

DAY 1 - MAUNDY THURSDAY

CHANGED TO LIVE HOLY

WARM-UP

Recall one activity you found difficult to be good at. What did you do about it? Share your experience.

⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

ROMANS 6:6-14v

In our culture, it is customary to take this season as a time to reflect and be in an attitude of repentance and humility. This Holy Week, we may find ourselves wondering if it is really possible to change. We tend to believe that if we just pray harder or get involved in spiritual activities, it would produce change—at least for the week. We may consider this season an opportunity to reboot, do good works, or abstain from specific things. But because change is not simply a matter of external and temporary actions, we know that our own efforts do not have the power to produce lasting change.

The good news is that God desires to set us free from the power of sin. The Bible says our old self was crucified with Christ so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. To be enslaved means “to be controlled, constantly dictated.” Imagine yourself like a remote-controlled car—following every instruction and move dictated by our own sinful nature, leading to death and destruction.

This is exactly what Jesus dealt with once and for all. When He carried the cross, He carried with Him every sin we were powerless to overcome. That is why the verse says you can already consider yourselves dead to sin. On your own, you are incapable of controlling your sinful desires, but in Christ, sin is devoid of its power. A new power is at work in you—the power to say no to sin because of God’s grace. Because of Jesus’ finished work on the cross, we can live a holy life, not just a holy week.

APPLICATION

PERSONAL: Is there a specific sin you feel powerless to overcome? Knowing that Jesus took our sins and gave us the power to live a holy life, repent and declare His finished work in your life today.

GROUP: In a group, take this time to pray for each other to have a deeper understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done. Pray that in this season, our eyes will be opened to understand the new life we have because of Christ.

DAY 2 - GOOD FRIDAY

ONCE IS ENOUGH

WARM-UP

What is the most expensive item you've bought so far?

⁸When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

HEBREWS 10:8-10

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

HEBREWS 10:19-22

In a commercial world, we understand the value of trade. If we want something, we have to be willing to give up something else for it. We save up so we could "afford" a nice home, a car, or a vacation. Sometimes we behave the same way in spite of how Jesus dealt with our sins.

In the verses above, Jesus is referred to as the High Priest, the one who is qualified to offer sacrifices to cover for sin. In the Old Testament, the High Priest had to make animal sacrifices regularly for God to forgive His people. Think of how many animals would have to be slaughtered if we lived in that day! A High Priest had to be without sin, because if he sinned while performing the ritual, the wrath of God could fall upon him and cause him to die right at that moment.

Jesus is the perfect High Priest. He alone is without sin, so He is the only one qualified to do something about it. But Jesus is not only the High Priest—He Himself is the sacrifice. This sacrifice was only done once, and no other sacrifice was necessary. This means we can never "afford" our salvation or "earn" God's goodness and favor. Jesus has already made a way and He is the only way.

Hebrews chapter 10 leaves us with an encouragement: Knowing that Jesus' sacrifice is complete, all we need to do is come to Him with a full assurance of faith. Through the finished work on the cross, we are sure and secure.

APPLICATION

PERSONAL: Do you still do things to appease your guilt for past sins or to earn God's favor? Are you fully secure in Jesus' finished work on the cross? Reflect on what the Bible says about this. Ask God to reveal the motives your heart and pray that you would learn to trust Him more every day.

GROUP: In a group, ask everyone to bring out a coin and form a circle.

The coin symbolizes our tendency to make sacrifices/good works to earn God's love and favor. One by one, share what you have learned today and how it will apply in your life by completing the statement, "Because Jesus sacrifice is complete, I (can/will) _____." [Example: Because Jesus sacrifice is complete, I can be secure that He loves me in spite of my faults and imperfections]

After sharing, leave the coin at the center of your circle and then pray together.

DAY 3 - BLACK SATURDAY

FORGIVEN AND FREED

WARM-UP

Which is easier for you, to forgive or to ask for forgiveness? Have you ever felt restless or unable to sleep? Why did this happen?

¹¹But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹²he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

HEBREWS 9: 11-14

¹⁹When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. ²⁰He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." ²¹In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. ²²In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

HEBREWS 9:19-22

Imagine yourself in a courtroom. Your sins are being read in front of your friends and loved ones. How would you feel? Do you think you'd be able to sleep knowing you'll stand in trial the next day? We all fear being exposed because we know that we are guilty of wrongdoing. Ever heard the phrase "guilty as charged"? That phrase best describes us because no matter how seemingly petty our sins may have been, the Bible says we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Our sins have brought upon us guilt and condemnation.

Guilt and condemnation are like an alarm clock that never turns off. For as long as sin is there, the alarm clock keeps ringing, often leaving us restless. Will we ever be set free from guilt and condemnation? The answer is yes. Romans 8:1 says there is now no condemnation in Christ Jesus. Once we have acknowledged Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, we experience His forgiveness. The shedding of Jesus' blood is proof that we have all been forgiven. The phrase, "covered in blood" means sin has been taken away together with the guilt and shame it brings. Jesus' blood purifies our conscience.

As you remember Jesus' death on the cross, receive the freedom that comes with being forgiven and freed from guilt.

APPLICATION

PERSONAL: Are there sins you know are forgiven, yet you still feel guilty about? Take this moment to come before God. Thank Jesus for what He has done for you on the cross.

Knowing that you are forgiven, is there anyone God is telling you to also forgive? Pray for the specific person God reveals to you today.

GROUP: In a group, ask everyone to take out a pen and paper. Individually, write down what Jesus' death on the cross means to you. Did it guarantee forgiveness, promise healing and restoration, give freedom and faith to live? If there is still time, ask everyone to share their answers.

DAY 4 - EASTER SUNDAY

NO MORE TEARS

WARM-UP

Describe your favorite birthday celebration.

¹On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷"The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again."⁸ Then they remembered his words.

¹³Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶but they were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast.

²⁵He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"

LUKE 24:1-8,13-17,25,26

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 PETER 1:3

Nothing makes a person more downcast than the loss of a loved one. In the Book of Luke, we find different responses to Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus' disciples are described with downcast faces. How discouraged and defeated they must have been, knowing that they lost a friend, mentor, and Savior. Yet in the story, we find Jesus anonymously confronting their negative emotion and calling them foolish and slow of heart. Was it wrong to grieve? While feelings of loss and pain were real and valid, Jesus was trying to point out the truth behind His death: it wasn't meant to end there. He was to be raised in power and glory.

Note that Jesus challenged His disciples to believe that He did not suffer and die for nothing. Jesus' story does not end in tragedy, but in triumph. Jesus' story did not end in death, but in victory. That is why we celebrate Easter. It is a momentous celebration, declaring that Jesus has won the victory.

Because Jesus rose from the dead, victory is guaranteed regardless of the suffering and hardship we may be facing today. Because He rose from the dead, we have a new life in Christ where the old is gone and the new has come. Lastly, because Jesus rose from the dead, we have hope of eternity, confident that one day we will be with Him forever. Now this calls for a celebration!

APPLICATION

PERSONAL: How does Jesus' resurrection affect the way you live? What does Jesus' resurrection mean to you now? What will you start doing differently this week based on this truth?

GROUP: Take this moment to praise God. If you won't be joining any of our celebration services today, take the time to praise God together for His goodness and faithfulness.

In a group, write down one thing you are grateful to God for. Pray together and thank God with all your heart.