



10-Day Easter Preparation Guide

Day 1: Trial

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

Matthew 26:1–2, 57–68; Luke 23:13–25; John 18:28–40

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

- Though Pilate declared of Jesus, “I find no guilt in this man” (Luke 23:4), the travesty of the trial continued. Even in this mockery of justice, God’s plan was not thwarted. He used these acts of sinful men to His own purposes, to make a provision to redeem us from sin. How does this help you to believe that God has a greater plan in the sufferings you might experience as a believer?
- Have you encountered some level of persecution in your community, on the job, or even in your church for your stand for holiness? Remember that Jesus experienced that, too, and He committed Himself to the Father. What would that “commitment” look like in your situation?
- We all deserve the unjust treatment that Jesus received before His crucifixion. Spend a moment in gratitude and worship of Jesus for His amazing grace in taking your place and giving you freedom.

Day 2: Word of Forgiveness

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

Isaiah 53:12; Luke 6:12-16, 23:32-34; Acts 3:15, 17; 1 Timothy 1:13-14

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

- Jesus illustrated the importance of prayer during His life on earth, and His prayers on the cross were profound—full of rich truth. What does it mean to you that Jesus felt it was important to pray on the cross for others, and especially His enemies?
- On the cross, Jesus turned to His father when life seemed darkest. How does His example encourage you to turn to Father God when trials come?
- Ignorance of God’s truth is not the same as innocence. Think of people you know who do not know the truth of the gospel. Consider this: they will not stand in “innocence” before God. Will you be the one to bring them the truth they so desperately need?
- In spite of our sinful rebellion against God, Jesus longs to forgive us. He shed His blood to make forgiveness possible (Hebrews 9:22). Have you received His forgiveness? If you have, do you forgive others, as He has forgiven you? (See Matthew 6:12.)



Day 3: Word of Assurance

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

Luke 23:32-43; John 6:37; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:3-5

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

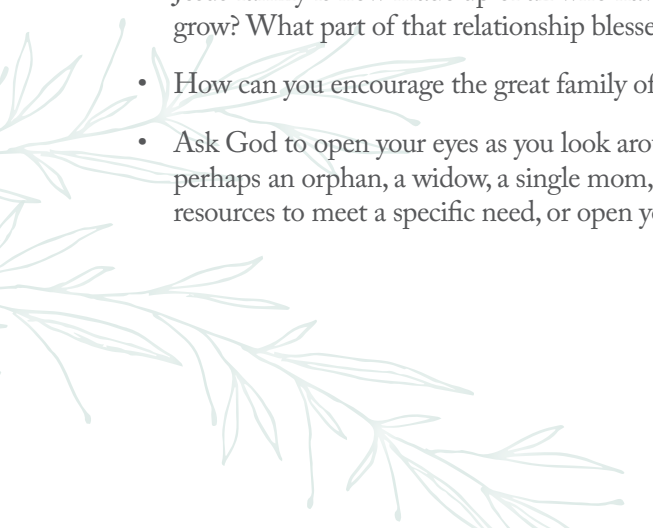
- Although it is good to examine our hearts to be sure we have trusted in Christ alone for salvation (2 Corinthians 13:5), God never intends for His children to doubt their salvation. How do you know that you are a child of God? How do Jesus' words of assurance on the cross encourage your faith?
- God opened the eyes of the dying thief to his need for Jesus. He knew that he could never save himself. When did you first realize that you needed the Lord? What did God use to open your eyes to your need of the Savior?
- Entrance into eternity with God is not a matter of our religion, ritual, heritage, or good works. It's all a matter of our plea for mercy and God's rich grace toward us. Meditate a few minutes on the love, mercy, and grace of God in your life... and express your thanks to Him for this precious gift.
- Perhaps you have loved ones or friends who are still rejecting Christ. Ask God for fresh opportunities to extend the gospel message to them. They may come to know him in their final moments, just like the penitent thief. Take time to pray for them now.

Day 4: Word of Devotion

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

Matthew 12:48-50; John 19:23-27; 1 Peter 5:7; Hebrews 4:15

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

- Jesus glorified God by providing for His earthly mother before His death, thus fulfilling the law to honor her (Exodus 20:12). His life example of caring for family responsibilities should encourage us to care for our own families' needs. Is there an area where you could do better in this area—honoring parents or caring for family needs?
 - Jesus' family is now made up of all who have trusted Him for salvation. How can you help your relationship with Him grow? What part of that relationship blesses or encourages you the most?
 - How can you encourage the great family of God in your community—spiritually, socially, and financially?
 - Ask God to open your eyes as you look around your local church. Find someone who needs caring "family" connections—perhaps an orphan, a widow, a single mom, a college student, or someone in the military. Use your spiritual gifts or resources to meet a specific need, or open your home and include that person at family gatherings or a private meal.
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Day 5: Word of Dereliction

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

- Psalm 22:1, 23:4; Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 27:45–49; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 13:5–6

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

- In the intense darkness of the hour, Jesus cried out in anguish, “God, why have you forsaken me?” As the Father laid our sins upon His Son, the weight of the curse we deserved (Galatians 3:10–13) made Jesus feel forsaken. Indeed, He was forsaken! He endured that awful separation with you and me in mind. Can we ever thank Him enough? Take a minute to express your gratitude.
- Have you felt the full impact of your sinfulness? Consider that Jesus bore not only your sin but the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Though He suffered, He knew the joy awaiting Him (Hebrews 12:2)—eternity with those who would place their faith in Him. If you have placed your trust in Jesus, are you willing to obey God, no matter where it leads you?
- Jesus suffered, yet He knew His Father’s purpose, and it helped Him endure to the end. Though you might not have understood the purposes of God in your trials, how does trusting that He is in control and has a plan help you endure suffering?

Day 6: Word of Agony

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

Psalm 22:14–15; 69:4, 9, 20; John 19:28–30

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

- If anyone ever doubted the humanness of Christ, His words of physical anguish—“I thirst”—made it clear that He was one of us. How does this simple declaration move you to identify with Jesus, who was not ashamed to identify with you?
- Jesus took the full cup of suffering so He could be sympathetic to our need. He was a “merciful and faithful high priest” (Hebrews 2:17). If He was so committed to you before His death on the cross, what does this say to you about His commitment to intercede for you now? (See Romans 8:34)
- Jesus deeply respected the Word of God, and waited to express His physical anguish until “all was finished” (John 19:28). He was submissive to the Father’s will, even in the midst of suffering. How do you respond in suffering? Are you seeking God’s will, or entirely focused on circumstances?

Day 7: Word of Triumph

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

Luke 2:49, John 17:4, John 19:28–30

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

- On the cross, Jesus fulfilled prophecy and finished the mission God sent Him to do. His suffering was ended and glory was ahead. But many other things were accomplished when Jesus cried, “It is finished.” For one, the debt of sin was cleared—paid in full—and God was fully satisfied. If you have trusted Christ, rejoice in thanksgiving now that no more sacrifice is required.
- Have you ever considered the terror in a criminal ready to die for his crimes? We are all sinners, worthy of condemnation, death, and separation from God. But the Bible says there is now “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). What does this mean to you?
- The Father was satisfied by the death of His Son for our sins. This means that nothing else is necessary; there is nothing that can be added. Think of a time when you thought your good works would appease God and make Him accept you more, and then read Ephesians 1:6. Where does your acceptance lie?
- The battle against Satan has been won. He is a defeated foe, because of Jesus’ victory on the cross. How does your life illustrate this truth? If not, do you need to apply this truth? Read Hebrews 2:14–15 and Romans 6:1–14 to encourage yourself to live in holiness—your life “crucified with Him” (Jesus).

Day 8: Word of Confidence

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

Psalms 31:1–15; Luke 23:44–49; Acts 7:59–60; 2 Timothy 1:12

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

- As people watched Jesus die, some were no doubt transformed by His words. One thief sought Him for salvation. One centurion saw Jesus’ true nature as the Son of God. As people watch your life, what do they understand about Jesus from observing your conduct and responses?
- Jesus committed His life’s work to the Father’s will, and then committed His spirit to the Father’s care in death. Have you committed your life into the hands of your Heavenly Father? How does your life show that you believe your life is not in the hands of circumstances, but in God’s hands?
- Jesus died as He lived. If you die as you have lived, how will you die? What do you think that would look like?
- David said to God, in Psalm 31:15, “My times are in your hand.” David believed that God is in control, and that he could trust God with his life (v. 14). How does your life show that you believe your “times” (life, length of life) are in God’s control?
- Stephen’s words in death (Acts 7:59–60) show that he understood the victory he had in Christ, and he even forgave those who killed him. As Paul said, for the believer there is no “sting” of death (1 Corinthians 15:5). How does knowing this help you prepare for your own death?

Day 9: Calvary Miracles

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

Matthew 27:45–53; John 2:11

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

- People came to spend time with Jesus for many reasons. Some came because of the power of His words, because they were fed, or because they'd heard stories about His miracles. Why did you first come to Jesus? Why do you come to Him now?
- Darkness accompanied the death of Jesus. Darkness is often a symbol of judgment in the Bible. What was the judgment of the cross? What does this mean to you, personally?
- We can praise God for the miracle of the torn Temple veil. Read Hebrews 9:12 and 10:19–20. What is true for you because of this miracle?
- One of the most amazing miracles in the Bible was the raising of “saints” from the dead after an earthquake. Why do you think God performed this miracle? Read about the resurrection of the saints in the future. (John 5:29; 1 Cor. 15:55; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–17).

Day 10: Resurrection Day

SCRIPTURES FOR MEDITATION:

Matthew 16:21–22, 28:5–6; Romans 1:3–4, 6:4–12; 1 Corinthians 6:14, 15:1–4; Ephesians 2:6; 1 Peter 1:3

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

- Some people wear crosses to symbolize gratitude for the death of Christ, but perhaps we should wear “empty tomb” jewelry. Why does it matter that Jesus rose from the dead—to you?
- Think about how the resurrection of Jesus transformed His disciples—they were courageous in telling people about His death and resurrection, even to the point that they were willing to die for the truth. How has His resurrection transformed you?
- Have you been to a funeral recently? If you have, you know that Christians grieve differently than those who haven't put their faith in Christ. How did the resurrection change our view of death? (John 11:25–26; Philippians 3:21)
- The resurrection was the proof that God has accepted the “payment” of Christ's death for our sin. How does this help you deal with any sin in your past, or your current desire to please God? Because of the resurrection, you have the same power that raised Jesus from the grave. Read Ephesians 1:19–20 and Colossians 3:1–4, and then examine your life as you ask, “Am I living today as if Christ rose from the dead? Am I living in resurrection power?”

