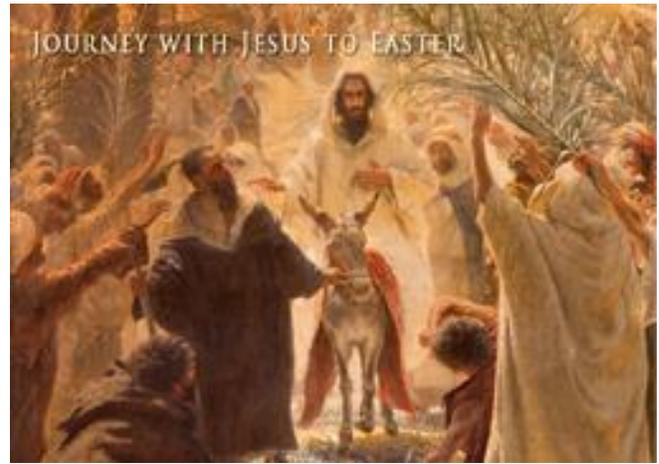


**Daily Reflection on Scripture**  
**Week of April 14**  
**Palm Sunday**  
**Journey with Jesus to Easter**



**Sunday April 14**

*Scripture: Mark 11:1-3 As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. "Go into that village over there," he told them. "As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks, 'What are you doing?' just say, 'The Lord needs it and will return it soon.'"*

**Morning Prayer:** God, today's scripture begins telling the story of Jesus' final week. Jesus was about to face an enormous amount of disorientation. He was headed into a week full of pain, sorrow, confrontations, questions, betrayals, healings, joy, laughter, and by week's end, death. I want to be like Jesus who instead of running from the disorientation, he entered into it. He believed that regardless of what happened you were already ahead of him, ready to meet him in the lowest moments and hours of the week with love, friends, compassion and strength. The story begins by saying that Jesus prepared himself for the week ahead by stating what he had need of. I like that idea. Knowing that my week will be full of disorientations, I begin it by asking you for what I need. I need\_\_\_\_\_. May it be so.

**Noon Text:** Breathe in and breathe out. In this moment, how are you feeling? What do you need? Remember God is as close as your breath. Ask for what you need.

**Evening Text:** God, as I prepare to close down the day, I need a good night full of needed rest. Help me to rest well so I can rise up tomorrow more ready to face the day.

**Monday April 15**

*Scripture: Mark 11:15b-17 Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, and he stopped everyone from using the Temple as a marketplace. He said to them, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves."*

**Morning Prayer:** God, the scriptures say that our bodies are the temples of Your spirit. Forgive me when I treat myself, and my body as a commodity. In his anger Jesus raised a ruckus said "My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations!" I am also God's temple, and I want to spend my days in a spirit of prayer for the world as Jesus instructed. Help me to be mindful of my every word, every action and every thought. May they be spent in service to the world bringing peace, hope and healing wherever I find myself. May it be so.

**Noon Text:** Think of all you've experienced today, the situations you faced, the people you met. Offer a prayer of blessing and gratitude for each one. Be at peace.

**Evening Text:** God, today was a mixture of joys and challenges. I didn't live it perfectly, but I can rest knowing that you love me unconditionally, imperfect as I am.

## **Tuesday April 16**

*Scripture: Mark 12:28-31 One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."*

**Morning Prayer:** God, the words of Jesus are clear. Love You, love my neighbor and love myself. Love the one God, and all people, Your children, my neighbors. And truly the first part always seems easier than the rest, at least that is what I tell myself. Because I love You; of course I do. But then I have to honestly reflect on my own actions. Am I loving my neighbor, no matter their nationality, their race or their faith? How am I demonstrating that love? Am I loving myself by practicing self-care? Am I loving You by deliberately spending time in scripture, reflection, silence and prayer? My prayer this morning is that my love for You is strengthened by how I love my neighbor and how I care for myself. May it be so.

**Noon Text:** Have you taken time for yourself today, caring for yourself? How are your words and actions demonstrating love for your neighbor? Love God, neighbor and self.

**Evening Text:** God, my day has come to an end and it is time to take care of myself with a night of rest. I am grateful to sleep now, secure in Your love and grace.

## **Wednesday April 17**

*Scripture: Mark 14:10-11 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests to arrange to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted when they heard why he had come, and they promised to give him money. So he began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.*

**Morning Prayer:** God, as I read today's scripture about betrayal I am reminded of the times when I have been betrayed. I think of the soul crushing effects of it. Why do we betray one another? Why do I talk about people behind their backs? Why do I want to get even with someone who has hurt me? Why do I not realize that the betrayal done by others also lives in me? Help me to do the really hard thing and ask You to continually help me to grow closer and closer to be forgiving of those who have betrayed me. Also help me to lessen the times that I am the betrayer. Thank you for Jesus who experienced betrayal and yet never betrayed anyone. Help me to be more like Jesus. Help me to be free from resentment so there can be more room for compassion. May it be so.

**Noon text:** Who are you affirming and appreciating today. By practicing compassion more often, you are less apt to practice betrayal. Remember it is love that always wins.

**Evening Text:** God, as night approaches, my mind, body and soul need to connect more deeply to Your gift of love and grace. Help me to do that as I close my eyes to sleep.

## **Thursday April 18**

*Scripture: Mark 14:22-24 As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take it, for this is my body." And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And he said to them,*

*“This is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many.*

**Morning Prayer:** God, In today’s scripture I see Jesus gathering for a meal with his friends. It seems that Jesus did that a lot. Every meal was as a sacrament, a sign of God’s presence in the food and drink. Help me to see that every time I sit at a table, whether it be alone or with co-workers working on a project, fellow students, family or friends, it is an opportunity to break bread with them. The breaking of bread is a global act of community. Help me to see the meals I share today as a sacrament of Your presence in the food, in the hands that prepared it, in the faces and stories of those sitting with me. Thank you for breaking bread with humanity so that we can see the breaking of bread as a way to restore a broken humanity with Your love. May it be so.

**Noon Text:** Who have you broken bread with today? If you were too rushed then, pause now to give thanks to God for the food you ate and the people you were with.

**Evening Text:** God, now is the time to untangle from the day and settle into the sacrament of rest. May I experience Your loving acceptance of who I am as I rest in Your love.

### **Friday April 19**

*Scripture: Luke 23:33-34a When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.”*

**Morning Prayer:** God, in the darkest of days, in the midst of incredible betrayal, while suffering from intense pain, Jesus asks that You forgive his tormentors. How many times have I been stingy with or reluctant to offer forgiveness for even the most trivial of a perceived offense? Up to the moment of his death, Jesus was teacher and example, showing us what it truly means to be a Christ follower. God, help me to live by the example of the greatest teacher ever. Help me to forgive as he forgave. May it be so.

**Noon Text:** Is there someone in your life who is seeking forgiveness? Have you offered it wholeheartedly? Reach out today and in the way of Jesus forgive.

**Evening Text:** God, those with Jesus have spent a week of uncertainty. I often feel that way and am so very grateful for the promise of Easter as an end of the uncertainty.

### **Saturday April 20**

*Scripture: Luke 23:55-56 As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.*

**Morning Prayer:** God, like the women in today’s scripture, there are so many “important” things to get done today. Yet the difference between the women and me is, I don’t always know when to stop. Even with the responsibility of preparing spices to anoint Jesus’ body, they still honored a day of Sabbath rest. May I have the strength to do what needs to be done today, and may I have the wisdom to know when to stop and rest. Throughout the day may I remember that tomorrow is Easter. Easter is my assured hope that no matter what I face today, Easter is the promise of new life. May it be so.

**Noon Text:** Smile. Hold it for a few seconds. Can you feel a difference? Now, take in a deep breath and slowly release it. Know that God is smiling at you. You are loved.

**Evening Text:** God, on this Easter eve, I release my burdens and fears with sure and certain hope of Easter. Easter is the assurance that nothing can separate You from me.