

5 Days to Calvary: Holy Week Devotions

Introduction:

We often talk about Christmas as the season of giving, connecting the arrival of Jesus as God's gift to the world. However, the further Western culture has slouched from the biblical, historical, and theological truths about Christmas the less it feels like a true season of giving. In the beloved, annual Christmas special *Lucy* offers Charlie Brown a biting critique that hits its target with increasing precision year by year, "We all know that Christmas is a big commercial racket."

But for those of us who follow Jesus, Easter season maintains the clarity of its origination with far greater authenticity. After all, it's much easier to hijack a colorful, pine tree surrounded with gifts than to steal a bloody, Roman cross surrounded by mourners.

In 2023, the *New York Times* reported what is perhaps the sweetest heist you'll ever read about. Joby Pool broke into an industrial unit and stole a trailer containing 200,000 Cadbury Crème Eggs. The trailer's value was estimated at \$37,000.¹ This kind of caper elicits less horrified disbelief and more of a baffled grin as it sounds like Willy Wonka was the mastermind behind the plan, not Al Capone. This story, while legally serious, is socially humorous because Easter has yet to be successfully commercialized. You can't steal Easter without looking like a fool. Even skeptics and doubters understand this season is about stripping away the layers until only love remains.

Jesus wasn't just given; He gave. He didn't just give a gift; He gave His life. When we see the Cross we find ourselves in the presence of something so unthinkably selfless and sacrificial it resists all attempts of the culture to dilute its power. As we look at the biblical and historical scenes associated with the final week of Jesus' life, we see the giving Savior, the One who takes on burdens so we might walk in freedom.

As we walk through Holy Week, may it point us toward the beauty of the Christ not only in His resurrected glory but in His sacrificial grace.

¹ Daniel Victor, "Thief Steals Nearly 200,000 Cadbury Creme Eggs in Britain," *New York Times* (2-15-23)