



PREPARING FOR  
*Easter*

EASTER 2024 | PRAYER GUIDE

BUT WE SEE HIM WHO FOR A  
LITTLE WHILE WAS MADE LOWER  
THAN THE ANGELS, NAMELY  
JESUS, CROWNED WITH GLORY  
AND HONOR BECAUSE OF THE  
SUFFERING OF DEATH, SO THAT  
BY THE GRACE OF GOD HE MIGHT  
TASTE DEATH FOR EVERYONE.

—HEBREWS 2:9 (ESV)

Jesus' love is unlike any other. In His love for us, He willingly endured the suffering and death we were meant to endure. A crown of thorns was placed on His head, and what was intended to be a mockery of who He claimed to be, has instead become a profound reminder of exactly who He is and what He came to accomplish.

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As we prepare our hearts for Easter, these reflections will take us on a journey through the events leading to Christ's death and resurrection, with invitations to recall, reflect on, and respond to Jesus – *our King and Saviour*.





## RECALL

*"...Behold, your King is coming to you; Righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." –Zechariah 9:9*

## LET'S REFLECT...

Looking from the Mount of Olives across the valley to the ancient walled city of Jerusalem, Jesus had only a short distance to go. The last, but most significant, portion of His journey. Moving closer to Jerusalem, closer to what He knew would be His ultimate work. But to get there He needed a donkey.

With fantastic detail Jesus asked His disciples to get Him – not just a donkey – but a colt that had never been ridden. Why? Jesus catches our attention. A Messianic prophesy is revealed. "Behold your King is coming to you...humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt..." (Zechariah 9:9). With this, Jesus announced His purpose: He is to be King!

A King! Their King! They yearned for a Saviour from Roman tyranny. Their Messiah to set things right! A conquering revolutionary! But instead, Jesus came as a very different kind of King.

Instead of the steed of a victorious warrior, He came in humility riding on a donkey, to be a very different kind of King with a very different kind of kingdom. A kingdom of salvation, yes. A kingdom of freedom, yes. But one of humility, meekness, love, and grace for every individual. Conquering in the eternal spiritual battle through pain, sacrifice, and love.

Instead, He was, not a conquering revolutionary for a specific time, but a King who will rule our hearts and lives forever. An

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eternal deliverer and Saviour for all who trust in Him. Time without end. Every people, tribe, and nation.

“Behold Your King!” As you raise your palm branches, your voices and praise, consider this humble Saviour-King, Jesus, who came, took a journey to conquer for you, so that you may live in freedom, peace, and love forever.

**PRAYER:** *Thank you Jesus for Your willingness, suffering, and conquering the grave so that we can live in freedom, peace, and love. We praise You as the King of our hearts and lives.*

## HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

**Option #1:** Spend time today praising our Saviour-King, Jesus. Write out statements of praises that You want to lift to Jesus on colourful paper and use them to decorate your home for Easter.

**Option #2:** Choose your favourite “Hosanna” song, however you stream music or on CD, and worship with it!

**Option #3:** Around the world, people use various plants to create crosses to remind them of the palm branches that were used. Find a plant and create a cross as an everyday reminder of Jesus until Easter.

**Option #4 (family):** Take a walk with your family around the neighbourhood and recall different things about Jesus. Every time you get to a “Stop sign,” stop and have one family member say a praise about who Jesus is, such as “Praise Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd,” “Praise Jesus, You are the humble Saviour King,” etc.

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### RECALL

*"And He said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'" —Luke 22:15-16*

### LET'S REFLECT...

The day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed was upon them. Jesus turned to Peter and John and said, "Go and prepare the Passover for us" (Luke 22:8). During the meal, Jesus shared with His disciples, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Did the disciples understand the loaded statement that Jesus made? "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you"—*Why did Jesus eagerly desire to eat this Passover specifically? What was unique about this one?* "Before I suffer"—*it was a strange statement to make, what did Jesus mean by "suffer"?* "For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God"—*What is the "it" that Jesus was looking forward to its fulfillment?*

This Passover was unlike any other Passover that Jesus had with His disciples. He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying, "This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way, He took the cup saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood" (Luke 22:19-20). Jesus was ushering in something different, something new. He was the Passover Lamb that would be slain. But before His death, He would be handed

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over to be tortured. All of this is not news, as Old Testament prophecies predicted the Messiah's suffering.

This New Covenant that we have with Jesus, symbolized by the bread for His body and the cup for His blood, was fulfilled by His willingness and obedience to lay down His life for us all.

**PRAYER:** *Lord Jesus Christ, thank You for Your willingness and obedience to lay down Your life for us. May I never forget the new covenant.*

## HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

**Option #1:** What are we eagerly desiring and looking forward to its fulfillment? Maybe it is a job, a spouse, a child (or grandchild), or a home. May we lift whatever we are desiring to God in prayer and trust, if He wills, that He will bring it to fulfillment.

**Option #2:** As Jesus said, "I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." Consider fasting from a meal or fasting from your favourite snack or drink for the day.

**Option #3:** Bread is different from country to country. Some cultures have special Easter breads with special meanings. Consider making a bread recipe from another culture or country! Share what you made with someone new! Think about the idea of NEW (as in New Covenant) as you create this new-to-you bread.

**Option #4 (family):** Every time your family comes together for a meal, when you pray before you eat, consider adding this new line to your prayer: "Thank You, Jesus, for Your provision, we remember Your greatest provision—dying on the cross to take away our sins. Thank You for that sacrifice."



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### RECALL

*"So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Behold the Man!' When the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!'...Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, 'Behold your King!' They cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!'"*  
—John 19:5-6, 14-15

### LET'S REFLECT...

"Behold, your King!" Jesus stood before the soldiers and endured. He stood before the Jewish leaders and endured. He stood before Pilate and then the Jews and endured. The mockery, the shame, the false accusations! And all of this while they dressed Him up like a puppet in a robe and crown—made of thorns—as a mockery of who He really was.

If it wasn't so painful, it would be ironic that the truth of who Jesus really was—our King—was being so profoundly mocked. How did Jesus view His tormentors? The Soldiers: They didn't know the Truth, the magnitude of what was happening before them that day. They just grabbed for power and cruelty to satisfy their own emptiness. The Jewish Leaders: They didn't know the Truth. They were blinded by their own thoughts, their stubborn interpretations, and their fear. Pilot: He didn't know the Truth. He was trying, but fear and the need for position and power were greater instigators in him.

As they placed the crown of thorns and robe upon Jesus, they rightly called Him "King." Before them stood the only One who could truly usher in a Kingdom which would bring lasting peace,

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salvation and... a love that was greater than all their hate, malice, and fear. But instead, they mocked Him. And He endured it, for them...and for you.

**PRAYER:** *Jesus, I pause to acknowledge what You endured for me. I pause to recognize that Your suffering was a mental and emotional challenge, as well as physical and spiritual. Your suffering for me was great. Thank You.*

## HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

**Option #1:** Take some time to sit quietly to contemplate the shame and injustice that Jesus suffered. Write a journal entry, poem, or prayer in response.

**Option #2:** Take a piece of paper, divide it into two sections. Compare Jesus' treatment in this passage in one column with how a King should be treated in a second column. Conclude with a prayer.

**Option #3:** Consider those who suffer injustice, mockery and bullying for Jesus' sake around the world today. Find some stories on the internet of those suffering recently and take some time to pray for them.

**Option #4 (family):** As you have the opportunity as a family, consider taking the time to discuss the suffering that Jesus went through while He was on the cross, and ask the following questions: *How does it make you feel? How does this make you think about your own life? Have you ever been bullied, falsely accused, or treated unjustly? What does God want to say to you from this time of reflecting?* End your time together by affirming that Jesus understands bullying, false accusations, and injustice.



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### RECALL

*"When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home."*

—John 19:26-27

### LET'S REFLECT...

Looking at the crowd before Him, the soldiers took His garments and divided them into four parts. His tunic, however, was seamless, so the soldiers cast lots to see who would be the lucky one to take it home. What these soldiers were unaware of was that their very action fulfilled a Messianic prophecy about Jesus: "They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." (Psalm 22:18).

Hanging on the cross, Jesus saw His mother along with the disciple whom He loved, John, standing nearby in the crowd. While each breath that He took only further intensified His pain, as His whole body was held up by three nails—one through the right hand, the other through the left hand, and the last one through both his feet—Jesus slowly inhaled and uttered to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Panting a bit, his lungs slowly being filled with fluid, Jesus took another breath, turned His gaze towards John and said, "Behold, your mother!" From that moment onward, John took care of Jesus's mother.

Did we notice the compassion? Did we see the care? What a love that Jesus had towards His mother, making sure the widow would not be left alone after He was gone! Yet, for those who mocked and despised Him in the crowd, Jesus had the same compassion, care, and love towards them too. In fact, they were the very reason why He was on the cross. He was there on their

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behalf, bearing their sins and taking on the full wrath of God.

Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God, was slain for the sins of humanity. Although we do not deserve His compassion, care, or even love, it did not change His heart for us as He drew His last breath.

**PRAYER:** *Dear Jesus, I do not deserve what You did for me on the cross. Thank You for Your undying compassion, care, and love towards me. Teach me to extend Your compassion, care, and love to everyone that I encounter. In Your name, amen!*

## HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

**Option #1:** On a piece of paper, using the words “compassion, care, and love,” draw an image that allows you to consider deeply the work of Jesus on the cross.

**Option #2:** As an act of worship, reach out to one person by text, email, card, etc. who you know is alone—a senior, a single parent, a refugee, or an international student—and encourage them. Consider inviting them out for coffee!

**Option #3:** James 1:27 tells us, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress....” Jesus looked after His widowed mother. How can you tangibly look after orphans and widows? How can you share the same compassion, care, and love of Jesus to the world around us? What is one thing you can do this week?

**Option #4 (family):** While Christ was dying on the cross, He was thinking of others. Reflect on Jesus dying on the cross and consider taking time to create an Easter card for someone who needs compassion, care, and love. Give it to someone whom you know would be blessed by it.



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### RECALL

*"...the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." —Luke 24: 5-7*

### LET'S REFLECT...

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" Oh, the joy of that statement!

The women stood outside the tomb, still grasping their spice jars, with fear clutching their hearts as they approached the gaping hole at the entrance to what should have been a tomb sealed shut. What could have happened?

They had come to meet death. They had come to care for the dead. And what they had found instead was emptiness. Well, actually, not emptiness, but life. But they couldn't see that yet.

They went in. They looked around. There was no body. The body of the Lord Jesus wasn't there! They were mystified, puzzled, thinking: *what could have happened to it?* All they found was emptiness. Until.

Into the darkness blazed the presence of two men dressed in dazzling robes. The bearers of a message of life, not death. The living, not the dead. "Why are you looking in a tomb for someone who is alive!? He isn't here! He has risen from the dead!"

A message of life. "Don't you remember?" the men asked the women. "He already told you! ...He would be betrayed at the hands of sinful men, be crucified and... rise again on the third day."

They had come to meet death. They had found emptiness. Until,

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they remembered the message, the truth, the life. Jesus had met death, left the tomb empty and ushered in a new age of life.

**PRAYER:** *Thank You, Jesus, for conquering death and bringing new life to all. Thank You that I can live in abundant life because of You. Help me to constantly remember the message of hope and life that You have told us!*

## HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

**Option #1:** It is interesting that the women hadn't remembered Jesus' message! The angels had to remind them. Do you remember Jesus' message as you go about the events of your life? What causes you to forget or to disregard Him? This Easter, how can you begin to consciously live with and remember Jesus more every day? Prayerfully write down some ideas and choose one to incorporate over the next month.

**Option #2:** Ask several people who come from a different background than you about their traditions around celebrating Easter. Find out how those traditions give insight into the work of Jesus for us. What have you learned that enriches your perspective of the resurrection of Jesus and celebrating His triumph?

**Option #3:** The resurrection is something to celebrate! Consider hosting a celebration at your home—invite your family, friends, and/or neighbours over. Make the focus of your time celebrating new life in Jesus! What fun ideas can you incorporate in food, conversation, decor, and activities?

**Option #4 (family):** Celebrate Easter as a family and make it a big deal. Put up the balloons, have some cake, crank up the worship music, and have a dance party, knowing that we have freedom from our sins and death, and have the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus.



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## SALVATION INVITATION

Now that you have taken the time to consider these five reflections, how have they deepened your understanding of Jesus—the humble Saviour King—who, out of His great love for you, willingly laid down His life? Bearing the punishment of your sins on your behalf, He suffered and died on the cross. God, in His power, raised Jesus from the dead, and you can have hope in resurrection and eternal life because of His finished work.

### **Do you have a personal relationship with Him?**

If you have never received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, or if you would like to recommit your life to Him, please pray:

*Dear Jesus,*

*I'm seeing more and more of who You are and what You did for me. Indeed, You are the Saviour King. I recognize the distorted and destructive ways that I have been living. I confess that these are self-centered, keeping me from You and the ultimate person You created me to be. Thank You for loving me, suffering, dying, and rising from the dead on my behalf so that I can be right with God and have new life. I put my faith in You, Jesus, as the only way for me to receive the gift of freedom, salvation, and eternal life with God. Please forgive my current way of living and come into my life, make me new, transforming me from the inside out. Help me to live for You in this broken world so that others may see Your salvation through my life. In Your holy and precious name, amen!*

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**TELL US:** *If you just prayed this prayer and received Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, please do not keep it to yourself! We would love to hear from you and help you understand what this decision means practically for your life. Please scan the QR code, share what happened by email, and a pastor will connect with you soon!*



Wherever you are with Christ, *"I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith"* —Ephesians 3:16-17



# You're Invited!

## GOOD FRIDAY

You're invited to recall,  
reflect, and respond to  
Christ's death.

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March 29, 9 AM, 11:30 AM\*, 2 PM

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\* Livestreamed.

On Friday, kids and junior youth  
programs will not be available.

## EASTER SUNDAY

Come and celebrate  
the resurrected King,  
Jesus Christ!

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March 31, 9 AM, 11:30 AM\*, 2 PM

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\* Livestreamed.

On Sunday, kids and junior  
youth at 9AM & 11:30AM