

# THE WEEK BEFORE

**BIG IDEA:** PREPARATION SHAPES CELEBRATION. AND THIS WEEK WE PREPARE TO CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST NEXT WEEK.

**KICKING IT OFF:** What has been your past experience, if any, with engaging with Holy Week; that is, the week before Easter?

## KEY SCRIPTURES

### LUKE 22:39–53

*“Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.*

*“Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.” While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?” And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”*

### LUKE 22:54–62

*“Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with him.” But he denied it. “Woman, I don’t know him,” he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” “Man, I am not!” Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.” Peter*

*replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.”*

### LUKE 22:66–23:12, 23-25

*“At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. “If you are the Messiah,” they said, “tell us.” Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.” They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?” He replied, “You say that I am.” Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.” Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.” So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “You have said so,” Jesus replied. Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.” But they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.” On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies...But with loud shouts they insistently*

demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 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."

### **LUKE 23:26, 32-46**

"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... Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 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. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 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." The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read: *THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS*. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last."

### **DISCUSSION:**

1. Read aloud of Jesus' prayer and arrest in Luke 22:39-46. As Jesus was praying with so much anguish that his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground, the disciples were lulled into sleep. Twice he warned them to pray so they would not fall into temptation. In what areas do you struggle with being metaphorically lulled into sleep rather than praying against temptation? How might you be more diligent?
2. Despite the suffering He was about to face, Jesus prays, "Father, not my will but yours be done." Share a time when you faced something difficult, but were willing to surrender to God's will rather than your own. When have you done the opposite?
3. Read aloud where Peter disowns Jesus in Luke 22:54-62. In what ways have you, like Peter, denied Jesus by your words or actions? What happened as a result?
4. Read aloud where Jesus stands before Pilate and Herod in Luke 22:66-23:12, 23-25. Despite Pilate's continual denial that Jesus had done anything worthy of death, the frenzied crowd demanded Jesus be crucified. In essence, they condemned Jesus because of their own unbelief. When have you been tempted to get caught up in "the crowd" and turn away from Jesus?
5. Read aloud where Jesus is crucified in Luke 23:26-46. As Jesus was crucified, despite the mockery He endured, He prayed: "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." What is your reaction to the grace Jesus gave then, and the continued grace and forgiveness He gives you now?



**WRAPPING IT UP:** Discuss where you see yourself in the account of Jesus' last days leading up to His crucifixion. With whom do you most resonate? The disciples lethargy? Peter's denial? The crowd's unbelief? The repentant criminal?

**PRAYER FOCUS:** Pray for all those who will hear the Gospel message at the Easter service at the Tyson Events Center, that lives would be transformed.

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." Luke 22:42



**BIG IDEA:** THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREATEST WOW THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN.

**KICKING IT OFF:** Describe the grandest WOW you've ever experienced.

## KEY SCRIPTURES

### **MATTHEW 28:1-11**

*"After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 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. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 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." So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

### **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. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "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. 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.'" Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid."*

### **LUKE 24:1-6**

*"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. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 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? He is not here; he has risen!"*

### **JOHN 20:1-18**

*"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. 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!" So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw*

and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I

will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her."

### **1 CORINTHIANS 15:16-17**

*"For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins."*

### **DISCUSSION:**

Read aloud each of the accounts of Jesus' resurrection found in the four Gospels and discuss the following:

1. What similarities do you find in each of the stories? What differences?
2. Describe the physical reaction of each of the eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection and/or to His appearance to them. How do you think you would have reacted if you were present for this event?
3. Is it easier for you to believe in Jesus' teachings than in his resurrection? Why or why not?
4. Discuss how this event of Jesus' resurrection from the dead became a turning point in the world.
5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:16–17. Discuss the connection between Jesus' resurrection and your faith. What hope do you have because of what Jesus has done?



**WRAPPING IT UP:** If there was no resurrection, we should abandon all things Christian. But if Jesus did rise, he's the only man in history who predicted his own death and resurrection and then pulled it off. He's worth following. If you're on the line, make a decision to cross the line to faith in Jesus.

**PRAYER FOCUS:** Pray for all those who attended our Easter service at the Tyson – that many lives will be transformed by the message of the Gospel.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." 1 Corinthians 15:16-17*