

LORD, HELP US *To Remember*

APRIL 2-10 2023



BE IN CHRIST
Holy Week Guide

DO THIS IN *Remembrance* OF ME

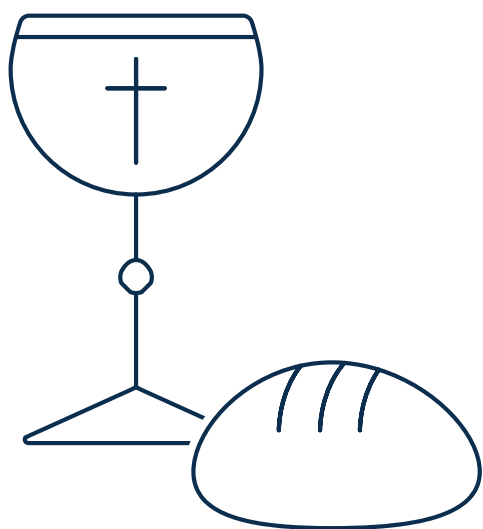
*Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love:
Take my heart, oh, take and seal it
Seal it for thy courts above.
Rescued thus from sin and danger,
Purchased by the Saviour's blood,
May I walk on earth a stranger,
As a child and heir of God.*

These words are from the hymn "Come Thou Fount Of Every Blessing". They describe our struggle to be good "rememberers" as followers of Jesus.

When Jesus gathered his disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem before his crucifixion he shared a meal with them on the occasion of the Jewish feast of Passover. Passover (Pesach in Hebrew) is a major Jewish holiday that commemorates the story of the Israelites escape from slavery in Egypt. Passover is about remembering. To Jewish people Passover is an opportunity for re-centering and re-affirming what you are building your life on. In that upper room Jesus understood how easy it would be for his followers to lose their way.

Holy week is a chance again for each of us to say 'Lord - Help Me To Remember'. For our BIC Holy Week guide this year we want to simply take you on a journey through accounts of the first Easter and just call to mind some of the most essential things we need to keep always before us. May your "first love" for Jesus be rekindled!

A very blessed Easter to each of you.



Palm Sunday / April 2

Triumphal Entry

STEPHEN ROY

Read Matthew 21:1-11

Reflect When I was growing up, the town we went to for our summer holidays offered children a donkey ride on the beach. I can remember having that ride a few times. The donkey was led along the beach to a large rock and then returned to the starting point. It did not take long but it was a thrilling ride for a small child.

The donkey ride Jesus takes is quite different and develops into a huge spectacle. With preparations made ahead of time, Jesus sends his disciples to retrieve the unriden colt along with its mother. He then rides the animal into the city of Jerusalem acclaimed by the crowds as Messiah as they shout out "Hosanna to the Son of David." They place on him their hopes and expectations.

Yet while some have a clear understanding of who they want Jesus to be, others ask the question, who is this? Surely, they must know something about Jesus? Their question could be, who really is this? What they do not realize is that as the week ahead unfolds, the focus shifts from Jesus the conquering King to Jesus the suffering servant. God's pathways are not always the ones we choose or prefer.

Pray *Lords, help us to remember...*

...that your ways are not our ways. Help us see both the King and the servant in Jesus and that his ways are ways of peace.

Monday / April 3

Jesus Cleanses The Temple

CHARMAINE STULP

Read Matthew 21:12-17

Reflect I once spent about 20 hours sitting at the arrivals gate at Toronto Pearson Airport. I remember one scene in particular. There were two little girls watching that gate and upon seeing their grandfather appear, they jumped up and down, squealed in delight, and ran to him with arms outstretched. In the chaos of the crowd, those little girls were searching for the face of the one they were looking for.

Isn't that a picture of how we should be when we enter the temple? This space was to be a house of prayer, searching for one face... our Saviour, Jesus.

How quickly we can get distracted by the chaos.

How easily we can forget what the church is for.

How swiftly we can move to selfishness.

We lose sight of those who are blind and sick and we get in the way of them meeting Jesus.

I want to be like those little girls at the airport. I want to wave palm branches, arms outstretched, focused on the face of the One I am looking for, singing, "Hosanna!"

Pray

Lord, help us to remember...

...to bring our focus back to you, the One who makes the lame walk and the blind see. You alone deserve our attention.

Tuesday / April 4

My Hopes For You

JON LIMMER

Read John 17:20-26

Reflect My son was nine on his first day of grade 4. He was excited. Our hope was that he would make good friends. I met him expectantly when he got home. He was quiet. After some coaxing, we sat on our stairs. He cried. "No one likes me. I tried to get people to be my friend, but they ignored me." My heart broke with his.

Many relate to that dejected 9-year-old. Our loneliness feels wrong. It's not the way things are supposed to be. Aloneness was the first not-good thing in creation. God fixed it by creating human relationships. But today, relationships seem more fractured than ever – constantly connected but feeling so alone.

The church was initiated to embody God's kingdom – a foretaste of re-creation glory. Jesus' hope for us was to embody oneness through his love. He prayed that we would have unity so profound that it reflects the oneness of God. He died so that we could experience it.

My 9-year-old returned to school not trying to get anyone to be his friend. He simply tried to be a friend – loving others. Friendships began which continue over a decade later.

Our oneness, rooted in Christ's love, will last an eternity.

Pray

Lord, help us to remember...

...that life isn't meant to be lived alone. Help us remember to remain in your love. Help us to display your love well through our oneness.

Wednesday / April 5

An Example To Follow

MELANIE WIGG

Read John 13:1-17

Reflect Growing up, our church held a footwashing service on Maundy Thursday. With chairs arranged in a circle, we sat together and sang hymns while, one by one, we washed the feet of the person beside us. We prepared for the evening by making sure that our feet and stockings were clean! We weren't meeting a literal need during those services, of course. However, this act of community was still meaningful and personal.

When Jesus washed his disciples' feet at the Last Supper, he said, "I have given you an example to follow." Since washing people's feet doesn't meet the practical need it did then, what does it mean to follow Jesus' example now?

First, we notice a person's need. We can't meet a need we don't see. Second, we embrace the humility of Christ believing no act of service is beneath us. Third, we put aside our own self-consciousness. We wrestle with the question "What will others think?" and choose to move ahead anyway. Then, we meet people in all the messiness of life. We bring compassion where walking through this world has left them tired, weary, and bruised. With a figurative towel around our waists, in simplicity and kindness, we say, "I see you. Let me help you."

Pray

Lords, help us to remember...

...the humility and selflessness you demonstrated for us. Empower us to follow your example in both the actions of our lives and the posture of our hearts.

Thursday / April 6

The Garden of Gethsemane

CHRIS HIGGINSON

Read Matthew 26:36-56

Reflect *Pressure pushin' down on me
Pressin' down on you, no man ask for...
That's the terror of knowing what this world is about.*

These lines from an 80's song are all too true. Life brings pressure. It's not if, it is when. Count on it.

Just ask the apostle Paul who spoke about being "under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself" (2 Corinthians 1:8).

Just ask Jesus.

Gethsemane literally means "oil press". This was a garden of pressing and crushing, both for olives, and for Jesus. It was here Jesus felt the crushed as the sin-bearer of the world. He was "overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death" (Matt. 26:38). It was in this garden of pressure and crushing Jesus prayed. And prayed. And prayed. And His Father loved him through it, even while his friends slept.

The crushing pressure of the garden, and the cross, were ultimately places where God's love shone the brightest. Like Jesus, it's as we pray, and pray, and pray, that we give God opportunity to love us through the pressure until we can see again how he'll bring life from death.

Remember 2 Corinthians 1:8 mentioned above? Don't forget to read verse 9.

Pray *Lord, help us to remember...*

...to pray, and pray, and pray, giving you opportunity to love us through the pressure until we can see again how your loves always wins the day.

Good Friday / April 7

The Most Important Word In History

TODD LESTER

Read John 19:16-37

Reflect During a vacation to Paris and the Louvre museum, I observed a beautiful Hellenistic statue called the Winged Victory of Samothrace (in Greek, the Nike of Samothrace). It occurred to me why they named the shoe company Nike. Nike means victory ... a clever brand for an athletic company. The statue commemorates the Nike - the goddess of victory. According to mythology, during the battle of marathón Nike sent word of victory home by a messenger at a distance of 26 miles (the origin of the distance for a marathon). The messenger was so exhausted when he got there he said only one word, "Victory" and then died from exertion.

Throughout history many statements of victory have been made. But the most triumphal statement ever spoken, just three words in English but only one in Greek (tetelestai), occurs when Jesus said, "It is finished!" Three of the gospels tell us Jesus shouted it. He shouted because he had won the victory and then it says he gave his spirit. Tetelestai is the most important word in history because it announced the most important victory in history. The victory over sin and death. When Jesus shouted "it is finished" what was finished? His work of atonement and salvation was complete - available for all.

Pray *Lords, help us to remember...*

...the immensity of your love and that what is good about Good Friday is that it marks the moment in time when the world received the greatest expression of love ever known.

Saturday / April 8

"In Between" Despair And Hope

RENEE KIEVIT

Read John 19:38-42

Reflect The time between Jesus' death and resurrection must have been gruelling. Can you imagine the questions that were undoubtedly running through the minds of Jesus' followers. Had Jesus' death been final? Would Jesus be resurrected? What will happen to us now? Had Jesus spoken the truth? Can we trust what Jesus taught us?

During chaos & crisis, we can come face to face with despair. So many questions with few answers, we see only bleakness and often can't even think thoughts of hope. We wonder whether hope will ever be possible again?

In the passage today we see two of Jesus' followers, previously only following Him in secret, now in Jesus' death coming forward to prepare His body as per Jewish burial custom. In their despair Joseph and Nicodemus prepared Jesus' body. With 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes and bringing strips of cloth, they carefully clean and wrap Jesus' body and place it in the tomb.

In between chaos/crisis and hope, we can take the next step, we can do the next thing. With the truth of resurrection known and therefore the possibility for hope in our minds, just as Joseph and Nicodemus, we can prepare for what will come next. Jesus' burial gives us ultimate hope for life.

Pray *Lord, help us to remember...*

...there is always life after chaos, there is always hope after despair. Help us remember that 'in between', you are still present with us.

Easter Sunday / April 9

Resurrection Day

CHARLIE MASHINTER

Read Luke 24:1-12

Reflect While writing this I received news that Jimmy Carter is nearing the end of his earthly life. Carter was a one term US President whose time in office is considered by historians to be somewhat of a failure. His enduring legacy however is not about his Presidency but rather what he was able to do "after" he was President. Carter understood that he could leverage his influence for what was to come. He used that influence to make a wonderful difference for good. What seemed like the end was only the beginning.

As we come to the culmination of Holy Week today we celebrate the resurrection. What a joyful thing to gather and sing "He Lives". But resurrection is only a beginning. Theologian N.T. Wright contends that the resurrection is not the end but rather the starting point for "the restoration of all things" or "setting the world to rights"

...

"Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven."

If Jesus could rise from the dead we can go into the world knowing that God's power can both bring back to life and transform. We are a resurrection people. Jesus is alive!

Pray

Lord, help us to remember...

...this Easter that the good news is not just about going to heaven when we die but also living joyfully with and for Jesus all our days!

Easter Monday / April 10

Drawn From The Dusty Road

ROSEMARY LEGGE

Read Luke 24:13-35

Reflect *Talk with me, Lord; Thyself reveal,
While here o'er earth I rove;
Speak to my heart, & let it feel,
The kindling of Thy love'*

– Charles Wesley

*A dusty road, a heavy conversation.
Two men weary from travel, uncertain of the future.
Hope, certainty, and promise had been theirs.
The crush of death and grief,
They believed a tomb held their Saviour.*

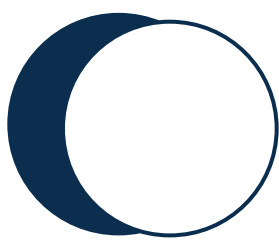
What loss these two men must have felt, a dreadful hopelessness weighing them down as they walked. Doubt and discouragement haunted their discussion until a Stranger joined them. This Stranger who listened, this Stranger who engaged, this Stranger who rebuked their doubt and reminded them of God's plan for pain, suffering, and resurrection. A moment to part ways turned into an invitation for more, a yearning building within. Feeding of the body and of the soul, a revelation of the Who and What of the Stranger. The breaking of bread, drawing deeper, joyous realization that hope was not lost. A promise kept; Jesus lives!

A closer walk with Jesus is the best outcome of Easter. By faith we grow in our awareness that He is right there with us on the dusty roads of life. Each new day we open our hearts to all that He has for us as we live in the good news of the resurrection.

Pray

Lord, help us to remember...

...that we can move from hopelessness to joyful celebration, believing that God always fulfills His promises.



He is Risen!



Blessed Easter

from all of us at

BE IN CHRIST

Church of Canada

About the Creators

STEPHEN ROY

Stephen is the Church and Community Relations Associate for Mennonite Central Committee ON. He is part of the Pathway BIC congregation in Kitchener and chairs the BIC Board of Directors.

CHARMAINE STULP

Charmaine is the Administrative Assistant for BIC Canada and is part of the Welland BIC congregation.

JON LIMMER

Jon is the Lead Pastor of Covenant Christian Community BIC Church in Penetang ON.

MELANIE WIGG

Melanie is the Director of Next Generation Engagement & Special Projects for the Be In Christ Church of Canada.

CHRIS HIGGINSON

Chris is the Lead Pastor of Sauble Christian Fellowship - a BIC congregation located in Sauble Beach ON.

TODD LESTER

Todd is the Director of Leadership Development, Operations, Global Programs for the Be In Christ Church of Canada.

RENEE KIEVIT

Renee is the Co-Lead Pastor of Wainfleet BIC Church and a graduate of the Arrow Leadership Program.

CHARLIE MASHINTER

Charlie is Executive Director of the Be In Christ Church of Canada.

ROSEMARY LEGGE

Rosemary is the Pastoral Resident at Riverside BIC in Fort Erie ON and recently completed her credentialing for Pastoral ministry.

GILLIAN FENSKE

Gillian is the gifted graphic designer for this project. She lives in Kitchener ON and operates INK & PIXEL DESIGN CO. (inkpixel.co). She is part of the Westheights BIC congregation.



BE IN **CHRIST**

BELOVED
BELONG
BECOME

2700 Bristol Circle
Oakville, ON L6H 6E1
905.339.2335
beinchrist.ca