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PREFACE

Christians have traditionally set aside eight days between Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday for quiet meditation and reflection. These eight days are commonly called the Holy Week. This year, we will be meditating on the theme of "*Brokenness*" as we journey with Jesus on the last week of His earthly life.

During this sacred time leading up to Easter, I invite you to set aside moments each day for meditation and contemplation on the profound love and sacrifice demonstrated by Jesus on the Cross. If you have the palm cross, do use it together with this devotional guide.

The theme of brokenness will guide our reflections, as we acknowledge our own brokenness and the brokenness of the world, and encounter the transformative power of Christ's redemptive work. May this devotional material deepen your understanding of the Easter story and draw you closer to the heart of God.

Peace and grace,

Pastor Desmond Soh

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¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

18"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:13-21

Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.

JOHN 16:20

Palm Sunday

¹Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." ⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5"Say to the daughter of Zion,
Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

Matthew 21:1-11

Background

In Matthew 21:1-11, Jesus instructs two of His disciples to fetch a donkey and its colt in Bethphage, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. He then rides into Jerusalem, and a large crowd spreads their cloaks and palm branches on the road, shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" This is why we call this day "Palm Sunday" because of the palm branches laid for Jesus. The people recognize Jesus as the Messiah, but their understanding is limited to a political savior who will deliver them from Roman oppression. Yet, amidst the celebration, lies a poignant irony—the same crowd that hails Him as king will soon cry out for His crucifixion. This scene captures the brokenness of human expectations and the paradoxical nature of Christ's kingship.

Think-Meditate-Contemplate

Consider the responses of the crowd (see Lk 19:27-40; Mk 11:6-10; Jn 12:12-19). What are their expectations of Jesus? What kind of "King" are they desiring? What are your expectations of Jesus? What does our expectation reveal about our "broken" understanding of God's plan for salvation?

Holy Monday

¹⁵In And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. ¹⁷And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?? But you have made it a den of robbers." ¹⁸And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. ¹⁹And when evening came they went out of the city.

Mark 11:15-19

Background

Jesus enters the temple and finds it filled with merchants and money changers, who were exploiting worshippers by overcharging for sacrificial animals and currency exchange. In response, Jesus overturns the tables and drives them out, quoting Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, declaring that the temple should be a house of prayer for all nations. In this act of indignation, Jesus confronts the brokenness within the temple, the spiritual decay and the exploitation within religious institutions. By overturning the tables and driving out the merchants, Jesus highlights the distortion of true worship and the failure of religious leaders to uphold justice and righteousness.

This dramatic action serves as a powerful reminder of the consequences of spiritual complacency and the need for genuine repentance and renewal within the faith community. This act of cleansing reveals the brokenness of the religious system, where greed and exploitation had corrupted the sacred space meant for worship.

Think-Meditate-Contemplate

Did the indignation of Jesus surprise you? Why was Jesus so upset? After He has driven out the merchants and overturned the tables, what did He do (v.17)? Compare Jesus' responses to those of the chief priests and the scribes (v.18). Why were they "fearful" of Him? In what ways do we see elements of brokenness within modern expressions of our "worship" today?

Holy Tuesday

⁹And he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. ¹⁰When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹²And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. ¹³Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' ¹⁴But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' ¹⁵And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "Surely not!" ¹⁷But he looked directly at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?

¹⁸Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him." ¹⁹The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.

Luke 20:9-19

Background

Jesus and His disciples entered into the inner walls of Jerusalem after spending the night in Bethany. Immediately, His presence and teaching challenged the religious authority. Rather than confronting their hypocrisy directly like the day before by overturning the tables in the Temple, Jesus conveyed his message through the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (see timeline chart in page 13). Drawing on imagery familiar to His audience, Jesus exposes the leaders' rejection of God's messengers and their failure to fulfill their role as stewards of God's vineyard, representing Israel. This parable serves as a prophetic warning of the judgment that will come upon those who persist in their disobedience and rejection of God's authority, echoing themes found in Isaiah 5:1-7, where God's people are likened to a vineyard that yields wild grapes, signifying their unfaithfulness and rebellion.

Think-Meditate-Contemplate

Reflect on the actions of the wicked tenants. Compare their actions with those of the religious leaders in verse 19. In what ways do we reflect similar rejection of Jesus? How have we failed to be God's stewards in His "vineyard?"

Spy Wednesday¹

¹⁴Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

Luke 22:3-6

Background

After the past few days of exuberant entry to Jerusalem and the intense confrontation with the religious leaders, Jesus and His disciples spent a quiet Wednesday in Bethany, likely at Simon the Leper's home (Mt 26:6). Jesus sought respite and rtest. However, beneath the calm and quiet, religious leaders plotted to kill Him (Mt 26:3-5). One disciple in particular, Judas Iscariot, prepared to betray Him, fulfilling the prophecy of Psalm 41:9 which says,

"Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me"

The betrayal by Judas, a trusted companion and friend, underscores the brokenness of human relationships and the depths of Jesus' suffering. Despite being deeply wounded by this act of treachery, Jesus willingly submits to His arrest, trial, and crucifixion, ultimately fulfilling God's redemptive plan for humanity.

Think-Meditate-Contemplate

Matthew's gospel informs us that Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Mt 26:14-16)². What does Judas' betrayal reveal about his heart (see Jn 12:4-6)? As the group treasurer, how does Judas' betrayal challenge notions of trustworthiness? Have you experienced betrayal by someone you trust? How did you react? How did Jesus respond to Judas' betrayal? In what ways do we betray Jesus?

¹ Wednesday is called Spy Wednesday because of the reference to the betrayal of Judas Iscariot in Matthew 26:14-16. He was a clandestine spy amongst the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ.

² The thirty pieces of silver was symbolic. It was the price to be paid to compensate for the damage done to a slave that had been gored by a neighbor's ox (Exodus 21:32). Christ went to the cross as the "servant" of God (Phi 2:7). Jesus was a servant "gored" by the nails of the crucifixion (cf. Isa 53:5). Zechariah prophesized over 600 years before that someone would haggle over the price of his hire and be paid thirty pieces of silver (Zech 11:12-13). Judas haggled over the betrayal of Jesus (Mt 26:15) for the exact number of pieces of silver.

Maundy Thursday³

³⁹And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." ⁴¹And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴²saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." ⁴³And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. ⁴⁵And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation." ⁴⁷While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Luke 22:39-48

Background

After sharing the Passover Meal with His disciples, Jesus faced the inevitability of His betrayal and crucifixion. On this Thursday night, Jesus was abandoned, tried, and ultimately, crucified on Friday. Despite the weight of impending suffering, we know from the other gospels that He washed His disciples feet (Jn 13:3-20) and instituted the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:20–30; Mark 14:17–26; Luke 22:14–20), signifying the sacrificial nature of His impending death. As they journeyed towards the Mount of Olives, Jesus urged His disciples to remain vigilant in prayer, preparing them for the trials that lay ahead (Luke 22:40). Here, in this sacred space alone, the weight of the world's sin bears down upon Jesus, causing anguish and turmoil. Jesus, fully aware of the agony that awaits Him, grapples with the brokenness of humanity as He prays fervently to the Father.

Think-Meditate-Contemplate

How does Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane reveal the extent of human brokenness and the depth of His love for humanity? Have you ever experienced a moment of overwhelming despair or brokenness? How did you find solace and strength in such times? Reflect on the disciples' inability to stay awake while Jesus prayed. How does their failure highlight the fragility of human loyalty and commitment?

³ Maundy in Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday) comes from the Latin word mandatum ("mandate" or "command"), referring to Christ's commandment to His disciples at the Last Supper in John 13:34 " A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

Good Friday

³He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

Isaiah 53:3-7

Background

Isaiah 53 is a prophetic passage that depicts a Messianic figure who suffers and bears the pain and afflictions of others. He is despised, rejected, and acquainted with grief, yet he willingly endures these sufferings for the sake of others. Jesus, the ultimate fulfillment of this suffering servant, endured profound brokenness as he was wrongfully tried, falsely accused, mocked, whipped, beaten, and ultimately crucified. His journey to the cross was marked by suffering and sorrow, bearing the weight of humanity's sin and brokenness. Just as Isaiah prophesied, Jesus was led like a lamb to the slaughter, remaining silent in the face of his accusers. Jesus' death on the Cross captures the ultimate theme of brokenness – He was broken for our brokenness.

Think-Meditate-Contemplate

How does Isaiah's passage portray the brokenness of Jesus? Reflect on the significance of Jesus' sacrifice for our brokenness and sin. If you had been an eye witness throughout Jesus' whole ordeal, how would you feel and what would you do? Why is this day called "Good" Friday? What's so good about Jesus' death?

Holy Saturday

⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Matthew 27:62-66

Background

Jesus, the Son of God, is now dead. He who knew no sin, became the sin of the world (2Cor 5:21). Joseph of Arimathea had the ignoble task of burying Jesus' broken body. He took Jesus' body down from the cross and buried his body in his unused and newly hewn family tomb the day before (Mt 27:57-61).

Meanwhile, the religious leaders went to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, to request for Jesus' tomb to be made secure lest his disciples steal his body away. The actions of the religious leaders reveal their fear and insecurity in the face of Jesus' teachings and claims. Their attempt to control the situation highlights the brokenness of their hearts and the fragility of their authority. Despite their outward piety, their refusal to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah reflects a deeper spiritual brokenness rooted in pride and arrogance. In their misguided efforts to suppress the truth, they unwittingly contribute to the fulfillment of God's plan, underscoring the paradox of brokenness and redemption in human affairs.

Think-Meditate-Contemplate

Reflect on the religious leaders' actions on the Sabbath in contrast to the women who prepared Jesus' body for burial the day before (Luke recorded only half a verse in Luke 23:56b about the women): Consider how their actions reveal their true intentions and beliefs about Jesus. Contrast their behavior with that of the women, who kept the Sabbath devoutly. Explore the significance of Sabbath observance and the contrast with the leaders' disregard. Imagine the thoughts and emotions of the religious leaders following Jesus' death. Take time to meditate on the profound implications of Jesus' sacrifice.

Easter Sunday

¹Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." ⁸So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Matthew 27:1-10

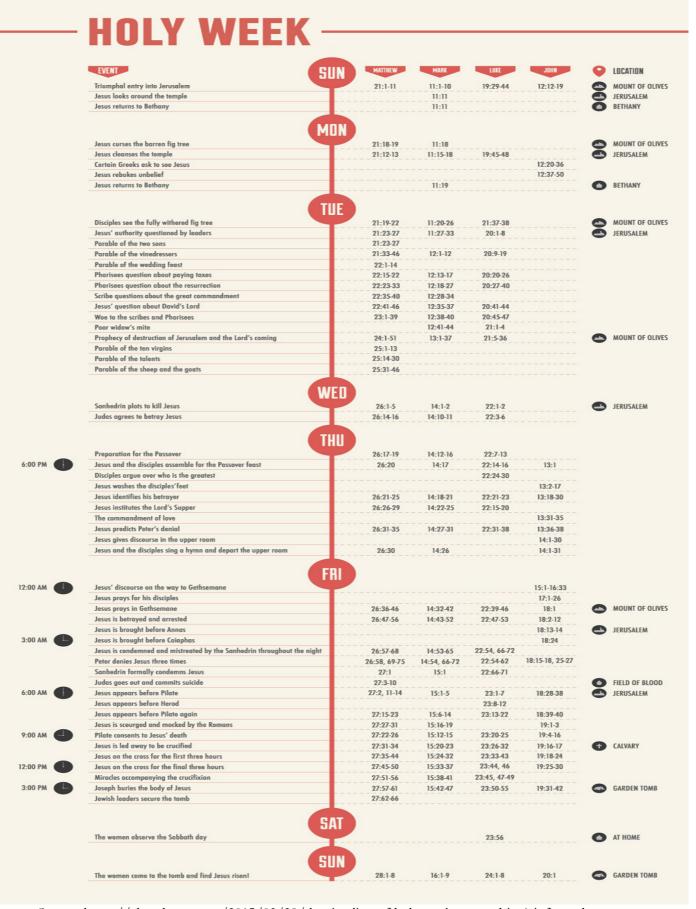
Background and Reflection

Jesus rose again from the dead on the third day just as He said he would (Jn 2:18-22; Mt 12:39-40). On Resurrection Sunday, as dawn breaks over Jerusalem, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary journey to the tomb where Jesus had been laid. Their hearts heavy with grief and sorrow, they come to anoint his body. However, upon arriving, they are met with a shocking sight: the stone sealing the tomb has been rolled away, and an angel of the Lord appears, radiant and glorious. The angel declares to them the astonishing news: "He is not here, for he has risen, as he said" (Mt 28:6). Overwhelmed with fear and joy, the women run to tell the disciples of this miraculous event.

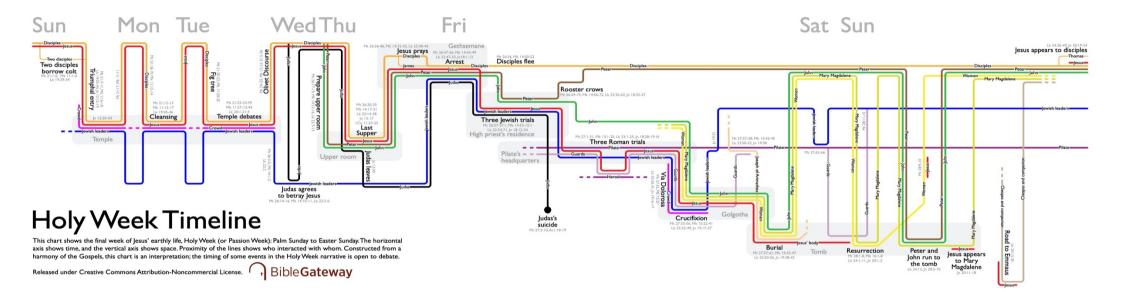
This momentous occasion marks the culmination of Jesus' victory over death and the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. Despite the brokenness and despair of Good Friday, the resurrection powerfully demonstrates God's triumph over sin and death, offering hope and new life to all who believe.

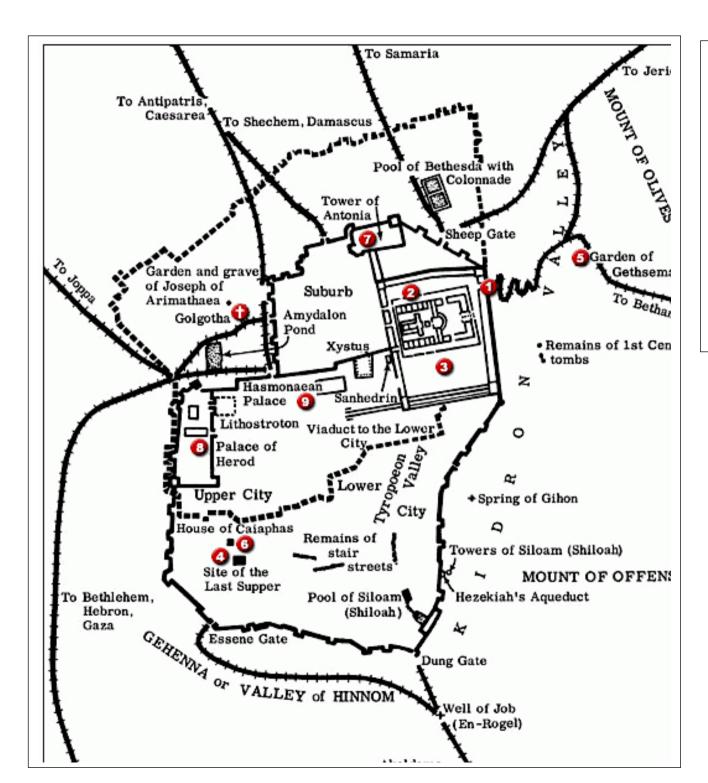
As we reflect on the resurrection of Jesus, we are reminded that even in our moments of deepest brokenness, God's love and grace prevail. Just as Jesus emerged from the tomb victorious, so too can we find healing and restoration through Him. As we celebrate this Resurrection Sunday, may we embrace the hope and joy of Easter, knowing that our Savior lives and reigns forevermore.

Will you, like the disciples, go proclaim to many that "He has risen from the dead?"



Source: https://churchpop.com/2015/03/29/the-timeline-of-holy-week-mapped-in-1-infograph





Source: https://bible-history.com/map-jesus

- 1. Golden Gate
- 2. The Temple
- 3. The Court of the Gentiles
- 4. Last Supper
- 5. Garden of Gethsemane
- 6. House of Caiaphas
- 7. Fortress of Antonia
- 3. Herod's Palace
- 9. Hasamonaean Palace
- 10. Golgotha