

# Let Your Kingdom Come: Preparing our Hearts for the King

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*Family Bible Readings for Holy Week*



God promised Abraham that through his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed.<sup>1</sup> But when would this promised One come? How would we recognize Him? God promised Isaiah that a child would be born, a son would be given, and the government would rest on His shoulders. His name would be Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace.<sup>2</sup> What would His reign look like?

By the time the book of Samuel is written, the Jews had grown impatient waiting for the Promised One and cried out for their promised king.<sup>3</sup> God obliged them, giving them the king they desired, one who fit their paradigm.<sup>4</sup> King Saul was an archetype of the flesh, seeking selfish desires out of fleshly pride. When he rebelled against God, God rejected him,<sup>5</sup> “for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”<sup>6</sup> Because it was not time for the Christ to come, God gave them another King, a “type” of Christ; He gave them King David. Still, he was not the Christ, the Messiah. There would be no end to the increase of the Messiah’s government or of His peace. He would occupy the throne of David.<sup>7</sup> So where was this son of David? The Jews watched for their Messiah for generations. Prophets wrote of Him, describing His kingdom.

They continued to watch and wait, and then Jesus came.

In Matthew 4:12-17 and Luke 4:16-22, the writers explain their perspective on Jesus’ ministry. Jesus had just come from the wilderness, having been tempted by the Devil for forty days, and was ready to begin His ministry. Returning to Nazareth, He began teaching in the synagogue for the first time “and the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him.” That would be a safe place for the young preacher to start. Every good Jewish man knows the book of Isaiah; it was their favorite because it pointed to the coming Messiah, in whom they placed all of their hope for salvation. Matthew and Luke each record the incident a little differently.

Matthew points out that Jesus had settled in Capernaum just northeast of Nazareth, His home town. He then quotes Isaiah 9:1-2, the prophecy explains that this region that was once in darkness and has now *seen a great light*. Jesus would later confirm that He is the light.<sup>8</sup>

Luke, on the other hand, records Jesus quoting Isaiah 61;

And He [Jesus] opened the book and found the place where it was written,  
*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He has appointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set free those who are oppressed,  
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 12:3; 15:1-6

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 9:6

<sup>3</sup> 1 Samuel 8

<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel 9:2

<sup>5</sup> 1 Samuel 15:22-23

<sup>6</sup> 1 Samuel 16:7

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 9:6-7

<sup>8</sup> John 8:12; 9:5

And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."<sup>9</sup>

This was a huge step toward declaring Himself the Christ. Yet, to the people of Nazareth, this was Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter.<sup>10</sup> It would be three years before His message was culminated at the cross.

We serve an Eternal God who is not constrained by time and space. His timing is always perfect because He is perfect! As Matthew points out, Jesus was clearly born King of the Jews, yet the gospel is not just for the Jews; it is for all whom He has chosen. Before Jesus would reign as King of kings, He would be servant of all by dying for the sin of mankind. There *will be* a time for Christ's earthly kingdom, but first He will to rule the hearts of men, women, and children, for *the Kingdom of God is here, wherever God is King!*

As you read through what happened each day of the week leading up to the resurrection, imagine the great enthusiasm of the people on Palm Sunday as Jesus finally declares Himself King, for "they supposed that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately."<sup>11</sup> Hear Jesus' final instructions to His disciples; sympathize with their excruciating disappointment as the week progresses into Friday; rejoice with them in their great excitement when they finally understand, as the Holy Spirit brings the pieces together for them, and they see that Jesus is the Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the conqueror of death and deliverer from the slavery of sin (See Luke 17:20-34), the One who reigns forever more.

#### Ways to prepare:

- Make a **Lenten Candle Wreath** using 5 candles for this application. Involve the family in its creation. You could use silk lilies and/or palm leaves (Dollar Tree), a spring flower centerpiece, or a wooden cross; use your imagination.
- **Fast** — After prayer as a family, decide how and what will be "given up" during this week of meditation. Fasting is not just giving up food. Fasting can be sacrificing entertainment, music, coffee, sugar, or anything that the Holy Spirit reveals could have mastery over you. In *Treasuring God*, Noel Piper says fasting "can be a way of saying, 'Oh, God, I want you more than I want any of the good things in my life — food, videos, crossword puzzles, shopping, etc. You are the One who fulfills my desires.' . . . In this time that is "added" to our day through fasting from some activity, we might:
  - Consider the depth of our sin and the height of God's love in Jesus, asking God for forgiveness.
  - Remember Jesus' forty days of fasting and temptation in the wilderness, and consider the temptations that hit us the hardest.
  - Pray for our enemies and the people in our lives who are most difficult to like.

"Christian fasting is a test to see what desires control of us. Fasting reveals the measure of food's mastery over us—or television or computers or whatever we submit to again and again to conceal the weakness of our hunger for God. A real lived-out human act of preference for God over his gifts is the actual lived-out glorification of God's excellence for which he created the world. Fasting is not the only way, or the main way, that we glorify God in preferring him above his gifts. But it is one way."

*A Hunger for God*—John Piper

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<sup>9</sup> Luke 4:17-21

<sup>10</sup> Luke 4:17-22

<sup>11</sup> Luke 19:11

- Pray for the salvation of a neighbor, coworker or family member.
- Read aloud biographies of great Christians who sacrificed all for Christ.

In traditional Jewish celebrations, the mother lights the candles and the father leads in the teaching and Scripture reading. This promotes the biblical standard, as Dad and Mom lead the home in unity; Dad brings the Word while Mom makes the application (Proverbs 1:8). The rest of the readings and activities, however, should be shared among all able family members, even to the youngest who may just blow out the candles!

If you only have small children in your home, you may want to consider using a **Resurrection Tree** (a twiggy branch on which to hang symbolic ornaments), a **Play Dough® Mountain** (to act out the story with pipe-cleaner figures as it progresses through the week) or **Road to Calvary Banner** (each day adding a symbol until you reach Mt. Calvary). You will find instructions included in the resource books. Make it as ornate or as simple as fits your family and ability.

**Resources:**

Piper, Noel, *Treasuring God in Our Traditions*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 2003

Hibbard, Ann, *Family Celebrations: Meeting Christ in Your Holidays and Special Occasions*, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., Brentwood TN, 1988

NOTE: Suggested Cross-centered Songs can be found beginning on page 23.

Consider using the blank places in this booklet to record things that are special, truths the Lord taught you or significant breakthroughs for your family during the Easter Season.

## **Palm Sunday: Worshiping the King**

*He IS King! The King of hearts, the King of lives!*

**Candle Reading:** Begin by lighting five candles of the Lenten Wreath while reading **John 1:1-8**.

Begin each devotional with **PRAYER**.

**Daily Reading:** Read **Luke 19:29-44** and **Zechariah 9:9**. Allow time for discussion following each question.

1: Jesus knew he would soon be crucified. Why do you think he “got their hopes up” by riding into Jerusalem like a king?

A: To fulfill prophecy. By riding into Jerusalem, Jesus was saying, “I AM King. And I will be King.” His entrance into Jerusalem was also the “trigger” or “the last straw” for the scribes and Pharisees to make their move to kill Him as God had planned.

2: Where is the kingdom of God according to Jesus in John 18:36-37? What did Jesus mean “not of this realm?”

A: The Kingdom of God is not physical, but spiritual.

In Luke 19:41-44, we read that Jesus wept over Jerusalem because they didn’t understand “the things which make for peace!” Instead of “hello,” Jews greet one another with “shalom” which means “peace.” Not just peace as in “no conflict,” however. “Shalom” is actually a blessing means “May you have peace in spite of conflict.” This is a play on words since the Jews were looking for an earthly king who would bring peace by conquering their enemies. They didn’t recognize Jesus as the peace-bringer.

3: According to **John 14:27** and **Colossians 3:15-17**, what things make for peace?

A: Peace comes from Christ ruling in our hearts, not our circumstances or security.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem to declare Himself King, but not here on earth, *yet!* That time will come. For now He is King in the spiritual realm — in the hearts of those who have surrendered to Him.

**Embrace the Grace:** Is Christ my King and Lord? Does Christ rule every area of my heart? What am I holding back? What relationships, habits, desires, etc. need to be surrendered to the kingship of Christ?

### **Sing a Cross-centered Song**

**PRAYER:** We worship You, Father, as Eternal God, King of kings, Lord of lords, Creator of the universe. You are righteous in all Your ways, kind in all Your deeds. You are near to all who call upon You in truth. You will fulfill the desire of those who fear You and will save Your children who cry out to You. You keep all who love You. My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord and bless Your holy name forever and ever. Amen

## Monday: Surrendering to the King

*He won't share the throne with anyone!*

**Candle Reading:** Light the five candles while reading **John 1:9-13**. **Pray.**

**Daily Reading:** Read **Luke 19:45-20:26** (skip verses 27-40); **Luke 20:41-21:4**.

1: Jesus chased the sellers out of the temple, calling them thieves because they were cheating and robbing the people. God's temple was to be holy and pure because, before Christ died, it was His dwelling place. According to **2 Corinthians 6:16-18** and **1 Corinthians 3:16**, where is God's dwelling place now? What kind of "temple" does He want?

A: God dwells in the hearts of those who have been regenerated (born again) and desire to be surrendered to Him (sanctified). (See 1 Peter 2:9-12) For additional study, read all of 1 Peter.

2: What is the important question the church leaders asked in Luke 20:2? Why did they not know the answer?

A: "Where does your authority come from?" They did not accept that Jesus was the Messiah; they had already rejected Him. (Further discussion: See Spurgeon's sermon "Sin of Unbelief" <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0003.htm>)

3: In the parable of the vineyard, who do each of the characters represent? Discuss what role each of them fulfilled in the parable.

A: Vineyard owner = God; tenants = Jewish elders; servants = prophets; son = Jesus; others = US! (The church, the children of God, those who have not rejected Christ.)

### Snuff one candle.

**Embrace the Grace:** To what authority am I submitting? What areas of authority has God given me? In today's passage, those in authority abused their power. Am I humbly following Christ's example by serving those under me or am I lording over them? If I am a child of God, my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) that must continually be cleansed from sin. Am I truly a Child of God? Is my "temple" clean?

### Sing a Cross-centered Song

**PRAYER:** Father, thank you for loving us so much. You are so patient to wait for us to respond to Your call. Thank you for Your Holy Spirit. We confess that we are sinful people who sometimes try to be independent. We do surrender all to you, Lord, and thank You for dwelling in our hearts through faith. In Jesus name, Amen.

"What do I long for so much that my heart clamors, 'Give me *this*, or else I'll die!' What must I have for life to be meaningful or happy? If I answer that question with anything other than God Himself, then that's what functions as a god to me. ... Idols aren't just stone statues. No, idols are the thoughts, desires, longings, and expectations that we worship in the place of the true God. Idols cause us to ignore the true God in search of what we think. ... God calls us to bury our false idols at the cross. It's in union with Jesus Christ, the one who hung on Golgotha's tree, that we have the power to conquer all our idolatry and bury our gods in the blood-soaked ground beneath His cross."

*Idols of the Heart--Fitzpatrick*

## Tuesday: Serving the King

*Giving our time and resources.*

**Candle Reading:** Light four candles while reading **John 3:16-21**. **Pray.**

**Daily Reading:** Read **Luke 19:11-26**. (For a longer version add **Matthew 25:14-46**.)

1: Luke uses a key verse or phrase: "To everyone who has . . ." Has what? (Luke 19:26; also see Mt. 25:29) Insert into the verse some possibilities: understanding, authority, resources, time, talent, mercy, faith, forgiveness.<sup>12</sup> (To everyone who has [understanding] more will be given . . . and he shall have abundance.) How is this possible?

A: God has blessed us with so much! *With it we can either serve Him or serve ourselves.* When we embrace God's truth, He gives us more truth. Like a child graduating from milk to soft food to meat, God gives us more and more to understand and to use **for His glory**. (It is not about *us*, how we can manipulate God into giving us more. It is all about God getting the glory by our obedience of faith.)

2: How can we serve our Lord? What ways are described in the parables?

A: Examples: Not hiding the gifts and talents He has blessed us with, but developing them for His glory; using our resources for the Kingdom; using our time wisely rather than selfishly; serving those who are less fortunate or hurting; serving others rather than our own interests. (See also Matthew 10:42; Phil 2; James 2:14)

**Snuff one candle.**

**Embrace the Grace:** Am I using what God has given me wisely and for His glory? Take inventory of God's blessings and thank Him with a full and grateful heart. Have I shared God's goodness and love recently with someone who doesn't know Him?

**Sing a Cross-centered Song**

**PRAYER:** Father, You are so good and bless us in so many wonderful ways. We want to serve You and Your Kingdom, not our own selfish interests. Expose the false ideas that somehow You *need* us and our gifts: You don't need *us*; *we need You* to work through us. Be glorified in our lives. In Jesus name, Amen.

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<sup>12</sup> All, but not limited to, topics Jesus covered in His parable teaching.

## Wednesday: Living for the King

*By Dying to self.*

**Candle Reading:** Light three candles while reading **John 8:12; 9:5; 11:9-10. Pray.**

**Daily Reading:** Read **Matthew 26:6-16.**

1: Why did Mary anoint Jesus with expensive perfume? (The value was equal to almost a year's wages!) What can we learn from her obedience to the Holy Spirit and her gift to Jesus?

A: The passage says it was to "prepare [His body] for burial." In those days, they anointed a person's body after they died with perfume to cover the smell. Mary was obeying the Holy Spirit even though she didn't understand *why* she was doing it. Her obedience was "an offering and sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." (Ephesians 5:2)

Judas, on the other hand, had a problem with the sin of greed. He was the disciple's treasurer (John 13:29), but he pilfered from it for his own desires, and was disgusted by Mary's "waste" of precious ointment (John 12:6). Sin kept Judas blind to the truth and he betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15).

Contrast Judas' behavior with Mary's. Judas was willing to exchange the salvation of his soul for money. Mary was willing to make a large financial sacrifice to show her love and devotion to Christ. Note: NOT FOR YOUNG CHILDREN (Matthew 27:3-10) We will not know this side of eternity if Judas repented, but his actions were not without consequence.

Read **John 13:2-17; 33-35.**

2: What do you think is the significance of washing the disciple's feet? Should we literally wash each other's feet?

A: Jesus answers in John 13:14-15. In those days, people wore sandals and their feet got very dirty. It was the job of the house servant to wash the guest's feet. Since the disciples were hosting their own Passover meal, there were no servants to wash their feet and none of them wanted to think of themselves as the "servant," so Jesus gave them the example that we should all be servants of one another. (See also Mark 9:35)

3: What does it mean to be "a servant of all?" To serve your family members? To serve an unreasonable boss? What are some practical ways we can serve one another?

**Snuff one candle.**

**Embrace the Grace:** What am I willing to give to the Lord? What am I willing to sacrifice? Missionary Jim Elliot said it this way: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." What are some ways I forfeit God's riches in order to gain my own fleeting desires and temporary treasures? Do I listen carefully to the Holy Spirit, eager to obey? Am I willing to be a servant of all?

**Sing a Cross-centered Song**

**PRAYER:** Dear Father, You have sacrificed Your beloved Son for us! How can we hold anything back from You? Help us to die daily to our own desires and be willing to give them all to You. Use us as Your servants to show others how much You love them by loving them through us. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

## Thursday: Remembering the King

*Through Communion, the Passover and Prayer.*

**Candle Reading:** Light two candles while reading **John 12:35-36a**. Pray.

**Daily Reading:** Read **Luke 22:7-34**.

The cup and the bread that Jesus used for the first “communion” was part of the Passover meal. Attending a Seder Meal helps to explain this; the middle piece of bread was broken and hidden from sight (the third Person of the Trinity!) and the Cup of Redemption was always left and not drunk like the rest. It had great significance for the Jewish disciples when Jesus took the bread and said, “This is my body which is broken for you.” Then He took the Cup of Redemption and said, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant of My blood. Drink it in remembrance of Me.” After generations of ritual, they are finally shown the significance! They could drink the Cup of Redemption because their Redemption – Jesus – had come. The blood of the sacrificial lamb covered all who put it on their door frames, so that the angel of death would pass over the house saving the first born from death. The blood of the eternal sacrificial Lamb – Jesus – covers the sin of all who believe, saving *us* from eternal death.

1: In Luke 22:31-34 Jesus said to Peter, “Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat.” What is the purpose of sifting or refining? (Illustrate with sand or flour, if possible.) What does God want to accomplish by allowing the sifting process in Peter’s life?

A: Sifting removes debris, impurity, and the unusable parts leaving only the pure and useful. (See James 4:6-10) 1 Peter 1:22 shows that Peter learned that “obedience to the truth” purifies the soul. Sifting can be *very painful*, as God removes from our hearts wrong thought patterns, sinful behavior, critical attitudes and a rebellious spirit. What remains is a humble and contrite heart which God can use! **Notice that Jesus did not pray for Peter that he be *delivered* from the sifting, but that he would be strong and ready to minister to his brothers as a result of it. Be sure to point out God’s sovereignty in using painful situations in our lives to produce godly character and Christ-likeness.**

Read **Matthew 26:30-75**. These events happened during the night into the early morning.

Jesus prayed, “If there is any other way for atonement and redemption to happen, please let it be!” But was there any other way? Jesus knew there was no other way and submitted to the will of the Father by answering His own question, “Not My will, but Yours, be done.”

2: What does persistence in prayer have to do with temptation to sin?

A: Persistent prayer keeps our hearts aligned with God’s. He will always provide His grace to overcome temptation.

**Snuff one candle.**

**Embrace the Grace:** What habits, thoughts and attitudes does God want to “sift” from my life? The same sin that alienates us from Jesus causes us to be separated from one another. What sin is keeping me from fellowship with the Lord, and with others? (Isaiah 59:2) Jesus came to reconcile us to God, and has given us the message and ministry of reconciliation. Are there offences that keep us from fellowship with others that should be “cleared up?” I must confess and repent (be reconciled) so that God may hear me and that I may hear Him. Take the time to reconcile with whomever God brings to your mind.

**Sing a Cross-centered Song**

**PRAYER:** Lord, thank you for the reminders of Your sacrifice on the cross. May we never take them heartlessly. Purify us as gold, sift us like wheat, dear gentle Shepherd. Bring to light the things in darkness and reveal the things once hidden that we might be cleansed. Our desire is to walk in obedience to Your Word and in communion with You. In Jesus name, we pray, Amen.

## Friday: The Death of the King

*For Our Redemption.*

**Candle Reading:** Light one candle while reading **John 12:46**. Pray.

**Daily Reading:** Read **Matthew 27:1-2; 11-61**

The Jews sent Jesus to be tried by Pilate because they were unable to put someone to death under Roman law. (John 18:31-32) They were accusing Jesus of *blasphemy* which is punishable by death according to Mosaic Law; they understood blasphemy to be “claiming to be equal with God” which violates the first Commandment and the Great Shamah. (Deuteronomy 5:7; 6:4) **Read John 10:27-33**. This would have been a valid accusation if Jesus were not God! **Blasphemy** is basically “glory stealing;” **attributing to Satan or someone else credit or glory that belongs to God.**

1: **Read Luke 22:65**. Who really was blaspheming? According to their own judgment, who really deserved the death sentence? How do we steal praise from God by taking credit or honor that belongs to Him? (For further study see Matt. 9:2-8; Mark 3:20-30)

2: In John 1:29, John the Baptist called Jesus “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” What did he mean? What is the significance?

A: Jesus is our complete, once-for-all sacrifice for sin. (Exodus 12; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Peter 3:18)

3: Both Matthew (22:51) and Luke (23:45) mention that the veil in the temple was torn in two. The veil separated the main part of the temple from the Holy of Holies; only the High Priest could enter once a year to offer blood atonement for forgiveness of sin. What is the significance of God tearing the veil in the temple at the moment of Christ’s death? Read Hebrews 9:11-12. Discuss the veil of the temple.

A: By tearing the veil, God is allowing us to approach Him without the mediation of a priest or added sacrifice. Jesus is our Mediator; Jesus is our Priest; Jesus death is the forever sacrifice. (Also Hebrews 10:19-23; 1 Peter 3:18)

4: Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem set off a series of events that had the momentum of a fast moving train. As you read through the following passages, consider “Who really crucified Jesus?”

A: **Read Acts 3:12-15** (Jewish leaders); **2 Corinthians 5:21** (the Father) and **John 10:17-18** (Jesus).

**Snuff last candle.**

**Embrace the Grace:** Meditate on *why* Christ had to die. Jesus’ death is the only permanent atonement for sin. By Jesus’ death alone are we reconciled to God. Jesus’ death is God’s ultimate demonstration of love for you and me! (Romans 5:6-8) Jesus died for *my* sin; He took *my* place on the cross; *I* should have been crucified *instead of Him*. Consider a new understanding of being crucified *with* Christ (Galatians 2:20). Ask yourself, “In what ways do I steal God’s praise by taking credit for His works and ways?”

**Sing a Cross-centered Song**

**PRAYER:** Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying for my sin so that I could come to God and know Him, now and forever. Forgive me, Lord, for stealing Your praise, taking honor that only belongs only to You. Show me, Father, what it truly means to enter into Your presence with fullness of joy. In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.

## **Saturday: Mourning the King**

**Candle Reading:** Read **1 John 1:5-9** around the darkened candles. **Pray.**

**Daily Reading:** Read **Matthew 27:62-66** and **Isaiah 53**.

**Embrace the Grace:** The prophet Isaiah accurately described Jesus' death hundreds of years before Christ was born. Spend some time today contemplating Jesus suffering and death on your behalf. Our culture avoids mourning and sadness. Yet, Ecclesiastes 3:4 says there is a "time for mourning," and Matthew 5:4 says those who mourn are blessed. **Read James 4:1-10.**

### **Sing a Cross-centered Song**

**PRAYER:** Thank You, Father, that all this happened according to Your plan. Thank you for what Christ did on the cross so that I can be set free from guilt and sin. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within each of us. In Christ's name, we pray, Amen.

**PARENTS:** **Let your family see and hear you lament over your sin;** mourn for *their* sin and salvation, crying aloud to the God of our salvation.

## Resurrection Day: Celebrating the Risen King!

To make this morning extra-memorable, you may want to rise early, bundle up in coats and blankets and do your morning devotional outside while watching the sun come up, as the women did that first Easter morning.

**Candle Reading:** Have all candles lit when everyone gets up in the morning. Prepare with anticipation and excitement. Have joyful music playing – Jesus is alive! When everyone gathers, read **Isaiah 60:1-3**. **Pray.**

**Daily Reading:** Read **Matthew 28** and **Luke 24**.

Try to imagine yourself with the women that early morning, going to the tomb in anticipation of anointing a dead body of your loved one. They probably walked very slowly, mourning and weeping as they went. Then, finding He was alive, they *ran* with excitement back to tell the disciples! Hallelujah, He is alive!

Perhaps you can better relate to the men walking on the road to Emmaus. Jesus easily overtook them for they, too, were walking slowly, mournfully, commiserating in their sorrow. Then, with “burning hearts,” they listened to Jesus explain the scriptures. They were actually talking to Jesus and didn’t know it! You can be sure they *hurried* back to Jerusalem that evening with renewed energy!

1: What was Jesus’ final instruction to His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 and Luke 24:47-49? What were they supposed to wait for?

A: Go and proclaim “that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations,” or “make disciples . . . baptizing . . . teaching.” They were to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Embrace the Grace:** Do I share Christ with others with the same enraptured wonder? Do I still marvel at His great love for me so that it spills over into my conversation? Anticipate “divine appointments” to share your excitement in the coming weeks.

**Practice the Easter greeting of the early church:**

Leader: *He is risen!*

All: *He is risen, indeed!*

**Sing a Cross-centered Song**

**PRAYER:** We praise You, O Christ, Son of the Living God, for the great power that You had to break the chains of death! Thank You that right now we can have new life in You, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. We ask You for boldness to tell others about Your incredible sacrifice on our behalf. In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

(If you have been fasting from food, this morning would be a truly special “break-fast” as you anticipate the morning celebration with other believers! You could prepare special muffins or cinnamon rolls the night before if big breakfasts are not an option. Egg Casserole or Strata is easily refrigerated the night before and popped in the oven in the morning.)

# Suggested Cross-centered Songs

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## ***Crown Him with Many Crowns***

Crown Him with many crowns  
The Lamb upon His throne  
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns  
All music but its own!  
Awake, my soul, and sing  
Of Him who died for thee  
And hail Him as thy matchless King  
Through all eternity

Crown Him the Lord of love  
Behold His hands and side,  
Those wounds, yet visible above,  
In beauty glorified  
No angel in the sky  
Can fully bear that sight  
But downward bends his burning eye  
At mysteries so bright

Crown Him the Lord of life  
Who triumphed over the grave  
And rose victorious in the strife  
For those He came to save  
His glories now we sing,  
Who died and rose on high  
Who died eternal life to bring  
And lives that death may die

Crown Him the Lord of lords  
Who over all doth reign  
Who once on earth, the incarnate Word  
For ransomed sinners slain  
Now lives in realms of light  
Where saints with angels sing  
Their songs before Him day and night,  
Their God, Redeemer, King

Crown Him the Lord of Heaven  
Enthroned in worlds above  
Crown Him the King to Whom is given  
The wondrous name of Love  
Crown Him with many crowns  
As thrones before Him fall  
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns  
For He is King of all

## ***Man of Sorrows***

Man of Sorrows, what a name  
For the Son of God who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim  
Hallelujah, what a Savior

Bearing shame and scoffing rude  
In my place condemned He stood  
Sealed my pardon with His blood

Hallelujah, what a Savior

Guilty vile and helpless, we  
Spotless Lamb of God was He  
Full atonement can it be  
Hallelujah, what a Savior

## ***In Christ Alone***

In Christ alone my hope is found  
He is my light, my strength, my song  
This Cornerstone, this Solid Ground  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm  
What heights of love what depths of peace  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!  
My Comforter, my All in All  
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone! Who took on flesh  
Fullness of God in helpless babe!  
This gift of love and righteousness  
Scorned by ones He came to save  
Till on that cross as Jesus died,  
The wrath of God was satisfied  
For every sin on Him was laid,  
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay  
Light of the world by darkness slain  
Then bursting forth in glorious day  
Up from the grave He rose again!  
And as He stands in victory  
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me  
For I am His and He is mine  
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death  
This is the power of Christ in me  
From life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny  
No power of hell, no scheme of man  
Can ever pluck me from His hand  
Till He returns or calls me home  
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

## ***I Will Glory in My Redeemer***

I will glory in my Redeemer  
Whose priceless blood has ransomed me  
Mine was the sin that drove the bitter nails  
And hung Him on the judgment tree  
I will glory in my Redeemer  
Who crushed the power of sin and death  
My only Savior before the holy Judge  
The Lamb who is my righteousness  
The Lamb who is my righteousness

I will glory in my Redeemer  
My life He bought, my love He owns  
I have no longings for another  
I'm satisfied in Him alone.  
I will glory in my Redeemer  
His faithfulness my standing place  
Though foes are mighty and rush upon me  
My feet are firm held by His grace  
My feet are firm held by His grace

I will glory in my Redeemer  
Who carries me on eagle's wings  
He crowns my life with loving-kindness  
His triumph song I'll ever sing  
I will glory in my Redeemer  
Who waits for me at gates of gold  
And when He calls me it will be paradise  
His face forever to behold  
His face forever to behold

### ***And Can It Be***

And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me!

Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me!

He left His Father's throne above,  
so free, so infinite His grace!  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
and bled for Adam's helpless race!  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free, for,  
O my God, it found out me

No condemnation now I dread:  
Jesus and all in Him, is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
and clothed in righteousness divine  
Bold I approach th'eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own

### ***This Fathomless Love***

Lord, what moved Your heart to love lowly man  
Before any star could herald Your praise?  
And why did You come, abasing Yourself  
Veiled in a robe of frail human clay?  
Why would You, the Pure give Your life for the vile  
The innocent seeking the guilty to be reconciled?

I can't comprehend this fathomless love  
I'm gripped and amazed at what You have done  
Why would the Adored become the despised  
To bear all the furious wrath that was mine?

How awesome this mystery  
Of Your fathomless love for me

Why would You adopt and take as Your own  
Those who had crushed Your one precious Son?  
Why mercy and grace towards Your enemies?  
Your name they have cursed  
And Your throne they have shunned  
O how could You choose to show kindness to these  
The ones who would mock You and hate You  
The ones just like me

### ***Alas and Did My Savior Bleed***

Alas and did my Savior bleed  
And did my Sov'reign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?  
Was it for sins that I had done  
He groaned upon the tree  
Amazing pity, grace unknown  
And love beyond degree

My God, why would You shed Your blood  
So pure and undefiled  
To make a sinful one like me  
Your chosen precious child

Well might the sun in darkness hide  
And shut His glories in  
When Christ, the mighty Maker died  
For man the creature's sin  
Thus might I hide my blushing face  
While His dear cross appears  
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness  
And melt my eyes to tears

### ***Before the Throne of God Above***

Before the throne of God above  
I have a strong and perfect plea  
A great High Priest whose name is love  
Who ever lives and pleads for me  
My name is graven on His hands,  
my name is written on His heart  
I know that while in heav'n He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart  
No tongue can bid me thence depart

When Satan tempts me to despair  
and tells me of the guilt within  
Upward I look and see Him there,  
who made an end of all my sin  
Because the sinless Savior died,  
my sinful soul is counted free  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me,  
To look on Him and pardon me

Behold Him there! the risen Lamb  
My perfect, spotless righteousness  
The Great unchangeable I AM,  
the King of Glory and of Grace  
One with Himself I cannot die,  
my soul is purchased by His blood  
My life is hid with Christ on high,  
With Christ my Savior and my God  
With Christ my Savior and my God

### ***The Wonderful Cross***

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the prince of Glory died  
My richest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride

Forbid it Lord that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ my God  
All the vain things that charm  
I sacrifice them to His blood

O the wonderful cross, o the wonderful cross  
Bids me some and die and find that I may truly live  
O the wonderful cross, o the wonderful cross  
All who gather here by grace draw near  
And bless Your name.

See from His head, His hands, His feet  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown

Were the whole realm of nature mine  
That were an offering far too small  
Love so amazing, so divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all

### ***Jesus Thank You***

The mystery of the cross  
I cannot comprehend  
The agonies of Calvary  
You the perfect holy One crushed Your Son  
Drank the bitter cup reserved for me

Your blood has washed away my sin  
Jesus, thank You  
The Father's wrath completely satisfied  
Jesus, thank You  
Once Your enemy now seated at Your table  
Jesus, thank You

By Your perfect sacrifice  
I've been brought near  
Your enemy You've made Your friend  
Pouring out the riches of Your glorious grace  
Your mercy and Your kindness know no end

### ***The Glories of Calvary***

Lord, You're calling me to come  
And behold the wondrous cross  
To explore the depths of grace  
That came to me at such a cost  
Where Your boundless love,  
Conquered my boundless sin  
And mercy's arms were opened wide

My heart is filled with a thousand songs  
Proclaiming the glories of Calvary  
With every breath, Lord how I long  
To sing of Jesus who died for me  
Lord take me deeper into the glories of Calvary

Sinners find eternal joy in the triumph of Your wounds  
By our Savior's crimson flow,  
Holy wrath has been removed  
And Your saints below, join with Your saints above  
Rejoicing in the risen Lamb

### ***Before the Cross***

My Savior's sacrifice paid for all my sin  
So in my suffering I look to the cross again  
No need, no want, no trial, no pain  
Can compare to this  
The wrath of God, once meant for me  
Was all spent on Him

Before the Cross, I humbly bow  
I place my trust in the Savior  
Your finished work captures my gaze  
You bore the wrath, I know the grace

In my darkest hour, Your presence is my peace  
In my days of joy, Your grace carries me  
Jesus, my Great High Priest  
The One who pleads for me  
My heart is filled with faith in You  
Here at Calvary on my knees

### ***Gospel Song***

Holy God in love became  
Perfect man to bear my shame.  
On the cross He took my sin.  
By His death I live again.

### ***Christ the Lord is Risen Today***

Christ the Lord is risen today—Al-le-lu-ia!  
Sons of men and angels say— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Raise your joys and triumphs high—Al-le-lu-ia!  
Sing, ye heavens and earth reply— Al-le-lu-ia!

Love's redeeming work is done— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Fought the fight, the battle won— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Death in vain forbids Him rise— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Christ has opened Paradise— Al-le-lu-ia!

Lives again our glorious king— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Where, O death, is now they sting?— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Dying once, He all doth save— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Where they victory, O grave?— Al-le-lu-ia!

Soar we now where Christ has led— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Following our exalted head— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Made like Him, like Him we rise— Al-le-lu-ia!  
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies— Al-le-lu-ia!