

LENTEN DEVOTION – HOLY WEEK

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Sunday | LUKE 22:14-23

Jesus serves. Jesus serves us. Jesus came not to be served but to serve. The sheer magnitude of this reversal – that the Son of God becomes the servant, offering us not just bread and wine, but his body and blood, his very self – should stun and shock us no matter how often we celebrate the Lord's Supper. As we remember the events of this week – recalling Jesus' last supper with his friends, his sacrifice for our sin, his unending love for the world, even those closest to him who deny and betray him – we examine our own inability to stay away, remain loyal and go all the way to the cross with him.

In a culture where those who serve are often invisible, undervalued or ignored, how does the last week of Jesus' life on earth call us to regard the least in our society? If Jesus, our Lord, takes on the role of table server, foot washer and crucified criminal, what tasks and roles are we called to perform for his sake? When have you served another? How did it feel? Did you do so willingly or were you pressed into service?

I have a favorite picture of my children. The photo shows my son, around 6-years-old, bent over washing his younger sister's feet with the garden hose. She is 3, covered in mud, looking down as he cleans her feet. Behind her, my youngest, also filthy, stands waiting her turn. The entire scene spontaneous, enacted because my son saw the need and the means to meet it. A simple act of service, lovingly performed, a witness to me of what a life in Christ might look like.

During this Holy Week, notice both how you serve and are served. Imagine Jesus as you give and receive acts of service.

Almighty God, as we begin this holiest of weeks we ask that you would quiet in us any voice but yours. Still our minds, open our hearts, grant us the faith to stay awake in order to be with Jesus. As we remember how he came to serve, not be served, we yearn to do likewise, in thanksgiving and with joy. Amen.



Monday PRAYER

Living God, we acknowledge our tendency to worship you on Sunday only to forget your claim on our lives come Monday. Yesterday we praised you, shouted with joy and got caught up in the excitement of the crowds. Today we question if your entry into Jerusalem matters. Nudge us from complacency. Do not let us neglect your call. Keep us aware of your presence among us and show us how to stay close to you all week, especially this week. Amen.

Tuesday PRAYER

God of all times and places, the business of daily life consumes us. Work must get done. Meals must be cooked. Bills must be paid. We go easily from one day to the next, oblivious to your work of salvation happening here and now, in and all around us. Help us to pay attention, to be mindful of your purposes, attuned to your will, grateful for each moment on this abundant life we have in and through Jesus Christ. Amen.



Jesus serves

Wednesday PRAYER

The days are surely coming, Lord, when you will no longer walk the earth. The atmosphere feels sinister as we prepare to gather at table together. Hold us close as we worry our faith will falter and our fear will overwhelm our promise to follow you wherever you lead. Bless our sincere desire to be loyal to you and forgive us when we falter and flee. Amen.

Maundy Thursday PRAYER

Lord, you are our Master, our Teacher, our Friend. The thought of your suffering pains us. We desperately want a different outcome, an escape from what you tell us must come. As you serve us, wash our feet, offer the bread and cup and give us the commandment to love one another, we relish our time with you. We will remember your words, your actions, your loving care and honor you when we emulate them. Amen.

Good Friday PRAYER

My God, my God, why have you forsaken your Son? How can you tolerate the suffering of the One who came to save? How can it be that He who brought abundant life has been sentenced to a cruel death? Hear our lament. Stand with us in our sorrow. Sit with us in the dark. Remind us of our Savior's promise that we will see him again. Grant us the strength to get through the night in the hope of a new day. Amen.

Holy Saturday PRAYER

Jesus, the light that no darkness can overcome, even as the sun rises, the night refuses to relent. We huddle together, afraid, bereft and unsure what to do next. All we can do is cling to each other, assure one another that we heard you correctly, that you did say on the third day you would be raised, that you said plainly that you would not abandon us. Help us to hold fast to your words even when we see no evidence of their truth. Help us to put our hope in you despite our despair and doubt. Amen.

Easter Sunday PRAYER

It is the third day, Lord of all, the third day, the eighth day of creation, the day of resurrection. The stone is miraculously rolled away, the tomb is unquestionably empty and the glorious news of you alive, scarred but breathing, ripples through the world. Reconciliation accomplished. Redemption certain. Death defeated. Sins forgiven. Salvation won. No longer can anything separate us from the love of God, the hope of Christ, the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Alleluia! Christ is risen! Amen.