

2018

HOLY WEEK

DEVOTIONAL



ذهب

Artwork by Stephanie Kelly, EU '19
(Arabic for *Gold*)
Oil paint, 16x20, 2016

THE EMPTY ROOM REPRESENTS NEW BEGINNINGS, THE CHAIR REPRESENTS AN INVITATION
FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO COME AND LIVE, AND THE TORN CURTAIN REPRESENTS JESUS'
DEATH AND RESURRECTION – THE TORN VEIL, THE NEW COVENANT.



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YOUR CALLING. OUR PASSION.



PREFACE

Holy Week is the week leading up to Easter, beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with Easter Sunday. It is a week devoted to commemorating Jesus Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), the Last Supper with His disciples (Maundy Thursday), His crucifixion (Good Friday) and His resurrection (Easter Sunday).

It has historically been a time of introspection and repentance, an opportunity to embrace what it looks like to live out Christ's suffering in our own lives and find true redemption in Him. It is this sentiment — death and new life — that is at the heart of Holy Week.

We pray this devotional, created by different members of the Evangel family, will bless you.

Carol A. Taylor

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President, Evangel University

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DAY ONE **PALM SUNDAY**

By: Hadley DuVall (EU '19), Current Student, Accounting

CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Philippians 2:5-11

When making a hire in the marketplace or choosing a team member, leaders look for many qualities, but attitude and character are at the top.

In Paul's appeal for unity to the church at Philippi, in Philippians 2:5-11, he gives the contemporary believer an advantage for excelling in the workplace. Paul opens this prayer with an appeal for the right chemistry: "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" (verses 5-6).

For the right chemistry, we must have the right attitude. Jesus humbled Himself to have the same likeness as a servant. If our King can give up His divine privileges for our sake, we cannot always expect to be treated as if we are on the top tier. In fact, it must be the exact

opposite. If we serve as Jesus humbly did, we place ourselves in a servant's posture — not above others.

As followers of Christ, we need to have strong mental and moral standards that set us apart. Jesus' character sustained Him as He took the blame of all sinners by dying on the cross. In this unbelievable act of love, He understood what His sacrifice meant. Jesus portrayed consistent character, even unto death, so we could have life. If we are willing, we can carry forth His character to our part of the world, glorifying His great name and ushering souls to the cross.

If we exemplify the attitude and character of our Savior, we will reflect Christ in the workplace, and our life will make an eternal impact.



DAY TWO HOLY MONDAY

By: Mark Fabian (CBC '02/AGTS '05), Director of Digital Learning at EU

OUR BETRAYAL, HIS REDEMPTION

Matthew 26:14-16

The chief priests and elders plotted together to kill Jesus, and they would have killed Him earlier, but they lacked opportunity. The crowds, fickle as they were, prevented them from carrying out their covert plan. If only they could catch Him by surprise, apart from the crowds. They just needed an agent — someone who could get close to Him.

In Matthew's gospel, there's only one mention of Judas Iscariot before this, and it's in the list of the disciples where his name appears last, and (spoiler alert!) he is identified as the one who betrayed Jesus (Matthew 10:4). He was one of the twelve — a day-in, day-out companion to and witness of Jesus. He heard Jesus' teaching, witnessed His miracles, and even participated in His ministry. He was close to Jesus, but he wanted more. If only he could leverage his position to garner prestige and gain a profit. He just needed an audience — a chance to step out of the Master's shadow and make a name for himself.

By the time Judas went to the chief priests, his course was set. However this terrible thought started, he had entertained it and rationalized it. Luke's gospel adds this insight: "Then Satan entered into Judas" (Luke 22:3). He was at last determined to act. He was ready to betray Jesus.

Judas got his audience, and the chief priests got their agent. The exchange was thirty pieces of silver, the same amount that Exodus 21:32 prescribes as recompense upon the death of a slave. This transaction defined his tragic life.

This disturbing episode reflects again the grim human story. Unthinkable as it seems, people often barter their innocence and integrity for unjust gain or illicit pleasure. Judas is not alone in his misappraisal.

Thanks be to God, Christ transforms humanity's tragedy into a story of priceless redemption.



DAY THREE **HOLY TUESDAY**

By: Kate Alsup (EU '15), Advancement Data & Donor Research Specialist at EU

PERSIST IN EXPECTANCY

Isaiah 42:1-4


Isaiah 42:1-4 is a message for a suffering people. They were exiled, disappointed, and alone. Their suffering narrowed their focus and threatened to diminish their ability to see God at work in the world around them. The complaints they had for God were similar to ours when we feel disregarded and burdened by unrighteousness and injustice: What is God doing about our suffering? Our loss? Our disappointment?

This passage is a reminder to persist in the expectancy of righteousness and justice only the Spirit of God can bring. The hope God offers is constant, even if our lives don't seem to be, and the servant of the Lord was sent to bring the nations into conformity with the character of God.

In times of struggle, we yearn for an all-powerful strength to come and enforce our

justice. The Servant shows His strength, not through His powerful physical might, but through His meekness. Enacting God's righteousness through justice is more than a show of power to intimidate the world; it is bringing the world — all of the world — into right relationship with God, themselves, and each other. It is persistently casting God's promises over all people and all nations. Not to crush, but to strengthen, transform, and empower.

Justice is the application and outworking of God's righteousness. When we are able to lift our eyes from ourselves, we can become workers of God's justice to other people and other nations. Our efforts become God-driven action and produce God-empowered results.





DAY FOUR **HOLY WEDNESDAY**

By: George P. Wood, Executive Editor of AG Publications, AG National Office

LOVING CHRIST MORE THAN A CAUSE

Mark 14:1-11

Holy Wednesday is a crucial day in the events of Holy Week. From Palm Sunday through Holy Tuesday, Jesus has been publicly performing significant actions and speaking startling words. These actions and words spiked the ire of Jesus' enemies, who — according to Mark 14:1 — “were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him.”

But, they had no way to get at Jesus, protected as He was by the sympathies of the crowds. No way, that is, until one of His own resolved to betray Him.

Mark does not tell us what prompted Judas to betray Jesus. He mentions that the chief priests promised Judas money, but this was after he approached them, not before.

However, we do know that, between the chief priests' intent to murder Jesus and Judas's intent to betray Him, we find the story of an unnamed woman and her broken jar of expensive perfume.

Some of those present were indignant about the “waste” and rebuked her harshly.

Jesus might have been expected to join the criticism of this lavish waste of money. But — and isn't it amazing how Jesus rarely conforms to our expectations — He didn't! Instead, in verses 6-9, He drew attention to Himself.

With these words, Jesus outlines two distinct forms of spirituality. One focuses on helping the poor; the other focuses on loving Jesus.

Jesus was an advocate for the poor. Yet, in this instance, He saw that the guests' focus on the poor detracted from their focus on Him. The most important thing is to love Jesus. If you love Jesus, you will help the poor whom Jesus loved. But it is also quite possible that a cause — even a praiseworthy one like helping the poor — can lead you away from loving Jesus.

Perhaps this was the reason for Judas' betrayal. He loved a cause more than he loved Christ.



DAY FIVE **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

By: Yisrael Vincent (AGTS '17), Ph. D Student, Pastor, Adjunct Faculty at EU

THE HEART OF JESUS

John 13:12-16

In the Great Hall of AGTS, a statue demands the attention of everyone who walks by. Cast in the stillness of bronze is a life-size depiction of Jesus washing the feet of Peter on the night before His death.

Many of us are familiar with the scene from John 13; however, the candid image of Jesus kneeled over a bowl of water rinsing the feet of a weathered fisherman invokes reflection. Ultimately, what Jesus did for Peter He has done for us all.

Maundy Thursday invites us to remember this symbolic act. John 13:12-16 illuminates the heart of Jesus' action: that we have been called to do the same.

Jesus' example is intentional. Luke's account of the Last Supper recalls a familiar argument between the disciples concerning who would be the greatest (Luke 22:24).

By washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus gives a context for the greatness we are to pursue. In our culture, it is easy to accept conflicting definitions of greatness, but Jesus' example serves as a guiding lodestar for our endeavors. In the Christian community, service done in love reflects the ministry and message of Jesus. Jesus does not shun us away from pursuing great things; He simply defines what great things look like in the Kingdom.

By devoting ourselves to the example Jesus left, we in turn resemble Him more and more each day. Like the disciples, we may not fully understand the example set through Jesus' symbolic act (verse 7). Thankfully, Jesus is quick to meet us where we are and be the model of who we are called to be.

This Holy Week comes with the opportunity to more deeply understand Jesus' teaching and more closely follow His command to do as He has done (verse 15).



DAY SIX GOOD FRIDAY

By: Bruce Deaton, Head Women's Soccer Coach/Director of Soccer Operations at EU

THROUGH A FATHER'S EYES

Isaiah 53:1-5

It was a normal Louisiana evening during just another high school soccer match. She was making the same run to track down the soccer ball as she had done hundreds of times before, but this time was different. The difference was in the sound — two, in fact. They are sounds I will always remember but would do anything to forget.

As she approached the sideline where I, her coach and father, was standing, everything changed in an instant. I heard the deafening sound of a bone breaking, followed by shrill screams of pain and agony. Although I was merely 10 feet away, I could do nothing to change what just happened.

At that moment, I would have done anything to take her place, to bear her pain and take it all away. But I could not. Something we had shared together for years immediately changed forever. I cried that night, and

several times following when I ventured out to training. Our season was not over, but Tessa's was.

As her dad, I wanted to take the pain from her and place it upon myself. It is this memory that leads me to think about the sounds of this day, Good Friday.

God, our Father, listened to the pain and agony of Jesus being crucified for our transgressions. Not only did He not remove the pain and agony that was endured by His Son, but He actually invited it by the willingness of Jesus to take our place — to bear our sins upon His body. This is an act of love far beyond my comprehension.

While the sounds of that day had to be overwhelming, those sounds opened the doorway to sounds of victory for us just a few days later.



DAY SEVEN **HOLY SATURDAY**

By: Jennifer Watson (CBC '98), Student Ministries Pastor

BETWEEN THE CROSS AND THE EMPTY TOMB

Romans 6:3-11


The fragile space of waiting between the cross and the empty tomb caused the hearts of those who loved Jesus to feel the sting of death. When we grieve, we question everything and wrestle with the truth. Worry lingered in the air instead of the unbridled victory that had already been won. Often, we feel that same ache stirring in our hearts as if most days are the Saturday before our victory.

Saturday can hold the hurts, if it must, but Sunday proves that death is no match for our God. As believers, we cling to the truth tucked away in every line of this passage: Jesus was raised from the dead so we may walk in a newness that was purchased for us.

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (verse 4).

We drink in the knowledge that we shall be made like Him in our resurrection, but the word *if* causes me to glance harder at one powerful phrase in verse three that we often skip: "For if we have been united with him in a death like his."

As the world watches and we eagerly look for His return, I pray we find ourselves thick in unity with our brothers and sisters and locking shields for the battles we find ourselves in at this time in our world. No longer slaves to sin and fear, we press on with the work God has called us to knowing that we can do this hard and holy work empowered from on high and walking in a newness that brings vitality to tired bones.





DAY EIGHT **EASTER SUNDAY**

By: Dr. Brandon Schmidly (EU '98), Chair of Undergraduate Seminary Programs at EU

THE MOMENT OF A MIRACLE

John 20:1-9

We have all had that moment when something confusing becomes understood. Perhaps, like me, you have experienced it in church when, for months, you have been confused by what seem like strange lyrics of a song, and then, in an instant, the penny drops, and the song makes sense.

Perhaps your circumstances have been the cause of frustrating chaos. Then, in a moment that seems miraculous, the most irreconcilable confusion turns to perfect sensibility. An epiphany transforms the maddening chaos into clarity.

When I read the description of Mary's visit to the tomb, and my eyes traverse the phrase "the stone had been taken away (verse 1)," I cannot help but hear the sound of Don Francisco triumphantly singing, "He's Alive."

However, that imagery, that emotion, is not what Mary was experiencing. Mary approached the tomb while it was still dark, a fitting metaphor to her mental state. As she sees the stone and the empty tomb, the emotion Mary feels is like a punch in the gut. She runs frantically, sobbing, to those she knows will understand the pain of this moment. I imagine that as she ran, she questioned God.

Consider this: Mary is the first human being to encounter evidence of the greatest miracle that God will ever grace the universe to experience. But, Mary is not merely misunderstanding the circumstances; they overcome her.

Peter and John likely share her emotion as they run to the tomb. They do not run with excitement, but distraught with anger. This does not make sense. They know the Scriptures, and this does not fit anyone's Messianic template.

At the entrance to the tomb, John hesitates, but Peter is impetuous. They see the linens and realize this is not evidence of grave robbers. As their minds grapple to make sense, the penny drops.

For the first time, the penny drops for all of creation. This is what the Scriptures meant. This is the victory Jesus will win. Can it be? He's alive? He's alive. HE'S ALIVE!

On this Resurrection Sunday, you may be in the midst of circumstances you do not like or understand. Remember, Jesus wins the victories that seem impossible, and His resurrection has given us the victory that matters most.

A notebook page with a mountain range illustration at the top and bottom. The word "NOTES" is centered in bold yellow text. Below it are 20 horizontal yellow lines for writing.

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**WE PRAY THIS DEVOTIONAL
HAS BEEN A BLESSING TO
YOU. MAY OUR LORD AND
SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST,
CONTINUE TO DRAW YOU
NEARER TO HIMSELF THIS
WEEK, AND EVERY WEEK.
GOD BLESS YOU.**



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