



A SPIRITUAL IMPACT RESOURCE

# THE STORIES OF HOLY WEEK

The narrative of what happened during Holy Week is sprinkled through the gospels and sometimes it is challenging to put the pieces together of ‘what happened when’ during this intense last week of Jesus’ walk on earth. Can you imagine what it would have been like to be there, walking the path of this week with Jesus?

We invite you to join us on this Holy Week journey as we tell the story of each day, gleaned from the Word and presented to you in story-style, first person, imagining how the followers of Jesus would have been feeling as the events unfolded.

We pray that your faith will deepen as you dig into the stories and meditate on the significance of each day. May you be drawn into each story and find new insights, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Your Spiritual Impact Team

# PALM SUNDAY

Today has been so exciting! Jesus is about to be established and do something great! We were all shouting and welcoming Him as he rode into Jerusalem on a colt. We shouted 'Hosanna' and waved palm branches hailing Him as our new and coming King!

**“On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.’” (John 12:12-13)**

There were so many people welcoming and watching Jesus! Because He raised Lazarus from the dead, the city is all a-buzz about Him, some thoroughly believing in Him but of course many are angry and I might add, jealous of the attention and accolades He is receiving. Some Greeks also came looking for Him later and He started talking about death. He was saying, **“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in the world will keep to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. Now my soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.” (John 12:23-28a)**

Then, a voice came from heaven and it thundered, **“I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” (John 11:28) Some thought it was an angel speaking! Jesus told us the voice was for our sakes and that judgment was upon the world and the ruler of this world would be cast out. And He said, “If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself.” (John 12:32)**

By the end of the day, we were emotionally spent. We were elated and celebrating, then amazed and confused. We were all trying to process it all and understand what Jesus was really saying.

## ***Your Response:***

*As you imagine these two scenes what would you have been thinking and feeling? Take time to rejoice in the “Hosanna moment” of today, Palm Sunday. Would you have loved to be there? Spend time in prayer, asking the Lord to give you deeper insights into the events of this week with a new depth as you read these Holy Week devotional stories.*

# MONDAY

Yesterday we shouted Hosanna! We waved palm branches. It was so exciting to be there among the followers of Jesus, welcoming Him into the Holy City, Jerusalem. We have so many hopes! We have seen so many miracles. We want everyone to know who He is. He is the Messiah—the Light of the world!

But the city is full of confusion. So many have no idea who Jesus is. There is darkness here. The Jewish leaders especially seem to be missing the point, surrounded by a darkness that is unsettling. Roman leaders here are also full of concern, not knowing what our Hosannas mean. “Save us now”—what’s that all about? What is Jesus saving the people from?

And what about Jesus? Yesterday we saw clearly that His demeanor was resolute, determined, focused – truly a Man with a mission.

But today, Jesus shocked us as we saw righteous indignation pour out of Him in a powerful display of emotion we did not expect. He entered the temple, saw what the corrupt money-changers were doing and He exploded. The full force of His fury was suddenly unleashed and it took our breath away. He flipped tables and yelled in indignation with a power we had never seen:

**“Is it not written ‘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)**

We stood riveted as we saw a side of Him that gripped our souls. This temple was His Father’s house and He was setting it straight. He could hold back no longer. His purity split that darkness with a heavenly light, and words He had spoken to us earlier echoed in my spirit:

**“You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of the light...I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.” (John 12:35-36b, 46)**

The watching crowd was as astonished as we were, but something else was brewing. As we stood frozen, pondering His powerful light, we also saw the beginnings of the response from the onlooking chief priests and scribes. They were angry. They were afraid, filled with a fear that was propelling them to make a terrible decision—they began to think of ways to destroy Him—destroy, that’s the word used by Mark. (11:18) What lies ahead? We need to pray.

## **Your Response:**

*As you imagine this scene what are you thinking? What are you feeling? Spend time in prayer, asking the Lord to illuminate your thinking and speak to your heart as you ponder the events of this day after Palm Sunday.*





# TUESDAY

I'm not sure coming to Jerusalem, even for the Passover, was a good idea for Jesus, especially after today. But despite all the controversy, I somehow have peace. It began with an early trek to the temple so Jesus could teach all of us Passover pilgrims and others who had heard of His miracles. Oh, did He teach!

Group after group approached Him, some with legitimate questions and others with superficial verbal games, trying to trip Him up and secure a reason to have Him arrested, tried, and put to death. Sometimes, Jesus' wise answers quieted His challengers, but at other times, He just seemed to incite them further. Was this part of the plan – to make sure He would be handed over to the Jews?

When the chief priests and scribes challenged His authority, He responded with a question that closed their mouths, "Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?" He countered further with parables that seemed to point out the Jewish temple leaders' corruption. Their 'unfruitful' behavior would soon cause them to lose the 'vineyard' entrusted to them.

The Sadducees tried to trip Jesus up about who would be married to whom in the resurrection. Jesus' amazing answer not only showed He divinely knew what our resurrection experience would be like, but it caused some of the scribes to acknowledge He spoke well and dare not ask further.

Jesus was too wise for the Herodians, who confronted Him about paying taxes. They could only marvel at Jesus' 'both-and' answer about rendering to Caesar what was Caesar's and to God what was God's.

Our day didn't end at the temple. As we sat privately with Him on the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem, Jesus spoke words of both warning and assurance. He is obviously facing something very hard, and I'm afraid He's not going to be with us much longer. This 'last-ditch effort' to tell us Who He truly is and what He is about to do may be two-fold. He doesn't want us to 'fall asleep' and not be ready when the end comes, but He also wants us to have peace about what we will face (Luke 21:18-19). Even now, with evil around us, He wants us to have His peace. (story information from Matthew 21:23-25:46; Mark 11:27-13:37; Luke 20:1-21:38 & John 12:20-50)

### **Your Response:**

*These passages reveal the evil and scheming surrounding Jesus' arrest, death, and resurrection. We are privileged to see God's hand in each step Jesus took to the cross. How have you seen God's hand (and realized it was for your ultimate good) through a difficult situation? What comforts you and gives you peace when life is overwhelming?*

Tuesday - A Day of Controversy & Parables Story by Shawn Maassel



# WEDNESDAY

Jesus was not what I imagined when I think back to the scripture about the “a King who will reign” (Jeremiah 23:5). He certainly did not dress or live like a future king. He did have a lot of followers at first. I always imagined when the time came that His followers would be prepared to fight for their future king.

Though Jesus allowed me to be a part of his twelve chosen disciples, those closest to him, I always felt like an outsider. They were all from Galilee while I was from Judea. The Galileans were not exactly our friends or close companions.

I was chosen to handle the money given to us for our ministry. Honestly, I was happy to be in control of the money. The others did not want to have anything to do with it. I was not comfortable when Jesus asked us to go out two by two with “no bread, no bag, no money in our belts.” Going to places that might not welcome us, he wanted us to preach that people should repent. (Mark 6:7-12)

One day I bought some new sandals and used some of the money. I thought I deserved some pay for taking care of it. I started stashing some money away just in case people stopped giving money to the ministry. With so many people in authority not liking what Jesus was preaching, people were bound to stop contributing to the ministry. I never wanted to be dependent on others for my daily living.

As the ministry progressed, some days we would have thousands of followers trying to get close to Jesus for healing or to hear His preaching. Other days we were just trying to keep Jesus from being arrested. Jesus was angering a lot of people because he was claiming to be the Son of God (Matthew 27:43). I could not understand why Jesus seemed determined to anger the church leaders without gathering his followers to demand His kingdom.

One day I overheard some church leaders discussing ways to arrest Jesus. They were concerned with arresting Him during the Jewish Passover due to the crowds of people expected to be there. I started to question why I continued to follow Jesus. I started to believe that He was not the “King who will reign”. I was confused, conflicted, frustrated, discouraged—and lots of other feelings and thoughts began to flood my mind. Sometimes I even felt like evil thoughts that were not my own were trying to take over me. (See Luke 22:3, John 13:27) I began to wonder if I could quietly turn Jesus over and make some money in the process. Surely if Jesus could heal people and perform all the miracles, He would be able to escape imprisonment.

## **Your Response:**

*The Lord knows we may have doubts sometimes, just as Judas doubted despite being with Jesus daily. As we ponder Judas' decisions and how Satan was a part of it, let's be aware of the enemy's deceitful ways and keep our armor on! And let's thank God for loving us enough to die in our place knowing all our doubts. Pray that God will erase your doubts and make you strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.*

# THURSDAY

As a Jew I have celebrated many a Pesach, but this one has been unlike any I have ever experienced. I have never felt such confusion, terror, dismay, mixed with marvel! So many strange things to ponder...

It started when Yeshua directed us to go to a certain home to celebrate our Passover. It was quite unusual. We didn't arrange anything ourselves. But when we got there, we found things just as Yeshua said. So, we got our seder needs purchased, cooked, and ready for our special meal.

During our time together we enjoyed each other's company. We remembered during our seder the events where Hashem- the Lord- had provided for our people when they were in captivity in Egypt. We remembered how Adonai sent Moses to lead our people out to freedom after the awful plagues sent upon Egypt, and how the Red Sea parted for us to escape! During our seder we drink 4 cups reminding us of Hashem's miraculous involvement in our escape. When we came to the 3rd cup of redemption something strange happened....

Mysteriously, Yeshua referred to Himself as the source of our redemption while sharing the matzah and the wine - as His body and blood. "Drink from it all of you; this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:27-28), and then how His body was going to be given for us. It was strange, unthinkable- but somehow very beautiful. Somehow it seemed that all these ancient symbols of our deliverance were finding their fulfillment in our Messiah Yeshua! We were told to remember these things always.

Then Yeshua said he wouldn't enjoy another Passover again until it was fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Oy! I am truly troubled! He said he was going to be arrested and would suffer for us- as Isaiah the ancient prophet said of the suffering Servant. I never could understand that part of the Tanach. We knew things were getting a bit hot in Jerusalem over our Yeshua- and his claims to be the long awaited Moshiach- Messiah. But that He would die!? That didn't sound like the kind of Messiah we were hoping for.....

During our dinner conversation there was discussion about who of us was the greatest. This seemed like an inappropriate time for such a topic, but Jesus responded with something quite profound. He said that greatness is shown through serving, not dominating others. He even demonstrated it by washing our feet! Peter complained at first, but submitted to Yeshua. Like I said- it's been strange.... As darkness fell, we took a walk to the olive garden of Gethsemane. It has always been a place of peace and reflection for me. Today though, the atmosphere felt different. Jesus seemed different. He seemed troubled. A weary, forlorn, intense look came upon Him. He asked me, my brother, and Peter, to come with him to a place to pray. He didn't want to be alone. He said, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." Our hearts were sad with him. Our full stomachs mixed with the emotional pain we sensed made us become drowsy. Yeshua walked to a quiet spot. We faintly heard him pray "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as You will." I barely caught that as my eyes were drooping in fatigue.

Faintly, I remember Yeshua returning to check on us- but we were so delirious with concern and exhaustion that we were barely coherent. The last clear strained words I heard were, "... May Your will be done."

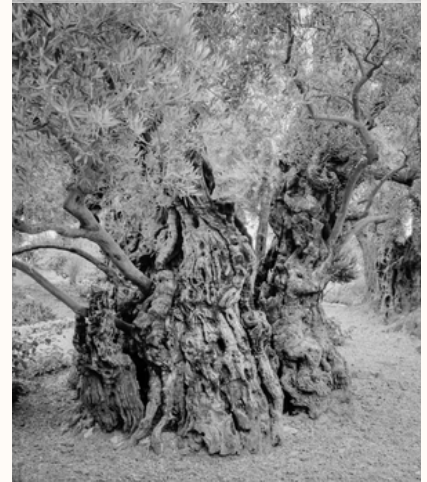
Suddenly, we heard Yeshua right next to us. He said "... Look! The hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

After that everything started happening so fast! There were torches, soldiers, priests and we were scared! And Judas- what was he doing with them? He kissed Yeshua- but something was strange about that. We didn't know what this would lead to. Peter's anger and fear moved him to try to protect Yeshua - and he sliced off a servant's ear! Oy vey! I'm so ashamed to say that I ran after this. My fear took over and I just wanted to get out of there! In my mind, as I ran as fast as I could, Yeshua's words kept coming to me. "Not as I will, but as You will, not as I will but as You will." Over and over it repeated. Yeshua was willing to do whatever His Abba wanted. But will I? I'm afraid. What will happen now? It is dark. I need to find a place to stop where it's safe and I can breathe. "Not as I will but as You will," repeats again in my mind. Oh Adonai...I am afraid. Help me be like Yeshua now, and to want Your will most of all.

(story information from Luke 22:7-38)

## **Your Response:**

*When life is very hard, do you relate to this disciple's fear, yet desire to do "not as I will, but as You (God) will"? Let's meditate on Jesus' willingness to submit His will to the Father. Consider how you can follow in Jesus' footsteps in the midst of your hardship.*



# FRIDAY

I saw what they did to Him, to my Messiah, my Friend...

They tried to accuse Him in a ridiculous kangaroo court. They couldn't convict Him; He'd done nothing wrong! He healed the sick; He made the lame walk; He brought back the dead! Who else could have done that but the Messiah? He was the One we had been waiting for...

They screamed and shouted, "**Crucify Him!**" (Luke 23:21) How could they? They had shouted "Hosanna" just days before! (Matt. 21:9) Then He was there before the crowd, carrying the beam of a cross. My heart thundered in my chest; this cannot be happening, I thought. I saw they had whipped Him. His back was bleeding and He was so weak. They had to pull a man from the crowd just to help Him carry that awful cross. (Matt 27:32)

I watched in anguish as they nailed Him there. His hands. His feet. He cried out and I thought my own heart would stop as I watched them raise Him up, but I just stood there. I couldn't stop them. He was there tortured, hurting, and still He spoke to John and to His mother. (John 19:26-27) My heart broke as I saw her face. He was her baby. She wouldn't leave. She couldn't leave, none of us could. We stayed, we were determined to stay as long as it took.

We heard Him shout out, "**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**" (Matt 27:46) He looked exhausted with pain. They rolled dice for His clothes. They acted like He was just another criminal. But He wasn't! Even on the cross I heard Him talking about paradise and forgiveness to the real criminals hanging beside Him.

I heard Him say, "**It is finished**" (John 19:30) then He was gone. Just...gone...

And now what? What becomes of us? Will they come for us too? How do we move forward without Him? I'm broken without Him. I want to turn back time and do something, anything to have changed this day. But I can't - it's over.

So we sit in this room, shattered and afraid. Some quietly cry. Others pray. What comes next? Something? Nothing? All I can think to do is pray - just like He taught us.

I bow my head as the tears flow down and begin...

## **Your Response:**

*Take a moment and pray; thank the Lord for what He did for you on the cross. He died in anguish for you and for me. Today, let's pause and sit in that hard truth and give humble thanks to the One who shed His blood for all of us, because He loves us.*

Good Friday - Story by Tracie Durham

# SATURDAY

They killed him. Jesus is dead. My rabbi. My friend. My Savior.

I thought that he was the prophesied one that we have been waiting on for centuries. He was supposed to be our Savior. The One who would rescue us from the oppression of the Romans. The one who would restore Jerusalem and conquer our promised land. But now... He's dead. He still had so much left to do! How are we supposed to continue on without Him? He spoke with authority, knowing Yahweh's will in a way not even the Pharisees do. He healed the sick and forgave people's sins – only God could do that! (Luke 5:17-26) But now... He's gone.

**“It is finished.”** Those were His final words. (John 19:30) But what does that even mean? He didn't do what we thought He would. What did we miss? He had to have been the Son of God. The moment that He drew His final breath, the ground beneath us began to shake. Rocks split apart. And the dead.... They were raised. I thought that I had imagined it, but I wasn't the only one who saw them. And I heard that the curtain to the Holy of Holies was torn in two, right down the middle! No man could do that.... (Matthew 27:51-53) How had anyone in the temple even survived? No one can enter God's holiest presence except the High Priest, and even the High Priest can only enter once a year after a time of purification or he will die. (Leviticus 16; Hebrews 9:7)

What does this all mean? My Friend is dead. He's never coming back. He said that He would rebuild the temple. (John 2:19) I guess He'll never have the chance. He will never get to finish His work that I put all my faith in. I will never get to finish my training under a rabbi. I probably shouldn't have been chosen anyway; it's not like I had the schooling. But more than any of that, I miss my Friend. And I'll never get to see Him again. Maybe I'm still in denial, but some part of me still holds onto hope. This work is “finished,” but is there something more? Maybe tomorrow I will understand better.

### **Response:**

*Think back to a time when you were struggling and couldn't see what God was doing. How did He carry you through that time? If you're in that place now, how can this story give you assurance that God is still with you?*

Saturday - Story by Grace Kann





# RESURRECTION SUNDAY

(Drawing in a deep breath) Ahh. It feels good to breathe again. Angels, help me remove these bandages. Ooo and turn down the glory. My eyes are adjusting. It's so cold and dark in this cave. (Stretching) Much better.

Father! We won! It's finished!

In anguish, I carried the world's mocking, murderous hate; humiliating, conniving betrayal; fearful, unbelieving denial; and every imaginable selfish desire to the cross. In torment, I paid for it all there. But no longer! My disciples, friends, and anyone who believes, can join in our justice and victory! I've crushed Satan! (Luke 22:42-65, Revelation 18-19, Genesis 3:15)

I must go and show them. I'm alive! Angel, please open this tomb, while I fold up these cloths. (Matthew 28:2, John 20:6-7)

In front of the tomb

There's Mary. She's distressed. It melts my heart. "Why are you weeping?" Holy Spirit, she doesn't recognize me. She thinks I'm the gardener. "Mary." Yes! She gets it! "Don't cling to me, I've got to go to my Father, your Father." Sweet sister, God is now your Papa, and Papa, I can't wait to be together, again. "Go, go to my brothers. Tell them." I'm here! (John 20:11-18, Luke 24:3-10, Mark 14:6, Romans 8:15)

On the road to Emmaus

Cleopas will be walking here any minute. Oh, with tender patience and love I listen to him and his friend. They still don't grasp that I came so they could share in my glory from now on. Spirit, convince them. Bravo! Did you see the joy in their faces when they realized it's me? I'm Jesus! (Luke 24:25-31, 1 Peter 5:10)

On the shore of the Sea of Tiberias

Thank you, Father. My brothers have seen and believed. But Peter is wracked with guilt for denying me. Through my death and resurrection, there's no guilt for anyone who believes. Spirit, as I give him the opportunity to confirm his love for me, release his mind and heart of all shame. I have plans for him and condemnation has no part. I came to save! (John 21:15-19 John 3:16-17)

Resurrection Sunday - Story by Trina Young

