



WORTH IT

Reading Plan

Was it worth it? What was the result of Jesus' painful sacrifice? As a companion guide to the *Worth It* series here at SG, we will look at selected daily scripture readings designed to celebrate all that was gained. Why not make a list of all the benefits as you read!

Palm Sunday | March 28

The first Sunday of Holy Week is traditionally called Palm Sunday, because as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on this day, people placed their coats on the path in front of Him and waved palm branches in the air in celebration. It was a way to highlight His importance and give Jesus honor. Many people misunderstood His goals and thought of Him as a conqueror destined to defeat the Roman occupiers. Actually, He WAS a conqueror, just not in the ways many people were expecting. That's why Romans 8 makes a lot of sense. As you read today's passage, think about what Christ's life, death and resurrection gained us. He truly is a conqueror in all the ways that matter, and that enables us to conquer as well!

Romans 8:31-35, 37-38

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Monday | March 29

On this day during Holy Week, Jesus entered the temple in Jerusalem and cleared out the merchants and those exchanging currencies. People at that time had lost focus on the true purpose of the temple and worship.

In our reading today, again from the book of Romans, Paul talks about the difference between people who are living life on their own terms, and those who have put their trust in Jesus. The focus is different and the mindset is different. According to this passage, what is the difference? What advantage is there in focusing in on Jesus and living in the freedom of His forgiveness?

Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Tuesday | March 30

On Tuesday during Holy week, Jesus entered the temple again and debated with some of those who were skeptical of Him and His message. Then He took the disciples up to the Mount of Olives and spoke at length about the Kingdom of God using many parables and talked about the future.

One of the many benefits of following Jesus is our "inheritance" as children of God. Those that follow Jesus have access to all the blessings of Jesus, including the Kingdom of God, here on earth and for eternity in heaven! What are the benefits of our inheritance according to this passage?

Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Wednesday | March 31

The Bible doesn't say what Jesus did on Wednesday of Holy Week. Some scholars suggest that He and His disciples may have rested and relaxed in Bethany, where they were staying, getting ready for the Passover on Thursday.

Today we take a look at a passage in Galatians which talks about the difference between a slave and an heir. As we ask the question, "was it worth it?" for Jesus to suffer and die, consider the difference between slaves and heirs. It's like night and day. Jesus thought his suffering was worth it to bring us from slavery to freedom, from outside the family of God to inside.

Galatians 4:1-7

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Maundy Thursday | April 1

Thursday Jesus celebrated the Jewish Passover with His disciples, surprised them by washing their feet, and instituted the practice that today we call Communion. Later he went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, and was betrayed by Judas and arrested. As he washed the feet of the disciples, as He taught them to remember Him in communion, as He prayed for them in the Garden, and protected them during His arrest, He was demonstrating His love and forgiveness.

Today we read more about the attitudes and actions we are encouraged to practice as followers of Jesus, especially to love others. In this way we are following the example of Jesus Himself. These attitudes and actions, practiced by billions of Christ followers throughout history, have changed the world.

Colossians 3:12-17

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Good Friday | April 2

Friday, commonly referred to as Good Friday, was the day Jesus was prosecuted, nailed to a cross, died and was buried in a tomb. It was a day of terrible suffering but also of incredible love.

Our passage today underscores the reason Jesus felt it was worth it to die in this way, paying the debt for our sin and making a way for us to be right with God. Incredibly, this grace is given to us as a gift and is available to all. We can be called children of God. Ask the question- what is my response to this gift? Have I considered it? Have I accepted it? Am I truly thankful for it?

1 John 3:1-3

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Easter Saturday | April 3

Jesus' body lay in the tomb on Saturday. As the Sabbath, it was the Jewish day of rest. The Roman soldiers stood guard outside the tomb.

It would be natural to think about the reality of death on this silent Saturday. But for those who trust in Jesus, death is not a hopeless end, but a glorious beginning. It is still a time to grieve...but not without hope. Today we read about the future, when death is defeated and Jesus brings us into an amazing new life. Jesus gave everything to open the door to this amazing future! Are you living in fear of death? Why? How does this passage offer a difference perspective?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Easter | Sunday April 4

The last day of Holy Week is commonly called Easter Sunday. It is the day Jesus rose from the dead and left the tomb. It is the greatest day of celebration in the Christian community, and a day of incredible hope for the whole world.

Before Jesus left to go back to heaven, he gave what many call the "Great Commission." Not only does this passage give followers of Jesus their marching orders, it concludes with a promise that Jesus will always be with us. Was it worth it? Yes! The message of the Gospel has been shared across the centuries and across the planet, transforming lives, families, communities and even entire countries. And Jesus is still with us today through His Holy Spirit. Thank you, Jesus, for your gift of life and the forgiveness of sins!

As we continue past Holy Week, notice that even after seeing Jesus raised from the dead, some of his followers had doubts. Let's face it, doubt is a reality we all must contend with at times. But how do we deal with our doubts? Over the next three weeks we will take a look at doubt and how to respond to it in our new sermon series, *I Doubt It*.

Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."