

# Devotions and Prayers for Holy Week

## Hosanna! A Fellowship of Christians

### 2017

In the seven days from when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey to the full day he spent lying in a tomb, everything changed for him and for us. He was seen and celebrated, honored and worshipped...and then betrayed and denied, crucified and buried. What he experienced in that final week is the pattern for all who follow him. So these devotional exercise are offered to help us walk through our own seven day experience of noticing, confessing, thanking, and praising.



Each day's experience is centered on a theme, drawn from the story for that day. The devotional begins with a very brief prayer...but one you may want to sit still with for a bit before continuing. Then comes a biblical story about what Jesus did and said in those seven days. Following the story is a question (or, rather, several related questions) to apply this story to your own life. Don't hurry through them, or be limited by them. What does God want to show you today?

After your time of reflecting, it may be helpful to read a prayer of response written by Rachel Marie Stone. These are also available as videos at <http://www.ibelieve.com/slideshows/8-prayers-to-pray-throughout-holy-week.html>. Following the prayer is a psalm of praise. This is a week for asking hard questions of ourselves, but the purpose is not to wallow in grief or despair, but to come to greater trust in and a deeper love for the God who saves. You might want to listen to or even sing a worship song instead of or alongside the psalm that is offered here. May the words and attitude of this prayer guide you into those that follow...

*Loving God,  
I am just beginning to realize how much you love me.  
Your son, Jesus was humble and obedient.  
He fulfilled your will for him by becoming human and suffering with us.  
I ask you for the desire to become more humble  
so that my own life might also bear witness to you.  
I want to use the small sufferings I have in this world  
to give you glory.*

*Please, Lord, guide my mind with your truth.  
Strengthen my life by the example of Jesus.  
Help me to be with Jesus in this week  
as he demonstrates again his total love for me.  
He died so that I would no longer  
be separated from you.  
Help me to feel how close you are  
and to live in union with you. Amen.*

--from [www.snoringscholar.com/a-prayer-for-holy-week](http://www.snoringscholar.com/a-prayer-for-holy-week)

## SUNDAY: SEEING

A Prayer for Starting: God, I want to see you.

A Story for Reflecting: Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee" (Matthew 21:1-11).

A Question for Noticing: Where do I see God best? In what other ways does He show up in my life, but I miss Him? When does he come to me "riding on a donkey"?

A Prayer for Responding:

*Lord God,*

*I give you thanks, for you are good, and your mercy is endless.*

*Here I stand, at the start of this holy week,*

*This week in which your church remembers Jesus' passion and death,*

*And I am distracted by many things.*

*Turn my eyes now to the One who comes in your name*

*The one who opens the gates of righteousness*

*The one who answers when we call.*

*I bless you, Lord, for shining your light upon me,*

*And for sending your son to us, in human frailty.*

*To walk the road we walk.*

*Open my eyes that I may see him coming,*

*And may praise him with a pure heart.*

*And may walk in the way of his suffering,*

*And share also in his resurrection.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.*

A Psalm for Closing: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory! (Psalm 24:1-2, 7-10).

## MONDAY: WORSHIPPING

A Prayer for Starting: God, I want to worship you.

A Story for Reflecting: Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me" (John 12:1-9).

A Question for Noticing: How do I "anoint Jesus' feet" in my own life? How do I make it clear to him and others that I value him?

A Prayer for Responding:

*Lord God,  
Six days before his death, your son sat with Lazarus,  
Whom he had raised from the dead,  
And ate dinner with his friends.  
Once again, your gospel tells us, Martha served,  
And Mary knelt at Jesus' feet  
To anoint them with costly perfume.  
The disciple who was about to betray him  
Said that it was a waste.  
He didn't care about the poor, really –  
He just wanted to fill his own pockets  
And make Mary feel ashamed.  
Lord God, Often we cannot discern what is best:  
When to pour out costly perfume for your sake,  
Even if the world thinks it a waste.  
When to be busy serving,  
Or when to rest at your Son's feet and learn.  
Give us ears to hear you and eyes to see.  
For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

A Psalm for Closing: Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O LORD. How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light (Psalm 36:5-9).

## TUESDAY: FALLING

A Prayer for Starting: God, teach me to let go.

A Story for Reflecting: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say--' Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name."

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:24-32).

A Question for Noticing: How much dying have I allowed myself to do? Do I really, truly want to let go of the things that hold me back from true life, from bearing fruit, from glorifying Christ in my life?

A Prayer for Responding:

*Lord God,  
The message of the cross is difficult to take.  
How can death give way to life? How can weakness be strength?  
Yet your word says that Jesus, being God,  
Took on human flesh  
And suffered the worst kind of death.  
How can this be?  
This message is indeed difficult to take.  
But your foolishness is wiser than our wisdom.  
Your weakness is greater than our strength.  
Help us to know that none of us can boast before you.  
It is only in Christ Jesus that we can boast.  
In his name, we ask you to help our unbelief.  
That we may love you, and walk in the way Jesus taught us.  
In his name, Amen.*

A Psalm for Closing: In you, O LORD, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame. In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me. Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress. Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel. For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth. Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you. I have been like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge. My mouth is filled with your praise, and with your glory all day long (Psalm 71:1-8).

## WEDNESDAY: BETRAYING

A Prayer for Starting: God, I am sorry.

A Story for Reflecting: Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples--the one whom Jesus loved--was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot.

After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or, that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night. When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once" (John 13:21-32).

A Question for Noticing: How have I received nourishment from the hand of Jesus? How have I betrayed him and myself by going after something else I wanted more?

A Prayer for Responding:

*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.*

A Psalm for Closing: Be pleased, O God, to deliver me. O LORD, make haste to help me! Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. Let those who love your salvation say evermore, "God is great!" But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay! (Psalm 70:1, 4-5).

## THURSDAY: SERVING

A Prayer for Starting: God, I want to serve others.

A Story for Reflecting: Jesus, knowing that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13:3-5, 12-17).

A Question for Noticing: Whom does God want me to serve? Whose dirty feet are in my life on purpose? What can I do to show them how much I and you love them?

A Prayer for Responding:

*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.*

A Psalm for Closing: I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live. What shall I return to the LORD for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 116:1-19, passim).

## FRIDAY: TRUSTING

A Prayer for Starting: God, where are you?

A Story for Reflecting: Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit (Matthew 27:45-50).

A Question for Noticing: When have I felt abandoned or ignored by God? Do I feel any of that in me right now? What would Jesus say to me about that from the cross?

A Prayer for Responding:

*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.  
Lord God,  
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.*

A Psalm for Closing: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them... All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him....and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it ["It is finished!"] (Psalm 22:1-2, 27, 31).



## SATURDAY: WAITING

A Prayer for Starting: God, help me wait for you.

A Story for Reflecting: When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first."

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone (Matthew 27:57-66).

A Question for Noticing: How do I wait? Impatiently, angrily, with demands? Patiently, gently, humbly? How do I wait on God? How am I waiting for Him right now?

A Prayer for Responding:

*Lord God,  
On the Sabbath,  
Jesus rested.  
He was in the grave.  
He had finished his work.  
To most people's eyes,  
It looked as if it were all over.  
He was dead and buried.  
But only as a seed dies when it is planted in the earth,  
Not to decay, but to spring to new life.  
Teach us to take refuge in you when we are afraid  
Teach us that death is not our end  
Teach us to hope always in you  
And in the resurrection, the making of all things  
New.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

A Psalm for Closing: In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me. Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me. You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge. My times are in your hand (Psalm 31:1-4).