

THE PASSION OF CHRIST FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

by Margaret Carey

Carey's family devotional guide centered on the passion of Christ, providing age-appropriate meditations, discussions, and prayers to help families reflect together on the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

8 Chapters

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01 - Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday Study By: Margaret Carey Scripture Reference

Matthew 21:1-11 See also Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19 and Revelation 19:11

Key Verse Matthew 21:5 (NET) "Tell the people of Zion, 'Look, your king is coming to you, Unassuming and seated on a donkey, And on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

1. Read the Passage:

Read the Matthew 21:1-11 in the NET Bible or in the translation of your choice.

Dig deeper:

If time allows, read about this event in all four of the Gospels and compare the accounts. Reading all four of the Gospels may help you gain a more complete understanding of the events that occurred. You can find this same account in Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40 and in John 12:12-19. See also Revelation 19:11.

2. Observe the actions and attitudes of Jesus: In the space below, write down all that you observe about Christ. For example – what did Jesus do? What did He say? To whom was He speaking?

Next, read Revelation 19:11 – in this verse, John is speaking of Jesus as the one called 'Faithful' and 'True.' What is Jesus riding on in this verse?

3. Understand the culture: This is the beginning of the final act in the life of Christ on earth. He was entering Jerusalem to officially present Himself as their King. It is important to note something about the culture: It was customary that a king would enter the city on a white horse after a victorious battle but during a time of peace, the king rode in on a donkey. (Judges 5:10; 1 Kings 1:33) Ask: What message might Jesus have been trying to communicate by entering on a donkey and not on a white horse?

Jesus was entering the city extending grace, not to judge the city. As we see in Revelation 19:11, the time will come (a time still future to us) when Jesus will enter the city as a victorious ruler and will judge the world.

4. Observe the response of the People: In the space below, jot down some of the responses of the people.

We note that the crowds that went ahead of Jesus were shouting:

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Hosanna in the highest!"

Others asked who He was.

Explain the meaning of the statements:

“Hosanna” literally means “Save Now”

“Son of David” was a Messianic title for Jesus. The crowds were acknowledging Jesus was who He claimed to be...for now.

Later, we read how these same crowds went from shouting ‘Hosanna’ to shouting ‘Crucify Him.’

Dig Deeper- This Triumphant Entry of Jesus is significant for 4 reasons:

1. This was the final and official presentation of Jesus to Israel as their Messiah. 2. Many people recognized this as seen in their shouts of praise.

3. By coming on a donkey, Jesus presented Himself as King.

4. This presentation of Jesus was the exact fulfillment of prophecy; prophecy the Israelites would have been very familiar with. This should have confirmed without any doubt that Jesus was (and is) the Messiah.

5. Your Response:

We learn at least two things from this passage today.

1. Jesus is who He claimed to be. He is the Messiah, sent by God to die for us so that we might live with Him for eternity (John 3:16).

2. We know the people will eventually change their shouts, but for the time being, they recognized who Christ was and sang praise to His name. Praise is a gift to God. Praise is also public and verbal.

What is your response to Jesus? Do you believe He is your Savior? This is the most important decision you will ever make.

How can your family publically and verbally praise God today? Find someone to share God’s goodness with today and do so!

Pray with your family...

- Thank God for sending His Son so that we might have life
- Ask God to help you and your family recognize His goodness and for the courage to praise Him as you share His goodness to at least one person every day this week.

6. Family Activity Palm Leaf Activity

Instructions:

Using this palm leaf on the palm leaf activity sheet as a pattern, trace and cut out a palm leaf from a piece of green felt or green paper. As a family, decide what you will give praise to God for this week. Using a permanent marker, write your family’s praise to God then display the leaf in a prominent place in your home for the entire week. As you pray daily, thank God for He has given

your family and share your praise with others who may visit your home throughout the week.

02 - Cursing the Fig Tree

Cursing the Fig Tree Study By: Margaret Carey Scripture Reference:

Mark 11:12-14, Mark 11:20-26;

See also Matthew 21:18-22

Key Verse:

Mark 11:22 (NET) "Jesus said to them, 'Have faith in God...'"

1. Read the Passage:

Read Mark 11:12-25 in the NET Bible or in the translation of your choice.

Dig deeper:

If time allows, see also Matthew 21:18-22.

2. Observe the actions and attitudes of Jesus: In the space below, write down all that you observe about Christ. For example, what did Jesus do? What did He say? To whom was He speaking to? The Bible tells us that Jesus was hungry and saw a fig tree with leaves. When He reached for figs, he found that there were none. Mark tells us it was not the season for figs.

Ask: If it was not fig season, why do you think Jesus cursed the tree?

3. Understand the culture:

"Mark informs his readers that it was not the season for figs. Passover always comes in March or April, and fig season is not until May or June. However, fig trees generally produce a number of buds in March, leaves in April, and ripe fruit later on. Jesus was looking for the edible buds, the lack of which indicated that the tree would be fruitless that year."ⁱ

Consider now how in Scripture, the fig tree is often symbolic for the nation of Israel. Jesus never wasted an opportunity to teach something spiritually while acting physically. If this fig tree represents the nation of Israel, what spiritual lesson can we draw from it? The nation of Israel had the leaves of 'profession'; they had the pretention of being fruitful when in fact they were not producing any real spiritual fruit. In other words, they were doing and saying the 'religious' things, but in their heart, they did not believe in Jesus. They refused to accept that Jesus was the promised Saviour.

4. Observe the response of the Disciples: In the space below, jot down some of the responses of the disciples.

• v. 14 tells us the disciples heard Jesus curse the tree • v. 21 tells us Peter remembered what they saw and mentioned it to Jesus

Peter sounded almost surprised when he says: “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!” What was Jesus response to Peter?

“Have faith in God,’ Jesus answered.” This was a lesson for the disciples in the importance of faith. Remember, Jesus knew His time on earth was coming to an end and that He only had a few more days with His disciples. The point Jesus was trying to get across was that dependent trust in God can accomplish humanly impossible things through prayer.

Dig deeper:

Verse 23-25 read as follow (NET): “I tell you the truth if someone says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. For this reason I tell you, whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your sins.”

Discuss what Jesus might have meant in these verses.

God is the source of all change. Moving a mountain is sometimes symbolic of doing something humanly impossible. Jesus was teaching His disciples that with faith, they can accomplish what appears to be impossible (see Php 4:13). Does this mean if we ask for anything, God will give it to us? What do you think? Ask yourself: “Is what I am praying for part of God’s will for my life?” If so, then you can be confident that God will answer your prayers. God does not desire to withhold from us, quite the contrary. Yet He knows what is best for us thus when He withholds anything from us, it is always for our own good. We can trust Him with that!

5. Your Response:

What can we learn from today’s passage?

1. Jesus wants us to have faith in God. He wants us to trust Him for all our needs and to believe He has our best interests at heart. He wants us to boldly ask for what we need in prayer knowing that God will answer us and meet our needs.
2. Jesus also warns us against pretending we are something we are not. If we are indeed going to call ourselves ‘Christians’, followers of Christ, then we should live our lives as such.

What is your response?

1. Is there something in your life that you are not trusting God with? Confess your lack of faith to God and ask Him to grow your faith. Then turn your needs over to God and watch for Him as He works out His will in your life.
2. Are you calling yourself a Christian? Are you living like one? Calling yourself a Christian and not living like one brings disgrace to Jesus. Surely you do not desire to defame the name of Christ. If you struggle with behavior that might not be honoring to God, find help. Find someone who can pray with you and help keep you accountable. Ask God for the strength and courage to live your life in a way that honors Him.

Pray with your family...

- Thank God for the gift of His word (the Bible) from which we can learn more about Him and about His expectations for us.
- Ask God to help you as you seek to grow your faith in Him.

6. Family Activity

Family Creed The apostle's creed was an early statement of Christian belief. In it, the apostle's agreed to belief in specific things about God and about Christ. It included belief in God as Father Almighty and the Maker of heaven and earth. It also included belief in Jesus as God's only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, a virgin at the time of His birth. It also included belief in the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Your activity today is to write out your Family Creed. On the leaves included as part of these activity sheets, have each family member write down one or more things you believe about God or Jesus (one item per leaf). Attach your 'leaves of profession' to your Family Tree (also one of the activity sheets). Discuss how important it is for your life to match what you believe. Display your family creed this week as a reminder of what you believe.

03 - Jesus is Anointed

Jesus is Anointed Study By: Margaret Carey Scripture Reference:

Mark 14:1-11 See also Matthew 26:6-16; John 12:1-8

Key Verse:

Matthew 22:37 (NET)

“Jesus said to him, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’”

1. Read the Passage:

Read Mark 14:1-11

Dig deeper:

If time allows, see also Matthew 26:6-16; John 12:1-8 2. Observe the scene as well as the actions and attitudes of Jesus: In the space below, write down all that you observe about Christ and His surroundings. Look for who, what, when, where and why. Where was Jesus? Who was with Him?

What was the reason for the gathering?

What did the woman do?

What was Jesus response?

3. Understand the culture:

It was the week of Passover; the Passover feast was only a few days away and Jesus was reclining (relaxing) at the home of one of His followers. The book of John identifies the woman as Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus. John also tells us she anointed Jesus’ feet using her hair as a towel (John 12:3).

Alabaster is a translucent stone still used to make ornamented items of value. Note the value of the contents in the jar was approximately a year’s worth of wages. The custom of the time was to anoint the heads of guests with oil. The climate in the area was very dry at times and it was soothing to the person to have oil placed on his/her head. That Mary anointed Jesus’ feet as well as His head suggests her motives were different than just a customary anointing of the head. Her anointing of Jesus’ head was an act of honor. Mary’s anointing of Jesus’ feet was an act of devotion.

4. Observe the response of the people:

Consider now the response of the different people who witnessed the event.

1. Mary – what was her response to Jesus?

2. The people present – what was their response to Mary’s actions?

3. Judas Iscariot – what was his response to Mary’s actions? (see also John 12:6)

Dig deeper: The religious leaders in Israel had no excuse for not recognizing Jesus as Messiah; many prophecies were fulfilled in Him. 29 prophecies alone were fulfilled in one day – the day of Jesus’ death. If time allows, Read the Old and New Testament verses listed in the Family Devotionals Activity Sheet – Jesus is Anointed. Match the New Testament occurrence with the Old Testament prophecy. Remember, the Jewish religious leaders spent a lifetime studying Scripture and would have known these prophecies well. Yet because Jesus was not who they wanted Him to be, a military leader among other things, they refused to believe He was the Messiah in spite of the evidence before them. What about you? Have you created an image of Jesus according to what you want Him to be or do you worship Him for who He actually is? Take some time and discuss this with your family.

5. Your Response:

Note Mary’s response:

She recognized Jesus was about to die (He had already told them that). Out of her devotion to Jesus, she gave Him what was of most value to her. Notice she broke the jar...she was holding nothing back. She could have poured part of it out and kept some for herself, but instead, she gave Him all she had to give.

Note the response of the people: When you look up the word ‘indignant’ or ‘indignation’ in the dictionary, you find the word means ‘anger aroused by something unjust, mean or unworthy.’ Did they think Jesus was not worthy of such a display of affection? Not worthy of the cost of that perfume?

Note the response of Judas Iscariot (from John 12:1-50):

He was upset the money was not put in the ‘offering plates’ (so to speak). He would have preferred the perfume be sold and the money placed in their treasury because he was stealing from the disciples’ funds.

What is your response? Are you like Mary, willing to give Jesus all for you recognize He is worthy of all? Are you like the people, thinking maybe Jesus is not worth all you have? Or, are you like Judas, wanting to take from what is God’s? This isn’t just about money, it is about time, abilities and resources. Does God get the best of your time? Does He get the best of your skills and abilities? Or do you save the best for yourself and give God what’s left?

Pray as a family- • Thank God for all He has blessed you with whether it be little or much.

• Ask God to place a desire in your heart to honor Him with the best of all you have.

6. Family Activity As a family, decide what you find most valuable. For some, it may be money, for others it may be toys or time or skills and abilities.

Make a commitment to, as a family, give God your best. Give a toy or two to a shelter, volunteer your time to help another, or share your skills with another family or with the church. Perhaps as a

family, you will decide to give financially to the church. Remember, Mary gave with her heart. As a family, do the same. God is not concerned as much with the amount as He is with the heart.

04 - Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet Study By: Margaret Carey Scripture Reference:

John 13:1-17

Key Verse:

John 13:15 (NET) "For I have given you an example – you should do just as I have done for you."

1. Read the Passage Read John 13:1-17

Dig deeper In his book, John maintains a pattern of '7'. He lists 7 witnesses, lists 7 miracles and also lists 7 'I Am' statements of Jesus. Family Devotionals Activity Sheet – Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet lists the scripture references for the 7 miracles (John calls them 'signs'). It also lists scripture references noting the responses of the people to those seven signs. In the space provided, jot down the signs and the responses. You will notice that as Jesus' miracles became more significant, the hatred towards Him grew as well. Discuss with your family why this may have been the case.

2. Observe the scene, as well as the actions and attitudes of Jesus This devotional will focus on the emotions Jesus may have been feeling. What do we know about what Jesus knew and felt? How did He demonstrate His feeling?

Notice an important principle here: Jesus KNEW (vs. 1, 3) so Jesus DID (vs. 2, 4-5). Jesus did what He did because He knew what He knew. Our actions are the result of our deepest thoughts. What do your actions say about your thoughts?

3. Understand the culture

It was customary for guests arriving at a person's home to have his/her feet washed. This was a menial task and was often done by a servant. This particular foot washing, however, did not take place upon arrival rather it occurred during the evening meal (John 13:2). Jesus got up from the meal and removed His outer garment because His outer garment would have gotten in His way. He then wrapped a towel around His waist.

"By putting on an apron, Christ looked like the slave to whom the task of washing the feet of guests was assigned. Though the disciples realized what Jesus was doing, none of them offered himself for the task. Servanthood was not on their minds. Jesus loved them knowing all about them, including the worst of them, Judas. All of them knew what needed to be done. All of them could have done it but none of them did."ⁱ (See Luke 22:24 for a glimpse as to why they may not have been thinking about servanthood.)"

4. Observe the response of the people

We've already observed that none of the disciples offered to wash the others' feet. Granted, it was not their job to wash one another's feet, but they would have recognized what Jesus was doing the moment He bent down to wash the first set of feet. Thus they knew what Jesus was doing yet not one of them offered to do it for Him or to even help Him for that matter.

John tells us of Peter's response. What did Peter tell Jesus? Do you think Peter was being disrespectful? Why or why not? (see verse 9)

Peter loved Jesus and did not want Jesus washing his feet. He couldn't imagine Jesus washing his dirty feet. Yet Jesus insisted because Jesus always took the opportunity to teach a spiritual lesson when doing physical tasks. What might have been the lesson Jesus was trying to teach Peter with His response: "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

Also note: Peter was trying to tell Jesus what Jesus should or should not do. This is interesting; how often do we try to tell Jesus what we think is best for us?

Dig deeper:

Discuss with your family the contrast between the events of Palm Sunday and this event. Jesus announced Himself as King of Israel and was now performing the task of a lowly servant. What does this tell you about Christ and about the example He has set for us?

5. Your Response:

We can note three responses here:

1. Jesus

Out of His love for His disciples and because He knew His time had come, He washed their feet as a demonstration of His love for them. Consider Php 2:5-8 (NET)

"You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had, who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross."

2. The disciples

They were too busy arguing over who was the most important that they neglected to volunteer to wash the others' feet or even to offer to help Jesus wash the others' feet.

3. Peter He loved Jesus and wanted to please Jesus, but he was still trying to dictate to Jesus what He should do.

What about you? Are you too busy trying to become someone that you are missing opportunities to serve one another? Are you like Peter, one who loves Jesus but sometimes tries to tell Him what to do? Or are you like Christ, demonstrating your love for Him in how you serve others?

Decide as a family how you might serve another person or family. Perhaps you could bake cookies and take them to a shut-in or to a nursing home. Perhaps someone needs help with childcare or

an auto repair and you are in a position to help. As a family, demonstrate your love for God by serving others.

Pray with your family...

- Thank God for Jesus and for the example Jesus sets for us in His word.
- Ask God to help you identify someone in need so that you might serve them.

6. Family Activity Have you ever been a part of a foot washing? Why not follow the example set before us by Christ and participate in one with your family?

Beginning with the adults, wash the feet of one another in your family. As you wash one another's feet, remember to pray for that person. Upon the conclusion of the foot washing, a parent should lead the family in a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for his/her family.

05 - The Passover

The Passover Study By: Margaret Carey Scripture Reference:

Matthew 26:17-35 See also Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-20 and John 13:1-38

Key Verse:

1 Corinthians 11:24-26 (NET)

“and after he had given thanks he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’” In the same way, he also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, every time you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

1. Read the Passage Read Matthew 26:17-35

Dig deeper If time allows, read this account in all four of the Gospels.

2. Observe the actions and attitude of Jesus In the space below, record the actions and attitude of Jesus. Remember to ask who, what, when, where, why and how.

Dig deeper Read about the first Passover Meal in Exodus 12:1-51.

3. Understand the culture For the Hebrew people, the evening meal was the most important meal of the day. They would come in after a hard day’s work and relax with their family. This particular meal was even more significant in that this Passover meal was celebrated each year as the Jewish people remembered how God spared them and saved them from bondage in Egypt. This meal involved unleavened bread and four cups of wine.ⁱ • The first cup, at the beginning, is called ‘Kaddish’ which means ‘to sanctify.’

- The second cup is the cup of remembrance celebrating what God has already done.

- The third cup of the meal is the one Jesus held up and stated: “this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” This cup is called the cup of salvation.

- After drinking the fourth cup, at the very end, one would say ‘next year in Jerusalem.’ Note that Jesus did not drink this 4th cup. Instead He said ‘I tell you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’

It is from this Passover Meal that we celebrate the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper. Jesus modeled it for us.

4. Observe the response of the Disciples

Notice the disciples did just as Jesus requested. This was an important meal they were about to observe. When Jesus told them one of them was to betray Him, they were very sad (v.22). None

of them could believe that they could be the one. Why did Judas betray Jesus? We can only speculate. As a family, discuss reasons why you think Judas may have betrayed Jesus?

Some have suggested the following:

1. Money – perhaps, but he was already helping himself to the disciples' money (John 12:6) and what they paid him to betray Jesus was not much. Maybe?
2. Some think that perhaps Judas thought his betrayal of Jesus would force Jesus to assert His true power and authority and overthrow the Romans.
3. Some have suggested that perhaps Judas thought Jesus was a false Messiah and the true Messiah was yet to come.
4. Still others thought that perhaps Judas was upset about Jesus' seemingly causal attitude towards the Law.

We don't know why he did it, only that he did. Would God have forgiven him had he asked for forgiveness? Absolutely! Sadly, however, Judas, remorseful over his actions, chose to end his life instead (John 27:1-10).

5. Your Response

Jesus was speaking symbolically when He raised the cup and the bread. Verse 27 tells us that Jesus gave thanks for the cup and offered it to the disciples and said: "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Jesus knew He was about to die and that His blood would be shed. He also knew why it had to be this way. The writer of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 9:22 that 'without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.'

Jesus extends the same offer to you. Believe in Him, acknowledge your sin and accept His forgiveness. It is only through Jesus and the sacrifice He made that we can live eternally.

If you have already accepted His forgiveness, now would be a good time to take an attitude check. Are you like Judas, possibly wanting to force Jesus' hand on something. I remind you God has your best interest at heart. What part of your life are you still holding on to unwilling to trust Him with it? Let it go. Trust Him. He is sovereign and He knows best. He can and will handle all things better than we ever could.

6. Family Activity As a family, make some Unleavened Bread as a reminder of all Christ did for us.

You will need the following:

1 cup whole wheat flour ¼ tsp salt ¼ tsp ground cumin or coriander ½ cup water

Mix the ingredients together onto a lightly floured surface. Knead the dough for a total of 5 minutes. Divide the dough into three balls and flatten each ball into a circle. Have an adult fry the rounds of dough on a hot skillet (the skillets should be hot enough that a drop of water dances on the surface.) Set the hot bread on paper towels to cool.

Explain:

Yeast was not used in the Passover meal because the Israelites had to be ready to go in a moments notice and they did not have time to wait for the bread dough to rise. To this day, unleavened bread is used when observing the Passover meal. At the Passover meal, the bread is eaten with bitter herbs as a reminder of the bitter hardships the Jews suffered when they were slaves in Egypt. Try spreading some horseradish sauce on the unleavened bread then enjoy your children's reactions when they taste it! For a sweeter taste, try serving the unleavened bread with a bit of honey and enjoy it with a drink of grape juice. Encourage your children to share God's goodness with one another.

If time permits, have an adult in the family lead in the observance of the Lord's Supper with the family. At the conclusion of the observance, lead your family in prayer remembering to thank God for loving us enough to send His only Son to earth so that we might know God through Him. Thank Him for the sacrifice He made on the cross so we could have eternal life.

06 - Good Friday

Good Friday Study By: Margaret Carey Scripture Reference Matthew 27:32-56 See also Mark 15:21-41; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:17-37

Key Verse 1 Corinthians 15:3 (NET) “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”

1. Read the Passage Read Matthew 27:32-56 2. Observe Jesus This is a familiar historical account for many therefore, this day we will focus on some of the statements Jesus made while on the cross. Using a red letter edition (so you can spot the statements quickly), look through the four gospels (passages listed above) and list the 7 statements Jesus made while on the cross.

1. Matthew 27:46

2. Luke 23:34

3. Luke 23:43

4. Luke 23:46

5. John 19:26

6. John 19:28

7. John 19:30 As you consider the culture, take a closer look at the first one listed in Matthew 27:46.

3. Understand the culture

Take a second look at the statement Jesus made recorded in Matthew 27:46: “At about three o’clock Jesus shouted with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” This passage has puzzled many for God has promised to never leave us nor forsake us and these words of Jesus suggest God had forsaken Christ, His very own Son, in His darkest hour. Was Jesus asking God why He had forsaken Him? The answer to the question is in Psalms 22:1-31.

Turn your Bible to Psalms 22:1-31. Note verse 1:

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

It was not uncommon for Jewish people to quote the Psalms when in extreme situations much like we sing songs or quote verses to make us feel better when we are hurting. Rather than asking God why He had forsaken Him, perhaps Jesus was thinking through Psalms 22:1-31. Why the two languages (Hebrew and Aramaic)? Jesus, like all of His disciples was trilingual. As a child, he learned Aramaic and this would have been His first language. This was the everyday language of the Jewish people in the first century. When He was 11 or 12, He and all the other Jewish boys of similar age in Galilee and in Judea would have been required to learn Hebrew. Then, as an adult,

He had to learn Greek for everyday commercial events. The fact that He spoke in His first language gives evidence to the extreme stress He was under while on the cross. This was not a cry of defeat though; this was a declaration of victory as He quoted Psalms 22:1-31.i

Dig Deeper

Take a closer look at Psalms 22:1-31. This is a lament psalm and follows the usual pattern for lament psalms. In lament psalms, the psalmist begins with a lament (such as why have you forsaken me) but quickly moves into a confession of trust (see vs. 3-5) and always ends with a vow of praise (see verses 22-31). Consider how in thinking through Psalms 22:1-31, Jesus was not questioning God's faithfulness; He was declaring God's victory:

"Let all the people of the earth acknowledge the Lord and turn to him!

Let all the nations worship you! For the Lord is king and rules over the nations.

All of the thriving people of the earth will join the celebration and worship; all those who are descending into the grave will bow before him, including those who cannot preserve their lives. A whole generation will serve him" (vs. 27-30 NET) Dig even deeper: When time permits, read through Psalms 22:1-31 as a family and point out all the prophecies that were fulfilled on the cross. For example, Psalms 22:7 reads "All who see me taunt me; they mock me and shake their heads." We read about this in Matthew 27:41.

4. Observe the response of the people

Focus on the response of the centurion in Matthew 27:54. He saw all that had happened and exclaimed Jesus was indeed the Son of God. Interestingly (and significantly), this confession of faith did not come from a Jew, rather it came from a Gentile.

5. Your Response

What is your response to today's passage? Living the Christian life is becoming increasingly difficult in today's culture. More and more Americans are becoming intolerant of Christ. First, do you believe like the centurion that Jesus is indeed the Son of God? Secondly, purpose as a family to share the truth about Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection with someone this weekend.

Pray with your family...

- Thank God for Christ and for Christ's willingness to die on the cross out of His love for us.
- Ask God to bring into your path someone with whom you can share Jesus.

6. Family Activity Compose a family Psalm of Praise to God. This is easier than you may think.

Just like lament psalms have a distinct pattern, psalms of praise also have a particular pattern you can follow as you compose your family Psalm of Praise. Use Psalms 100:1-5 and Psalms 117:2 as your example.

1. A summons to praise God: As a family, (and on a separate a separate piece of paper) write one or two lines commanding all to praise God. See Psalms 117:1 and Psalms 100:1-2.

2. Descriptive praise: Now, write lines that describe why God should be praised. He is the Creator of the universe. He is our Source of life. He is faithful. He is slow to anger and abounding in love. You can also see Psalms 100:3 and Psalms 117:2 for more examples. Write as many as your family can think of.

3. A renewed summons to praise God: Now, as seen in Psalms 100:4, write another couple of lines calling for people to praise God again.

4. Finish with the motivation for Praise - As demonstrated in 100:5, finish with some lines about why we want to praise God. For a sample Psalm of Praise see Family Activity Sheet – Good Friday.

07 - He Died?

He Died?

Study By: Margaret Carey This must have been a sad and confusing day for Jesus' followers. They had watched Him die the day before and now needed to bury Him. Joseph of Arimathea asked for Jesus' body and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph wrapped the body in a clean linen cloth and placed it in his new tomb. He then rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away (Matthew 27:57-61).

Today, in this quiet day, your family activity will be to match the OT prophecies that were fulfilled on the one day of Jesus' death. Spend this day reflecting on all Jesus endured during the last few hours before His death knowing He endured it all because of His love for us. (Answers are on the bottom.)

1. Psalms 41:9

A. Luke 23:33

Betrayed by a friend

2. Zechariah 11:12

B. John 19:23-24

Sold for 30 pieces of silver

3. Zechariah 13:7

C. Matthew 10:4

Forsaken by His disciples

4. Isaiah 53:5

D. Matthew 27:29

Wounded and bruised

5. Isaiah 50:6

E. John 19:28

Smitten and spit upon

6. Psalms 22:7-8

F. Mark 14:50

Mocked

7. Psalms 22:16

G. Matthew 27:26

Hands and Feet Pierced

8. Isaiah 53:12

H. Matthew 27:38

Crucified with thieves

9. Psalms 22:18

I. Matthew 26:15

Garments parted and lots cast

10. Psalms 69:21

J. Matthew 26:67

Suffered Thirst

Answers: 1-C; 2-I; 3-F; 4-G; 5-J; 6-D; 7-A; 8-H; 9-B; 10-E

08 - The Empty Tomb

The Empty Tomb Study By: Margaret Carey Scripture Reference

Matthew 28:1-20 See also Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:1-31

Key Verse 1 Corinthians 15:4 (NET) “and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures”

1. Read the Passage Read Matthew 28:1-20.

Dig deeper If time allows, read the resurrection account in all four Gospels.

2. Observe the actions and attitudes of Jesus: To emphasize the impossibility that anyone could steal the body, Matthew stresses the fact that the tomb was sealed securely and that a guard was posted. (see Matthew 27:65-66). Matthew’s account of the resurrection is short one but informative. As you read the passage, list evidences of Christ’s resurrection:

Matthew lists the following evidences:

1. The resurrection was attested by several witnesses (the women, the guards, others).
2. Although the tomb with Jesus’ body was sealed it was later discovered empty; the body was no longer there.
3. The excuse of the soldiers was illogical for no Roman soldier would admit to sleeping on the job. The penalty for sleeping on the job was death.
4. Jesus appeared to many people providing even more witnesses to His resurrection.

Here’s a question for you to consider: Why was the stone rolled away? Did Jesus need to roll the stone away so He could exit the tomb?

Look at verse 6. The angel tells the women: “Come and see the place where He lay.” Perhaps the stone was rolled away so the women could see that Jesus was no longer in the tomb.

3. Understand the culture Different details in the Gospels:

“When you read the Gospels side by side, you’ll notice some apparent discrepancies. For example, Mark reports that there were three women at the tomb of Jesus on resurrection Sunday, while Matthew speaks of only two...If four members of a band wrote stories about life on the road with a famous musician, we would expect a lot of overlap, but also some variation. People see the same things differently.” As you study the Gospels, the core question to consider is this: Who was Jesus? Each Gospel writer writes to a different audience and each adds his own personality to his writing; this explains the variations in their accounts. In spite of these, there are some truths that are certain: Christ lived a sinless life. Christ died and rose from the dead on the third day just as He had said. Jesus is both Lord and Christ. One other detail is certain: the Gospels all agree that

how people respond to Jesus determines whether they live or die eternally.

4. Observe the response of the People The women's response (Matthew 28:9) – The guard's response (Matthew 28:4 and Matthew 28:11-15) The religious leaders' response (Matthew 28:11-15) 5. Your Response:

How will you respond to Christ? Will you be like the women and worship Jesus or will you be like the religious leaders and continue to refuse to believe in spite of all the evidence presented to them. May you and your family be like the women and worship Christ for what He has done on the cross. Rejoice with your family. Enjoy this Resurrection Day for Christ the Lord has risen today, Hallelujah!

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