



Dearest Disciple,

We've begun our journey to Resurrection Sunday. Did its arrival surprise you or have you been expecting it? The busyness of our lives can often leave little room for reflection or preparation; a celebration of Easter beckons us to bring our imperfections, fears and brokenness to the feet of our resurrecting Savior.

However you arrived at this place, what matters is that you're *here*. Before you gather your family, prepare yourself with a moment of thoughtful reflection.

First, take a deep breath and ask the Spirit to lead you. How are you coming into this celebration of Holy Week? Whatever your physical, mental or emotional state, put a name to it. Jesus is welcoming you into this week with steadfast love.

Second, think back to last Easter and mentally walk through the big events of this past year. If you were to track everything that has happened from this time last year to today, would there be a common theme that describes the path you've walked? Take a moment to reflect on a word, phrase or feeling that comes over you as you think back on your journey.

Finally, meditate on this prayer from David:

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Scattered between the milestones of our spiritual journeys are countless moments of waiting and watching. While we look ahead and anticipate His resurrection, today we wait. We pray you hear hope in the silence, beauty in the ashes. As David wrote: *For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.*

The Lord is doing a beautiful, redeeming work in your life and, through the power of His resurrection, will transform you to His likeness as you seek His steadfast love.



Palm Sunday, March 28

Scripture Reading: Matthew 21:1-10; Zechariah 9:9, 14:4, 9

What would it be like to join the very first “Palm Sunday” procession? It sounds exciting, like a party or celebration — although a strange one, with all the branches and coats covering the ground. But to the men, women, and children who joined in, this was not just a party, but a dangerous one. They knew the words of the prophets backwards and forwards.

They recognized the ancient symbols: Jesus riding from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem on a donkey as people wave branches and shout “*Hosanna!*” The prophets said this would be the sign that the Messiah had come, the king who would rule over all the earth; and there would be no other kings beside him.

That sounds wonderful, right? They had waited for the Messiah for centuries, crying out for God to save them.

But there was a major problem: These people already had a king. They were subjected to the all-powerful Roman Empire and Caesar, the Roman Emperor. *Caesar*, not Jesus, ruled over all the earth and demanded there be no king but him. Even a hint of rebellion was silenced through extreme violence and death.

And yet, here comes Jesus, riding from the Mount of Olives into the holy, royal city of Jerusalem, as the crowd declares with their shouts, bodies, and even their coats: *God has saved us! God has given us the new king as He promised!*

No wonder the entire city was stirred, asking “Who is this?!”

Wonder Together

- What do you know about the Roman Empire?
- How do you think it would feel to declare that Jesus was your king if your country already had a powerful king?
- The Roman Empire used violence to create “peace.” How was Jesus’ kingdom going to be different?
- How would you answer the question, “Who is this?”
- How can you follow Jesus as your king today, in your country?

Dig a little deeper

Hosanna: This Greek word means “save!” and is used as a cry for help. It is often used in prayer, pleading for God: “Please help us!” *Hosanna* can also be used in praise: “You saved us! Thank you!”

Caesar: The title given to the Roman emperors; a very powerful dictator/ruler. These emperors also went by the title “King of Kings” (sound familiar?).

Jesus, we raise our voices and shout Hosanna! We cry out for You to save us. We celebrate that You have saved us, that You are the true King over all the world, and that Your kingdom stands for justice, mercy, and compassion. Help us to serve Your kingdom and worship no one else. In your name we pray, Amen.

Pray. Journal. Sketch.

JOURNEY THROUGH HOLY WEEK





Good Friday, April 2

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26:36–50, Psalm 130

After celebrating Passover with His friends and showing them His love and servant heart, Jesus went with His disciples to a garden called Gethsemane. He asked them to stay awake and wait while He prayed; they kept falling asleep. It was the middle of the night, after all.

Still Jesus prayed on.

I wonder if Jesus had Psalm 130 in his mind as he cried out to God that night, again and again: *Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.* The text says He felt overwhelmed by sorrow, that He fell with His face to the ground as He pleaded with God.

I wonder if Jesus wept the words *Hosanna! Save me!*, just as the people shouted a few days prior. But the hours passed — Jesus praying, His friends sleeping. Then soldiers arrived. Jesus was betrayed by one of His closest friends and arrested.

Before this day is out, Peter will deny knowing Jesus three times. Jesus will be brought to the authorities and sentenced to death.

Dig a little deeper

Gethsemane: A garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Could Jesus have passed by this garden on Palm Sunday, as he traveled to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives?

We've been following Jesus all week; we understand why they want to kill Him. Yet we also clearly see that what He has done was right in God's eyes.

This doesn't make it any easier when the one we hoped was God's Messiah, God's chosen, anointed King is crucified that afternoon.

Wonder Together

- Have you ever cried out to God, overwhelmed and on your face, as Jesus did that night? If so, how did you feel?
- How does it help you to know God has felt that depth of grief and pain?
- God doesn't seem to have given Jesus what He asked for; and yet, how does God show us that He is still in control, still working out a plan of love and redemption?
- How does this help you to trust God's love even when nothing is going as you hoped?

Messiah: Means "the one anointed with oil." In those days, a king who was taking the throne had oil placed on his head, "anointing" him king. God promised to send Israel a Messiah, *the anointed one*, who would be the true king of God's kingdom.

God, on this most sorrowful night, we lay with our faces on the ground before You. There is so much pain and suffering in the world; but we surrender ourselves to You who came to live among us, who carried our burdens and sorrows and lived as one of us in birth and in death. We point our eyes to You. We place our trust in You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Pray. Journal. Sketch.

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Resurrection Sunday, April 4

Scripture Reading: John 20:1, 11-16

It's been a long, strange week since the procession into Jerusalem last Sunday. Jesus was killed on Friday, and His body has been lying in a tomb, in a garden, waiting until after the Sabbath when His grieving, frightened friends could finish preparing it for burial. Now, His friend Mary arrives early Sunday morning, even before dawn, to finish the sad, horrible task.

But Mary arrives to a shocking sight: The stone has been moved from the cave where Jesus' body lay, and He is not there. What would you make of that? Of course she didn't think He was alive; dead people don't suddenly become alive.

But who would steal the body? Could this week get any worse?

Then a man approaches and asks why she is crying. She assumes he is the gardener. After all, that's where they are, in the garden, where Jesus' body was left. But then He says her name, "Mary." And she knows.

Jesus is alive!

God resurrected Jesus. This means Jesus is God's Messiah, the world's one true King, the one who rules with justice and compassion, with love and mercy. This means God is not the one who puffs Himself up in power like earthly kings and powerful people, but who bends down to serve in love — and asks us to do the same.

Through Jesus, God has reversed the power of sin death. In following Jesus, we can find the path of life. Through Jesus, we can be saved! *Hosanna! Thank you God! You have saved us!*

Wonder Together

- What do you think Jesus' friends thought or felt when they discovered He was alive?!
- What do you think about Jesus being alive still today, here with you?
- What does it mean to follow Jesus as our living King?
- Have you received God's gift of salvation in Jesus? Would you like to?
- Raise your voice in *Hosanna!*, today! Jesus is alive!

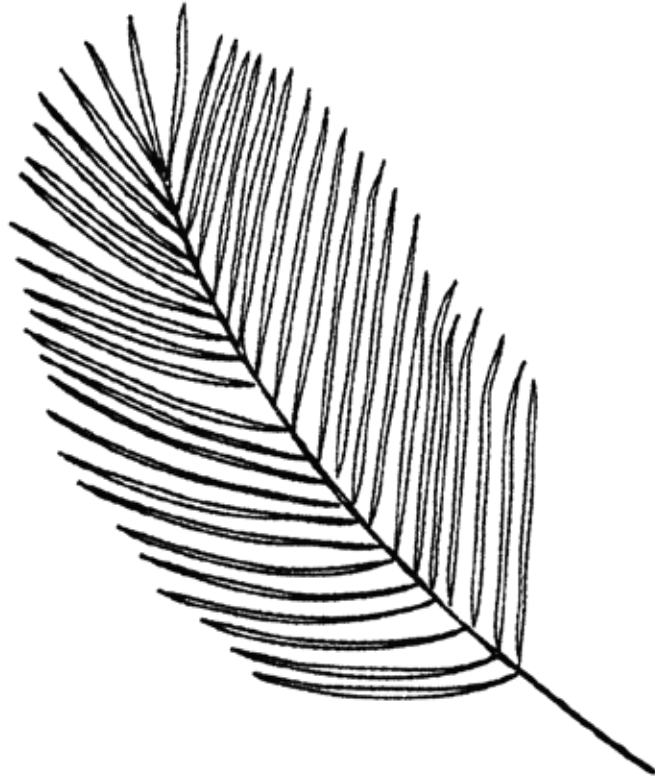
Dig a little deeper

Resurrection: Different from simply coming back to life. A resurrected person will never die again!

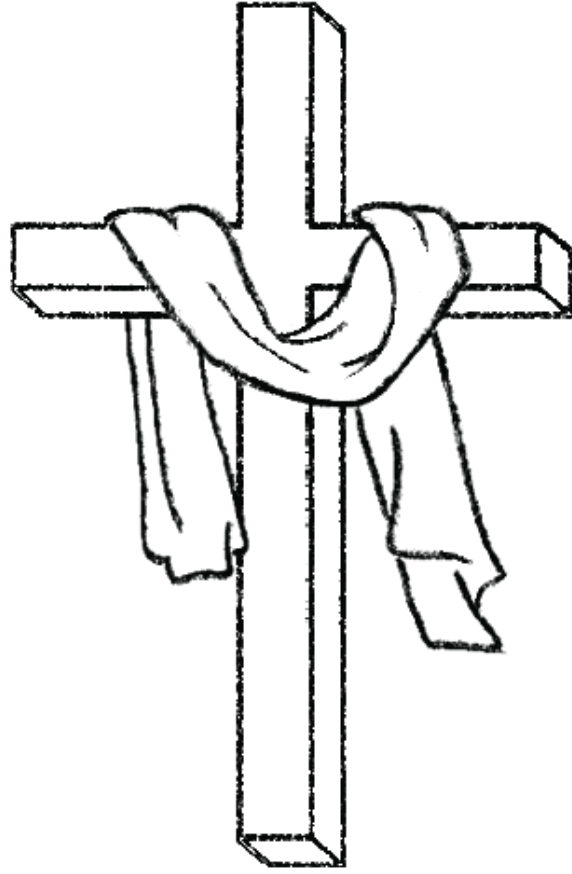
Hosanna! Hallelujah! Jesus, You are alive, and we raise our voices and lift our hands to praise You, our King of kings and Lord of lords. Will You teach us to learn Your voice and seek Your face as we follow You through this life and into the next life? We give ourselves to You and worship You forever. In the name of the risen Jesus we pray, Amen.

Pray. Journal. Sketch.

JOURNEY THROUGH HOLY WEEK

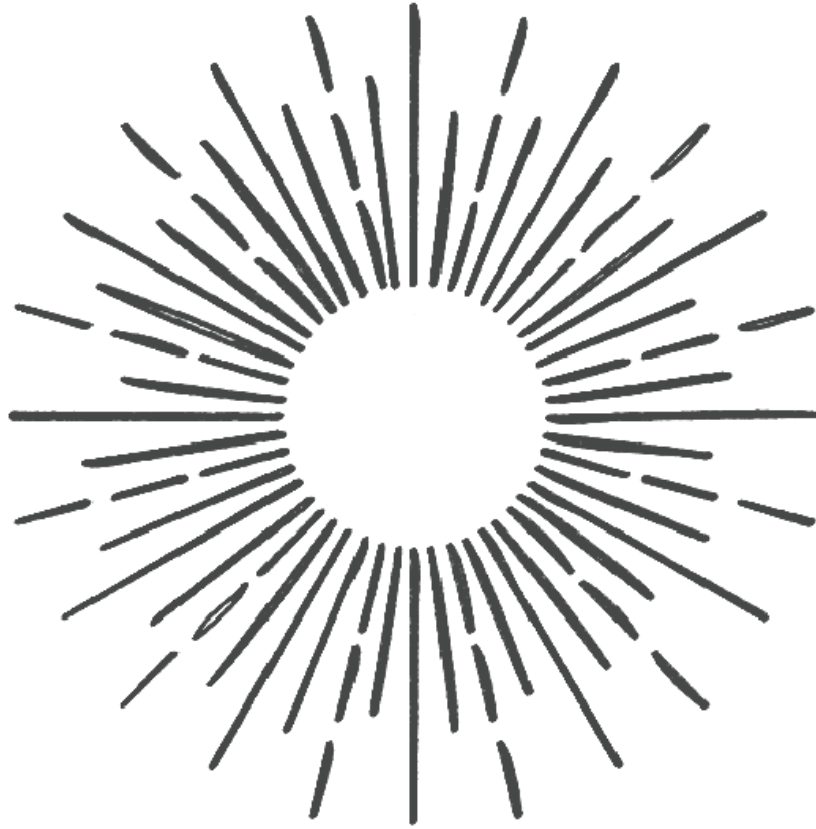


palm sunday



good friday

JOURNEY THROUGH HOLY WEEK



resurrection sunday