

## Palm Sunday, March 24

Have you ever been told you have an attitude problem? As a teenager, I had a bit of an attitude problem. I was moody. I was often snarky to my parents. I did not always speak to my siblings in a kind way. I regularly let my emotions drive my actions. Can you relate? Don't we often let our emotions cloud our judgment? We let our emotions lead us even when we know they might take us down the wrong path. The world encourages us to lead with our feelings and live by our emotions, to live our truth and let our feelings determine our attitude and actions. But what does the Bible say about the attitude we are to have as Christians? Who do we look to for guidance? Where do we turn for direction?

Paul gives us a clear answer in Philippians 2:5. He writes, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Where do we turn for direction? We turn to Christ. We look at his attitude to guide us. He gives us the perfect example of how to live our lives as Christians. Through his life on this earth, and especially through Holy Week, Jesus led with an attitude of true humility, self-sacrifice, and love for others. Jesus showed humility by washing the feet of his disciples. He showed his perfect ability to self-sacrifice by submitting himself to be arrested on Maundy Thursday. He showed his love for all people by allowing the Roman guards to nail him to a tree and crucify him. Christ lived with an attitude of love, humility, and self-sacrifice.

It is one thing to see what Jesus did, another to understand why. Why did he humble himself to become a man and a servant? Why did he have an attitude of self-sacrifice? Why did he willingly walk to the cross? The answer is simple. He did this for you. Christ's love for all people led him to carry out these actions with an attitude of complete selflessness, humility, and unconditional love. What a beautiful truth! Now, we are called to reflect this love, humility, and self-sacrifice. The truth is, we will never be able to achieve a perfect attitude as that of Christ. But we can look to Christ for strength and strive to live like him. And whenever we fall short, we can look to the cross. We have a Savior who never fell short, even through the tortures and pain he endured during Holy Week.

Christ came to do the hard work. He died to take your sin and guilt away. He made you righteous in God's eyes. Now, it is your job to respond by imitating Christ and his attitudes. Reflect Christ in your life. Find ways to reflect his love by being humble, loving, and self-sacrificing. Be an imitator of Christ as you enter this Holy Week. Consider what it means to imitate the actions and attitudes of Christ. And remember that he did this all for you.

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, turn my eyes to you this week and every week. Please help me be an imitator of you in everything I say and do. Amen.

## Monday, March 25

Palm Sunday was filled with shouts and cheers. Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna to the Son of David! Can you imagine what this day must have looked like? Crowds gathered together, laying their coats and blankets on the ground to praise the Lord! I have always wondered what it would be like to experience this celebration. Hosanna! The Messiah is here!

Considering who this was, it turns out to be a rather humble and meek celebration. Yes, Christ was honored. The people met him with fanfare and praise and celebration. But this is God in the flesh. Compared to his heavenly praise, this was a whisper. In a moment, Christ could have easily called down angels and shown the people what a true celebration looked like. So why not? Why did Christ settle for a donkey, blankets, and palm branches? Paul helps us understand why in Philippians 2:6. He writes, “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.” Christ Jesus, who was by very nature God, valued humankind more than his status and glory as God. He gave up his glory and subdued his power to come to earth and save every one of us.

Christ’s life is full of gentle moments and quiet celebrations. First, think about his humble birth. The Son of God, our Savior, was born in a stable. There was no one there to celebrate this beautiful and historical moment besides Mary, Joseph, and some animals. Next, consider his life. He was the son of a carpenter. He grew up learning the craft of Joseph and living a human life, waiting for his time to come. Consider those with whom he surrounded himself. He spent time with lowly fishermen, tax collectors, and outcasts. He was ridiculed and questioned by the religious leaders, those who knew the Scriptures and should have been kneeling at the feet of the Lord. Christ’s life is full of examples of how he set aside his glory to live in this world.

Why would he do such a thing? Why would God, the creator of all things, set aside his glory to come to this earth? For you. Christ gave up his glory and came to earth to save all people. He loved you enough to consider his position something he could give up. What a thought! Jesus considers you, me, and each individual on this earth worth enough to leave his almighty throne and set his glory aside to come down to earth, and that is just what he did. What a testament to his love for us!

As we walk through this Holy Week, keep Paul’s words on your hearts and minds. Jesus came to earth and set his glory aside. He did this so that he could live and die for you. Now, he reigns in heaven in his full glory! Throughout this week, remember the lowly celebrations for your Savior during his earthly life. He accepts your praise, no matter how big or small. Find ways to praise him each day, looking forward to his eternal celebration in heaven. Hosanna in the highest!

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, thank you for setting your glory aside. Remind me every day of the sacrifice that you have made for me. Help me to praise you every day. Amen.

## Tuesday, March 26

Have you ever gone camping? My family did when I was a little girl. Camping brings back some wonderful memories of bonfires, swimming, and running around without shoes. But it also brings back memories of the clean-up process when the weekend was over. We had to clean up the campsite and pack up the car. When we got home, we did our laundry, washed our dishes, and cleaned ourselves up after our fun weekend. It was refreshing to get everything all cleaned up after spending time outdoors for a few days. Cleaning is important. Cleaning is so important that even Jesus did it. But he did not clean things and stuff; he cleaned feet!

Why would our Lord, Savior of the world, stoop to the status of a servant and clean the feet of others? Paul helps us understand in Philippians 2:7. He writes, “But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” As was noted yesterday, Christ set aside his glory to come to earth. This passage shows why he set aside his glory. Christ became a man. He took on a flesh and bone body. He was true God, but he was also true man! Christ took on the appearance of a humble servant as well as the attitude of one. His whole purpose on this earth was to bring people the truth. He was here to live a perfect life, die a perfect death, and rise from the dead. He came to save the world! And to do this, he became a servant.

He served all people by healing diseases and injuries. He showed love to all in his words and actions. He spoke the truth wherever he went. And he washed feet. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. They objected to the Lord washing their feet. But Jesus wanted to teach them. He explained the importance of being a servant. He called them to preach the truth and to serve others. Christ was leading by example. But he did not stop serving them after washing their feet. Christ was arrested, put to death, and raised again to life. He defeated death and the devil. Christ humbled himself, setting his glory aside, to serve me and you through his words and especially his actions. Christ has not washed my feet nor yours, but he has washed our souls clean.

When Jesus quietly went with his captors, he knew he was walking towards his death. But he was also walking towards your life. He submitted himself to pain and suffering to wash you clean. Jesus stayed on that cross at Calvary so that you would know his love and sacrifice. He saw your face and decided it was worth all the pain. What a moving message. As this Holy Week unfolds, keep this on your hearts and minds. Christ became a humble servant. He healed diseases and washed feet. He died on the cross. He cleansed your soul. He did all these things for you.

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, thank you for cleaning my soul. Remind me of my status before you, even when this world causes me to stumble. Remind me that you did this all for me. Amen.

## Wednesday, March 27

Do you ever struggle to be obedient? To do what God says the way he says to do it? For example, God says, ‘Honor your parents.’ But when mom or dad asks you to clean your room or do the dishes, do you find it easier to say no? Or to do it resentfully? Parents, God tells you throughout Scripture to train your children and keep them in the faith. But when devotion time rolls around after a long day, it can be easier to skip it and go to bed. As sinful humans, we struggle to be obedient to God’s Word. When you struggle with obedience, what do you do? Where do you turn? Turn to Jesus. He had to struggle with obedience to God’s will, too. Can you imagine what Jesus felt when obedience to his Father’s will meant he had to die on a cross?

Jesus understands what it is like to struggle with obedience to God. As true man, Jesus was subject to the same laws we are, the same need for obedience. And Satan did everything he could to tempt Jesus to fall into sin. Christ knew that becoming a man would come with these challenges, but he did it anyway. He humbled himself and became a man for you and me. How far did Jesus’ obedience go? It took him to the cross. Paul writes in Philippians 2:8, “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” Christ was obedient to God and his will, so obedient that he allowed himself to be nailed to a cross and killed. What a testament to his love and perfection! But this was not an easy task for our Lord.

The Bible has a detailed account of Jesus’ actions on the night of his arrest. He knew what was coming, and he went to pray. Jesus prayed multiple times to the Father to find another way. He asked for the Father to take away this coming pain. But at the end of each prayer, he asked for the Father’s will to be carried out. Jesus was true God and true man. Being true God, he knew that the final hours of his life were going to be painful and tortuous. Being true man, Jesus prayed for another way so that he did not have to go through the pain of his near future. But through all of this, he knew that God’s will must be done, and he would drink the cup set before him. This is a fantastic example of Christ’s obedience to God’s will.

Additionally, Christ’s status as God was mocked as he died on the cross. The Roman soldiers, the religious leaders and elders, and everyone who passed by laughed and jeered. They hurled insults at him. They questioned why he could not just take himself off the cross if he was truly God. The people questioned his status and nature, but Jesus did not stumble. He continued in his perfect obedience to God and his will. He stayed on that cross. He fought the battle and won!

Obedience can be a challenge in this sinful world. Sometimes, we question why God lets certain things happen, or we stumble and fall in our obedience. It is a blessing to know that we have a perfect Savior who fulfilled God’s laws and commands in our place. Jesus carried out perfect obedience to God’s will. He has made us free! Praise the Lord for Christ’s obedience, even to death on a cross. And remember, he did this for you.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your son to be obedient in my place. When I stumble and fall, direct my eyes to the cross and Christ's perfection. Remind me of his obedient sacrifice for me. Amen.

## Maundy Thursday, March 28

A name is a remarkable thing. When you were born, your parents looked at you and decided your name was perfect for you. Have you ever asked your parents why they gave you your name? Some people have an attachment to certain names. For example, parents might name their daughter “Lilliane” after her grandmother or their son “Isaiah” after the biblical figure. Some names have deep meaning behind them. Our parents chose our names specifically for us. I cannot imagine myself with any other name! Jesus was also given a name specifically for him. Before Jesus was born, an angel told Mary what to name him. The angel Gabriel told her to call him Jesus because he would come to save the people from their sins. In Hebrew, Jesus means savior. What a fitting name for our Lord! His name is powerful, and God the Father solidified him in that power after his resurrection from the dead.

Yesterday’s devotion focused on Jesus’ appearance as a man and his humility on this earth. But today, we will focus on the glory he received once his time of humility was complete and he had fulfilled the mission he came to earth to carry out. Jesus became obedient to death on a cross. He carried out the Father’s will. Paul tells us what happened after Jesus’ death was complete. He writes, “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.” God gave Jesus his name, and his resurrection confirmed that it would be a name above every name! His name is powerful. We can stand in awe each day at the name of Jesus. Use his name to pray. Use his name to praise. Use his name to comfort. Use his name to give thanks. Use his name every day, always keeping in mind the strength that his name brings.

Jesus’ name is awesome; it is the name above all names. His name literally means salvation. The name of Jesus means he saves us from everything. He saves you from all the sins you commit in the past, present, and future. All of the hurtful thoughts and words. All of the wounding actions. He covers it all with his saving work. That is the power of Jesus’ name. When Jesus completed God’s will, God gave him the name above all names and exalted him to the highest place. Jesus returned to heaven after his resurrection. But, he promised to return to bring us all home with him. This promise is an immense comfort. God has exalted Jesus in heaven, and we can live in the certainty that Jesus is preparing a place there for each of us.

As this Holy Week unfolds, think about Jesus’ name. Remember how special his name is. And remember that God knows your name, too. You are always on God’s mind. He is preparing a place for you in his heavenly home, which will be even greater than you can imagine! He is waiting for you to meet him in your eternal home. And until then, he will continue to think about you and watch over your steps as you walk on this earth. Walk in the comfort of God’s care, knowing that he is here with you, walking at your side. Remember that God knows you by name, by your unique name. Remember that Christ did all these things for you, and he will return one day to take you home to be with him.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for my name. Remind me daily that you know me by name and watch my steps everywhere I go. Keep my eyes focused on you and the heavenly home that awaits me. In Jesus' powerful name, Amen.

## Good Friday, March 29

Have you ever been speechless? God's beautiful creation often leaves me without words. It might be a stunning sunrise, sunset, or majestic mountain scene with a clear blue sky above. Maybe someone gave you a gift that has left you speechless. You received a gift that you had been hoping to get, and you were so happy you did not know what to say! Sometimes, people can leave us speechless. Married men might remember being speechless when their beautiful bride walked down the aisle. Families might remember being speechless with joy when another child was born. When this world comes to an end, we will be left speechless one more time. When Christ returns, every person will be struck by awe and bow down, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord. His name will be praised by all on earth and those already in heaven above. What a glorious day that will be!

Paul talks about the power of Jesus' name in Philippians 2:10. He writes, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." Jesus' name is so powerful that every knee will bow to it! As we consider the events of Holy Week, think about what happened as Jesus was breathing his last few breaths. There was power in this final, raspy exhale. The account of Jesus' death in Matthew gives the following details.

First, the curtain of the temple tore in two. This was the curtain that separated certain areas of the temple. In biblical times, a believer could not enter all parts of the temple; only a priest could enter these special areas. Now, there is no divide. Christians are free to come to God. Christ's sacrifice ended the separation. We can now come directly to him in prayer, praise, and times of need.

After the curtain tore, the earth shook, and rocks split. Have you ever seen a rock broken in two? It takes a lot of effort and power. But Jesus' death was a powerful event. Even the rocks and the earth fell at his feet. Christ is so powerful that even in his weakest moments of pain and torture, he could command the elements. Even in death, Jesus shook the earth. The Son of God died in our place, and the earth bowed to him.

Then, tombs broke open, and many people rose to life. Jesus' life on earth was powerful. But his death was even more powerful. Christ conquered death. As he died and rose again to life, he brought others with him. Christ conquers our death, too. We do not need to fear death. Christ has taken away its sting and set aside heaven for us. Someday, he will raise us to life and take us home to heaven. Life and death bow to Jesus and his name. He is our God, and he overcame everything for us. Let us bow at his feet, our Lord and Savior.

Jesus' name is powerful. As you consider the power of Jesus' name this Holy Week, remember that his name is what saves. Share his name. Share it with your family and loved ones. Share it with your friends. Share his name wherever you go. His name is powerful and can change hearts. Continue to share his name. And remember, his name is for you. He took on human flesh and a name to die for you. He rose for you. He lives in heaven, awaiting you. He did this all for you.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for the name of your Son. Remind me every day that his name is powerful. Help me to share his name wherever I go. Amen.

## Holy Saturday, March 30

Have you ever had to confess something? When I think of the word confess, I get a negative feeling. I remember times I had to confess to lying or hurting someone. It does not always feel great to confess to a sin that you have committed. Typically, a consequence comes along with confessing to bad words or actions. But have you ever thought about confessing happy things? The word “confess” isn’t always bad; it simply means to “tell or make known.” To speak something that is true. In church, we confess our sins, but we also confess our unity with those around us when we say the Creed. We can see and hear that other people are saying the same words as us, which means they are admitting they believe what we believe.

Paul writes about confession in Philippians 2:11. He writes, “And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” I like to think about what Jesus’ return will be like. What will it sound like? What will it look like? Many things are uncertain. But we can be sure that when Christ returns, every tongue will confess him as Lord. And until that time comes, we can look to examples of God’s glory and his power to bring people into the knowledge of Christ.

Many people confess Christ as Lord in the Bible. There are strong figures like John the Baptist, Peter, and even Simeon and Anna, who confessed Christ when he was an infant! There are also those who doubted but eventually confessed clearly as well. All of these people confessed Christ to the glory of God the Father. But one more person comes to mind when considering those who confessed Christ. Immediately after Jesus’ death, the Roman centurion who was guarding Jesus’ body confessed, “Surely he was the Son of God.” This man had a hand in Jesus’ death. He watched, or even helped, as soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross. He heard the pain and suffering that our Savior endured. But after seeing the events of Jesus’ death and the effect it had on the earth and the people, he confessed Christ as God.

What a moving statement this is. And what a comforting one, too! The Roman centurion, who had a hand in Jesus’ death, was able to confess him as God. You and I had a hand in Jesus’ death. Our sins nailed him to that tree. Our filthy rags kept him on that cross. But what a blessing it is to know that he wiped us clean, and we can confess his glory. He took away our sins. He took away the sins of that centurion and all who nailed him to the cross. We can all confess Christ to the glory of God!

As we walk towards the end of this Holy Week, remember Christ’s forgiveness. Each day, we doubt and sin. We add to our number of sins. But Christ paid for those sins. He was nailed to a tree for them. And because of that truth, we can praise and confess him as King and Savior. So go out and confess Christ, knowing that he did all this for you.

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice. Remind me that you washed away all my sins with your death on the cross. Give me strength to go out into the world, confessing your name. To God be the glory, Amen.

## Easter Sunday, March 31

He is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed! Hallelujah! Holy Week is one of my favorite parts of the church year. It is a week to see God's love on display through Jesus and understand the lengths he was willing to go for the salvation of the world. We get to walk through Jesus' final moments. We get to dwell on what he did for us. We have been dwelling on Paul's words from Philippians 2 this week. He writes a beautiful outline of Christ's humiliation and exaltation.

Philippians 2:5-11 reads, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

This section of Scripture shows us how Christ fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old Testament. He fulfilled the law for us. Christ became a servant and humbled himself for you and me. He set aside his glory and became a man. Then, he allowed himself to be arrested and killed. God raised him from the dead and glorified him in heaven and on earth. We can celebrate and thank Christ for all he has done for us and our salvation!

The events of Holy Week all lead to this day. The praises of Palm Sunday, the somber nature of Maundy Thursday, the agony and sorrow of Good Friday. It is all building up to the joyous day of Easter! Easter is a day of celebration. We celebrate Christ's life, death, and resurrection. We celebrate Christ's actions that fulfilled prophecy. We celebrate his perfection in our place. We can celebrate everything he did because it was for you and me. We can celebrate all of these things today and every day. Do not let your Easter celebration end when you go to bed tonight. You can start each day sure in the knowledge that your salvation is complete. Go forth in this sure hope of your salvation. Look forward to the eternal joys of heaven! As you celebrate this glorious Easter message, remember that Christ did all this for you.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you! Thank you for your son, Jesus. He is the Savior of the world! Remind me every day of the things he did for me. Help me to celebrate the joyous Easter message every day! In your name, Amen.