

DAY ONE

**“Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted:
‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”**

Mark 11:9

THE UNEXPECTED KING:

Every year, as travelers would approach Jerusalem for Passover, this phrase was part of a series of psalms the people eagerly sang as a praise to God for His deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt. Now, as Jesus arrived, the people called out these words. Hosanna literally means “save, we pray,” and both adults and children shouted this as Jesus entered Jerusalem and the temple. The people greeted Him as a powerful king, the hope of Israel, the rescuer of the people from their Gentile oppressors. But was this what Jesus came for? To change their circumstances?

Of course not. Jesus was not just a conquering king, a teacher, or a change agent for the circumstances surrounding the people. He was and is the Messiah, the King of all kings, and the Rescuer of the people from their sins. We can't miss out on the significance of hosanna for our world today. **Remember this: while people look for a temporary solution to their problems, people need a permanent change.** Salvation by grace through faith brings the only real change. This change may or may not affect external circumstances, but it will change the one who worships Christ.

As you begin this devotional series, take some time to remember the power of salvation for all who are in Christ. He did not come for the temporary, but for the eternal.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/QUESTIONS

1. Read Zechariah 9:9. How does this relate to what Mark records in Mark 11:1-11?
2. What was the general expectation as Jesus entered Jerusalem?
3. What does Jesus offer that is not expected?
4. Spend time in prayer as you think about how you might respond to this truth.

DAY TWO

“The next day when they went out from Bethany, he was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree with leaves, he went to find out if there was anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season for figs. He said to it, ‘May no one ever eat fruit from you again!’ And his disciples heard it.”

Mark 11:12-14

BEARING FRUIT:

While traveling back and forth from Jerusalem, Jesus saw a fig tree which was healthy in its appearance. And though it wasn't the right time for producing fruit, He cursed the tree for failing to produce fruit. Why would He do that? Even more, why would the leaves wither as the disciples would observe the next morning in verses 20-21?

This event clearly serves as an object lesson since Jesus constantly used way-of-life opportunities to teach a spiritual truth. Mark gave a hint here by explaining that it was not the season for figs; so, there had to be a deeper meaning. While God had given His people the opportunity to produce fruit, they did not. The task of bearing fruit, then, was to be given to a new people, those now grafted into the branch to bear fruit in season and out of season.

We are that branch, called to bear fruit whether in season or out of season. We are the Church, commissioned to take the gospel into the world. As you continue to focus on your worship of Jesus this week, remember His call to bear fruit. After all, He has given you an opportunity to change lives forever wherever you go. You have the Church, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, so be encouraged; you have all you need. Now, go and make disciples!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/QUESTIONS

1. How is a fig tree a good illustration for the life of a Christian?
2. Read Romans 7:14–8:2. How do we overcome the struggles that Paul shared?
3. What comfort do we have when we desire to do the right thing and produce fruit?
4. Today, think about how you can be involved in an activity that produces fruit.

EXPLORE **THE BIBLE.**

DAY THREE

“They came to Jerusalem, and he went into the temple and began to throw out those buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, and would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple. He was teaching them: ‘Is it not written, My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of thieves!’”

Mark 11:15-17

BURNING HOT FOR GOD:

Worship drives everything. The everyday tasks in life—all that we think, say, and feel—are to be done for the glory of God. We obey God because we love God and follow Him as an act of worship. However, we also need to be wary of the danger of complacency. We know that we must not reduce our time with God in worship to a simple checkbox or even a destination, yet in the fallen world we live in, even hearts that once burned hot for God can grow cold.

So what can we do to keep our hearts burning hot for God? Jesus considered the internal thoughts of the individual to be important, even as important as the external practices that all could see. He looked at the small things as significant, examining whether even the mundane tasks of daily life glorified God or not. After all, daily practices without a God-centered purpose can lead even those with the best of intentions astray.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/QUESTIONS

1. According to Jesus, what types of attitudes seem to be important for believers as they worship?
2. Meditate on Romans 12:1-2. What types of things cause us to become complacent in our true worship of the Lord?
3. How can we burn hot in our approach to worship? Come up with ways that you might approach worship in a fresh, new way while still retaining the message of Christ.

DAY FOUR

“It was two days before the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a cunning way to arrest Jesus and kill him. ‘Not during the festival,’ they said, ‘so that there won’t be a riot among the people.’”

Mark 14:1-2

THE BETRAYAL:

The Jewish rulers had had enough. In a secret plot, they looked for ways to arrest, kill, and be rid of Jesus forever. Their timing was important—not during the Passover because the increased number of people might create conditions for a riot. So, after the festival would be less chaotic. However, Judas Iscariot changed the leaders’ minds. Reaching out to the chief priests, Judas offered up the betrayal and was promised payment for his act. The betrayal had begun.

It’s easy to pick on Judas because his betrayal was so clearly based on his sinful desires and agenda. There are others, however, who betrayed Christ. Peter’s denial of Christ, the scattering of the disciples, the judgment of Pilate, the scourging of the soldiers, the screams of the crowd, and the mocking of the thieves on the cross are some examples. But what about us today? Every time sin occurs—and we all sin—aren’t we guilty of betraying Christ at some level? Doesn’t that also need forgiveness?

This is the time for forgiven betrayers to remember the Betrayed. Spend some time in prayer as you praise God for His forgiveness through His Son.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/QUESTIONS

1. Was Judas’s timing for the betrayal in God’s will? Why or why not?
2. How do people betray Jesus even today?
3. Read Romans 8:1-11. What do you need to confess to Christ?
4. Spend some time sharing your thoughts and feelings with God and with a close, trusted family member or friend.

DAY FIVE

“As they were eating, he took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to them, and said, ‘Take it; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’”

Mark 14:22-25

ONE WEIGHTY MEAL:

The final meal of Christ with His disciples was multifaceted: it was, of course, a remembrance, but it was also a celebration as well as a proclamation. Believers remember, celebrate, and proclaim this final meal in the Lord’s Supper, which is to be observed regularly and with care so that during a worship gathering, every action and every word of Jesus is to be recalled by the followers of Jesus until His return.

The weight of the Lord’s Supper also can’t be understated. Jesus is the Sacrificial Lamb, with His body broken and His blood poured out for all (1 John 2:2). In Christ, we have the Great High Priest and the Great High Sacrifice (Heb. 9:11-12). Forgiveness is through the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). In Him, we are redeemed by His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7). The way of salvation is through Jesus, and the Lord’s Supper clearly points to this theological truth.

As you remember the Lord’s Supper, be sure not to lose the significance of the Supper, as Christ has commanded nothing less. Examine yourself, take the elements with humble soberness, and make every attempt to preserve peace and unity with others. And as you do that, may the beauty of Christ be reflected in your time remembering Him!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/QUESTIONS

1. Read of the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23-34, Matthew 26:20-30, Mark 14:22-26, and Luke 22:14-22. Take note of how each description enhances the closeness that Jesus had with His disciples.
2. What were the symbolic meanings of the elements of the Lord’s Supper?
3. How do these meanings affect us today?
4. What does it mean for Christians to examine themselves prior to taking the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:28-29)?

EXPLORE **THE BIBLE**.

DAY SIX

**“Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed his last.
Then the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”**

Mark 15:37-38

FOREVER CHANGED:

It was the day of all days, the day that would become like night. Darkness over the land until around three in the afternoon. Insults, beatings, and chaotic hatred spilled out from the crowd. And this man, this Jesus, was hanging on a cross between two criminals, condemned to the most painful, gut-wrenching, suffocating death that mankind had ever come up with. This was the first day of the rest of eternity for the world.

It was on this day that all changed. Atonement was made, covenant instituted, blood spilled. The One who should receive the sacrifices became the sacrificed, the Lion became the Lamb who took away the sins of the world. He made a way when there was no way, the only way to the Father—Jesus, the Son of God, Prophet, Priest, and King.

Jesus cried out and breathed His last. After His cry came the splitting of the curtain in the temple, the ripping from top to bottom as the old became new to all who would believe. The rending of the curtain made it clear: no longer would there need to be a sacrifice in the holy of holies because Jesus did it once for all. Even the Roman centurion, a witness to so many similar deaths, proclaimed the truth of this man: “Truly this man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15:39) Yet so many, so often, choose to reject this God-man, Jesus, just as was done on that fateful day.

Good Friday, the day Jesus was crucified, was a somber day, not a day you would think would be “good.” Yet it was indeed a good day, the day on which God made a way for all to come to Him who will believe in His Son. As you meditate on Jesus’ sacrifice, remember and treasure the grace that He freely offered out of His love for you.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the temple curtain being torn in two?
2. Look up the seven sayings of Christ on the cross (found in Luke 23:34,43,46; John 19:26-28,30; Matt. 27:46/Mark 15:34), and meditate on these sayings.
3. How does the suffering of Christ give you hope for the future?

EXPLORE **THE BIBLE**.

DAY SEVEN

“Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin who was himself looking forward to the kingdom of God, came and boldly went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’s body.”

Mark 15:43

THE DAY BETWEEN THE DAYS:

It was a toiling day and a grueling night. The Savior had died, affirmed and confirmed by the Roman centurion. Jesus’ followers, distraught and scattered, had no plan, no focus, and no unity. Yet one unlikely man would be bold enough to lead out. Joseph of Arimathea, a man who Mark called “a prominent member of the Sanhedrin,” courageously asked for the body of Jesus for His burial. Pilate granted his request.

The place where Jesus was buried, a tomb cut in a rock, had never been used before. The clothing, linen freshly bought and carefully wrapped around Jesus, was His attire. Roman soldiers sealed the entrance and then guarded it against intruders. There was no doubt that Jesus was dead and there in the tomb He was buried.

This was the day between the days. It was a day of silence, a day of waiting between the first and the third days. For the disciples, it was likely the longest day of their lives as they waited and wondered about what was to come next in their lives. But God was still in control, His power ready to be miraculously displayed the next day. The best was yet to come.

As you meditate on the silence of Saturday, think about how God is still in control today. He is always present, working on His purposes for the future. “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose”

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/QUESTIONS

1. Take a time period (maybe an hour) and spend it in complete silence. Shut off your electronic device and anything else that may distract you and spend it in prayer, meditating on the death, burial, and resurrection.
2. Why was it important to have Roman guards at the tomb to protect it from intruders?
3. Read Romans 6:3-5. What do the cross, burial, and resurrection mean for the Christian?
4. How does God get a greater glory through the death and burial of Jesus?

EXPLORE **THE BIBLE**.

DAY EIGHT

“Looking up, they noticed that the stone—which was very large—had been rolled away. When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side; they were alarmed. ‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he told them. ‘You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they put him.’”

Mark 16:4-6

ALIVE:

Grief had overcome them; chaos had overtaken them. Yet, as we can see, these women were simply doing the right thing for their Lord. They were going to anoint the body of Jesus with the appropriate burial spices. They were simply being obedient in a mundane but significant way.

But it was very clear that something had changed. The tomb, sealed and guarded, was rolled away! What’s more, a stranger told them this marvelous, unthinkable news:

He has risen!

The Gospel of Mark tells us that these women were trembling and overwhelmed with astonishment (v.8). They were afraid, but their obedience continued. Luke tells us that they “reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest” (Luke 24:9). John 20:18 and Matthew 28:8 confirm this. This Jesus, whom they had followed for three years, the One who was crucified, who was buried, was now risen as He had predicted.

He was alive!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES/QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. How does what Paul wrote match up with the events shared above?
2. Why was it spiritually significant that the tomb of Jesus was empty?
3. Why is it important for the world that they know that Jesus is alive?

EXPLORE **THE BIBLE.**