

Events of Jesus' Life during Holy Week From the Book of Mark

- Sunday** – Palm Sunday: Entry into Jerusalem and return to Bethany (Mark 11:1-11)
- Monday** – Cursing of the fig tree and cleansing of the temple (Mark 11:12-19)
- Tuesday** – Discourses – Teachings (Mark 11:20-13:37)
- Wednesday** – Anointing in Bethany and Judas' betrayal (Mark 14:1-11)
- Thursday** – Preparation for the Passover, Last Supper, Gethsemane, arrest, trial before Sanhedrin (Mark 14:12-72)
- Friday** – Trial before Pilate, condemnation, crucifixion, burial (Mark 15:1-47)
- Saturday** – Jesus in the tomb. (Mark 15:42-47)
- Sunday** – Easter: Resurrection (Mark 16:1-8)

The Barren Disciple – Peter
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
April 2, 2023

Text: Luke 22:54-62

Purpose: Peter denied Jesus three times on the night Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested. He was barren because of His lack of standing with the Lord. We too are barren as we reject our Lord and fail to do as He commands. But there is restoration available if we turn to Him and seek His forgiveness.

A man and his complaining wife went on vacation to Jerusalem. While they were there, the wife passed away. The undertaker told the husband, “You can have her buried here in the Holy Land for \$150 or we can have her shipped back home for \$5000.”



The husband thought about it and told the undertaker he would have her shipped back home. The undertaker asked him, “Why would you spend \$5000 to have her shipped home when you could have a beautiful burial here, and it would only cost \$150?”

The husband replied, “Long ago, a man died here, was buried here, and three days later, rose from the dead. I just can't take that chance!”

Today we come celebrating the day Jesus victoriously entered Jerusalem riding on a colt. Our responsive reading

at the opening of our service today outlines the festive mood the people were demonstrating. They saw Jesus coming into the City of David and they were ready to crown Him King.

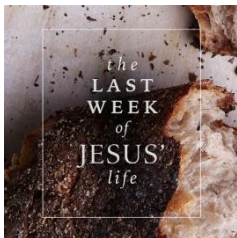


He came in peace to His people, but was well aware of the brewing betrayal of the Chief Priest, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, as well as one of His disciples, Judas. For one fleeting moment, Jesus was celebrated as their King.

But the rest of the week doesn't turn out so well for Jesus as King. He becomes the Lamb of God that is to take away the sins of the world. He willingly laid down His life so we could have a renewed relationship with God if we accept Jesus as our Savior.

An Overview of the Last Week of Jesus' Life

If you would take a moment and look on the inside of your bulletin, I have included a suggested daily bible reading based on the book of Matthew. Several of the gospel accounts include a few more details of that special week.



Holy Week—Daily Reading

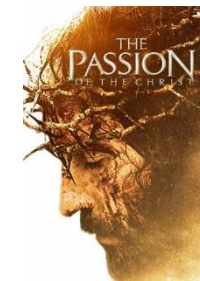
- Sun. April 2, 2023 – Palm Sunday – Matthew 21:1-11
- Mon. April 3, 2023—Overturning Tables – Matthew 21:12-17
- Tue. April 4, 2023—The Rejected Stone – Matthew 21: 33-46
- Wed. April 5, 2023—Many Called/Few Chosen – Matt 22: 1-14
- Thur. April 6, 2023 – Maundy Thursday – Matthew 26: 14-35
(Lord's Supper, Gethsemane, Judas' betrayal, arrest,

scourging, Peter's denial)

- Fri. April 7 2023 – Crucifixion of Jesus – Matthew 27: 32-54
- Sat., April 8, 2023 – Guards Posted at the Tomb – Matthew 27: 62-66
- Sun., April 9, 2023 – Resurrection Sunday – Matthew 28: 1-15

HE IS RISEN. HE IS RISEN INDEED!

If you have ever seen the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, you know it detailed the last 12 hours of Jesus' life. Beginning in the Garden of Gethsemane and ending at the tomb. There is a brief scene that shows Jesus on Sunday morning, but it is a small portion of the whole movie.

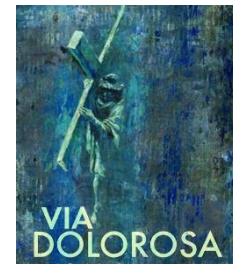


Maybe over the next week, you could set aside some time each day to read the passages found in Matthew. In doing so, you will prepare your heart and have a richer appreciation of the final week of Jesus' life.

There are so many different events occurring during the last week of Jesus' life, that we could take an entire year and examine one event each Sunday and still not exhaust the lessons that could be learned.

The Via Dolorosa

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to go to Israel with my mother. I vividly remember how much I was overwhelmed by the sights I saw and the places I stood. I was able to stand on the Mount of Olives and see the Eastern Gate through which Jesus entered Jerusalem. As I was standing there, in my mind's eye, I could see the



crowds cheering Jesus as He entered into the city so many years ago.

Jesus Looked

After the praise from the crowd died down, Jesus went into the city and walked around. I don't know why this scripture speaks to me so much, but it does. The text actually said, *“And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.”*

Jesus looked at all things.

When He walked into the temple, He saw the Laver of water where the priests washed their hands prior to touching the sacrifice. The priest had to be undefiled and the sacrifice had



to be unblemished as well. He would then enter the court of Priests where the sacrifice was tethered to one of the four horns, slaughtered and offered on the brazen altar.

Surrounding the Court of the Priests was a room where the priest's vestments were kept, a place for making cakes of bread for the showbread table, room where wood was stored for the altar fire, a place where salt was stored for preserving the meat, and a chamber for keeping the flame. Each of these things would be significant in relationship to the sacrifice that Jesus was going to offer in just a few days.



Standing high in the midst of the Temple stood the Holy of Holies. It was at this very spot that Abraham offered His son Isaac up to the Lord. The day had come where the *“Lord Himself will provide for Himself a sacrifice”* as quoted by Abraham centuries earlier. It was this very spot that David purchased the threshing floor and his son, Solomon built the first temple. It was this very spot where Babylon destroyed Solomon's temple over 550 years earlier. This temple mount was God's design. This temple mount was the place where for centuries sin was atoned for by the blood of animals and forgiveness was received.



Jesus understood that in a few days, He would be the perfect Lamb of God brought before priests and slaughtered by the hands of unclean sinners. His shed blood would cleanse humanity's sin once and for all. In generations to come, all that called upon the name of the Lord would be saved. Even today, if you call upon the name of Jesus, believe He is the Son of God and that God raised Him from the dead, according to the scripture *“You will be saved.”* Jesus' one selfless act on Calvary, would forever settle the question of sin and separation from God.

The magnitude of what Jesus was doing was missed by everyone. In the Book of Mark, it only records, *“He looked at all things.”* But the things that Jesus saw only reinforced why He had come and what His purpose was. Jesus had come to die.

While we were in Jerusalem, we walked down the hill from the Mount of Olives and entered the Garden where Jesus prayed the night of His betrayal. The olive trees there in that place are over 2000 years old. Even though we were not allowed into that area; I could still see those events unfold. In my mind's eye I could see Jesus taking His group of disciples there to pray. Earlier that evening, they met in the Upper Room to celebrate the Passover and now He was praying for the Father's will to be done as He was facing death by crucifixion.



What an awful night of trials, mocking, beating, and betrayal.

READ LUKE 22:47-53

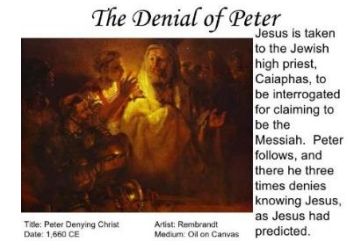
And the night of torture began.

The passage of scripture that I read this morning focuses upon one aspect of that night of torture and betrayal. Jesus' most loyal follower, Peter, was now in a state of denial. Peter was chosen as one of Jesus' disciples along with his other two brothers, James and John. They were known as the sons of thunder. These three had been in Jesus' inner circle. These three were always ready to do as Jesus led. They went out with the seventy healing the sick. One day, they were impatient and were ready to call down fire upon a village because they rejected the teachings of Jesus. They were the ones there at the Mount of Transfiguration and they were the ones that went with Jesus just a little further that night to pray with Him in the Garden.

Peter was the one that told Jesus in the Upper Room that not only His feet should be washed, but all of Him. Peter was the one that declared Jesus was the Son of the Living God. Peter was the one that was the outspoken spokesperson for the group. Peter claimed he was ready to go to Jerusalem to go to prison or die if necessary, with Jesus.



But Jesus knew Peter's heart and knew that when the critical time came, he would fold and deny Jesus. Jesus foretold that Peter would deny Jesus three times before the rooster would crow! How could this be true? Peter was the best of the best followers of Jesus. He was a passionate disciple and believer. How could Peter deny Him?



But we see in this passage that Peter followed, Peter denied, and then Peter remembered.

When the guards came and illegally arrested Jesus under the cover of darkness, Peter took a sword and struck the ear of the servant of the high priest. Jesus admonished Peter and healed the injured ear totally.

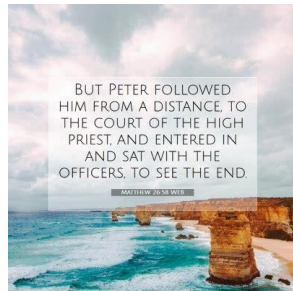
Verse 54 says, *“Having arrested Him (Jesus), they led Him, and brought Him to the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance.”*

But Peter followed at a distance. Now that the critical time had come for the companionship of devoted, loyal followers to stand with Jesus – they all abandoned the cause. Peter followed, but kept his distance.

How many of us are claiming to be followers of Jesus, but have not fully thrown our total commitment behind our words? We can talk a good game. We know all the right words to say when we are among other Christians. We have the right vocabulary, the right expressions, the right clothes, the right jewelry, and the right books on our book shelf – but are we fully committed?

When we are in the workplace, do we deny Jesus? When we are in the classroom, do we deny Jesus? When we are on the golf course, do we deny Jesus? When we are with our family, do we ignore our commitment to God? When we are put on the spot, do we do as Peter did and deny ever knowing Him? Peter was a follower, but in a moment of pressure, he caved in and rejected Jesus.

Jesus was inside the house going through an interrogation by the high priest, which was by the way – illegal. Peter was standing nearby in the courtyard warming himself by a fire. In the midst of His Lord's moment of trial, he was seeking to satisfy his own needs instead of standing with His Lord and Savior. How many of us are guilty of seeking to satisfy ourselves first and putting the needs of the Lord's church second or third on our list? How many of us are willing to deny ourselves so we can give more to missions? How many of us are willing to forgo our comfort so the message of Jesus can be



promoted among our family, friends, and neighbors? Just as Peter was guilty, we too are guilty of seeking to satisfy ourselves at the expense of Christ and His commandments.

As Peter was standing there warming himself, a servant girl came by and looked carefully at Peter and said “*This man was also with Jesus.*” I am sure panic filled Peter's heart because he quickly denied ever knowing Jesus.



A little while later, a second person identified Peter as being a disciple of Jesus. Loudly, Peter protested he did not know Jesus. In some of the other gospel accounts of Peter's denial, they say Peter called down curses when he denied Jesus.

Peter continued to linger there by the fire waiting for Jesus to come out of his trial with the high priest. After about an hour of standing and talking with one another, a third person caught the different dialect of Peter and identified him as a Galilean. They said, “*Surely, this fellow was with Him.*” Peter screamed out, “*I do not know Him!*”

And as he said that ... the rooster crowed. The prophecy spoken to Peter earlier that day by Jesus was now fulfilled. The denial was complete. The rooster crowed. The rejection was done.



We may not believe we are like Peter, but we are. We deny Jesus every day of our life. We do not give Him one breaths prayer in the morning. We do not love our neighbor as we should. We do not give of our time to the Lord's work. We do not serve on committees or as a deacon as we should. We do not honor God through our good conduct. We do not honor God with our language. We do not give as we should. We are not fully committed to the things of God because we are more concerned about our welfare – our family – our spouse – our bank account – our security – than the things of God.

We are like Peter and we are barren because of it. Only when we reorient our lives towards prayer, dedication, determination, obedience will we ever experience wholeness again.



Peter followed – Peter denied – and now Peter remembered. He remembered the words of Jesus and it crushed his spirit. Jesus could see Peter in the courtyard from where He was in the house. As the rooster crowed – Jesus turned His head and simply looked at Peter.

I don't know how to describe that look. Rembrandt tried to capture that scene. You can only guess what Jesus' expression would be – disappointment, dissatisfaction, distress, frustration, resignation, anger, sadness, loneliness, pain, sorrow, and/or grief.



And Peter's response to that look was unbelievable. Here was the bold disciple. Here was the great fisherman. Here was the leader of the disciples – stricken with grief over his denial. The scripture simply says, "*So Peter went out and wept bitterly!*"

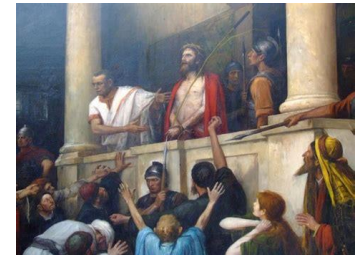
Our denying disciple is bitterly broken and grief stricken guilty.

I believe we all must come to a point in our life when we truly examine our life and see how far we have come to what we should be doing. We need an honest assessment of our righteousness. When we look in the mirror, we need to see our greed and our selfishness. When we look at our heart, we need to face our fears and examine our motives.

Only then will we be able to recognize our righteousness is as filthy rags before a holy God. We are only able to stand before God because of what Jesus did there on Calvary. When we accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God and believe He was raised from the dead for our sakes, then and only then will we be able to be reconciled back to God.

The Via Dolorosa

The rest of that evening, Peter is nowhere to be found. But Jesus walked the way of suffering known as the Via Dolorosa. This was a road that wandered through Jerusalem. I have walked this path through the streets of Jerusalem. In my mind's eye, I saw Jesus being paraded to the praetorian to be judged. I wandered along the way and saw beautiful sanctuaries built to worship along the last journey of Jesus to the cross.



I walked where Jesus walked to the edge of the city where Jesus was crucified for our sake.

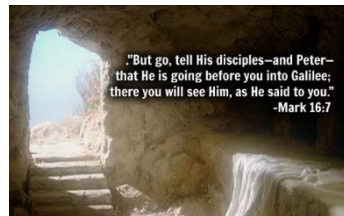


Jesus entered Jerusalem knowing that the Via Dolorosa was quietly calling Him to obedience. Jesus understood that the will of the Father included suffering. He had read Isaiah 53 and knew the awfulness of the agony that would be unleashed upon His body. But He chose to walk it anyway. Why? So, we might be restored and renewed when we claim Jesus Christ as our Savior.

That day almost 2000 years ago had been called the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Palm Sunday is a day of celebration. Our King has finally announced publicly that He is the Messiah. But it is also a day of solemn reflection because we see what is coming on Friday. Just as Peter denied ever knowing Jesus, each of us have, at one point in our life, denied Jesus.



The good news is that there is restoration when we acknowledge our sins and come back to Jesus. The angel at the empty tomb on Sunday morning sent word for Jesus' disciples to meet Him in Galilee. What I like so much about that message is when the angel said, "*But go, tell His disciples – and Peter – that He is going before you in Galilee.*" The phrase "*and Peter*" captivates my attention.



Peter had denied Jesus, but Jesus is still seeking a relationship with His disciple. Jesus has not given up on those that claim to be a follower but are far from Him.

I am here to tell you; Jesus has not given up on you. No matter the betrayal, denial, or sin – Jesus is willing to restore you into full fellowship once again. Today can be a day of celebration and renewal if you are willing to repent, and receive the free gift of grace offered by Jesus Christ.

LET US PRAY