

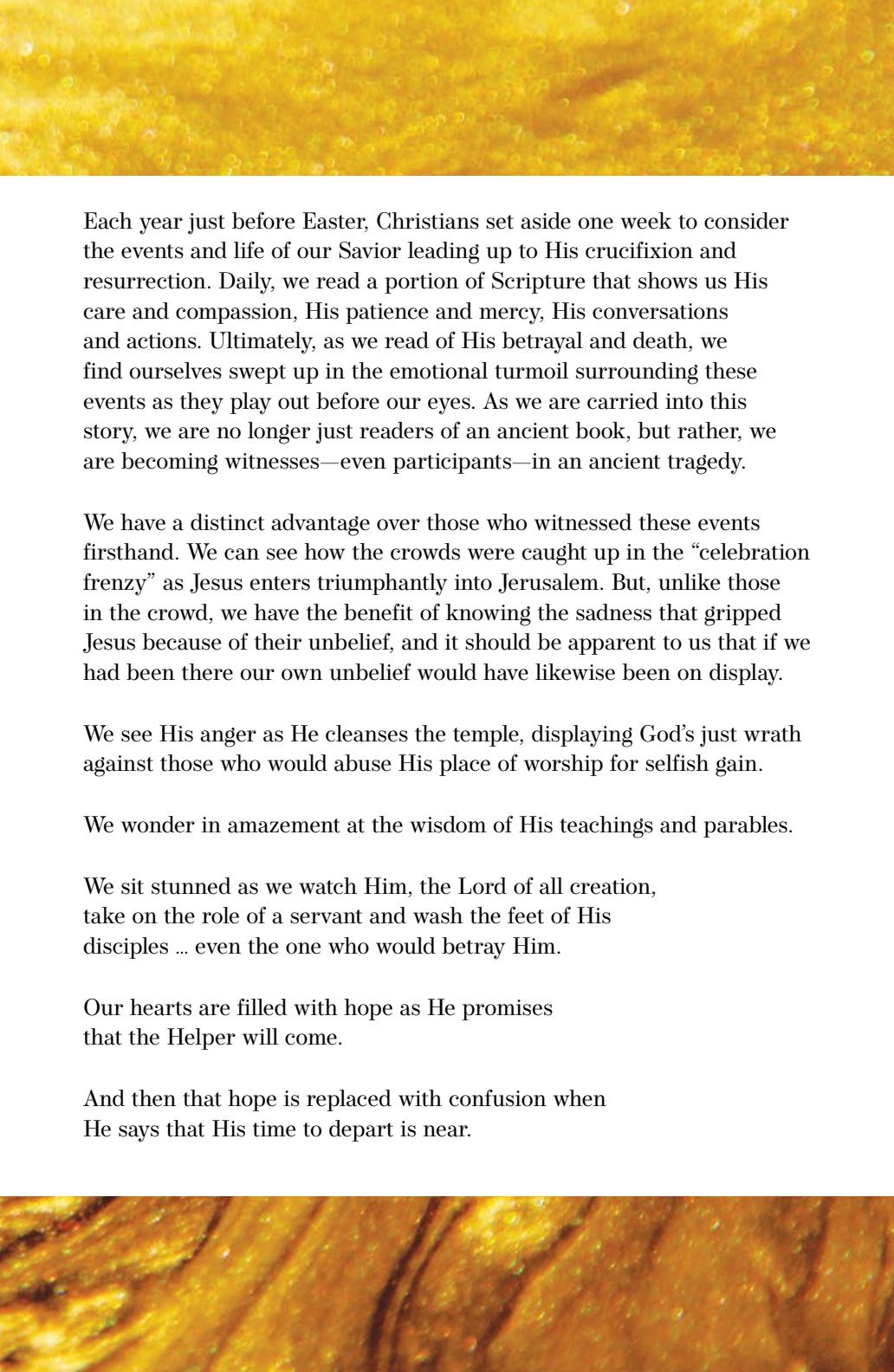


# HOLY WEEK

Devotional Guide 2020  
Jesus, The Light of the World



# INTRODUCTION



Each year just before Easter, Christians set aside one week to consider the events and life of our Savior leading up to His crucifixion and resurrection. Daily, we read a portion of Scripture that shows us His care and compassion, His patience and mercy, His conversations and actions. Ultimately, as we read of His betrayal and death, we find ourselves swept up in the emotional turmoil surrounding these events as they play out before our eyes. As we are carried into this story, we are no longer just readers of an ancient book, but rather, we are becoming witnesses—even participants—in an ancient tragedy.

We have a distinct advantage over those who witnessed these events firsthand. We can see how the crowds were caught up in the “celebration frenzy” as Jesus enters triumphantly into Jerusalem. But, unlike those in the crowd, we have the benefit of knowing the sadness that gripped Jesus because of their unbelief, and it should be apparent to us that if we had been there our own unbelief would have likewise been on display.

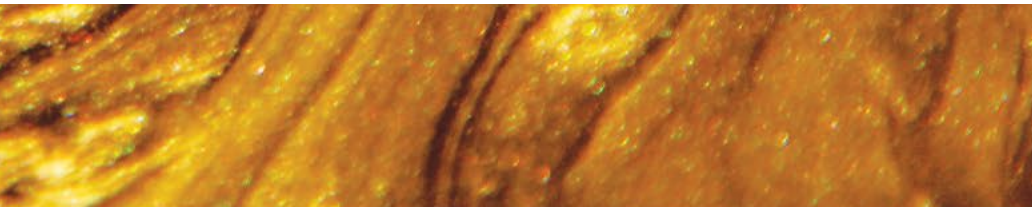
We see His anger as He cleanses the temple, displaying God’s just wrath against those who would abuse His place of worship for selfish gain.

We wonder in amazement at the wisdom of His teachings and parables.


We sit stunned as we watch Him, the Lord of all creation, take on the role of a servant and wash the feet of His disciples ... even the one who would betray Him.

Our hearts are filled with hope as He promises that the Helper will come.

And then that hope is replaced with confusion when He says that His time to depart is near.







We sit in silence as we read His words ... His prayers ... first for His disciples, and then His prayers for us ... for you and me ... and for Christians that will come after us! For our unity and sanctification.

We shout with rage as Jesus is betrayed and arrested.

We seethe with anger even as fear creeps into our hearts, knowing if He can be unjustly accused and sentenced ... beaten ... mocked ... crucified, what might our own fate be?

All of these emotions, fear, shame, sadness, confusion, dismay, and disappointment gripped the hearts of the disciples and other followers of Jesus.

Then, as Sunday unfolds, we realize that the story we thought was an ancient tragedy isn't ancient after all. It's timeless. Eternal. Just as much for us today as it was for them. And it isn't a tragedy. It's an epic, a true story of incomparable victory!

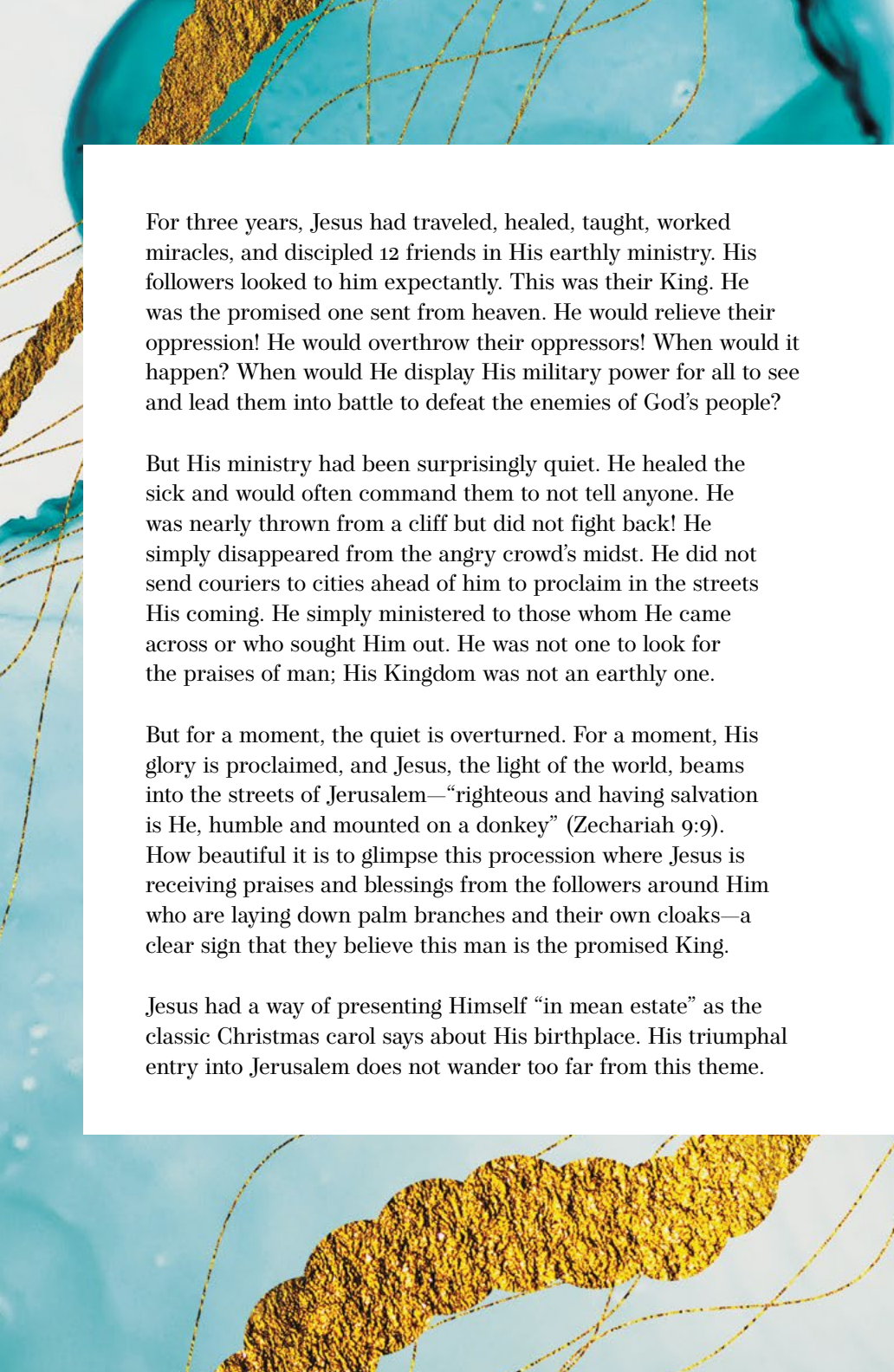
If we continue to allow ourselves to stay in the story, we find our hearts racing as we run with John to the empty tomb that Sunday morning, rejoicing with all the believers that what Jesus had promised has now come true! Sin has been dealt with once and for all. Death has been defeated. Satan has been vanquished. Jesus has risen victorious, and we are His!

My prayer for you is that you will put yourself in the story. Imagine you're there, feeling what they felt as they witnessed what they witnessed. This is in one sense a short journey of just seven days, but it is a journey that began in eternity past and continues into eternity future. As you step into His story of grace, may you have a fresh and renewed understanding of His grace as He refreshes your heart in the beauty of His love for you in the finished work of Jesus.



# **PALM SUNDAY**

The Light Dawns on David's City  
Mark 11:1-11


The background of the page is an abstract composition. It features a light blue background with several thin, golden, thread-like lines that crisscross across the frame. There are also larger, more textured golden shapes, including a prominent, elongated, and somewhat irregular golden mass in the upper left corner and another similar but more rounded one in the lower right corner. The overall effect is one of delicate, shimmering patterns.

For three years, Jesus had traveled, healed, taught, worked miracles, and disciplesd 12 friends in His earthly ministry. His followers looked to him expectantly. This was their King. He was the promised one sent from heaven. He would relieve their oppression! He would overthrow their oppressors! When would it happen? When would He display His military power for all to see and lead them into battle to defeat the enemies of God's people?

But His ministry had been surprisingly quiet. He healed the sick and would often command them to not tell anyone. He was nearly thrown from a cliff but did not fight back! He simply disappeared from the angry crowd's midst. He did not send couriers to cities ahead of him to proclaim in the streets His coming. He simply ministered to those whom He came across or who sought Him out. He was not one to look for the praises of man; His Kingdom was not an earthly one.

But for a moment, the quiet is overturned. For a moment, His glory is proclaimed, and Jesus, the light of the world, beams into the streets of Jerusalem—"righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). How beautiful it is to glimpse this procession where Jesus is receiving praises and blessings from the followers around Him who are laying down palm branches and their own cloaks—a clear sign that they believe this man is the promised King.

Jesus had a way of presenting Himself "in mean estate" as the classic Christmas carol says about His birthplace. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem does not wander too far from this theme.



He rides on a donkey—the mode of travel for the common man in that day—which is borrowed. Yet through this occasion, we see the humble power of our Savior. He has knowledge of the donkey and its colt from far off and that His disciples need only say the Lord has need of it. He has dominion over the colt who has never been ridden before by any man. He does not send out invitations ahead of time to come and praise Him; the crowd comes of their own accord because His fame and popularity has spread, and the people can contain their excitement no longer. Jesus has bridled His celebrity for the past three years because He has not come to cause a revolt or political upheaval. But God allows this sliver in time to give His friends and us a glimpse of His glory and a foretaste of the triumphal entry to come. It is as if He is allowing that city to glance at His sheathed sword, the weapon that He could have wielded against the powers of this world at any moment He wanted, but instead would turn against Himself to defeat an enemy far greater.

It is an especially solemn thought to wonder if a few in that crowd praising Jesus on Sunday might have on Friday been crying, “Crucify him.” We know one disciple would betray Him and another disciple, who surely was joining in the worship that day, would later that week deny he knew Him. How fickle, fearful, and doubtful is the heart of man! We can only come to the roadside with everyone else and acclaim our Savior who knows our past and future faults and cry, “Help me, save me, Jesus. Blessed are you, the Son of God!”

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**Sarah Merrick**, Director of Kids Discipleship

**How does  
Jesus’ entry  
to Jerusalem  
speak to us  
about who  
Jesus is and  
the nature of  
His mission?**

# MONDAY

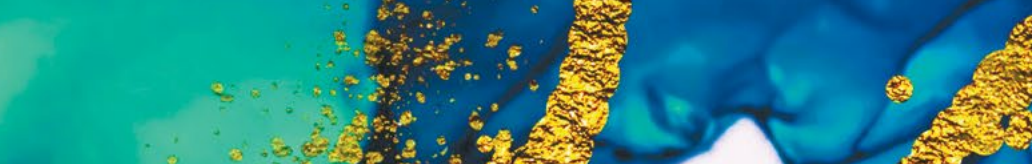
The Light Exposes  
Dead Religion  
Mark 11:12-19

Years ago, I was invited to be the speaker for an event focused on bringing attention to the issue of human sex trafficking. Now, I did my best, but to be honest, the message wasn't great. And probably worse—it was long. And actually, I had caught the organizer saying "Finally!" under his breath when I was done. And in that moment, all I felt was both incredible shame and anger. And sadly, what that revealed was that all I really cared about was not Christ, not sex trafficking ... but myself.

I share that vulnerable moment to expose how I (and if we were honest, all of us) can outwardly appear very righteous, but inwardly we are guilty of the hypocrisy of dead religion.

On Monday of Jesus' final week, He confronted the hypocritical, dead religion of the Jewish people. First, Jesus encounters "a fig tree in leaf" (Mark 11:13). But coming near, He saw no fruit, and thus Jesus curses the tree. But, why? Now, physically speaking, "a fig tree in leaf" signaled that the tree should have had fruit. But the deeper spiritual truth was that Jesus was rebuking the Jews that had the deceptive appearance of spirituality, but were, in reality, fruitless.





But not only that, this deadness would now be visibly displayed when Jesus entered the temple on Monday. Upon arriving, Jesus angrily overturned the tables of those busy selling animals, saying, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations. But you have made it a den of robbers!” (Mark 11:17) But, what was Jesus so angry about? Well, this selling was not in and of itself wrong. Worshippers had travelled far for the Passover, and it would be too long to bring their own animals. Yet, the trade market was actually occurring inside the “Court of Gentiles.” So, the Jews were actually “robbing” the Gentiles of their ability to worship God. And thus, Jesus was exposing Jewish ethnocentrism and, in turn, how little these Jews actually knew and worshipped God themselves.

What was the solution to the dead religion of the Jews? The answer was found not only in Jesus shining light on their dead religion on Monday. The final answer would only come on Friday and Sunday. You see, on Friday, Jesus would meet another tree where He’d be willingly cursed, and the temple of His body destroyed for our sin. And on Friday, Jesus would be rejected so that He could give thieves access to Paradise where they could eat again of the tree of life. And on Sunday, Jesus’ temple would be raised indestructible, and the Church would be birthed—without walls and including all nations.

But today is Monday. And every day should be a “Monday”—where Jesus shines light on wrong things in our life but also right things done for wrong reasons. Let’s confess, repent, and turn to Christ this week—bearing true fruit once again.

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**Tony Thomas**, Church Planting Intern

**What sin,  
visible and  
invisible, is  
Jesus shining  
on and  
exposing in  
my own life?**



The background of the page is an abstract composition of vibrant blue and yellow textures. A thick, irregular yellow line, resembling a rope or a crack in paint, runs vertically down the left side. The blue areas have a mottled, watercolor-like appearance. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular area on the left.

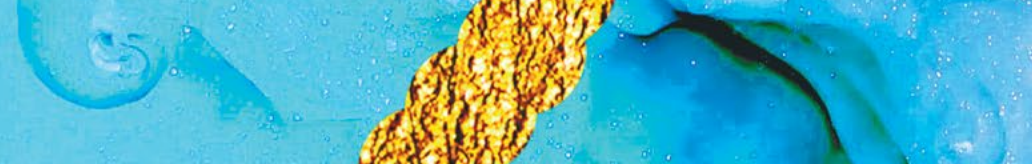
# TUESDAY

The Light Confronts  
the Darkness  
Mark 11:20-13:37

It was a busy night in the streets of Siem Reap, Cambodia, as my friends and I just finished exploring the ruins of Ankor Wat, the largest religious temple in the world.

We were roaming a vibrant marketplace in search for gifts and souvenirs when we came across a stand with a collection of Daniel Wellington watches. From afar, these watches looked exactly like the original, but when you got a little closer, you could see the subtle differences in the logo and the fact that the watch wasn't actually working. But I wasn't too worried about it. I could use my phone for time anyway. I proudly sported a nice-looking watch as I returned home. During a lunch with one of my friends, I felt pretty good about how the watch looked until I noticed he was wearing the same watch. Only this wasn't a cheap replica, it was the real deal.

As I began to pull my sleeve over my wrist, he notices and says, "Hey! Your watch is the wrong time!" At this moment, my perceived image of sophistication quickly turned into embarrassment. Our watches looked the same on the outside but mine was broken on the inside. It was nothing more than a mask; meant, in all its glamor, to distract you from its insufficiency.



Nothing confronts what is fake faster than what is truly genuine. On this day of Holy Week, we see Jesus being met with the hostility of the religious leaders. One after another, the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees, the Herodians, the Sadducees, despite their differences, all look for a means in which they could find Jesus at fault and guilty of being arrested. You see, these religious leaders were supposed to be the ones setting the example. The ones leading the way. Instead, they were the ones oppressing the people of God with heavy religious burdens. Their standards for others did not match the standards for themselves and it reeked of hypocrisy.

Now, if I'm being completely honest, I'm not that different. I try hard to make my outer garment and identity picture perfect. As I do this I forget about and ignore the cleansing that I desperately need inside. Just like my watch, all it's doing is hiding the issue. I'm broken on the inside; you're broken on the inside. That's the reality of sin. We can trick everyone around us but as we see in today's passage, there's no fooling God.

Here's the good news, Jesus confronts our hypocrisy, but He doesn't leave us there. The light of Jesus challenges the darkness within our hearts and overcomes that darkness through the work of the cross. By the blood of Jesus, "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." When Jesus comes again on that day of Judgment, it is through none other than Jesus himself that we will be able to enter the eternal paradise with our Lord.

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**Kevin Chung**, Worship Leader

**In what ways  
am I tempted  
to practice  
religiosity before  
others but not  
true spirituality  
in my heart?**



# WEDNESDAY

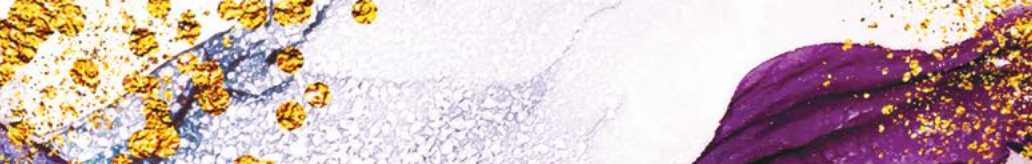
The Light  
Stirs Adoration  
Mark 14:1-11

It is two days before the Passover and Christ's crucifixion, and we know that Jesus is fully aware His death is fast approaching. Jesus is reclining at the table when a woman comes and breaks open a costly ointment and pours it out on Him. We see from other accounts of this story that this unnamed woman is likely Mary, whose brother Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus. By breaking the container none of the oil was preserved—she gave it all. Mark records the cost of this fragrant gift—300 denarii—a whole year's wages. In a culture where women were largely prohibited from earning a wage of their own, this ointment was likely a family heirloom and precious not only in cost but in sentimental value. It was an extravagant sacrifice.

Why would she have done such a thing? We see in other accounts that Mary is a good listener, sitting at Jesus feet. It could be that she understood where Jesus was going, or it could be that she was so grateful for all He had done for her that she wanted to offer what she could. Her heart is full of gratitude and she desires to honor Him. He accepts her extravagant act of love.

What is the response in the house to this beautiful gift? We see the disciples





were indignant and rebuked her harshly. They scolded her. The word used here reflects violent displeasure. They were flat out angry at her—what a waste! This same Mary who has offered them hospitality in her home is now the object of their scorn.

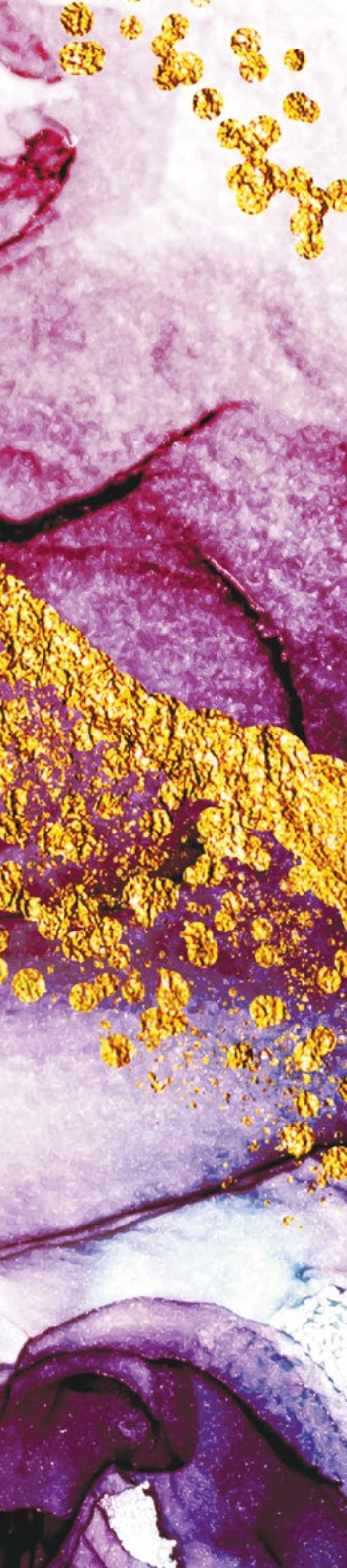
How does Jesus respond? “Leave her alone!” Don’t trouble her. He protects and defends her. Jesus’ heart is so completely others-centered, kind and loving, that even though He is literally hours from the cross, from His own bitter suffering, His focus is on her—caring for her heart. He cares for her feelings. He sees her. He appreciates her. Jesus has been clear to His disciples about the approaching cross (Matthew 26:1). One would expect Jesus to be thinking about Himself, particularly in light of what is coming, but here He is once again placing the needs of others above himself.

“She has done a beautiful thing to me.” As a woman, I realize there is a deep desire in us to be beautiful. In its purest form the desire is to glorify God by bringing beauty to God’s creation. Jesus saw this action and called out the beauty of her act. She offered what she had, and Jesus received it as a beautiful gift.

“She has done what she could,” He credits her with anointing His body before burial—and praises her— He lets them know that wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her. What one gives to Christ is never a waste.

It’s a beautiful story, but unfortunately, the passage doesn’t end there. In the very next scene, Judas goes out to betray Jesus, asking the chief priests, “What will you give me to betray Him?” Judas has also been loved by Jesus—spending years in His inner circle—and yet instead of caring for Him in His time of need, His selfish heart seeks how





to profit from it. What a contrast! Not only between Judas and this woman who gave up the most valuable thing she had to worship Jesus, but more significantly between Judas and Jesus. Jesus gave His own life so that we might have a relationship with Him.

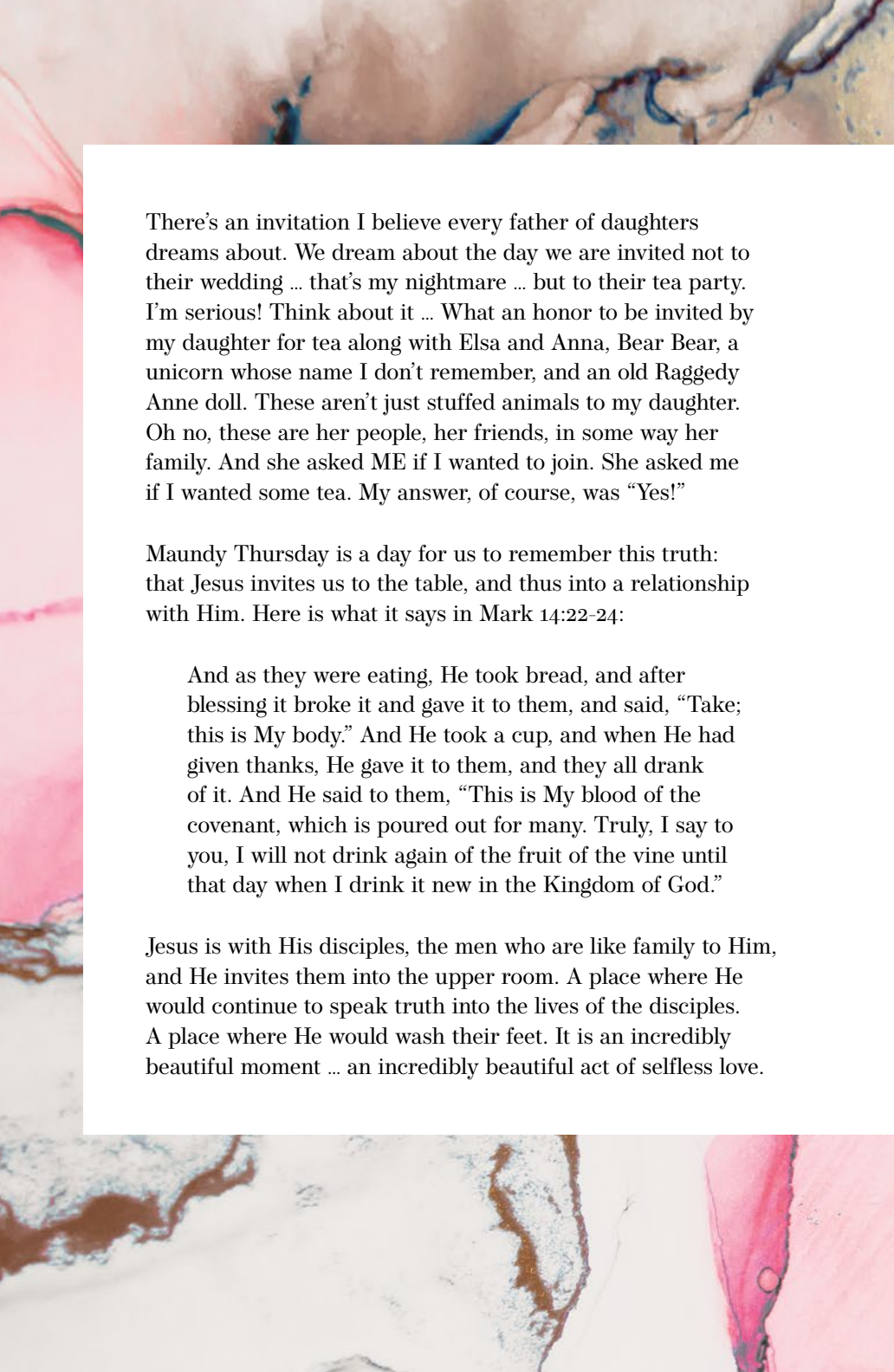
Mary's gift was but a response of gratitude to what she had experienced sitting at Jesus' feet. May you be encouraged today by remembering Jesus' others-centered, extravagant, and sacrificial love. May that gratitude empower you to love like Him. Whatever your circumstances are today, remember that Jesus sees and cares for you, and nothing offered to Him is a waste.

**What stands out to you most about Mary's display of adoration towards Jesus?**



# MAUNDY THURSDAY

The Light of Selfless Love  
Mark 14:12-51




There's an invitation I believe every father of daughters dreams about. We dream about the day we are invited not to their wedding ... that's my nightmare ... but to their tea party. I'm serious! Think about it ... What an honor to be invited by my daughter for tea along with Elsa and Anna, Bear Bear, a unicorn whose name I don't remember, and an old Raggedy Anne doll. These aren't just stuffed animals to my daughter. Oh no, these are her people, her friends, in some way her family. And she asked ME if I wanted to join. She asked me if I wanted some tea. My answer, of course, was "Yes!"

Maundy Thursday is a day for us to remember this truth: that Jesus invites us to the table, and thus into a relationship with Him. Here is what it says in Mark 14:22-24:

And as they were eating, He took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is My body." And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."

Jesus is with His disciples, the men who are like family to Him, and He invites them into the upper room. A place where He would continue to speak truth into the lives of the disciples. A place where He would wash their feet. It is an incredibly beautiful moment ... an incredibly beautiful act of selfless love.





And then He breaks bread with them, drinks wine with them and points them, and us, to an even more selfless act of love. Jesus uses the breaking of bread, and the drinking of wine, as an opportunity to point them, and us, to what He would do, what would happen, on the cross not even 24 hours later. He points to the truth that He Himself, His body, would soon be broken for us, and His blood poured out for those whom He has invited to the table, invited into relationship with Himself. Jesus is not just showing selfless love, He is shining a light to let us know that He is selfless love.

But we can't leave it there. In his account of the upper room discourse, The Apostle John quotes Jesus who says, "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." (John 13:34) We are called not just to be loved, but to be love, for one another. Let us be a people who not only receive selfless love but show love as well.

**Can you recall a situation or relationship in which you have been the recipient of selfless love? Is there an opportunity that comes to mind in which you might show selfless love to someone?**

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**Emilio Hood**, Director of Watershed





# GOOD FRIDAY

The Depth of Darkness  
Mark 14:53-15:47


Do you remember what it felt like when you were called to the principal's office, or the boss wants to see you, or the IRS comes calling? Geh! There are two implications here, and neither of them good. You've done something really bad and some kind of severe punishment is right around the corner.

Now imagine that this authority figure who is towering before you says, "I've heard from a number of different people that you've done some terrible things. Problem is their stories keep contradicting each other. So, I don't really know what to do about it."

Well, maybe this isn't so bad after all. Sounds like they've got nothing on you, really. Just keep your mouth shut and maybe this will all blow over. Then she leans in and asks, "Can you help me make sense of this? What do you have to say for yourself?"

This is the scene that Mark paints for us in chapter 14, verses 53-61 of his Gospel account. Jesus has been brought before the Jewish council of elders and the high priest holds Jesus' life in his hands—or so it would seem. When asked what He thought about the testimony of these many witnesses, Jesus says nothing (good move, Jesus). But then the high priest asks a different question, one which Jesus just couldn't resist to answer: "Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?" I bet you could've heard a pin drop as the council waited for Jesus' reply. Remember, at this point they've got nothing on Him (see verse 55).





And then He spoke. In one short sentence, Jesus combines three power-packed passages from the Hebrew Bible: Exodus 3, Psalm 110, and Daniel 7. “I Am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:62 ESV). The council flew into a rage! Why? Because Jesus just told them, “I AM Yahweh, the God of your fathers (Exodus 3:13-15). I AM the promised king from the line of David, seated at the right hand of God the Father (Psalm 110:1). And I AM the Son of Man, the God-Man who is given everlasting glory and dominion over all people, nations, and languages” (Daniel 7:13-14).

Do you see now why they reacted as they did? Jesus just told this high priest and his council, “You’re not my judges—I’m yours.” This is the very epitome of blasphemy. This Nazarene construction worker claims to be our Deliverer, our King, and our Judge? Only Yahweh God can make such a claim. He must be punished! Unless, of course, Jesus really is who He claims to be.

Jesus has testified for Himself, and He invites you to be His witness to your family, co-workers, and community. The question for you today is the same as it was for His disciples 2,000 years ago: “Who do you say that I am?” (Mark 8:29).

**When I consider Jesus’ death on the cross, what does this tell me about Him and His heart for the world? What does it tell about me?**






# SATURDAY

Do you think the disciples slept that night? It was the end of the Passover week, and there was supposed to be a sense of joy in remembering God's deliverance from slavery in Egypt, but it was hard to feel a lot of joy. They had thought they would be delivered again—this time from Rome—and they would have positions of political power and authority because they were so close to Him. But now He's dead. Conquering kings aren't supposed to die before they conquer anything, are they? Not only were their hopes dashed, so were their hearts. They had to watch their closest friend die. They had spent almost every day with Him over the last few years. The ache in their hearts must have been tremendous. Days of intense grief seem to last twice as long as normal days. You're stuck, reliving a memory that you wish you didn't have, but seemingly unceasingly plays over and over again in your mind. The first half of Proverbs 13:12 says that hope deferred makes the heart sick. The heart sickness of true hopelessness brings the deepest of darkness to the human heart.

As we read our Bibles, we know that Sunday is coming, and the Light will appear at dawn. We can read the Gospels and know that on the third day, He will rise. But can we camp out on the emotional weight of the hopelessness of that second day for a moment? The disciples ran away, they had given up hope. If Sunday didn't happen, if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, they had wasted their lives. They had walked away from jobs, and they had

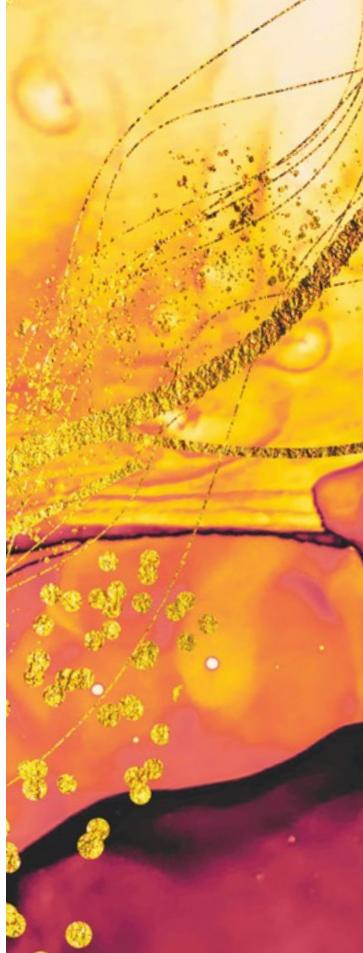
The Depth of  
Darkness



positioned themselves with a minority movement that both the Roman government and the Jewish religious leaders were now crushing by means of execution.

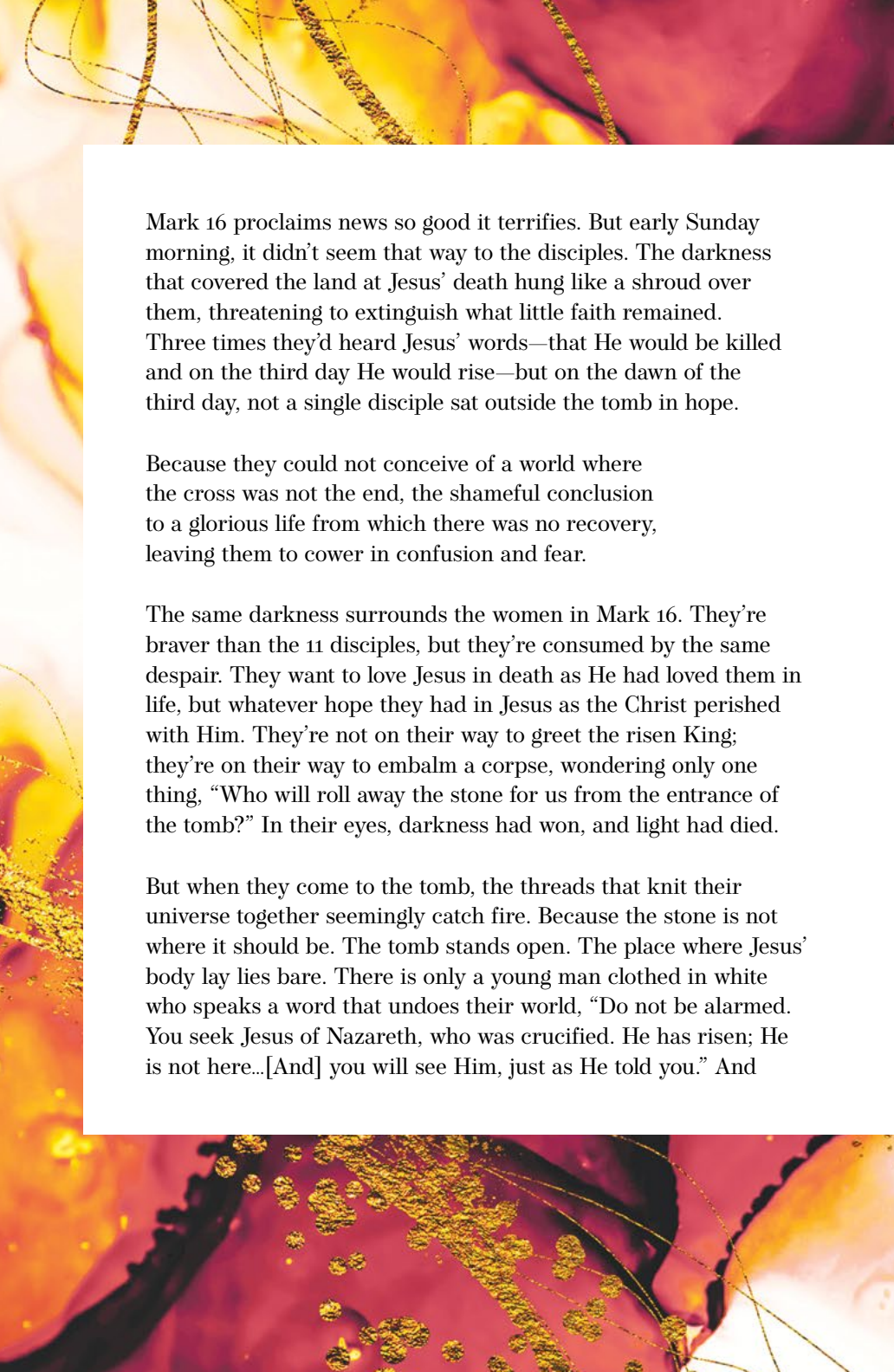
Years later, Paul says that “if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain... if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins... If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.” (1 Corinthians 15:13, 17, 19). The word vain in this passage means empty ... worthless. If this whole Jesus story is made up to give a false sense of comfort to the weak-minded masses, you’re wasting your time. So am I. But is hope—real, lasting hope—only needed for the weak? Or is it basic to human existence? We have the ability to get through each day because of hope. We hope in many different things to motivate us, to give us life. We know instinctively that if a friend or loved one says they just have no sense of hope in their life anymore, they are in grave danger. Loss of hope is utterly debilitating. Hope is essential to life itself. And only a resurrected Jesus brings an eternal hope that outlasts and carries us through our deepest grieving, disappointments, and fears. The hopelessness of Saturday is very real, but it is not the end of the story.

**How might my life look different apart from the hope I have in Christ?**



# EASTER SUNDAY

Jesus, the Light of Glory  
Mark 16:1-20



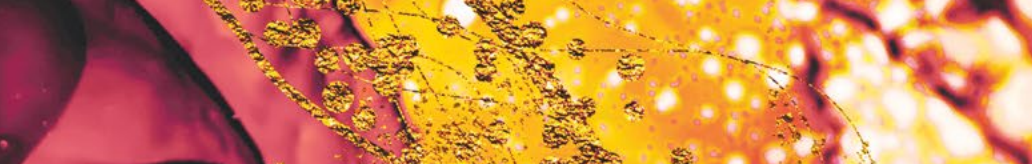
Mark 16 proclaims news so good it terrifies. But early Sunday morning, it didn't seem that way to the disciples. The darkness that covered the land at Jesus' death hung like a shroud over them, threatening to extinguish what little faith remained. Three times they'd heard Jesus' words—that He would be killed and on the third day He would rise—but on the dawn of the third day, not a single disciple sat outside the tomb in hope.

Because they could not conceive of a world where the cross was not the end, the shameful conclusion to a glorious life from which there was no recovery, leaving them to cower in confusion and fear.

The same darkness surrounds the women in Mark 16. They're braver than the 11 disciples, but they're consumed by the same despair. They want to love Jesus in death as He had loved them in life, but whatever hope they had in Jesus as the Christ perished with Him. They're not on their way to greet the risen King; they're on their way to embalm a corpse, wondering only one thing, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" In their eyes, darkness had won, and light had died.

But when they come to the tomb, the threads that knit their universe together seemingly catch fire. Because the stone is not where it should be. The tomb stands open. The place where Jesus' body lay lies bare. There is only a young man clothed in white who speaks a word that undoes their world, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here...[And] you will see Him, just as He told you." And





suddenly sorrow gives way to astonishment, and questions to terror, because what confronts them is joy too wonderful to be believed.

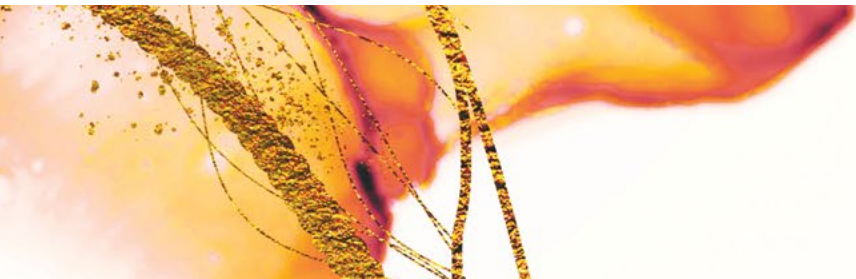
Because if true, then darkness had not won, and light had not died. The dawn of the third day was not the dawn of still more sadness but the dawn of a new creation where every tear would be wiped from their eyes. His perishable body had become imperishable, the first fruits of a resurrection that would consume death and decay as completely as fire consumes straw. The cross where God's enemies intended to destroy His kingdom was the cross where God had established His kingdom. Out of the greatest evil, God had brought the greatest good.

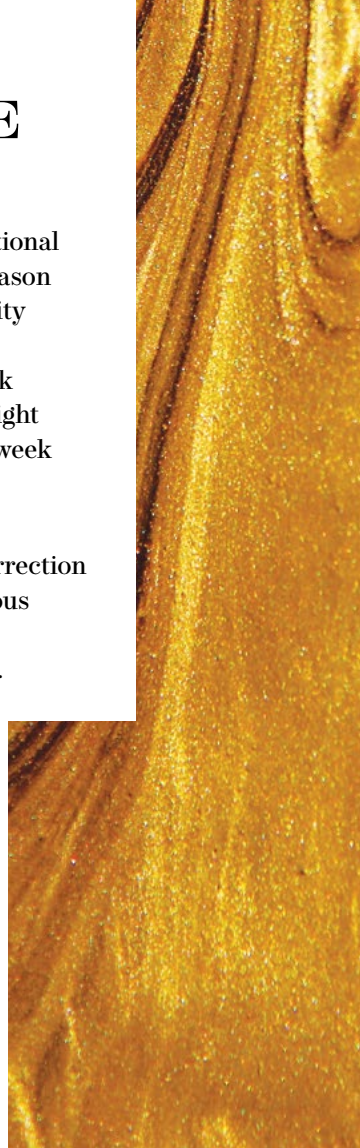
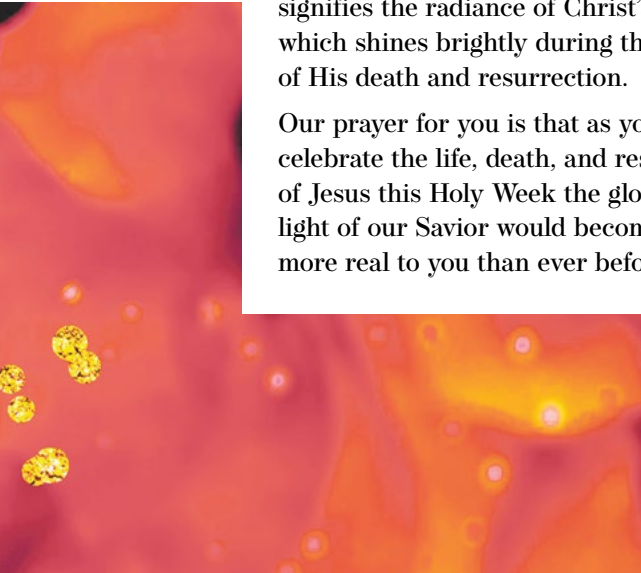
On Sunday morning, in a flash of grace, the darkness evaporated, the veil lifted, the night ended, and a violent joy broke into the world that shook their souls and for the briefest of moments stilled their tongues. Because death had died and the Light was shining. And here is the good news for us: that Light shines still, and the darkness has not—and will not—overcome Him (John 1:5). Though the darkness be deep and our faith small, His resurrected glory shines brighter still. Do not be alarmed; the news is terrifyingly good. He is risen. And you, you will see Him, just as He told you.

## **How does Christ's resurrection and victory over sin and death change how I live?**

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**Caleb Click**, Pastor of Spiritual and Theological Formation





# JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

The graphic art used in this devotional and throughout the Holy Week season was chosen to represent the regality and elegance of Christ, our King.

The warm gold paint of Holy Week signifies the radiance of Christ's light which shines brightly during the week of His death and resurrection.

Our prayer for you is that as you celebrate the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus this Holy Week the glorious light of our Savior would become more real to you than ever before.



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