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# READINGS FROM THE PASSION ACCORDING TO MARK

## Holy Week Devotional Reading

Holy Week is **THE MOST IMPORTANT** week of the year for Christians. The events from Palm Sunday to the Resurrection comprise three-eighths, 38%, of Mark's Gospel. If ever there was a week to **MAKE TIME** to be in God's Word and ponder on Jesus' cross and passion, it would be this week.

To guide you on this journey, I've created this reading plan that will take you through the remainder of Mark 14 and 15 throughout Holy Week, March 25-30. It's designed to lead you through these important chapters of salvation history so that it has an impact on your life today.

You can do these alone with a journal or together as a family. However you choose to do them, **MAKE TIME THIS HOLY WEEK** to ponder Jesus' holy cross and passion as you prepare for the glories of Easter.

Peace be with you,

*Pastor Tom Vanderbilt*

### Holy Monday, March 25, 2024

*Read: Mark 14:12-31*

Discuss:

- Review the first Passover in Exodus 12:1-51. Discuss the following similarities between the first Passover and Jesus' Passion:
  - An unblemished Lamb
  - Blood on the wood (doorposts/ cross)
  - The death of the firstborn
  - Freedom through death
- What do you think was in the heart of Judas that he would betray Jesus? Could that sort of thing ever be in your heart? What would Jesus say if it were?
- Discuss what "this is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (Mk 14:24) might mean. How does this bring you hope and joy?
- Describe Peter's attitude in Mark 14:30. When have you had that kind of attitude? Did you get comeuppance for it? Share with your group or in your journal.

## Holy Tuesday, March 26, 2024

*Read: Mark 14:32-50*

Discuss:

- In these hours before Jesus' arrest, He turns to three of His closest friends: Peter, James, and John. Who do you turn to when you're going through dark times like Jesus is?
- Discuss Jesus' prayer in Mark 14:36. What is Jesus asking for? What does He resign Himself to do? Have you ever prayed something similar in your life? Discuss it or journal about it.
- Jesus is annoyed when they come to arrest Him in the middle of the night. Why do you think they arrested Jesus at this time and not in the day?

## Holy Wednesday, March 27, 2024

*Read: Mark 14:51-72*

Discuss:

- How does Mark describe the case against Jesus in Mark 14:55-59? Do you think Jesus is getting a fair trial? Why or why not?
- What does Jesus say that ultimately leads to His condemnation by the council? Is He telling the truth? Does the council think He's telling the truth?
- Have you ever been like Peter, denying that you know Jesus? If you haven't said those words, have your actions ever made it look like you don't know Jesus? What would Jesus say about this?

## Holy Thursday, March 28, 2024

*Read: Mark 15:1-15*

Discuss:

- Does Jesus admit to Pilate that He is King of the Jews? Explain your answer.
- Why do you think Jesus doesn't answer the charges against Him?
- In Mark 15:14, Pilate asks, "**What evil has he** (that is, Jesus) **done?**" The crowd doesn't answer that question, but how would you answer that question? What evil has Jesus done?

## Good Friday, March 29, 2024

*Read Mark 15:16-32*

Discuss:

- Everything about the soldiers' treatment of Jesus is meant to mock Him. Read Isaiah 52:13-53:7 to see how the prophet predicted these events. Talk about similarities between Jesus' Passion and these verses from Isaiah.
- People walked past Jesus' cross and mocked Him saying, "**...save yourself, and come down from the cross!**" (Mk 15:30). Likewise, the chief priests and scribes derided Him saying, "**He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe**" (Mk 15:31-32). Who is Jesus really saving by being crucified?

## **Holy Saturday, March 30, 2024**

*Read Mark 15:33-47*

Discuss:

- Why *did* God the Father forsake His Son on the cross? Who benefits from this?
- The curtain of the temple separated the people from the Holy of Holies, the place of God's presence. Only the high priest was allowed to enter that part of the temple and only on the Day of Atonement. If anyone entered that area at another time, they would be struck dead because they're sinfulness cannot stand in the holy presence of God. With this in mind, discuss the significance of this curtain being torn in two. Discuss the significance of it being torn from top to bottom.
- Evening marks the beginning of a new day in the Jewish way of keeping time. They would have counted this as Saturday, the Sabbath. What does Jesus do on the Sabbath? Discuss how this is a keeping of the Third Commandment.

Thank you for making time to ponder Jesus' Passion during this holiest of weeks. I pray that you feel better prepared to celebrate the joyous Resurrection tomorrow.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!

In our risen Christ,

Pastor Tom Vanderbilt