



28 MAR

PALM SUNDAY

**PASSION
WEEK**

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

29 MAR - 3 APR



WHAT'S GOING ON?

READ

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will bring justice to the nations.

He will not shout or cry out,
or raise his voice in the streets.
A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.

In his teaching the islands will put their hope."
This is what God the Lord says—
the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out,
who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,
who gives breath to its people,
and life to those who walk on it:

"I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,
to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

"I am the Lord; that is my name!
I will not yield my glory to another
or my praise to idols.
See, the former things have taken place,
and new things I declare;

before they spring into being
I announce them to you" (Isaiah 42:1-9)

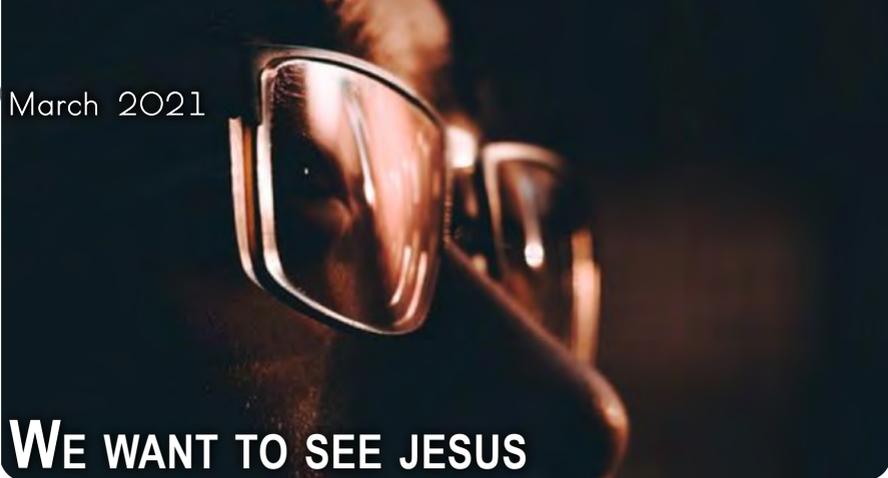
REFLECT

There is a story behind this passage. God had delivered the Israelite people from slavery in Egypt, brought them through the wilderness and into the Promised Land. They became a nation and built a temple. They defeated neighboring nations. Even when they disobeyed God, He sent prophets and judges to restore them. Until the unimaginable happened – they were conquered by Babylon. The temple was destroyed and they were taken into captivity in Babylon. They were defeated politically, economically, and religiously.

And then God spoke used the prophet Isaiah with a message of hope. Despite everything they were experiencing, He was still their God. They were still His people. He was with them. He would deliver them. While they were in captivity ... while they couldn't worship together or live the way they used to ... He was doing a new thing!

REACT

What new thing is God stirring up in you these days? What new thing(s) do you imagine He is doing in the church and in the world? If you can't see it yet, ask Him to help you.



WE WANT TO SEE JESUS

READ

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me" (John 12:20-26)

REFLECT

In the writings of John, seeing is believing. When the first disciples followed Jesus, He invited them to "come and see" (1:39). Philip was among the first to follow Jesus – to see what He was about, to watch and learn from Him.

This passage is, of course, at the end of Jesus' days on earth. He and His disciples have arrived in Jerusalem for their last Passover together. The festival is going on all around them. The hour of His crucifixion is quickly approaching. This is the setting for the Greeks who went to Philip and made their request: "We want to see Jesus."

As we are all preparing for Easter this week – we are reminded that people still want to see Jesus.

REACT

If you are serving people today, let this scripture be a reminder that people will see Jesus in your words and your actions. You are doing God's work.

If you are not involved in any frontline ministry, pray for those who are serving and those being served. Pray that Jesus will be revealed and that hearts will be receptive. This too is God's work.



GOD IS GREAT!

READ

Be pleased, O God, to deliver me.
 O Lord, make haste to help me!
 Let those be put to shame and confusion
 who seek my life.
 Let those be turned back and brought to dishonor
 who desire to hurt me.
 Let those who say, "Aha, Aha!"
 turn back because of their shame.
 Let all who seek you
 rejoice and be glad in you.
 Let those who love your salvation
 say evermore, "God is great!"
 But I am poor and needy;
 hasten to me, O God!
 You are my help and my deliverer;
 O Lord, do not delay! (Psalm 70, NRSV)

REFLECT

This psalm is a regular part of daily prayer for many people. Many liturgical prayers begin with these exact words: "Be pleased, O God, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me." They're good words in the morning when you don't yet know what the day will hold. They're good words all during the day as planned and unplanned events occur. They're good words at night, when the day is still with you even as you try to rest.

Today, these words might also help you pray for others. Do you know anyone who is experiencing anxiety, grief, and turmoil right now? Do you know anyone who is really struggling with isolation or loneliness? (And, truthfully, you're probably feeling those things too. It's okay to pray for yourself AND for others.)

REACT

Let verse one be your simple prayer for yourself and those who come to mind as you pray today: "Be pleased, O God, to deliver _____ ;
O Lord, make haste to help _____."

April 2021



LOVE ONE ANOTHER

READ

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:1-17, 31-35, NRSV)

REFLECT

Every year on Maundy Thursday, we read this story and hear again the words of Jesus: "If I have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet" and "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another."

Every year, we ask ourselves again what that means for us, what it looks like in real life.

What does it mean towel and basin for us these days? Instead of towels around our waists, we can show our love to our neighbors with boxes of food and drive-through prayers. These are simple acts of love that we offer to Jesus, who gave Himself on our behalf.

REACT

What small act of love can you do today in remembrance of Jesus' great love?

2 April 2021



JESUS, KEEP ME NEAR THE CROSS

GOOD FRIDAY – 2 APRIL 2021

Lent 2021 began, as it always does, with Ash Wednesday and the solemn reminder to “remember you are dust.” This season would show us how very fragile life is and how vulnerable we really are.

As we come to Good Friday today, we would remember last year we have a very different Good Friday, most of us would worship “together” in front of our mobile phone when the prepared Good Friday service was broadcasted.

Good Friday is a time to remember the Lord’s suffering on the cross for the salvation of all humanity. Maybe it will be helpful to read and pray Jesus’ own prayer from the cross:

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
Why are you so far away when I groan for help?
Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer.
Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.

Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
Our ancestors trusted in you,
and you rescued them.
They cried out to you and were saved.
They trusted in you and were never disgraced.

But I am a worm and not a man.
I am scorned and despised by all!
Everyone who sees me mocks me.
They sneer and shake their heads, saying,
“Is this the one who relies on the Lord?”

Then let the Lord save him!
If the Lord loves him so much,
let the Lord rescue him!"

Yet you brought me safely from my mother's womb
and led me to trust you at my mother's breast.
I was thrust into your arms at my birth.
You have been my God from the moment I was born.

Do not stay so far from me,
for trouble is near,
and no one else can help me.
My enemies surround me like a herd of bulls;
fierce bulls of Bashan have hemmed me in!
Like lions they open their jaws against me,
roaring and tearing into their prey.
My life is poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart is like wax,
melting within me.
My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay.
My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.
You have laid me in the dust and left me for dead.
My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs;
an evil gang closes in on me.
They have pierced my hands and feet.
I can count all my bones.
My enemies stare at me and gloat.
They divide my garments among themselves
and throw dice for my clothing.

O Lord, do not stay far away!
You are my strength; come quickly to my aid!
Save me from the sword;
spare my precious life from these dogs.
Snatch me from the lion's jaws
and from the horns of these wild oxen.

I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters.

I will praise you among your assembled people.
Praise the Lord, all you who fear him!
Honor him, all you descendants of Jacob!
Show him reverence, all you descendants of Israel!
For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy.
He has not turned his back on them,
but has listened to their cries for help.

I will praise you in the great assembly.
I will fulfill my vows in the presence of those who worship you.
The poor will eat and be satisfied.
All who seek the Lord will praise him.
Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy.
The whole earth will acknowledge the Lord and return to him.
All the families of the nations will bow down before him.
For royal power belongs to the Lord.
He rules all the nations.

Let the rich of the earth feast and worship.
Bow before him, all who are mortal,
all whose lives will end as dust.
Our children will also serve him.
Future generations will hear about the wonders of the Lord.
His righteous acts will be told to those not yet born.
They will hear about everything he has done.
(Psalm 22, NLT)



SIT FOR A WHILE AND WAIT

READ

As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

"Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard. (Matthew 27:57-66)

REFLECT

"It is finished," Jesus said as He breathed His last.

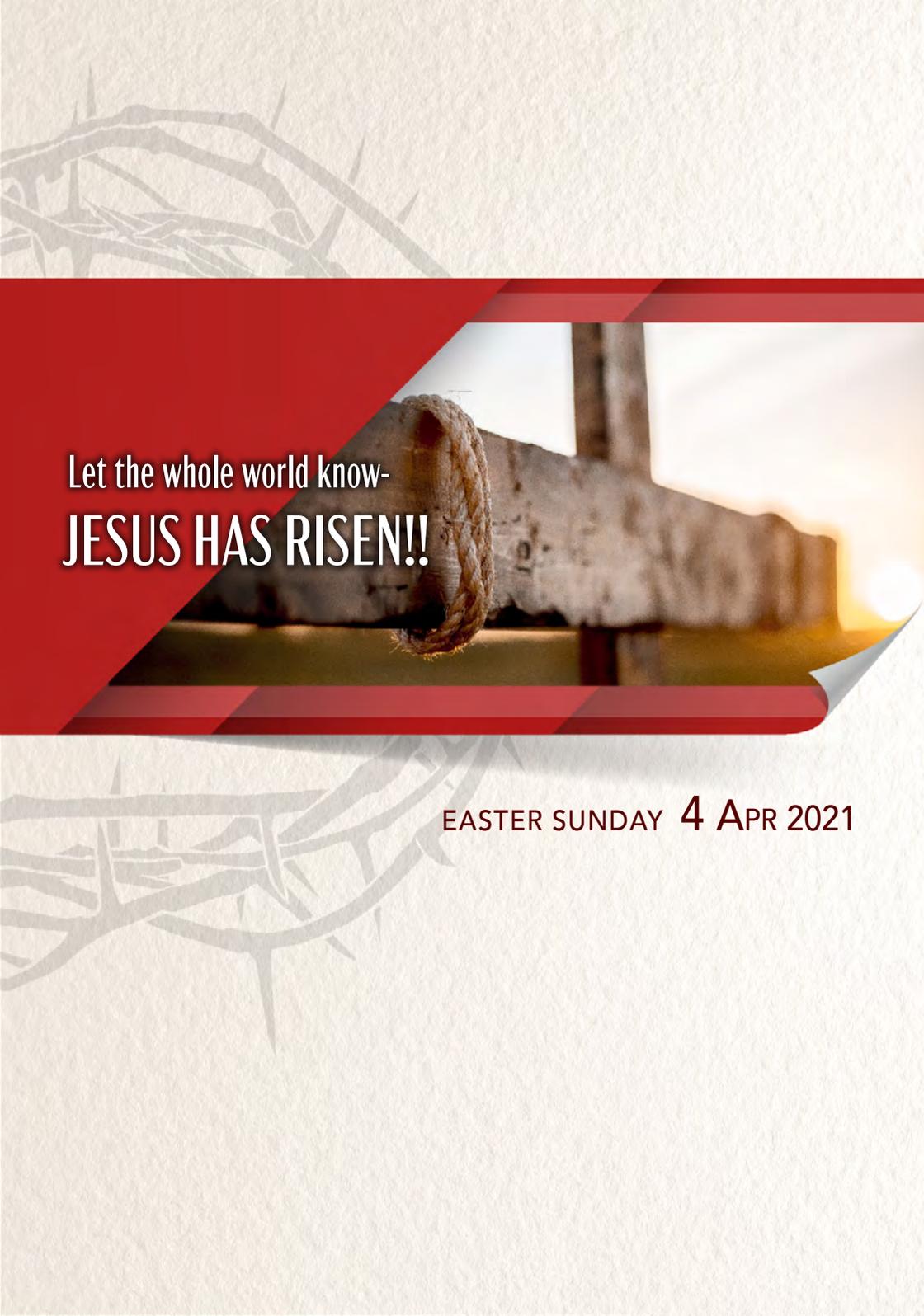
Except it wasn't.

Two women did the only thing they could – they sat and watched. Which is what the church does on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We wait and we watch. It's not wasted time. It is time to prepare our hearts and minds to hear and celebrate again the good news of resurrection.

But for today, we simply wait.

REACT

Whatever else you're doing today, find some time to sit for a few minutes in silence. Let yourself simply be in the tension between Friday and Sunday. Wait. Watch.



Let the whole world know-
JESUS HAS RISEN!!

EASTER SUNDAY **4** APR 2021