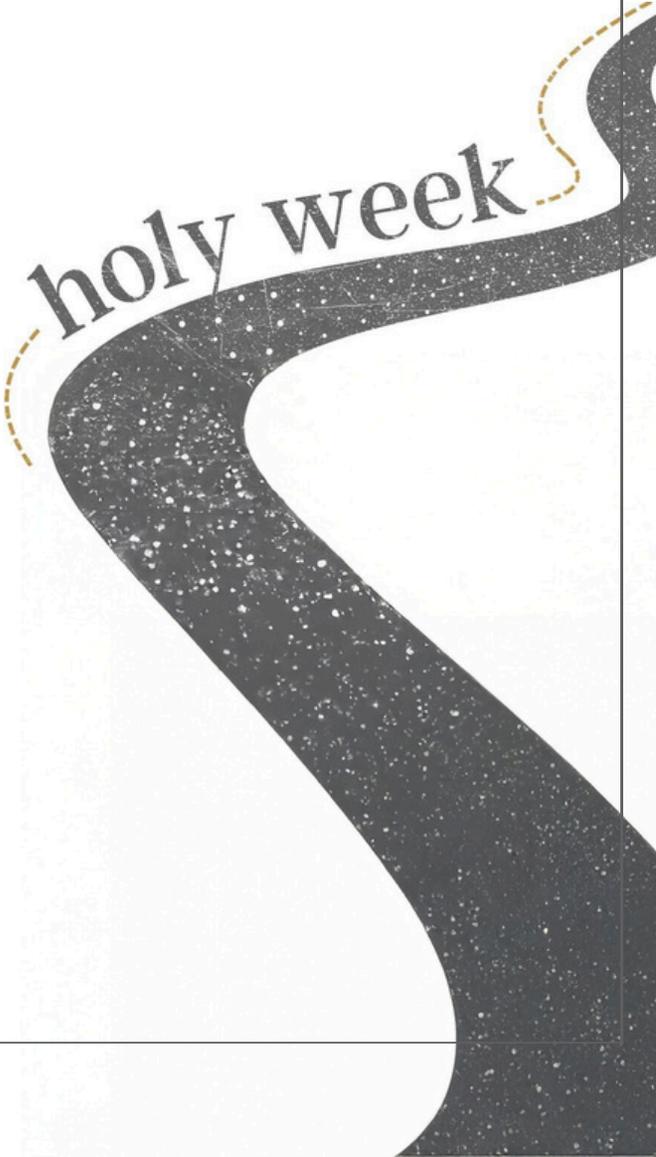


MARCH 29TH - APRIL 5TH

holy week





Easter is the most important week in the Christian calendar. This year, we invite you to enter the significance of Holy Week by personally pondering scripture, participating in different activities, and coming to God in prayer.

“Holy Week moves from the enthusiastic shouts of ‘Hosanna’ to the somberness of Holy Wednesday..., to the horrors of the agony and death of Jesus on Good Friday, to the joyous celebration of the first Eucharist of Easter. “

TRINITY COLLEGE THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Each day, you will be invited to reflect on a scripture, participate in an activity and pray a pre-written prayer. While the prayer and practice are provided, feel free to personalize them to deepen your connection. Note that it may be beneficial to look ahead at the week's practices, as you may need to prepare or set aside time for them.

As you walk through the week, you could also carry a physical cross with you—a small reminder of Jesus' journey to the cross. This tangible symbol can serve as a powerful connection to His sacrifice, especially during your daily moments of reflection and prayer.



MARCH 29TH

PONDER: LUKE 19:28-44

REFLECTION:

Jerusalem would have been swelling with people for the Passover feast. Matthew 21:10 says that the “whole city was stirred.”

Take a minute to imagine yourself in the crowd that day; the people crying out, “Hosanna!”, the palm branches waving in the air and the coats being placed in front of Jesus. What kind of conversations would be happening around you? Feel the excitement in the air that people would have felt regarding the triumphant king arriving.

Jesus is still the triumphant King today, worthy of our praise.

While your worship is unlikely to include waving palm branches, we are still called to glorify him as King. Worship often costs us something—our time, money, energy, or even our self-perception.

Reflect on the idea that heartfelt worship is costly. What has worship cost you in the past? It might include reading Scripture, listening to music that helps you praise God, or serving someone in need.

PRAYER:

God, we thank you that you are King of Kings. You are sovereign and rule over all. We thank you that you are not like earthly kings, exerting your force, but humbly came on a donkey and later died on the cross. We offer our lives in humble service to your great name. Help us honour you with everything we have. Amen.

PRACTICE:

Jesus is King! Spend some extra time today worshipping him—through music or another meaningful way—as you honour him as your King.

WRITTEN BY BOBBY RAU

MARCH 30TH

PONDER: MATTHEW 21:12-22

In these verses, we encounter a side of Jesus that feels strikingly different. By cleansing the temple and cursing the barren fig tree, Jesus acts out a living parable. Both the temple (which had become a site of corruption) and the tree (which bore leaves but no fruit) failed to fulfill their God-given purpose. Drawing on the warnings of prophets like Jeremiah and Micah, Jesus arrives to confront everything unjust and hollow. Ultimately, the “withered” tree points toward the cross, where Jesus took on the curse of our fruitlessness to offer us his life. As you read, notice how Jesus calls us away from pretense and toward a genuine faith that moves mountains.

REFLECTION:

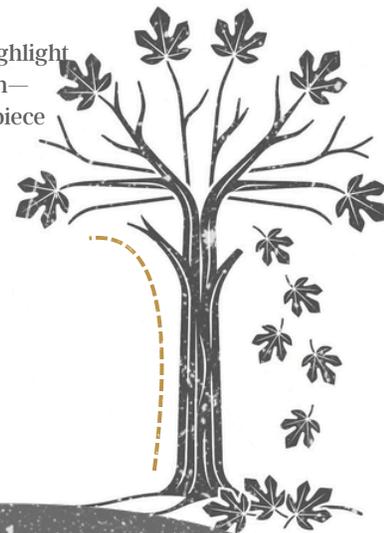
This passage challenges me to look honestly at the compromises I’ve allowed to settle in my life. It is easy to rationalize spiritual shortcuts—much like the Temple merchants might have blamed their greed on the pressures of Roman oppression. Yet, Jesus cuts through our “easy” excuses. He demands purity and authenticity. The beauty of the Gospel is that the same Saviour who forcefully rebukes our corruption is the one who mercifully offers His own life in our place. He doesn’t just demand fruit; He provides the grace necessary for it to grow.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I thank You for the Church and pray for a unified heart to glorify You. Search me and reveal the “tables” in my own life that need to be overturned. Thank You for sending Jesus to do the work I could never do—saving me from sin and restoring my purpose. I place my full trust in Your power and Your timing. Amen.

PRACTICE:

As you move through your day, ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one specific area—a worry, a habit, or a secret ambition—that you haven’t fully surrendered. Write it down on a piece of paper as a symbolic “offering.” In a moment of quiet, surrender that item to God, asking for the peace that comes from knowing Christ’s death and resurrection have already secured your standing before Him.



WRITTEN BY DAVIS FRIESEN

PONDER: LUKE 20:1-21:36

...and notice how Jesus talks about the religious leaders and the temple, both integral parts of the old covenant.

REFLECTION:

At the start of these chapters, the religious leaders challenge Jesus, but he responds with wisdom that reveals their hypocrisy. These leaders were well respected and held great authority among the people.

Later in Luke 21, Jesus speaks about the coming destruction of the temple. Jesus speaking against the leaders and the temple points to something significant. Two vital parts of the old covenant system—the priests who offered sacrifices and the temple where the sacrifices were made—would soon pass away.

Jesus is showing that the old covenant system will soon be surpassed by something greater. He is the promised Son of David (20:41), yet greater than David himself. Through him, God will establish a new covenant.

Right in the middle of these teachings about the old system and Jesus' identity as the promised Messiah, we encounter the story of the widow's offering.

Just after warning about religious leaders who "devour widows' houses," Jesus points to a poor widow who gives two small coins—everything she has. In doing so, he reveals the kind of people who belong in the kingdom of God. Not those who appear impressive, wealthy, or powerful. But those who trust God enough to give him everything.

In one sense, the new covenant is free. We do not earn it through our own achievements. Yet in another sense, following Jesus costs us everything. This is a common theme in his teaching: we must lose our lives to find them.

But in giving everything to Christ, we receive far more.

What is something you are holding onto today? Picture yourself like the widow approaching God's throne with your offering. What might God be inviting you to place in his hands?

PRAYER:

God, I thank you for the new covenant that was sealed through your blood. I confess that sometimes I prioritize riches, power, and popularity over worship of you. Give me a heart that is captivated by your glory so that I offer you everything I have.

PRACTICE:

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what may be taking too large a place in your life. How might these things be getting in the way of your devotion to God? Bring them before him in prayer, asking for his help as you place them in his hands.

WRITTEN BY BOBBY RAU

PONDER: MATTHEW 26:6-16**REFLECTION:**

While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came to Him with an alabaster jar – wait, push the pause button. Did I just skim right over the fact that Jesus was in the home of a man who had previously had leprosy? This man had most certainly been in quarantine in that era, and experienced being cast out from his community because of his skin disease. How long had it been since he could host a dinner party at his home? And now I'm wondering, was Jesus the one who healed him?

Our Ross Road Kids very recently studied the Bible lesson featuring leprosy. Jesus, while on the way to Jerusalem, took the time to heal ten men with leprosy. The only one who came back to thank Jesus at that time was a Samaritan. He certainly must have been doubly outcast for his disease and his heritage, and therefore, maybe he was doubly grateful! Now we have Simon the Leper, no longer a leper. Was he part of that group, and is he now thanking Jesus? Or had he perhaps heard of these others and thought to himself, "Wow, I'd really like to show Jesus how grateful I am to be healed. Maybe I can invite him to dinner?"

While this dinner was happening, a woman came to Jesus with an alabaster jar of expensive perfume. Lavish love and gratitude poured out on Jesus during a dinner of gratitude.

And then we've got a terrible misunderstanding about whether or not it's a waste to lavish love on the Lord. Our disgruntled disciple, Judas, decides to act on his bitterness, greed, impatience for the deposing of Rome ... and off he goes to see how he can force the matter, which leads him down the path to betraying Jesus. Gut-wrenching.

Who have I emulated, and who am I going to emulate from this passage?

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, on us as Your people and the sheep of Your pasture, Gentle Shepherd. We are not always following You as lovingly as we want to. We have not been as merciful as You; we have judged others; we have betrayed You with flippant idolatry; we have allowed bitterness and a host of other weeds in the garden of our hearts. And we are seriously so done with that weed-patch, Jesus. Please be our Shepherd and our Great Gardener. Forgive us, and cleanse us, and remind us of the extravagant cost of that forgiveness, that we would greatly value You, and lavish our love on You, as You so richly deserve.

PRACTICE:

What might I do this week for Jesus, or in the name of Jesus, for "one of the least of these," to thankfully, beautifully pour out His lavish love? Give testimony of His faithfulness in my life? Invite someone to dinner? Donate to Union Gospel Mission for their Easter dinner campaign? Lavish the precious commodity of extra time on Jesus in my devotions? Extra time on someone else? Breathe in gratitude and breathe out grace.

WRITTEN BY CINDY SUE PETERS

APRIL 2ND

PONDER: LUKE 22:7-62 & JOHN 13:1-38, 18:1-27

Have you ever been shocked at your ability to sin despite your commitment to follow Christ?

REFLECTION:

Go into any major city or perhaps a resort area in a tropical country and you'll likely come face-to-face with a major contrast. In one area you'll see beautiful skyscrapers, bustling city life, luxurious resort living with ocean views, and all the trappings of wealth. But go one block over, or cross the street out of the tourist areas and you'll find poverty, addiction, homelessness, crime, and squalor. If we're honest, we usually try to ignore this reality because it creates real cognitive dissonance or guilt within and we're not quite sure what to do with it.

When you think about it, this contrast explains well the human condition and the reason why Jesus had to go through the cross to begin with. Such a contrast exists within the human heart. Human beings are capable of such beauty and greatness while also being capable of such evil and cruelty. If you're reading this, you're probably a person of faith already, someone who has committed themselves to following Jesus as best you can. Despite that commitment, have you ever done something that surprised even you? Something that was obviously sinful and against your commitment to Christ—but you did it anyway? I know I have.

This is where Peter finds himself on the eve of Jesus' arrest. Despite his initial protest when Jesus tries to wash his feet he eventually states that he wants Jesus to wash his hands and head, too—in other words, he's all in! Only hours later he would fully deny even knowing Jesus at all—three times! I imagine he was confused by his own behaviour.

Our own double-mindedness reminds us that we need God's grace in our lives. The moments where we come face-to-face with our own shocking ability to sin reminds us of our need for the cross. The only one who was pure and innocent was willing to take our sins upon his shoulders so that we could be forgiven. This grace renews us, strengthens us, and motivates us. Without it, we'd be lost, confused, and broken.

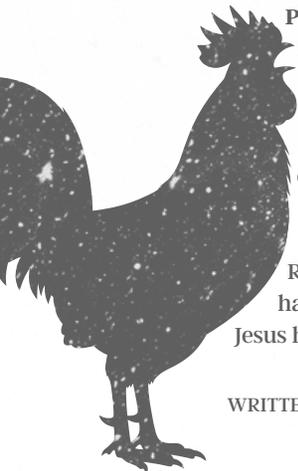
PRAYER:

Father, forgive me for my double-mindedness, for saying that I will follow you only to betray you with my actions and words. Thank you that Jesus was truly devoted to following Your will and that I can find true life through His life. Give me strength to live out my conviction when I'm tempted to betray.

PRACTICE:

Read the story of Peter's restoration in John 21:15-19. How must Peter have felt in that moment with Jesus? How does it feel for you to know Jesus hasn't abandoned you even though you've abandoned Him?

WRITTEN BY CRAIG THIESSEN



APRIL 3RD

PONDER: LUKE 22:63-23:55

REFLECTION:

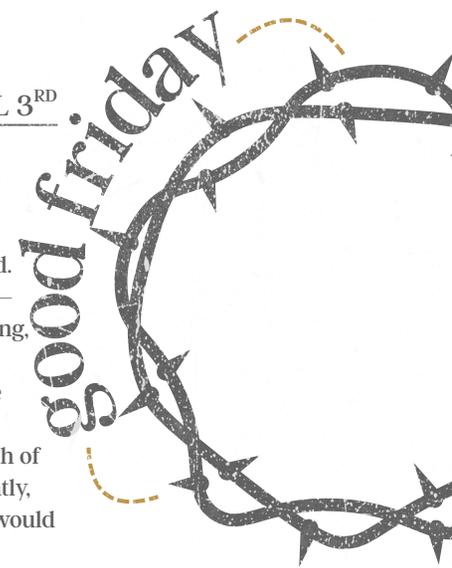
These verses are difficult to read not only because of the subject matter, but also to truly comprehend. I once thought I understood Jesus' suffering for us—the public mockery, ridicule, rejection, brutal beating, and crucifixion. However, visually experiencing these events through the movie "The Passion of the Christ" left me utterly stunned. It was a profound revelation: I had grasped so little of the actual depth of Christ's willingness to suffer for us, and consequently, how deep the Father's love for us must be that He would sacrifice His only Son.

PRAYER:

Abba Father, we struggle to find the words to express our gratitude for your love. We know that we are sinners, and on our own we cannot be restored to a relationship with you. Jesus was sinless, a perfect sacrifice. He willingly gave Himself on the cross in order to redeem us, and you accepted His sacrifice for our atonement. Father help us to share Your truth to those around us, that they would come to know you too. Help us to be obedient to your calling and give us wisdom as we reach out to others. We exalt and praise You!

PRACTICE:

Read these verses through slowly and thoughtfully. Reflect on everything that Jesus endured on your behalf. Consider the vastness of God's love and His desire to have a relationship with us. Express your gratitude to Him in prayer and praise. Listen to the song "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" and focus on the lyrics.



WRITTEN BY SANDRA NELSON



PONDER: LUKE 23:56

"Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment."

REFLECTION:

Years ago, shortly after my daughter was born, we learned that she would require open heart surgery to save her life. We spent many months in the NICU with her, and later were in and out of the hospital until she grew big enough for surgeons to operate on her tiny body. During that time, I lost count of the times people told us that God would perform a miracle. We waited, hoping with every doctor's appointment that we would hear a change in her diagnosis. We believed so strongly that God would heal her—and yet every time we saw a doctor, they would remark that she was a very sick little girl. There was absolutely nothing we could do in this time but wait. The time came for her to receive her surgery. We sat in a little dimly lit waiting room—one that had undoubtedly heard much bad news before—and waited to hear of the outcome. I wish that I could say that I waited in quiet reverence fully trusting that this was all going to turn out. Truthfully, after months of being told that my child was

going to be healed miraculously, I wondered why we were sitting in a hospital waiting room and not at home with a healthy, whole baby. But then, after four hours of surgery (and the miraculous skill of a heart surgeon) we were informed that our little girl was recovering in the ICU after a successful operation. It took years for me to realize the miracle of her surgery—and how God works miracles in whatever way he chooses (sometimes that means the obvious—heart defects requiring heart surgery!)

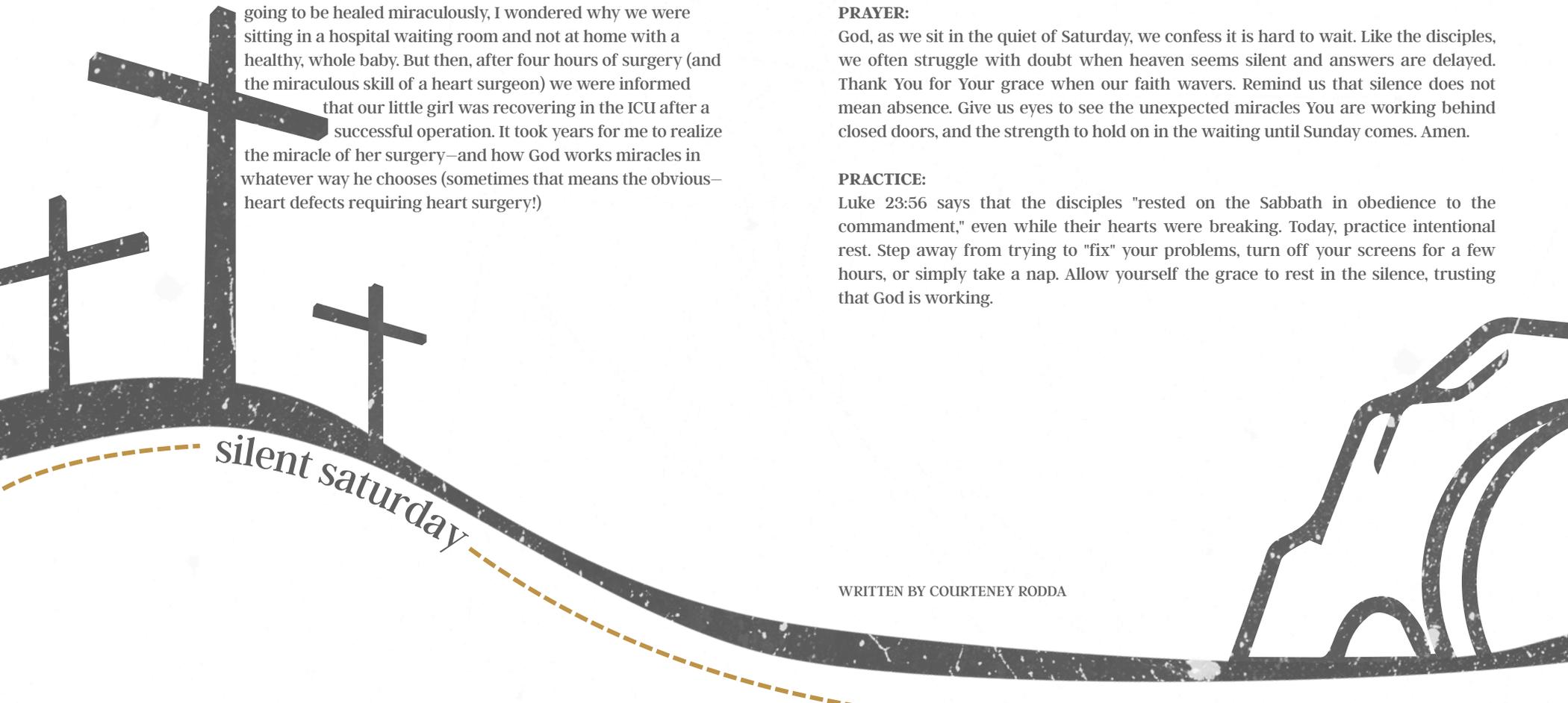
I wonder about the disciples and how they were waiting after Jesus' crucifixion. They had been waiting for so long for a messiah—then He came! Only to be brutally murdered at the height of his ministry. What were they to do now? Didn't God make a promise to them? Surely there were feelings of hopelessness and doubt. After seeing the empty tomb, we know that they still didn't understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead (John 20:9). There was confusion and sadness in all the disciples. Later, on the road to Emmaus two of the disciples spoke with Jesus after he had risen and they couldn't see the miracle that was in front of them. Even after He explained the Scriptures to them, they couldn't see the miracle until He broke bread with them later. As we observe Silent Saturday, what are you waiting for? Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, grief and unmet expectations can easily blind us to what God is doing right in front of us. We don't always get the miracle we picture in our heads, but God is always at work. This weekend, even if you feel like you are sitting in the dark, may God grant you the grace to wait, and eventually, the eyes to see the unexpected ways He has been working all along.

PRAYER:

God, as we sit in the quiet of Saturday, we confess it is hard to wait. Like the disciples, we often struggle with doubt when heaven seems silent and answers are delayed. Thank You for Your grace when our faith wavers. Remind us that silence does not mean absence. Give us eyes to see the unexpected miracles You are working behind closed doors, and the strength to hold on in the waiting until Sunday comes. Amen.

PRACTICE:

Luke 23:56 says that the disciples "rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment," even while their hearts were breaking. Today, practice intentional rest. Step away from trying to "fix" your problems, turn off your screens for a few hours, or simply take a nap. Allow yourself the grace to rest in the silence, trusting that God is working.



silent saturday

PONDER: LUKE 24:1-49

Notice how the characters in the story were slow to see what had actually happened—because a resurrection is nothing anyone expected!

REFLECTION:

It seems like the rate of technological advancement these days is so fast that we're used to regularly hearing about new and amazing developments. For instance, I was talking with a friend recently about a future in which people don't need a driver's licence because self-driving cars take us where we need to go. It seems the sky is the limit to what mankind might achieve!

There is an event in history, however, that no human could ever have dreamed up. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the singular most amazing thing that has ever happened upon this earth. The Apostle Paul would later reflect on this event with wonder:

“No one's ever seen or heard anything like this,
Never so much as imagined anything quite like it—
What God has arranged for those who love him.

But you've seen and heard it because God by his Spirit has brought it all out into the open before you.”

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-10
(the first three lines quoted from Isaiah 64:4)



resurrection Sunday

As the women approached the tomb that Resurrection Sunday it was beyond their imaginations to consider that Jesus might not be laying in that cave anymore. They carried spices with them so that they could anoint and honour Jesus' body, something they were not able to do right after he died or the following day (Saturday) since it was the Sabbath. They didn't expect to find the grave empty.

But—to their amazement—Jesus is not there! What a wonder! What a surprise! What joy!

One can imagine their confusion and fear as the angel appears to them. One can also imagine the dawning of hope and realization as they begin to understand what Jesus was talking about.

Everything changes with the resurrection. It truly is the greatest accomplishment in history.

Paul reminds us of the great privilege we have on this side of the resurrection—“God by His Spirit has brought it all out into the open before you.” What grace and privilege we carry because of Jesus. May our lives be transformed by the wonder and miracle of the cross of Jesus Christ—and the empty tomb.

PRAYER:

God, we truly have no words to express our amazement and wonder at the miracle of the empty tomb. Your power is truly unmatched. We rely on You. We humbly offer ourselves to You in response to Your love for us. We love you. Thank you. Amen.

PRACTICE:

Spend time today expressing wonder and praise to God. Go for a walk and express your thanks, or, journal some of your admiration and awe.

CLOSING REFLECTION

As we have pondered, prayed, and practiced during this Holy Week, may the resurrection of Jesus continue to be the source of our hope, joy, and strength. Let the reality of Christ's victory over death transform your heart and guide your steps each day. May His life shine in you, and may you share the hope of the risen Saviour with those around you.

Go in peace, with the joy of the Lord as your strength.

He is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Hallelujah!

