

Daily Practices

Week of 3/29/21 - 4/2/21

DAY 1 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 11:12-14

¹²On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. ¹³And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴And he said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it.

DEVOTIONAL: Jesus is using this moment as a teaching opportunity because Mark notes that fig trees were not bearing fruit at the time of year when Jesus curses this tree. All throughout the Old Testament, God uses a fruit-bearing fig tree as a metaphor for the flourishing of God's people. When they were following what God wanted for them, the fig tree would bear much fruit. When they weren't following God, then the fig tree would lay bare. As Jesus goes into the city of Jerusalem, he is calling out the lack of fruit in the people's lives. They weren't bearing the fruit that God required. This should give each of us pause. We need to examine our lives and look honestly at the fruit we are producing. Is it a fruit that is just ornamental? Or is it fruit that is rooted in God? But take heart, the fruit God seeks in our lives can be found in Galatians 5:22-23 (the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). Does your life produce the fruit of God?

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 2 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you.

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SCRIPTURE: Mark 11:15–20

¹⁵ And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶ And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. ¹⁷ And he was teaching them and saying to them, “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.” ¹⁸ And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. ¹⁹ And when evening came they went out of the city. ²⁰ As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots.

DEVOTIONAL: When people descended upon the temple for the Passover, they would often need to purchase a sacrifice to offer up to God. This was normal, but the ways that people were taken advantage of by those in power were not normal. They started charging more than they should have, and they set up their booths in the middle of the area where people were supposed to worship. Usually the poorest people had to travel the furthest and purchase these sacrificial animals. When they got to the temple, they were taken advantage of and they were given no space to worship. This infuriated Jesus. The religious leaders put their own desires in the way of people coming to God. They placed their own desires in the center. What do you place at the center of your life? Is Jesus really at the core? Jesus may be trying to move things around in your life and it may be painful; but ultimately, we need Jesus to rearrange our lives and desires to place him at the center.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit’s prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 3 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: John 2:15-22

¹⁵And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²²When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

DEVOTIONAL: When Jesus overturned the money changers' tables, he disrupted everything. But it still was nothing in comparison to what he was about to do. This beautiful, ornate temple that had been built would actually be torn down. The people wouldn't need a temple to offer sacrifices anymore because Jesus would become both the temple and the sacrifice. We have full access to God at all times because Jesus broke our need for a temple. We no longer have to go to a place to get near the presence of God. We have the presence of God living inside of us. Full access to God is yours. You don't have to bring anything to him—just yourself. You don't have to be afraid of God. You don't have to get yourself together. You can come to him because he has already come to meet you.

RESPONSE: Take a few minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to what God is speaking to you.

DAY 4 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you.

SILENCE: Set a timer for two minutes. Sit in silence and bring your attention to the presence of God with you right now.

SCRIPTURE: John 12:20–26

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

DEVOTIONAL: Jesus was just a few hours away from giving his life as a sacrifice once and for all. But his disciples didn’t understand yet. They couldn’t understand what it meant for Jesus to die. They were expecting Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom—which would have required Jesus to be alive. But Jesus was establishing a spiritual kingdom that required him to fight a spiritual battle with sin. This required Jesus to die; and when he died, he was actually giving his life as a sacrifice that would open it up for all people to come to him in faith. Through death, Jesus was able to bear much fruit. Similarly, Jesus calls his followers to give up their lives. This may not require you to physically die, but it will require you to seek Jesus as an example to serve others. When Jesus becomes central to your life, your dedication to him can be seen by your ability to give up your life in service to others.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit’s prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

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DAY 5 // DAILY PRACTICES

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, please help me to slow down enough in this moment to be fully present to myself and to you. May I hear how you want me to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you.

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SCRIPTURE: Mark 15:33–39

³³ And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ³⁵ And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.” ³⁶ And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” ³⁷ And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

DEVOTIONAL: On this Good Friday, we reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Jesus gave everything to you so that you could have access to him at all times. The temple curtain that kept us from getting too dangerously close to God was no longer needed. We didn't have to bring anything to God in order to be near his presence. Now we are able to come directly in his presence. How? By his presence coming directly into us. We now become God's dwelling place. God's presence is not just near you. It is in you if you have placed your faith in him. But let us not forget the cost in which He paid to provide us with access to him. Jesus gave everything in order to be with us. He gave his life, and he gave up his access to God the Father. When all of our sin that separated us from God was placed on Jesus, God had to forsake him until he died. Jesus was forsaken so that we wouldn't have to be forsaken.

RESPONSE: Take two minutes to respond to the scripture, devotional, or the Holy Spirit's prompting. Respond by writing in a journal, by meditating on a specific thought, or by talking with God.

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