

# Holy Week Devotional 2025

with special  
Kids Devotional included

## Palm Sunday

April 13, 2025 | Pastor Thomas Cross



### Luke 19:41-44 (NRSV)

<sup>41</sup> As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> Indeed, the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup> They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God."

Most of us think of Palm Sunday as a day of rejoicing and eager expectation, but it was not so for Yeshua (Jesus). For Him, Palm Sunday was a day of grief, for He knew what awaited both Him and the Holy City.

Luke tells us that immediately after His entry into Jerusalem (19:28-40), in which Yeshua was greeted with palm branches and loud praises, He took a moment to gaze over Jerusalem while He was still at a vantage point to see it. The sight made Him weep. He was weeping not for His own impending suffering, but for the destruction which would come to the Holy City and its people 40 years later.

What troubled Yeshua was the hard-hearted ignorance of the city's residents: "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes." Yeshua laments the reality of the people's inability to see their salvation, their unwillingness to understand and practice the way of peace (Shalom).

Yeshua made a choice that day, a choice that is consistent with the character of God. He did not choose to manipulate the people with razzle-dazzle displays of His power. Instead, He honored the free will and foolish choices of the people, recognizing that most of them were not going to be changed by reason or honest persuasion.

The Bible is filled with prayers of lament, honest prayers to God for help in the midst of suffering and hopelessness. This lament, spoken by God's Son, is different: Yeshua accepts our human choices, and accepts the grief that goes with them. He doesn't impose His good and gracious will upon Jerusalem; instead, He grieves the consequences of our own human choices. His heart is broken by our stubborn refusal to accept the good gifts He offers us.

The last phrase that Yeshua speaks is poignant: "...you did not recognize the time of your visitation." The word Luke uses for time is Kairos, which means "season," or time in a qualitative (rather than chronological) sense. The Greek word Luke uses for "visitation" is episkope, meaning "covering." Yeshua wanted nothing more than to cover and protect Jerusalem from harm. But first, the people would need to stand underneath His cover of protection. An umbrella does me no good if I don't stand underneath it.

**Prayer:** *Father God, please forgive our foolish choices and help us to stand underneath the cover of Your Son's eternal protection. Keep us steadfast in His guidance, care, and peace. May we never grieve Your Spirit by resisting Your good and gracious will, In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*



## JESUS CRIES FOR THE CITY Luke 19:41-44 (NRSV)

When Jesus got close to the city of Jerusalem, He started to cry. He wasn't crying because He was scared. He was crying because the people in the city didn't understand that He came to bring them peace and love. Jesus knew that some people would turn away from Him, and it made Him sad. He wanted to protect them, just like a big umbrella keeps us dry in the rain. But they had to choose to stand under it!

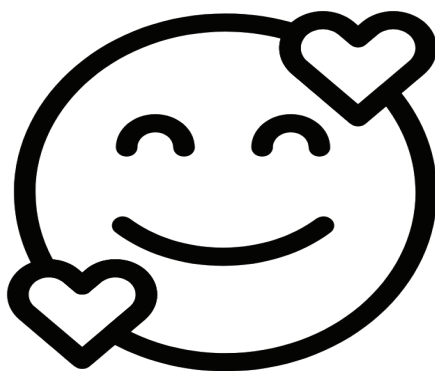
Jesus' love is like a big, warm hug. He wants to keep us close and safe, but sometimes we make choices that take us away from Him. Even when that happens, He never stops loving us! When we make mistakes, Jesus still wants us to come back to Him. His love never ends! No matter what happens, we can always trust that Jesus wants the best for us, and He is always ready to welcome us with open arms.

### Think About It:

Have you ever wanted to help someone, but they didn't want your help? How did it make you feel? How can you trust that Jesus always wants what's best for you?

### Prayer:

*Dear Jesus, help us to see Your love and protection. We want to follow You and make good choices. Thank You for always being with us. Help us to share Your love with others. Amen.*





**Mark 11:14, 19-25 (MSG)**

<sup>12-14</sup> As they left Bethany the next day, he was hungry. Off in the distance he saw a fig tree in full leaf. He came up to it expecting to find something for breakfast, but found nothing but fig leaves. (It wasn't yet the season for figs.) He addressed the tree: "No one is going to eat fruit from you again—ever!" And his disciples overheard him. <sup>19</sup> At evening, Jesus and his disciples left the city. <sup>20-21</sup> In the morning, walking along the road, they saw the fig tree, shriveled to a dry stick. Peter, remembering what had happened the previous day, said to him, "Rabbi, look—the fig tree you cursed is shriveled up!" <sup>22-25</sup> Jesus was matter-of-fact: "Embrace this God-life. Really embrace it, and nothing will be too much for you. This mountain, for instance: Just say, 'Go jump in the lake'—no shuffling or hemming and hawing—and it's as good as done. That's why I urge you to pray for absolutely everything, ranging from small to large. Include everything as you embrace this God-life, and you'll get God's everything. And when you assume the posture of prayer, remember that it's not all asking. If you have anything against someone, forgive—only then will your heavenly Father be inclined to also wipe your slate clean of sins."

If I'm honest, there have been plenty of times when I've read Scripture and thought, What in the world is this talking about? This passage is one of those. On the surface, it almost feels humorous; why is Jesus yelling at a tree like that?! But if we stick with it, the deeper meaning begins to take shape. And honestly, isn't that just like faith?

So many times, I've struggled to understand what God is doing. I have a plan, or at least an idea of how I think things should go, but it feels like Jesus often has something different in mind. And let's be real; being patient and trusting that God will come through isn't always easy. We're conditioned to be

independent, to "pull ourselves up by our bootstraps," so being vulnerable and reliant on something beyond ourselves can feel uncomfortable. But over time, especially when we look back, we start to see more clearly what God has been doing all along.

I can imagine the disciples in this moment, watching Jesus curse the fig tree, probably exchanging glances, unsure whether to say something or just keep walking. Then, the next day, when they see the tree completely withered, they finally work up the courage to ask about it. And that's when Jesus reveals the deeper lesson: "Embrace this God-life."

For me, this passage is about going all in for God, trusting Him completely and allowing faith and prayer to shape how we see and interact with the world. It's also a reminder that God wants our hearts to be in the right place. As we come to Him in prayer, He asks us to release and forgive those who have hurt us. Letting go and forgiving makes room for deeper trust. And, when we truly embrace this God-life, we can begin to see just how much God is at work in and through us.

**Prayer:** *Jesus, thank You for using the unexpected to catch our attention and reveal more of Your heart and love for us. Help us to come to You just as we are, trusting You fully in both the big and small things. Soften our hearts so we can freely forgive those who have taken up negative space in our lives. Teach us to pray with boldness and confidence, trusting in Your plan for us. Lord, we're all in! In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



## Monday of Holy Week

# Kids Devotion

### JESUS AND THE FIG TREE

Mark 11:12-25 (MSG)

One day, Jesus was hungry and saw a tree with lots of leaves. But when He looked closer, there was no fruit! Jesus said, "No one will eat from you again!" The next day, the tree had dried up completely! Jesus used this to teach His friends about faith. He said if we truly believe, we can pray and trust God for big things. He also reminded them to forgive others, just like God forgives us.

Sometimes, we expect things to turn out a certain way, but they don't. Jesus wants us to trust Him even when things don't go as planned. Faith means believing that God is working, even when we can't see it yet. He also wants our hearts to be good, just like He wanted the fig tree to have fruit. When we love others, show kindness, and trust in God, we are growing good fruit! Just like a tree needs water and sunshine to grow, our hearts need Jesus' love to be strong and full of faith.

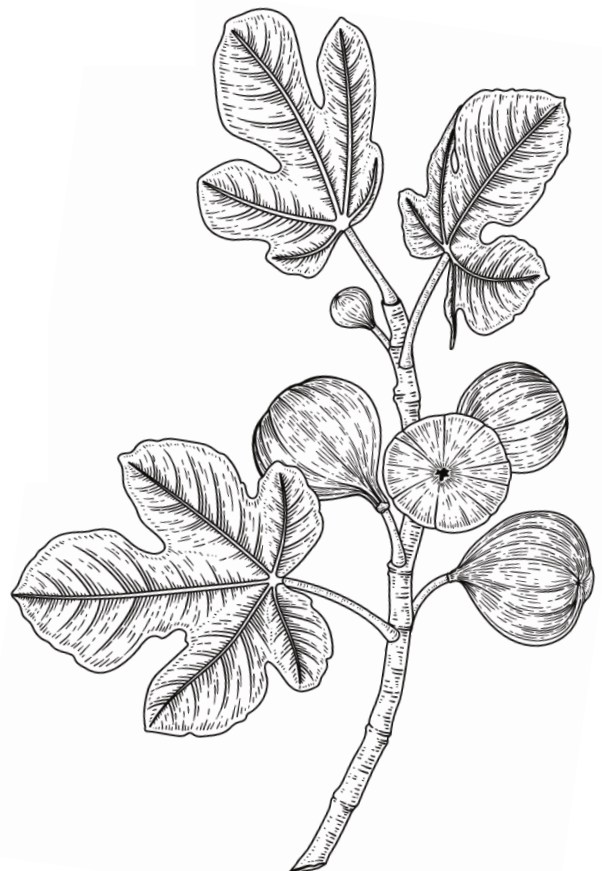
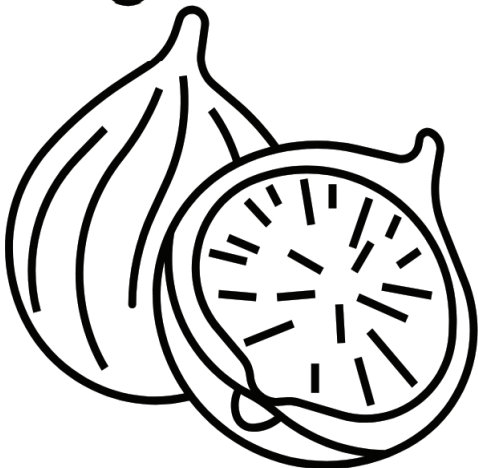
#### Think About It:

Have you ever prayed for something? How does it feel to trust God even when you don't see answers right away? What are some ways you can "grow good fruit" in your life?

#### Prayer:

*Jesus, help us to trust You and pray with faith. Remind us to forgive others like You forgive us. Help us to show kindness and grow good fruit in our lives. Amen.*

# Monday of Holy Week





### Matthew 22:34-40 (NRSV)

<sup>34</sup> When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, <sup>35</sup> and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" <sup>37</sup> He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 21 and 22 have great passages of Jesus teaching. Many of the parables represent a prophetic response from Jesus when the Pharisees, chief priests, or elders try to get Him in a "gotcha" moment. A response that they could then use against Him, but a sound bite they would never receive.

This passage, however, stands out to me because when the Pharisees come at Jesus once again, He gives no parable. He does not respond with a question. His response is direct without room for misinterpretation. There is no room for judgement. There is no "if this than that" equation. There are no parameters within who should be considered a neighbor. There is no deliberation about what is most important. In fact, the final commandment Jesus leaves us with two days later (John 13:34) speaks of love and only solidifies this first response...that loving our God and each other come first.

When we follow the way of Jesus we are to lead with love. Some days this is a hard conclusion, and I find myself falling miserably short. On paper I can recognize that even when opinions differ from my own, my task is love. But put into action, how am I to love when I see so much hate? When I see so much hurt? When I'm angry?

1 Corinthians 13:13 helps explain what love is. Even when our hearts and opinions can burn with fear or anger...love can prosper, love can be patient, love can be kind. It doesn't mean we are not allowed to feel or be upset or have reactions to the chaos we endure, but we can choose love. We can choose to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, and soul. We can choose to love our neighbor, even when we have vast differences. We can choose to love one another as Jesus first loved us: without judgement, equations, or parameters.

We know that "God is love," (1 John 4:8b). So let us all then live in love. Let us lean into God and the immense love that Jesus first showed all of us. First by His life, and second by His death.

**Prayer:** *Dear Jesus, I ask that You continue to make room in our hearts for love. Even when we feel there is no room, help us to recognize the image of Christ in all. Help us to remember that we are capable because You first showed us The Way. May we spread Your love through all we do and through all our conversations so that others may come to know You, Your light, and Your love. Amen.*



**THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE**  
Matthew 22:34-40 (NRSV)

Some people asked Jesus, "What is the most important rule?" Jesus said, "Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. And love others like you love yourself." Jesus didn't make it complicated—He told us that love is the most important thing! When we love God, we spend time with Him, talk to Him, and follow His ways. When we love others, we are kind, forgiving, and helpful. Love isn't just a feeling—it's something we show with our actions! When we love others, we show that we are followers of Jesus. His love changes us and helps us become the best version of ourselves.

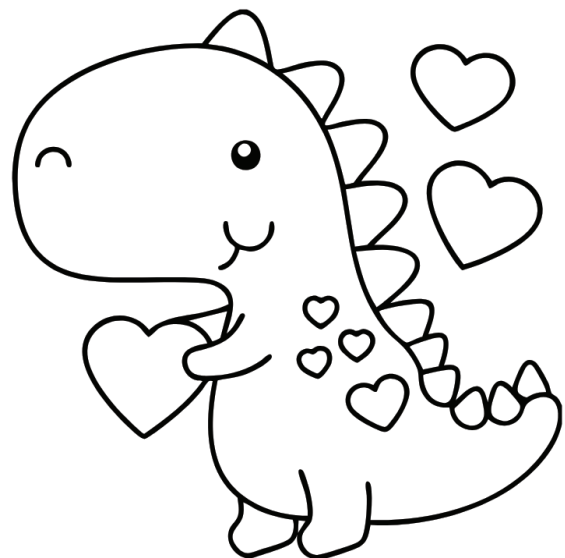
**Think About It:**

How can you show love to God? How can you show love to others? What is one way you can be kind to someone today?

**Prayer:**

*Dear Jesus, help us to love You with all our hearts and to be kind to others. Thank You for loving us first! Help us to show love every day in all that we do. Amen.*

# Tuesday of Holy Week





### Luke 21:5-9 (NRSV)

<sup>5</sup> Some people were talking about the temple, how it was decorated with beautiful stones and ornaments dedicated to God. Jesus said, <sup>6</sup> "As for the things you are admiring, the time is coming when not even one stone will be left upon another. All will be demolished."

<sup>7</sup> They asked him, "Teacher, when will these things happen? What sign will show that these things are about to happen?"

<sup>8</sup> Jesus said, "Watch out that you aren't deceived. Many will come in my name, saying, 'I'm the one!' and 'It's time!' Don't follow them. <sup>9</sup> When you hear of wars and rebellions, don't be alarmed. These things must happen first, but the end won't happen immediately."

In this Scripture of Luke 21:1-38, Jesus began preparing the disciples for what would be happening soon. Here are some things that Jesus shared with them.

Jesus was seeing the poor woman who gave more money than all the people, even though she didn't have even close to what everyone had to live on.

Jesus heard people talking about the Temple, and how beautiful it was. Jesus told his disciples that one day not one stone would be left.

The disciples asked their teacher about when these things will begin to happen. Jesus said, "Beware you are not led astray; for many will come and say it is me. Time is near! Do not go after them."

I am so glad that Jesus took lots of time to tell the disciples many more things before He went to Heaven. This let Jesus to continue teaching and preparing many more of his followers.

As I am thinking, one of my roles is to teach kids more about Jesus! Jesus was helping his disciples by teaching them all they needed to know before going to Heaven! That helped a LOT, but it also helps us remember that Jesus is always with us, and we can always help one another -- just like HIM!

Let's remember to always be a helper for people that need it, anytime, and anywhere. Whether we know the person or not, we can give someone a smile, ask if they need anything or just say hello. Let's do it together!

**Prayer:** Lord, I thank You for all You do for us. You see us and take care of what we need. I pray that I will be kind and caring as much as You are, showing love and compassion all of my days. Amen.





**JESUS TEACHES US TO BE READY**  
Luke 21:1-38 (NRSV)

Jesus told His friends to pay attention and be ready. He said that people might try to trick them, but they should always follow Him. He also reminded them to help others and not get distracted by things that don't matter.

Sometimes, we can get distracted by toys, TV, or video games, and we forget to spend time with Jesus. He wants us to stay focused on loving Him and helping others. When we listen to Jesus and do what He says, we are ready for anything! Life can be full of surprises, but if we stay close to Jesus, He will help us through anything that comes our way.

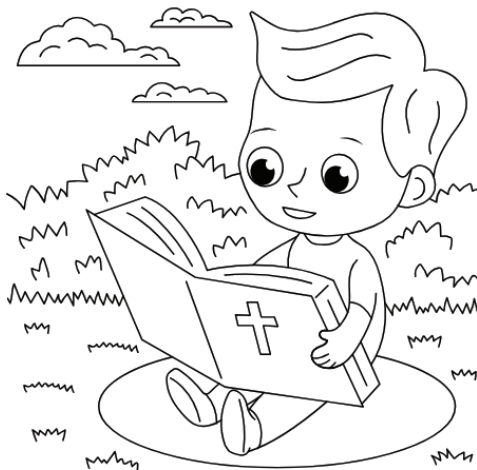
**Think About It:**

How can you stay focused on Jesus each day? What are some ways to show kindness and love, even when it's hard?

**Prayer:**

*Jesus, help us to listen to You and follow Your ways. Keep our hearts ready to love and serve others. Remind us to focus on what really matters. Amen.*

# Wednesday of Holy Week



## Maundy Thursday

April 17, 2025 | Pastor Don Bird



### Mark 14:32-42 (NRSV)

<sup>32</sup> They went to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

<sup>33</sup> He took with him Peter and James and John and began to be distressed and agitated. <sup>34</sup> And he said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake."

<sup>35</sup> And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup> He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me, yet not what I want but what you want." <sup>37</sup> He came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?"

<sup>38</sup> Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." <sup>39</sup> And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. <sup>40</sup> And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to say to him. <sup>41</sup> He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup> Get up, let us be going. Look, my betrayer is at hand."

Jesus knew what was coming. The weight of it pressed down on Him as He entered the garden. "Sit here while I pray," He told His disciples. Then, taking Peter, James, and John a little farther, He confessed His deep anguish. "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake."

But they couldn't. Not really. Three times Jesus returned to find them sleeping. And three times He asked them to stay awake. The moment of crisis was upon them, and yet, exhausted and overwhelmed, they slept.

It's easy to judge the disciples. We might imagine that we would have done better, that we would have kept our eyes open and our hearts attuned to Jesus. But would we? Or would we, too, have struggled to stay present in the painful moment?

Holy Week invites us to sit in this tension. As Jesus moves toward the cross, we are asked to keep watch with Him. To stay awake. Not just to the events of the story but to the realities of our world—realities of suffering, injustice, and fear that Jesus Himself bore.

Where are the places today where Jesus calls us to stay awake? Where is Christ still deeply grieved? In the cries of the unhoused? In the heartbreak of war? In the injustices that persist in our communities?

And how often do we, like the disciples, find ourselves asleep—not physically, but spiritually? Numbed by the noise of daily life, lulled into inaction, tempted to turn away from the pain around us because it feels too overwhelming to face?

Holy Week is our invitation to wake up. To be present. To stand in solidarity with those who suffer. To listen deeply. To pray with honesty. To follow Jesus, even when the path leads through sorrow.

So today, sit with this story. Imagine yourself in the garden. What would it mean for you to stay awake with Jesus—not just in prayer but in action? What would it mean to be fully present to the ways Christ is still at work, calling us to justice, to love, and to hope?

### As you reflect, pray these words:

*God of the garden, keep me awake. Let me not turn away from the pain of the world but sit in it with You. Give me strength to love, courage to act, and faith to follow. Amen.*



## JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN

Mark 14:32-42 (NRSV)

Before Jesus was arrested, He went to a garden to pray. He asked His friends to stay awake and pray with Him, but they kept falling asleep! Even though Jesus was scared, He trusted God's plan.

There will be times when we feel afraid or alone. Jesus understands because He felt that way too! But He still trusted God, and we can do the same. When we pray, we can tell God everything—our worries, fears, and hopes. He is always listening and caring for us. No matter what happens, we can trust that God is in control and will take care of us.

### Think About It:

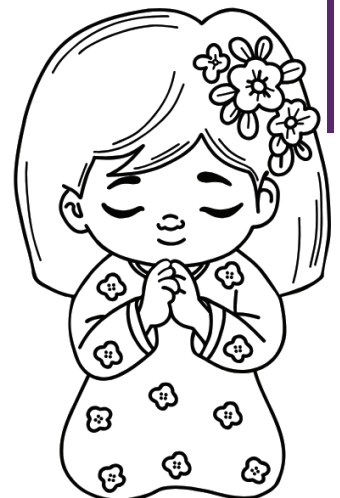
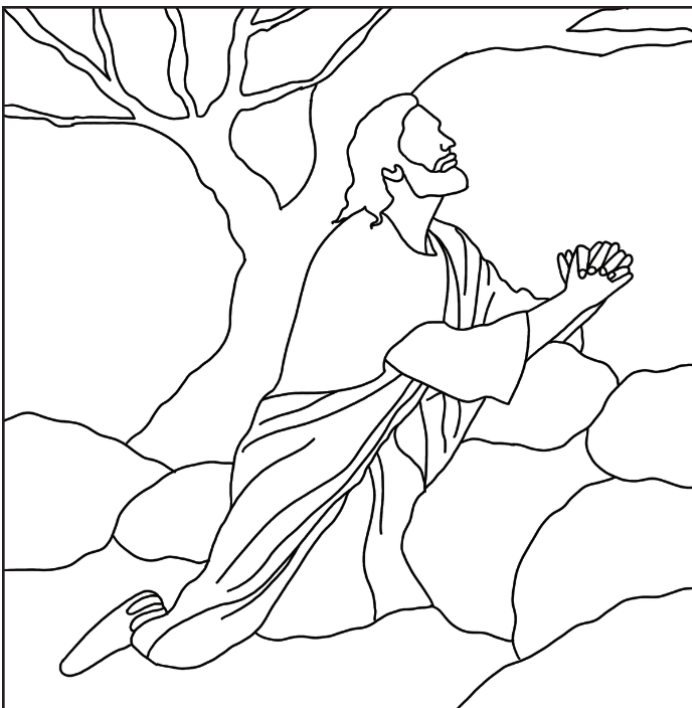
Have you ever been scared but trusted God to help you? How can prayer help you feel closer to God?

### Prayer:

*Dear Jesus, when we are afraid, help us to trust You. Thank You for always being with us and listening to our prayers. Amen.*



# Maundy Thursday





## Mark 15:40-41 (NRSV)

<sup>40</sup> *There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome.*

<sup>41</sup> *These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.*

On the day that I am writing this devotion, Mandy and I lost a friend of 30 years to stomach cancer. We were able to be with him and his family just two days prior. It is such deep heartache to not only grieve the death of those we love, but maybe even a deeper heartache is watching them suffer and slowly die.

In Mark 15:40-41, we find a quiet but powerful detail of the crucifixion: “There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. These women had followed him and cared for him when he was in Galilee, and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.” While the crowds jeered and the disciples scattered, these women stayed. They did not turn away from the suffering.

What does it mean to love someone all the way to the end? It takes courage to stay when everything in us wants to leave—to shield ourselves from the pain of watching someone we love suffer. But these women show us a different way. They bear witness. They refuse to let Jesus die alone. Their presence is an act of love in a moment of unimaginable sorrow.

We often think of Good Friday as a day about Jesus’ suffering—and it is. But it is also a day about those who choose to stay present in the face of suffering. Perhaps that is the invitation for us today: to be people who do not look away from pain, but instead, show up. To be the ones who, like these women, love all the way to the end.

Where might God be calling you to stay present, even when it hurts? Who needs you to bear witness to their pain and their worth today?

**As you reflect, pray these words:** *Loving God, give me the strength to stay present with those who are hurting. May I be a witness to Your love in moments of sorrow. Help me to be a person who does not turn away, but who loves all the way to the end. Amen.*



## JESUS DIES FOR US Mark 15:40-41 (NRSV)

On Good Friday, Jesus was hurt and put on a cross, even though He had done nothing wrong. Many of His friends ran away because they were scared, but some women stayed and watched. They didn't leave because they loved Jesus and wanted to be near Him. Even though it was a sad day, Jesus knew this was part of God's big plan to save the world. He gave His life so that we could be close to God forever.

Sometimes, doing the right thing is hard. Jesus showed us how much He loves us by staying strong, even when it was painful. He didn't fight back or run away—He trusted God. His love for us is bigger than anything! Because of Jesus, we can be forgiven and have a forever friendship with God.

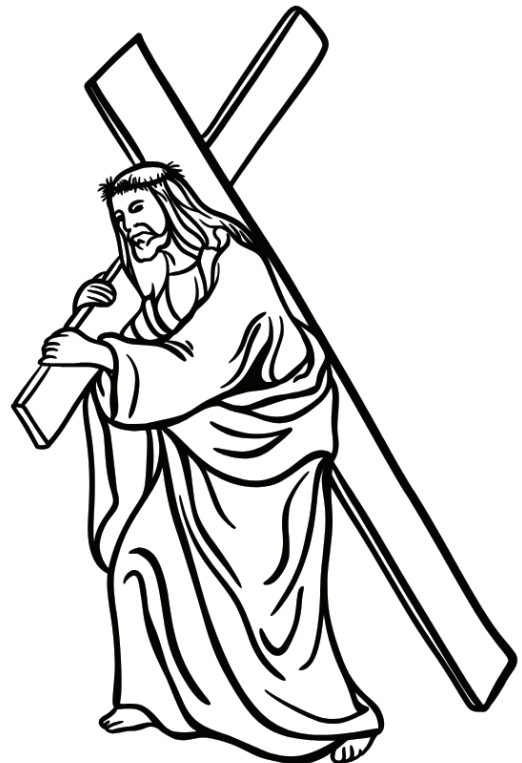
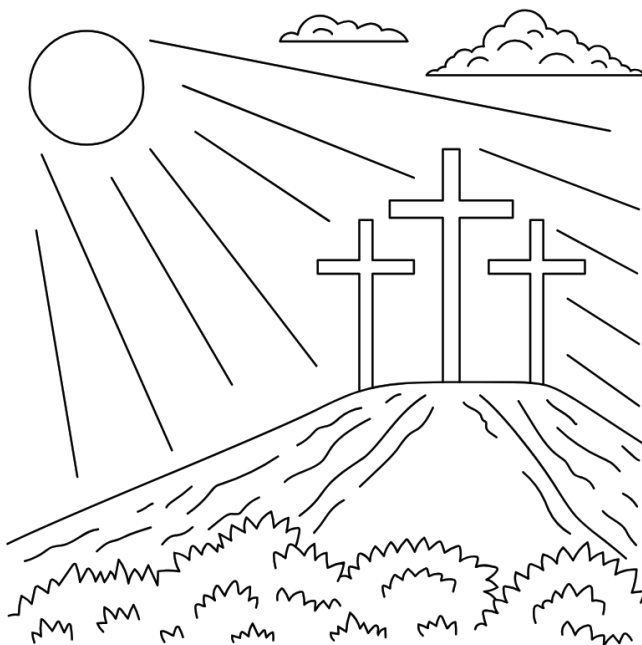
### Think About It:

How does it feel to know Jesus loves you so much? How can you show love to others even when it's hard?

### Prayer:

*Jesus, thank You for loving us so much that You gave Your life for us. Help us to be strong and loving, just like You. Amen.*

# Good Friday





## Matthew 27:57-61; John 19:38-42 (CEB) (Burial of Jesus, Guards at Tomb, & Sabbath)

*Matthew 27: <sup>57</sup> That evening a man named Joseph came. He was a rich man from Arimathea who had become a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> He came to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate gave him permission to take it. <sup>59</sup> Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, <sup>60</sup> and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had carved out of the rock. After he rolled a large stone at the door of the tomb, he went away. <sup>61</sup> Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting in front of the tomb.*

*John 19: <sup>38</sup> After this Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate if he could take away the body of Jesus. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one because he feared the Jewish authorities. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and took the body away. <sup>39</sup> Nicodemus, the one who at first had come to Jesus at night, was there too. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloe, nearly seventy-five pounds in all. <sup>40</sup> Following Jewish burial customs, they took Jesus' body and wrapped it, with the spices, in linen cloths. <sup>41</sup> There was a garden in the place where Jesus was crucified, and in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup> Because it was the Jewish Preparation Day and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus in it.*

Falling action. Denouement. This part of the story feels like the tidying of details after the big climax of the crucifixion. But it's not. It's a short rest before the biggest event in human history. If you ask a bunch of people how many disciples Jesus had, I think the most common answer would be twelve. But we'd leave out Joseph of Arimathea. He shows up in all four gospels, and both Matthew and John call him a disciple of Jesus. I wonder how many others there were that we never hear about.

Joseph (or Joseph and Nicodemus in John's account) prepares Jesus' body for burial. This was part of Jewish custom. They place Him in a tomb. Some details differ in the four gospels, but all agree that a large stone was placed in front of the tomb. It feels like a punctuation mark. An ending.

Is there something in your life that feels like an ending right now? Something that feels like the closing of a final chapter? There are times in every person's life that feel that way, like there's no way to move forward after this moment. It's over.

But it's not.

What if this moment in your life isn't the end of a chapter? What if it's only the beginning? What if God has new life in store for you? What if this is just a rest? What if this is just Saturday, but Sunday is coming...

**Prayer:** *God, when everything feels dark and the stone blocking me in is way too big for me to move, remind me that You are the one who rolls stones away, You are the one who brings new life, You are the one who makes beginnings out of what feel like endings. Amen.*



## Saturday of Holy Week

# Kids Devotion

### WAITING FOR A MIRACLE

Matthew 27:57-61, John 19:38-42 (CEB)

After Jesus died, His friends were very sad. They put His body in a tomb and rolled a big stone in front of it. Soldiers even guarded the tomb so no one could take His body. It seemed like the end of the story, but God had a big surprise coming! Even when things seem dark and hopeless, God is still working.

Sometimes, we have to wait for good things to happen. Maybe we pray for something, but the answer doesn't come right away. That's how Jesus' friends felt—they didn't know what would happen next. But even in the waiting, God had a plan. When we trust Him, we can have hope, even when things seem hard.

#### Think About It:

Have you ever had to wait for something exciting? How can you trust God when things don't go the way you expect?

#### Prayer:

*God, help us to trust You even when we don't understand what is happening. We know that You are always working for good. Amen.*

# Saturday of Holy Week



# Easter Sunday

April 20, 2025 | Sirena Gilbert



## John 20:19-23 (NRSV)

<sup>19</sup> When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

After being betrayed, mocked, beaten, and stabbed, Jesus endures a brutal public death. How heavy a darkness must have settled over His friends and followers. During one of the dark days that follow, He approaches His troubled friends where they are gathered, telling them "Peace be with you". When I read this, I imagine a moment filled with incredulous expressions and affronted reactions in response to His statement to them during such an awful time of grief, anger, fear, and insecurity. I know I would have been thinking: "Peace?! Peace be with me??!! Does this guy even know what is going on??" (eye roll, look of disgust).

But Jesus knows.

He then shows them His hands. And His side. He's like, yeah, it's me and yeah, that's what I said, "Peace be with you." He says it again, followed by a directive and breathes the Holy Spirit on them declaring: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." After all He endured, He emphasizes forgiveness.

He's telling them to have a heart of forgiveness which will bring them peace. That's powerful.

Forgiveness. How impossible this may seem when our innocence, our safety and security, our mental health, or a loved one has been taken from us. Perhaps we have or someone we love has been cheated, betrayed, violated, terrorized, or abused.

How we may grapple with this concept that forgiveness can give us peace even when the perpetrator, whether it be a person or institution, that has created our turbulent world of struggle or discontent, has not faced justice and seemingly lives in remorseless comfort.

Peace be with you...receive the Holy Spirit. He breathes on them the peace of the Holy Spirit and follows with a statement of solution...

Here's the recipe for inner peace. Here's the solution for our deepest turmoil. Here's the prevention for hatred and discontentment. Here's how to love. When we are at peace, is it not easier to feel, show, and share love?

This beautiful, astounding story of Christ's return from a merciless death, His physical form moving among His friends after His crucifixion, gave them a tangible living example of Love's unfaltering power to resist destruction. It reveals a lesson to us. The revelation that Love does not die. Resurrection, *resurgere*<sup>1</sup>, to rise again.

That day, Jesus appeared to His followers, told them they are now to go in His place to share the message of love and peace, and with His breath bestowed on them the Holy Spirit. *Receive the Holy Spirit. Put your pain aside. Be at peace and forgive everyone.*

His resurrection breathes new life and beauty on all humanity - and with it shows us how to live that new life in peace and love through forgiveness.

What does the Resurrection mean to you?

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, we ask You to hold us close in this life. Give us strength, clarity of mind, and purity of heart - during whatever season we are experiencing in this tumultuous, violent, beautiful, disturbing, wonderful, disquieted, and joyful world - to extend forgiveness and cultivate peace and love, however heavy or broken our hearts may be. We ask this in Jesus' name.*





**JESUS IS ALIVE!**  
**John 20:19-23 (NRSV)**

Early in the morning, Jesus' friends went to His tomb—but it was empty! Jesus had come back to life, just like He said He would. Later, He visited His friends and said, "Peace be with you." He showed them His hands and side so they would know it was really Him. Jesus had beaten death, and that means we can have new life with Him!

Easter is a day of joy and celebration because Jesus is alive! His love is stronger than anything—even death! Because of Jesus, we can be forgiven and have a forever friendship with God. He wants us to share His love with others and tell them the good news. No matter what happens, we can always have hope, because Jesus is alive!

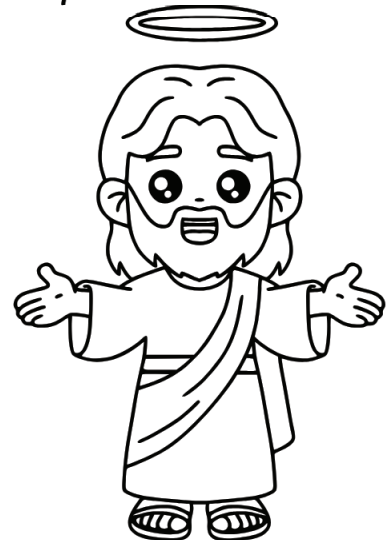
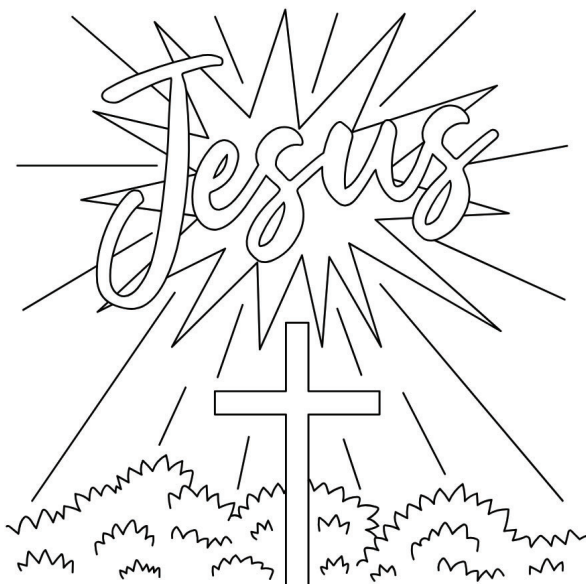
**Think About It:**

How does it make you feel to know Jesus is alive? How can you share His love with others today?

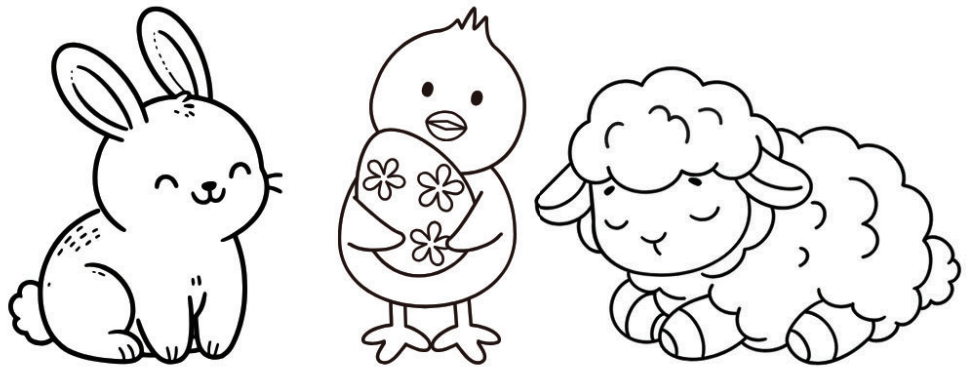
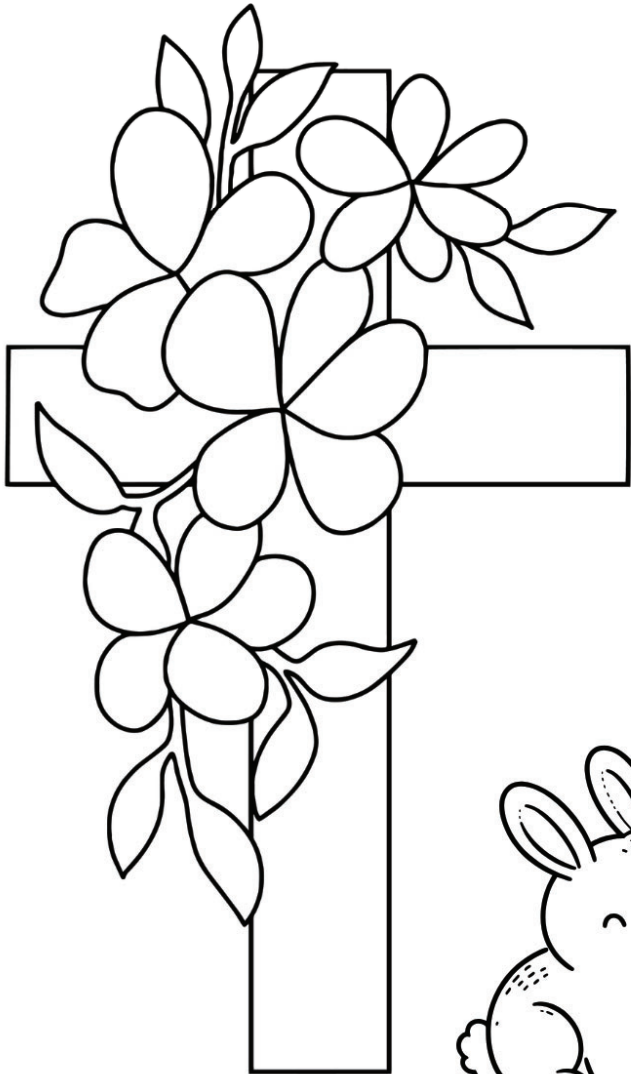
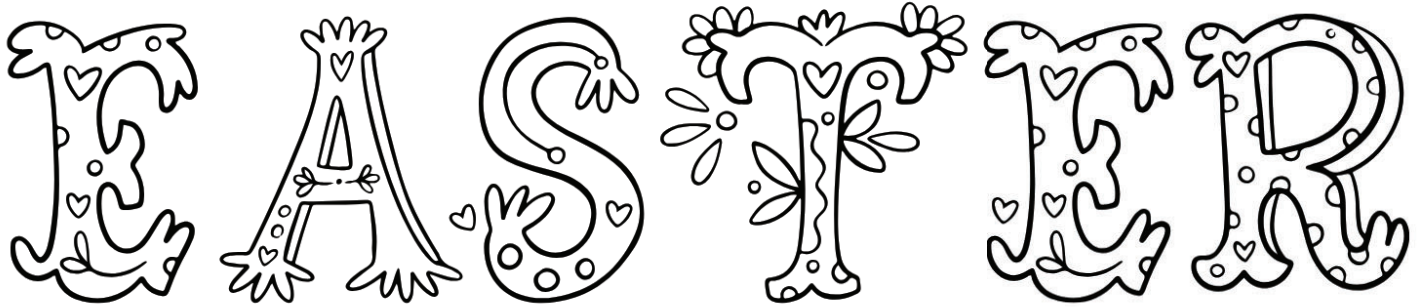
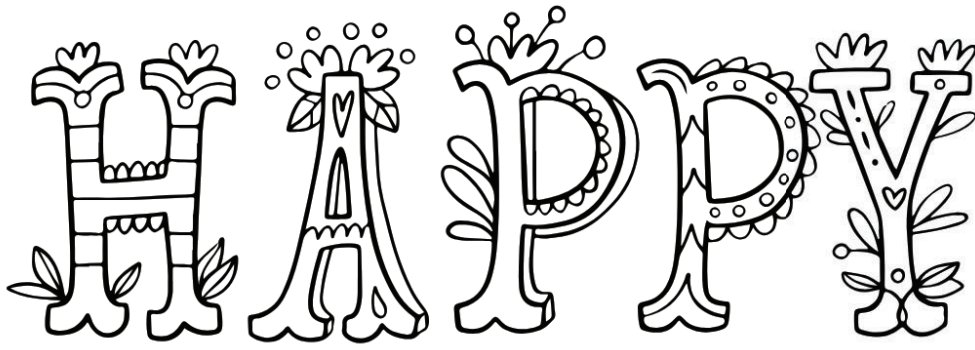
**Prayer:**

*Jesus, thank You for coming back to life and giving us hope. Help us to share Your love and joy with everyone. Amen.*

# Easter Sunday







*The Broomfield UMC Kids Devotional is derived from the reflections of the staff Lent Devotional submissions.*

# HAPPY Easter



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