

The background is a solid teal color with white, expressive brushstrokes. Green leaves are scattered around the edges, with a large branch of leaves in the top right corner and another branch in the bottom left corner.

Dr. Dave Snyder

Experience Jesus

An Eight Day Holy Week
Devotional Guide

First Baptist
Church of
Pensacola

INTRODUCTION

What are you passionate about? What or who drives your daily pursuits in life? Have you ever spent time thinking about what you value? We all worship something or someone. I often define worship as *our response to what we value the most*. What you value and treasure will determine your focus of worship. As we approach Easter Sunday, I want to encourage you to set your eyes on Jesus. See His passion and His love for sinners like you and me. See the amazing grace on His cross. I'm asking you to join me for the next week in studying and adoring the glory of our Savior. My hope is for your life to become passionate for Him more than anything or anyone in this world.

What is passion/holy week? This week is set aside in the church calendar to examine the passion of Jesus and His journey to the cross. The week examines His short time in Jerusalem, leading up to His crucifixion and resurrection. The week highlights His events in Matthew 21-27, Mark 11-15, Luke 19-23, and John 12-19. It is an important time in the life of the church to adore the spotless Lamb of God! The following devotionals will examine each day of the church calendar. Read and expect to grow in your understanding of His passion.

Day 1 // April 14, 2019

Palm Sunday

Scripture: Matthew 21:1-11

Palm Sunday, also known as Passion Sunday, is the start of the journey to the cross. As Jesus approached Jerusalem, He sent two disciples ahead for preparation. A donkey was selected for His ride into town (fulfilling Zechariah 9:9). The Savior entered the city with shouts of joy from the people gathered. Cloaks and palm branches covered the road as the anticipated King arrived. Everyone seemed to be happy on Palm Sunday. Sadly, the tone would soon change as their hero would be arrested, tried, and crucified. In this arrival, the crowds wanted a Messiah who would give political and national rescue. Jesus had a better mission. His mission was to save sinful man and woman, by the gift of His own blood.

In our lives, we tend to sway back and forth from good days and bad days. If you are like me, you may wake up one morning with expectations on how the day should go. I wonder what went through the minds of these folks gathered when they witnessed their hero fall later in the week? We can learn much from this story. Jesus came to give them what they *needed* and not what they *wanted*. They wanted someone to rise up and give them power. Jesus gave up His power so that they could rise up over sin and death. He exchanged His perfect life for their broken lives. He took the punishment of sin off of their souls and gave them eternal salvation. They needed that gift more than anything else in the world. So do we.

Today, cherish the Savior in what He gave you. You NEED Him above anything or anyone that may disappoint you today. You NEED Him for an unbreakable hope and future. You NEED Him for endless joy and mercy. You NEED Him for days in which you can't celebrate. He is eternally worthy to be celebrated! Spend some time in prayer today, thanking Him for coming to save you.

Day 2 // April 15, 2019

Holy Monday

Scripture: Matthew 21:12-22

Shortly after entering Jerusalem, Jesus entered into the temple. Seeing His Father's house of prayer turned into a sinful marketplace, Jesus cleaned up. Tables overturned and money-changers thrown out showed a different side of our Savior. This story offers a glimpse into the heart of the Son of God. Jesus was and is passionate about His Father's will. Upon entering a scene that was supposed to be a worship gathering, He discovered sin.

As we follow our Savior in this world, do we have that same passion? Do we combat against any sin that may hinder our worship? Lately, I have been praying this in my devotional time, "Father, please increase my love for you while increasing my hatred toward sin." What is in your life that must be removed so that you can freely worship? What steps must you take in order to come without distractions to the altar of His amazing grace?

In the church, may our aim be centered on Jesus. May we delight in the Father while trusting in the Holy Spirit. May we not center on ourselves, but instead steer our affections toward the glory of the only One worthy to be praised. As a church and as individuals, we can learn much from this scene.

Take a few minutes today and confess any sin that doesn't belong in your life. Trust in the glory of Jesus to eliminate that darkness so that you can live without any unnecessary burdens. See the passion of Jesus in the temple today. See how He is zealous for you and for His Father in glory.

Day 3 // April 16, 2019

Holy Tuesday

Scripture: Matthew 21:23-39

As the week continued, Jesus experienced conspiracies of every kind. Upon His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, the religious leaders plotted to get rid of Him. Their desire for removal caused them to stoop below their standards and join forces with Rome and the Herodians. In addition, they partnered with the Sadducees, who were considered to be religious liberals; denying both the resurrection and angels.

In today's reading, you will notice how Jesus faced challenges by these groups. Subjects such as marriage in heaven, taxes owed to Caesar, and the issue of His authority were brought to question. He was misheard, misled, and manipulated in many ways. Take some time and read the many conversations He carried.

Have you ever experienced unnecessary attack? Have your motives ever been questioned? Have you ever lost trust in people you know? We have this day in passion week to remind us of the real struggles Jesus faced before the cross. He can relate to our circumstances in life. He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses and temptations (Hebrews 4:15). He is able to identify with our stress and daily dramas. Find joy in the way your Savior victoriously handled all of these challenges. Trust Him with your life in every way, which includes what will happen today.

Spend some time in prayer today, thanking Him for His authority and truth. Praise Him for overcoming all obstacles before the cross.

Day 4 // April 17, 2019

Holy or “Spy” Wednesday

Scripture: Matthew 26:6-30

The story continued. Jesus paid a visit to the house of Simon the leper. (I love this side note, since it showed a reminder for us of the Savior’s love for broken people.) During the visit, a woman walked in and poured expensive perfume on His head as a sign of preparation. Indignant toward a perceived waste, the disciples mistakenly accused her of abusing a precious good. As a teacher, Jesus used the scene as a moment of declaration. He was soon to go to the cross for the sins of humanity. Her gift was a moment of worship.

As you continue in the story, you will notice Judas agreeing for the job of betrayal. For a price, Judas followed greed and gave up his loyalty to the Savior. The disciples gathered for one last supper before the arrest. Can you imagine the emotions in that meal? Can you imagine the pain our Savior must have felt? He knew of His betrayer and still shared a meal with him. He did this all, because He knew there must be a final atonement for sin. This is amazing love. We will revisit the last supper tomorrow.

What do you bring to worship? Have you made any sacrifices in your life for the purpose of kingdom building? The woman in this story gave up a very expensive perfume, because she was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude for the Savior. We live in a world that daily prompts us for self-centered pursuits. During this passion week, take time to examine what you give and bring in worship of the Savior. I’m not just speaking about finances, but really your entire life. He is worthy of any sacrifice we can make.

Day 5 // April 18, 2019

Maundy Thursday

Scripture: Luke 22:19-20, John 13:3-17

How has your journey been this week? I'm so glad you are experiencing the passion of Jesus this week. Continue following the story with me as today we look at the Lord's Supper and the foot washing scene. In today's passages, look for the mercy and humility of our Savior. He showed mercy when He offered bread and wine as symbolic representation of the cross. Each element taken demonstrated both the severity of sin and remedy of the Messiah. Whenever you take the Lord's Supper, remember the cross. Remember the great price Jesus paid in order to set you free.

The foot washing scene teaches a valuable truth of humble service. As Christ followers, we are called to serve others. Loving others and putting their needs above our own demonstrates the beauty of the Gospel. Jesus led and taught by example as He washed the feet of those around the table; the very posture of a servant. It brings to mind the fact that He is indeed the Son of Man that came not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

During passion week, look for opportunities to serve others. Look for ways in which you can put the needs of others above your own. Think of the Last Supper a meal served with unconditional love. Think of the foot washing as a servant's act of grace. Be thankful. You are loved and grace has been served to you. Jesus provided it all.

Day 6 // April 19, 2019

Good Friday

Scripture: Matthew 27:45-56, Luke 23:26-49, 1 Peter 1:18-19

After Jesus was arrested in the garden, He was taken through trials before the chief priests, Herod, and Pontius Pilate. Three trials were by the Jewish leaders and three were done by the Romans (John 18:12-14, Mark 14:53-65, Mark 15:1-5, Luke 23:6-12, and Mark 15:6-15). The trials also featured bloody beatings and mocking from soldiers. The way to the cross was full of evil and darkness.

We call this day, “good,” because on the cross, our sins were exchanged for the goodness of God’s mercy. Jesus came as a rescue mission to save sinners like you and me. He came, because without the shedding of His blood, there could be no eternal forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22). He came to suffer and die so that we can experience redemption and everlasting life. This day broke the heart of the Father. He sent His Son to demonstrate His love to a lost and dying world (Romans 5:8).

This is a day not of celebration, but of great remorse. It was indeed our sin that held Him there. It was our rebellion that caused the death. Take a few minutes and read the text. Soak in the reality of justice served to the only innocent and sinless man to walk the earth.

Spend today praising the Father for the gift of the Son. Praise the Father for His gift of grace shown on the cross. Praise Him that your sin was exchanged for righteousness. Jesus indeed paid it all. Your sin was covered. No more debt is owed. This is what makes today...good.

Day 7 // April 20, 2019

Holy or “Silent” Saturday

**Scripture: Matthew 27:59-60, Mark 15:46,
Luke 23:50-56, John 19:39-42**

On Saturday, silence fell on the hearts of many. His body was placed in the sealed tomb with guards standing by to watch. Tears were still shed as if the funeral of the great Savior was not over. In a borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the only hope for eternity waited. In the silence, faith was tested. In the silence, anticipation fell into remorse. Can you imagine the feeling that day? Can you picture the scene?

We will go through seasons of silence. We will have moments of our lives in which we can't hear or see our God work. In seasons of silence, grace speaks louder. When you are caught between the unknown and the fearful; trust in the voice that breaks the silence. I have good news; the Savior is not in that tomb anymore! I know, spoiler alert. He is risen! We will celebrate that in full force tomorrow morning.

Until tomorrow, I want you to find moments of silence in today. Spend time in deep prayer and reflection on what all happened this passion week. If you are in a season of silence, keep the faith. Our Lord is working and moving in this world He redeemed. He will lead you. He will answer you. Continue trusting Him. Open His Word, fall more in love with the redemption story, and yield yourself to His spiritual leadership. Sing. Pray. Listen. Love. Trust me, the silence doesn't last long. His voice is stronger.

Day 8 // April 21, 2019

RESURRECTION DAY

**Scripture: Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-8,
Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-10**

Rejoice! Jesus won! The tomb is empty! He conquered both sin and death and sealed within our hearts the guarantee of eternal life! The anthem of every church must be centered on the resurrection. If there was not resurrection, where would our hope be? How could we face the bad news when there is no guarantee of the good news? Jesus came, suffered, died, and rose again three days later. Today, I want you to proclaim the good news to all you see. Sing the good news. Share the good news. Live by the good news.

The resurrection is far better than any other hope we can have in this world. When you have a bad day, remind yourself the tomb is empty. When life is difficult, remind yourself the tomb is empty. When you are weak, sick, scared, or anxious; remind yourself the tomb is empty. He came not only to suffer and die, but to have everlasting life. By trusting in Him for salvation, you will experience the same everlasting life. Sin and death will not have mastery over you. In His Name, you will overcome. In Him, you will endure. In Him, you will one day experience the glory of heaven where death is not a guest.

Rejoice today! Above Easter lunches, egg hunts, social media pics, and other obligations, make sure you lift high the name of Jesus. He is the reason why we can celebrate Easter. He is alive. Hallelujah, amen.



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