governor.

15 Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" 18 For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

21 "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

22 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

23 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

25 All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!"

26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The earliest gospel manuscripts identify Barabbas as “Jesus Barabbas.” The crowd literally had a choice between two different Jesuses. Which messiah were they going to choose? The one from Nazareth, who consistently preached and lived forgiveness, peace, and enemy love? Or the insurrectionist who was willing to spill blood in order to fight the enemy?

The religious leaders were furious with Jesus. They felt he was blasphemous and deserved to die. But Rome had recently taken away the Jews’ ability to administer the death penalty. They had to bring their case before the Roman governor, Pilate. The chief priests were well respected and very visible in Jerusalem, so it wasn’t hard to garner support to release Jesus Barabbas instead of Jesus of Nazareth. After all, Jesus Barabbas would appeal to anyone with a militant vision of how to respond to Roman occupation. We know which Jesus they chose. Which messiah will we choose? In our polarized American context, we are more tempted than ever to hate our enemies and justify violence for the sake of a cause. Yet the first words out of Jesus’ mouth on the cross were about forgiveness. Jason Porterfield, author of *Fight Like Jesus*, says it well: “Here we see the culmination of how Jesus makes peace. Instead of responding in kind when wronged, Jesus forgave. And in doing so, he revealed a way to break free from the endless cycles of violence and counter-violence that plagues our world.”

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***Lord, we the church throughout history and we as individuals have often chosen the wrong Jesus. In your mercy, forgive us, and enable us to live a life of forgiveness, peace, and enemy love. Help us to live by a spirit of mercy so that we treat others in ways that promote their healing and wholeness.***

Points for personal prayer:

1. Praise God for providing in Jesus a way to break free from the cycles of hate and violence in our world.
2. Confess any times that come to mind when you have justified verbal or physical violence for the sake of a cause.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to make forgiveness and love your response when wronged or opposed.

# Saturday

## ***Matthew 27:62-66***

### **The Guard at the Tomb**

62 The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. 63 “Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ 64 So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

65 “Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” 66 So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

## ***Luke 23:55-56***

55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. 56 Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.



Silence ... that is all there is.

It seems that all hope has been lost. The man who brought such powerful teaching, such miraculous healing, such comforting words of hope and love has died. His horrible death was witnessed by so many.

For those who believed he got what was coming to him, today is a day of satisfaction. It is a day to smile at the naivety of this Jewish carpenter who kept talking about having a special relationship, and even oneness, with God. All his proclamations died with him. It should have been obvious he could not be trusted; he, like all others before him, dies a deserving death.

For those who had just held great hope that Jesus was indeed the one promised from generations ago, today is disorienting, dark, grief-filled, and hopeless. How are you supposed to pick up the pieces when hopes are dashed and it seems that evil and darkness have won again?

Silence. Weeping. Questions. Doubt. Anger.

And more silence ...

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***Father, in times of darkness, silence, and loss, enable us at the deepest place to find your peace that exceeds all understanding. Give us the courage to remain immersed in the reality of death and suffering, knowing that you are actively working for our peace.***

Points for personal prayer:

1. Praise God for his presence and care, even in apparent silence.
2. Confess the times when you have felt hopeless and abandoned, even by God.
3. Ask God to show you how you can, with humility and empathy, be an instrument of his peace to those who are going through dark times.

# Easter Sunday

*Luke 24:1-12 & John 20:19-23*

## **Jesus Has Risen**

1 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. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In 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? 6 He 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.' " 8 Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

## **Jesus Appears to His Disciples**

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

While Jesus' followers were still weighed down by darkness, fear, and despair in the aftermath of his crucifixion, events began to unfold on Sunday that added confusion to that volatile mix of emotions. First, a group of women who followed Jesus were on a sad errand to fulfill the customs for a proper burial of their teacher when they were met by an empty tomb and angelic beings. Furthermore, they encountered disbelief from the men to whom they described their experience. Later in the day, Jesus himself suddenly appeared to the group. Having deserted him on Friday, they would understandably be apprehensive about what he would have to say to them. But what he said – twice – was a phrase that included the word that has followed us all through this Holy Week: “Peace be with you.” It was a different kind of peace than everyone had once expected. And now, on the first day of a new week and a new era, Jesus passed the task of living out that kind of peace to them, and all who would follow.

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***Lord, we thank you for this study and for the many ways in which Jesus taught and lived out your peace. Empower us, Holy Spirit, to do likewise and to be your ambassadors for peace and to extend God's forgiveness to others.***

Points for personal prayer:

1. Praise God that in Jesus' death we have salvation and in his resurrection we have life.
2. Confess any instances when you have deserted Jesus or feared or disbelieved God's messengers.
3. Ask God to continually reveal to you personally, and to us as your church, more and more clearly the peace in which you desire us to live.