



west  
end  
baptist

Lent Prayer Guide  
2025



# *real* hope

*The following verses and meditations leading up to Easter and the Ascension contain many people that were present in those last hours and three days. As you read, think about the effects Jesus' willing sacrifice had on each one. What impact have they had, are having and will have on your own life?*

## Barabbas Symbolizes Each One of Us

**3/5 Matthew 27:21-26** <sup>21</sup> "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. <sup>22</sup> "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" <sup>23</sup> "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" <sup>24</sup> When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" <sup>25</sup> All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!" <sup>26</sup> Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

We are so like Barabbas – deserving death but getting life instead. Unmeasurable mercy. Everlasting grace.

**3/6 Mark 15:6-15** <sup>6</sup> Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. <sup>7</sup> A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. <sup>8</sup> The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. <sup>9</sup> "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, <sup>10</sup> knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. <sup>11</sup> But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. <sup>12</sup> "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them. <sup>13</sup> "Crucify him!" they shouted. <sup>14</sup> "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" <sup>15</sup> Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

A murderer set free – the most horrible of sin unpunished. Do you think any of your sins unforgivable?

**3/7 Luke 23: 20-25** <sup>20</sup> Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. <sup>21</sup> But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" <sup>22</sup> For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him." <sup>23</sup> But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. <sup>24</sup> So Pilate decided to grant their demand. <sup>25</sup> He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

Thanks be to God! We, like Barabbas, don't deserve life, but Jesus Christ, Messiah, has made a way for us.

**3/8 John 18:38-40** <sup>38</sup> "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. <sup>39</sup> But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews?'" <sup>40</sup> They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Pray gratitude for your undeserved salvation.

## Christ Changes Everything Because Christ is the Son of God

**3/10 Matthew 27:27-31** <sup>27</sup> Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. <sup>28</sup> They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup> and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. <sup>30</sup> They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. <sup>31</sup> After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Consider what physical torture He endured for you. What physical sacrifice have you made with God's strength?

**3/11 Mark 15:16-20** <sup>16</sup>The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. <sup>17</sup>They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. <sup>18</sup>And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" <sup>19</sup>Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. <sup>20</sup>And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Consider the humiliation Jesus suffered. Are you willing to suffer the same for the Kingdom of God?

**3/12 Luke 23:33-34** <sup>33</sup>When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup>Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Consider that Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers just as He forgives all believers. What have you forgiven with the power of our Creator God?

**John 18:16-18** <sup>16</sup>Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). <sup>18</sup>There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Crucifixion was for the absolute worst of criminals in all the Roman world. He who was sinless took all our sins on Him to give us the hope of eternal life.

**3/13 Mark 15:29-32** <sup>29</sup>Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup>come down from the cross and save yourself!" <sup>31</sup>In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! <sup>32</sup>Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Compare the cruelty of the crowd at the foot of the cross to the verses for 4/14 – the thief's trust and hope.

**3/14 Luke 23:35-38** <sup>35</sup>The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One." <sup>36</sup>The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar <sup>37</sup>and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." <sup>38</sup>There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the Jews.

During Jesus' ministry He had proven over and over who and what He was, but these powerful men refused to see. Thank God that you have seen and accepted Jesus as your Savior.

**3/15 John 19:31-37** <sup>31</sup> Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. <sup>32</sup>The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. <sup>33</sup>But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup>Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. <sup>35</sup>The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. <sup>36</sup>These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," <sup>37</sup>and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

Old Testament prophecies and promises fulfilled! Thank God for His infinite mercy and faithfulness.

**3/17 Matthew 27:62-66** <sup>62</sup>The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. <sup>63</sup>"Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' <sup>64</sup>So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." <sup>65</sup>"Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." <sup>66</sup>So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

Treachery and disbelief followed Jesus even after His death, but praise God for the resurrection.

**3/17 John 19:31-37** <sup>31</sup> Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. <sup>32</sup>The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. <sup>33</sup>But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup>Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. <sup>35</sup>The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. <sup>36</sup>These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," <sup>37</sup>and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

John the disciple recorded for us the truth and we are thankful to have his words and all the faithful who listened to God and wrote His words.

**3/18 Matthew 28:11-15** <sup>11</sup>While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. <sup>12</sup>When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, <sup>13</sup>telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.'" <sup>14</sup>If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." <sup>15</sup>So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Lies never last – time reveals the truth. We know beyond a shadow of a doubt the real Truth!

## God is Powerful and His Power Makes Our Hope Sure

**3/19 John 19: 1-11** Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. <sup>2</sup>The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe <sup>3</sup>and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. <sup>4</sup>Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." <sup>5</sup>When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" <sup>6</sup>As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." <sup>7</sup>The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." <sup>8</sup>When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, <sup>9</sup>and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup>"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" <sup>11</sup>Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

Even as Jesus stood before Pilate beaten and bleeding, He was in control. NO ONE made Him endure this time.

**3/20 John 19: 12-22** <sup>12</sup>From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." <sup>13</sup>When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). <sup>14</sup>It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. <sup>15</sup>But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. <sup>16</sup>Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). <sup>18</sup>There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. <sup>19</sup>Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. <sup>20</sup>Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. <sup>21</sup>The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." <sup>22</sup>Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

Pilate did not recognize Jesus as a king, but He was, and not just of the Jews! He is the King of all the earth, beloved by all who worship Him.

**3/21 John 19: 23-27** <sup>23</sup>When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. <sup>24</sup>"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So this is what the soldiers did. <sup>25</sup>Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," <sup>27</sup>and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Even as He lingered on the cross, He took care of those who loved Him, just as He cares for us.

**3/22 Mark 15:22-28** <sup>22</sup>They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). <sup>23</sup>Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. <sup>24</sup>And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. <sup>25</sup>It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup>The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the Jews. <sup>27</sup>They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>28</sup>and the scripture was fulfilled which says, “Has counted with the lawless ones.”

The humiliation of being crucified on a cross was compounded by being crucified with thieves. What do you do when you're suffering? Do you go to Jesus?

**3/24 Luke 23:32-34** <sup>32</sup>Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. <sup>33</sup>When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup>Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Such forgiveness – in the very moment of His agony. How long does it take you to forgive?

**3/25 Matthew 27:54** When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

Can you acknowledge Jesus as God as the tough, battle-hardened Roman centurion did?

### **United With Christ Our Struggles are Hope Filled Because of Christ's Own Suffering on Our Behalf**

**3/26 Matthew 27:32** As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.

Simon was minding his own business when forced into a horrible situation. His service as thrust on him, but you are gifted to serve in the body of the Church.

**3/27 Mark 15:21** A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

Down through hundreds of years Simon of Cyrene's name has come to us because of the role he played that day. What ministry will you be remembered for?

**3/28 Luke 23: 26-31** <sup>26</sup>As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. <sup>27</sup>A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. <sup>28</sup>Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup>For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ <sup>30</sup>Then “they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”” <sup>31</sup>For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

There is hope that Jesus found some comfort in those who bore witness to his sorrow and grief.

**3/29 Matthew 27:57-61** <sup>57</sup> As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. <sup>59</sup> Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, <sup>60</sup> and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. <sup>61</sup> Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

Joseph of Arimathea was a powerful man in Jewish religious circles, but he acted with courage to give the body of the Christ a proper burial. How's your courage in standing up for Christ?

**3/31 Mark 15:42-47** <sup>42</sup> It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. <sup>44</sup> Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. <sup>45</sup> When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. <sup>46</sup> So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. <sup>47</sup> Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

Joseph was hoping against hope to receive the body, so when Pilate agreed, he was ready. Are you prepared to work in the Kingdom?

**4/1 Luke 23:50-56** <sup>50</sup> Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, <sup>51</sup> who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup> Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. <sup>53</sup> Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. <sup>54</sup> It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. <sup>55</sup> The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. <sup>56</sup> Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

Even a Little Faith and Fear Can Turn to Great Courage

**4/2 John 3:3-14** Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." <sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." <sup>4</sup> "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." <sup>9</sup> "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. <sup>10</sup> "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. <sup>12</sup> I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up.

**John 19:38-42** <sup>38</sup> Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. <sup>39</sup> He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. <sup>40</sup> Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. <sup>41</sup> At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup> Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Nicodemus had come to Jesus at night because he feared the Jewish leaders. Look at him now! He's publicly assisting in a criminal's burial – he has outed himself as a follower of Jesus. It changed his life forever – is your life changed forever by Jesus?

### **Real Hope, Jesus is Alive**

**4/3 Matthew 27:55-56** <sup>55</sup> Many women were there [at the cross], watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. <sup>56</sup> Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Faithful women who had long supported Jesus and His disciples with funds and service. How faithful have you been with your money and service?

**4/4 Matthew 28:1-10** After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. <sup>2</sup> There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." <sup>8</sup> So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Women held little to no power in the ancient world, yet these ladies were first to see the resurrected Christ. Have you encountered Him?

**4/5 Mark 16:1-8** When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. <sup>2</sup> Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb <sup>3</sup> and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" <sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. <sup>5</sup> As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup> "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" <sup>8</sup> Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

The women were ready with their cleansing cloths and spices to wash and prepare Jesus' body for burial. Were they ever surprised! Has God ever surprised you?



**4/6 John 20:1-2** Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. <sup>2</sup> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

Jesus had saved Mary Magdalene from a horrible fate – demon possession. She was devoted to Him for saving her, but it went further than her service in return – He had come to mean everything to her. What's Jesus to you?

**4/7 Luke 24:1-11** On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. <sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup> In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " <sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words. <sup>9</sup> When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

The miracles and teachings about Christ are nonsense to a lost world. What will you do to change that?

**4/8 Mark 16:9-11** <sup>9</sup> When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. <sup>10</sup> She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. <sup>11</sup> When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

Why was His resurrection so hard to believe? Is His victory over death hard for you to accept or does it give you hope?

### **Hope For the World**

**4/9 Matthew 28:16-20** <sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

He loved His disciples. He had spent three years with them. Now He gives them the power to share the joy of salvation. Are you bearing witness? Are you making disciples?

**4/10 Luke 24:36-43** <sup>36</sup> While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>37</sup> They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. <sup>38</sup> He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? <sup>39</sup> Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." <sup>40</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate it in their presence.

The final proof of His living was to be touched and to eat. He wanted them to believe beyond any doubt. Do you believe?

**4/11 Luke 24:44-53** <sup>44</sup> He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." <sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." <sup>50</sup> When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. <sup>51</sup> While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. <sup>53</sup> And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Joy and praising God. Do you find joy – enough to praise God? He is worthy. He is worthy.

**4/12 Mark 16:14-20** <sup>14</sup> Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; <sup>18</sup> they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." <sup>19</sup> After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup> Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

The last time His disciples see Him is at the right hand of God. What wonder and anticipation that gives. Can you feel it?

### **Real Hope Results from Meeting Christ Personally**

**4/14 Luke 23:39-43** <sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup> But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? <sup>41</sup> We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

The promise Jesus made to that thief is a promise He makes to all who believe. Pray to anticipate the fulfillment of that promise.

**4/15 John 20:3-10** <sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both were running, but the other disciple [John] outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup> as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup> Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Ho hum. The tomb's empty. Why? What does it mean? They didn't connect His repeated telling them what would happen. Thank God for the gift of His Word – our Bibles.

**4/16 John 20:19-21** <sup>19</sup> On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

Jesus offers us the same peace – the peace the world cannot understand because it doesn't know. Do you have His peace?

**4/17 John 20:24-31** <sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." <sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." <sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." <sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Your doubts don't threaten God, nor are you punished for them. But, you are expected to trust Him.

**4/17 John 21:1-8** Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: <sup>2</sup> Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. <sup>3</sup> "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup> Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup> He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. <sup>6</sup> He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. <sup>7</sup> Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. <sup>8</sup> The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

Peter needed to be busy; he couldn't stand just sitting around grieving, so he went back to his old job – fishing. When you have struggles do you go back to old habits? Perhaps habits Jesus freed you from?

## **Our Hope Spurs Evangelism**

**4/18 Matthew 28:16-20** <sup>16</sup>Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Our only hope is found in Jesus. Don't you want that for the people you meet, work with, and love? What are you going to do about it?

**4/19 Luke 24:45-53** <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup>He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." <sup>50</sup>When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. <sup>51</sup>While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. <sup>52</sup>Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. <sup>53</sup>And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

We have the Holy Spirit to open our minds to understand the word of God. Such a blessing we have His written word at our fingertips.

*Compiled and written by John Ramirez and Tina Whitworth.*

*Scriptures are from the New International Version.*