

Daily Practices

Sixth Week of Lent

DAY 1 // WEDNESDAY

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

SCRIPTURE: ²⁸ After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘*The Lord needs it.*’”

DEVOTIONAL: The final week of Jesus’ ministry has taken him through Jerusalem by means of a royal entry that is uncommon in the traditional sense of a Roman king. Jesus speaks to his disciples and gives them clear directions to grab a young colt that has never been ridden. This colt has never been tamed, and in essence is pure. The imagery that is found in the pure sacrifice of this colt parallels to the pure sacrifice needed by Jesus’ death. The disciples, possibly not knowing the reason behind Jesus’ directive, are still given the opportunity to participate in his ministry. If you were asked the same question by Jesus, would you be willing to do what is asked of you? Consider what the world might say about you, tweet about you, do to you? What might your family think? Your spouse, your boss? Are our decisions because “The Lords needs it” or is it because “The _____ needs it” (Fill in the blank with whatever might be getting your devotion).

REFLECTION: What is God directing you to do in your life that you’ve been hesitant about doing?

PRAYER: “God give me the grace to accept hardship as a pathway to peace, taking as Jesus did, the sinful world as it is, Not as I would have it, trusting that you will make things right. God grant me the ability to discern what you are calling me to, and the faith to follow even when I can’t see all that is before me.”

DAY 2 // THURSDAY

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

SCRIPTURE: ³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

³⁴ They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

DEVOTIONAL: He is who he says that he is, and he will do what he came to do — whether we listen and follow or not. Just as Jesus said, as the disciples went ahead, the colt was waiting for them. We may be willing to go, but are we willing to sacrifice? What we read from this scripture is that the colt was readily given to the disciples — this animal was their way of life, their livelihood. It was potentially all that they had, and they were willing to give it up for the sake of the cross. Are we willing to give up what might be seen of value to us to remain in the will of the Father? Are we willing to sacrifice money, careers, political party, or social status? Does the sake of the cross supersede what we are clinging to here on earth?

REFLECTION: What is it that you are holding on to that God might be asking you to give up?

PRAYER: “My Lord may I do whatever is required of me because of my loyalty and devout love for you Father. I release my earthly possessions and time over to you so that I may seek first your kingdom, and your righteousness (Matthew 6:33).”

DAY 3 // FRIDAY

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

SCRIPTURE: ³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

DEVOTIONAL: We worship and acknowledge God's presence personally, but do we worship him publicly? At times, we shy away from having a physical response to the arrival of Jesus in our lives. The disciples and other followers of Jesus physically responded to Jesus without hesitation by throwing their cloaks on the colt, and along his path. This is not forced praise – the imagery is messianic and filled with humble worship to Jesus. This also is not a nationalistic or threatening act by Jesus, but it is one that points praise to God's presence. God is being praised for the mighty works he has done through Jesus. Everyone present is aware of the miracles performed, and the acts of love shown to his people.

RESPONSE: What can you do to physically respond to Jesus in worship?

PRAYER: Use Psalm 118: 27-29 as a guide for prayer: "The Lord is God, and He has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up t the horns of the altar. You are my God and I will give you thanks, you are my God and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever."

DAY 4 // SATURDAY

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

SCRIPTURE: ³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

³⁸ “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[a]
“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

DEVOTIONAL: The crowd recognized and responded to who Jesus was, and this one of the very few moments where Jesus allows the people to praise and worship him. He patiently, humbly takes his rightful place.

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” This verse is a fulfillment of the prophecy found in Zechariah 9:9:

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This moment is not so triumphant in the minds of the religious elite, but just as the colt symbolizes peace, Jesus promotes peace throughout his entry in Jerusalem.

RESPONSE: How has Jesus shown up for you that is deserving of praise? What miracles has he performed in your life, and in the lives of others that you have been witness to?

PRAYER: Father, “I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the Lord. I will fulfill my vows to the lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord.”

DAY 5 // MONDAY

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

SCRIPTURE: ³⁹ **Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”**
⁴⁰ **“I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”**

DEVOTIONAL: Just as the colt responded to Jesus, all of creation will respond to who God is. Even if we don't sing praises to him, the stones will. Pharisees wanted Jesus to rebuke his disciples, because yet again they have failed to see who Jesus was.

Today we are able to jump forward in the plot, and we know the resurrection is coming. If we were not able to read on, where would we find ourselves in the story? Would we be the pharisees hushing the crowd? Would we be the disciples physically responding to who Jesus is by worship? Or would we be one of the silenced because of the fear of opposition standing in their way?

RESPONSE: What do you believe your response would have been? And what is your response now, even knowing this side of the truth?

PRAYER: “Our Heavenly Father, as I look out at all of creation the mountains and waves bow at the sound of your name. The birds sing of your praised. God I don't want to miss out on being in your presence. As the Pharisees were blinded to who you are, Father my prayer is that I will have eyes to see, ears to hear you Jesus.”

DAY 6 // TUESDAY

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

SCRIPTURE: ²⁸ **After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.** ²⁹ **As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,** ³⁰ **“Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.** ³¹ **If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”**

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“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

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⁴⁰ “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

DEVOTIONAL: As you take in the entirety of this passage in preparation for Easter, seek out what God might be speaking to you. Whether you have been a believer for some time, or you’re new to faith, God’s word and the resurrection is just as powerful now as it was over 2,000 years ago. The triumphal entry is one of the very few accounts of Jesus’ ministry that is mentioned in all four accounts – illustrating the importance of it. Our Messiah came on the back of a lowly colt, not a royal horse, and he sat on the cloaks of servants, not royal robes. He is not a king with a multitude of armies to be judged by the flesh, but he is a king of peace and servanthood. He is a conqueror of nations not by brute strength, but by giving love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, meekness, and displaying self-control.

RESPONSE: As followers of Jesus, do we exhibit those same qualities of Jesus? Write a list of ways you do, and ways you don’t.

PRAYER: “Jesus, thank you for what you did on the cross so that I may spend eternity with you. My prayer is that I can live my life in a way that doesn’t display that the cross was wasted on me. I confess my unwillingness to press on when hope seems dead, my failure to praise you, kneel to you, and speak of your goodness to those around me so that they might too be saved through the work of Sanctification. Father, you presented yourself to us blameless and pure. Cleanse me, fill me with your word, and I offer my life as a sacrifice to be used by you.”