

NORTH LANGLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH

**John
1:1-18**

Daily Devotional



Daily Devotional
Easter 2026

Introduction

“He Sets His Face Towards Jerusalem”

Written by Matthew Price

NLCC FAMILY,

I want to welcome you on a journey that we’re taking through holy week. As a church, day by day, we will journey through the important moments in Jesus’ life leading up to Easter Sunday. Each day a pastor from our team will share a scripture, encourage us with a short teaching, and lead us in prayer. We hope that this journey throughout the next eight days, beginning on Palm Sunday and culminating on Easter Sunday, will be a blessing to you – and will lead you closer to Jesus.

As we begin this journey, I want to share a scripture with you:

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”

LUKE 9:51

Luke tells us that Jesus will be taken up. It’s a phrase that has a triple fulfilment. He will be taken up upon the cross, he will be taken up from death at the resurrection, and he will be taken up at his ascension where he will return to the father. The events of holy week can be summarized in those two beautiful words “taken up”. And when Jesus is taken up, we will experience the grace, the mercy, the transformation, the hope, and the salvation that God longs to pour out upon his children.

Also- notice that Jesus “sets his face” to go to Jerusalem. Biblical scholar David Garland writes that “‘He set his face’ is a Hebraism that implies a ‘fixedness of purpose, especially in the prospect of difficulty or danger.’” So, we can imagine Jesus turning his face towards the city of Jerusalem – knowing the suffering that lay before him. And as we look at his face we see a picture of resolve, focus, intentionality, and determination. Jesus knows the suffering that is before him, and yet he is determined to go to the cross.

Why? Why does he set his face with such determination to go be taken up? Well, it is Isaiah the prophet, who in chapter 53, prophesies that Jesus will be taken up and pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, punished for our peace, and wounded for our healing. He will do all of this out of love for us- and for the world.

Let’s pause and prepare our hearts for the week ahead. Would you take a quiet moment and slowly ponder the following:

How long has it been since you reflected upon the events of holy week?

Would you ask Jesus to open your eyes to the depth of what he accomplished that week?

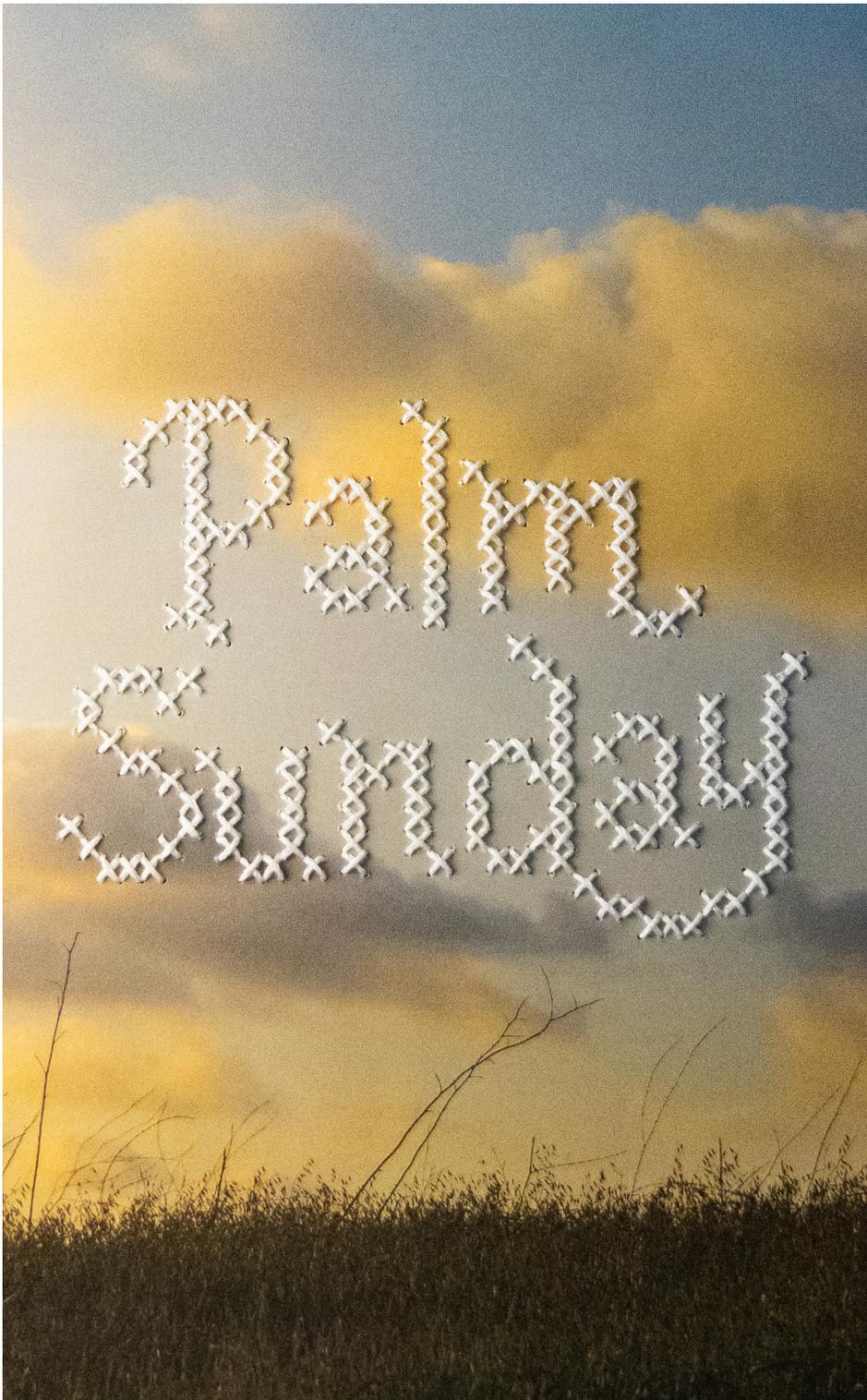
Would you ask Him to draw you close again- that you might receive His love in a fresh way this week?



PRAYER

Jesus, we thank you that you, with such loving determination, set your face towards the cross. May we see that love and determination in a deeper way this week. May we see the beauty of all you

accomplished for us as you were taken up at the cross, resurrection, and ascension. And we pray you would pour your love upon us this week.



Palm Sunday

“A Different Kind of King”

Written by Kerri Smith

“⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!””

MATTHEW 21:7-9

Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But exactly what triumph are we celebrating?

Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. Hundreds of thousands of people were gathered there. At the time, the Romans ruled over God’s people, and they longed for the Messiah to ride in like a warrior king and save them from this enemy. They envisioned a king who would come with a sword and make Israel the leader of all the nations.

As Jesus approached, they cut palm branches and laid them on the road. Throughout Jewish history, palm branches symbolized patriotism and victory. As the people filled Jesus’ path they were recognizing Him as their promised king. This is highlighted by their cry, “Hosanna,” which means “Save us”. They celebrated the triumph they believed Jesus was about to bring them. However, while the people laid down prideful palm branches, Jesus rode somberly on a humble donkey.

“⁴¹ As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.””

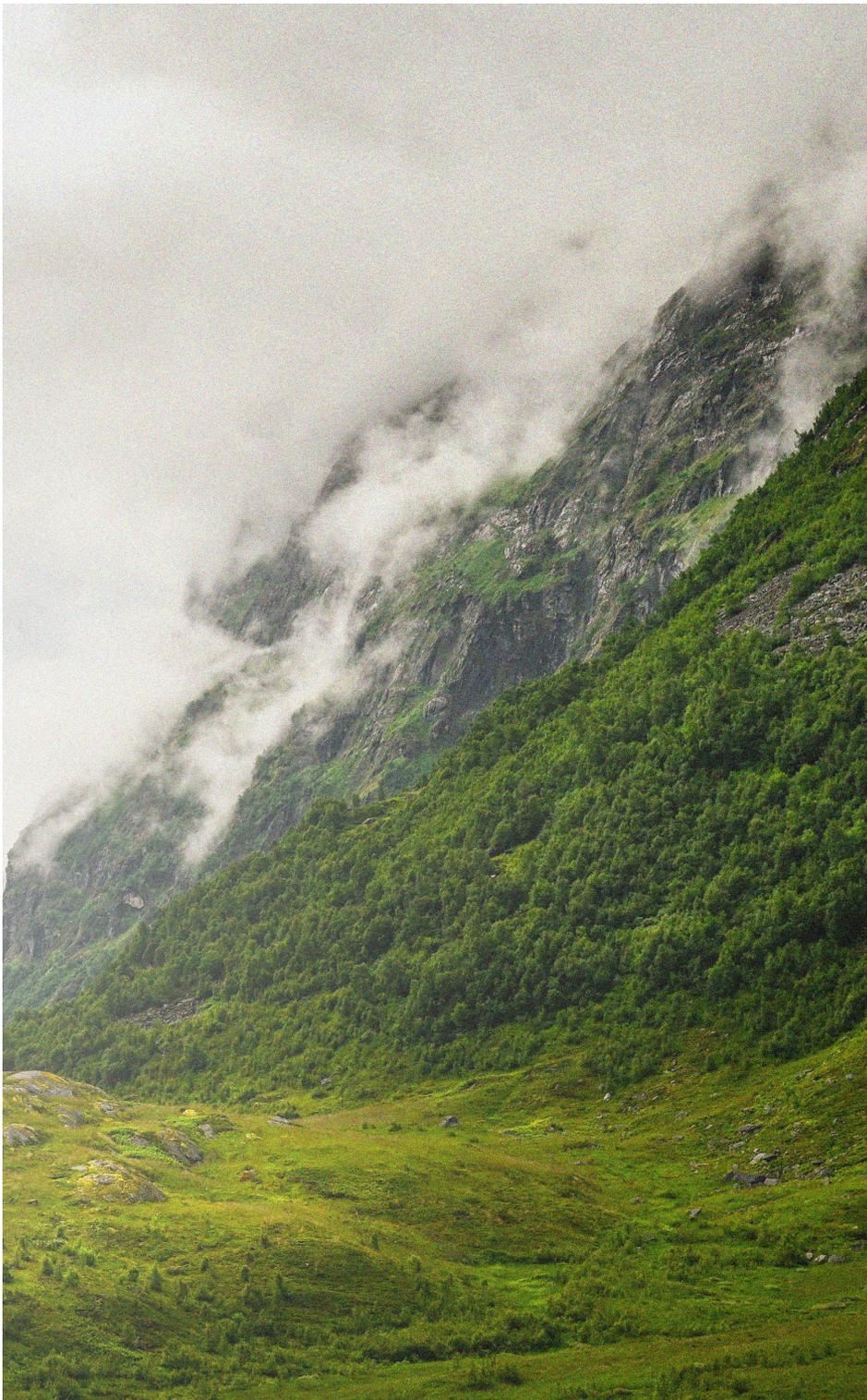
LUKE 19: 41-42

The donkey symbolized humility and peace. Jesus was declaring that He had come to bring peace. He came to restore the broken relationship between people and God. He didn’t come to free them from Rome, but to free them from the slavery to sin. He didn’t come to elevate them above other people, but to unite all people under the name of the one true King, Jesus.

So let us lay down our pride and cry out Hosanna—celebrating Jesus’ triumph over sin and death. Let us rejoice that we are welcomed into the people of God. Let us be grateful that His way is higher than our way (ISAIAH 55:8-9) and as we move beyond Easter let us remember to seek His Kingdom come (MATTHEW 6:33).

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we give You thanks for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who came not as a conquering king but as a humble servant. On this Palm Sunday, we celebrate His victory over sin and death, paving the way for our salvation. Help us to live in gratitude for His sacrifice, reflecting His love and grace in all that we do.



Holy Monday

“Entering the Kingdom”

Written by Tim McCarthy

“Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you... And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.”

MATTHEW 21:31B, 32B

Monday of Holy Week is when Jesus’ parables really escalate his confrontation with the caretakers of religious tradition and practice. In one simple parable, Jesus described two sons: one who initially agreed to work, but failed to follow through, and the other who refused to work, but eventually got things done (MATTHEW 21:28-32). Jesus’ next parable described God’s decision to rent his “vineyard” to new, reliable tenants who would “give him share of the crop at harvest time,” to “a people who will produce its fruit” (MATTHEW 21:33-43).

To everyone’s surprise, those worthy workers and reliable tenants were the worst men or women people could imagine in that culture – people who sold their loyalties to the enemy and their bodies to anyone who would pay! These people were finding their way into the kingdom because, though they started off badly, they were now responding to Jesus’ invitation with faith and repentance.

Meanwhile, the leaders of religious “renewal” were too proud to accept this new move of God’s mercy among them, and were plotting to silence Jesus for good. Yet Jesus would flip even that plot on its head,

for his death on the cross absorbed the punishment due to his persecutors, and make a way for even them to be forgiven, if they were willing.

In this season, God’s mercy toward sinners is a central theme. Jesus’ parables of confrontation challenge me to examine my own heart. Have I allowed pride to blind me to my need for mercy? Am I so invested in my way that I will miss experiencing God’s way of forgiveness, and miss the joy of celebrating that mercy with all who have received it?

PRAYER

God of mercy, you sent Jesus Christ to seek and save the lost. I confess that I have strayed from you and turned aside from your way. I am misled by pride, for I see myself pure when I am stained and great when I am small. I have failed in love, neglected justice, and ignored your truth. Have mercy, O God, and forgive my sin. Return me to paths of righteousness through Jesus Christ, my Saviour.

Holy Tuesday

“Be Alert! Keep on Loving the Lord!”

Written by Christy Bennik

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”

MATTHEW 22:37-39

Tuesday, a day that falls in the middle of the week and yet was a very full and significant day for Jesus in His final week on His journey to the cross. Jesus knew the precious moments that He had left to impart His final words and parables to His followers.

From the Temple to the Mount of Olives He called out religious leaders, foretold of the destruction of the temple and told of end times. The days to come would not be easy, there would be false prophets and temptations to become focused on things that are not important. He gave strong warnings and told of persecution that would come, but He also offered hope. He was building something new that could not be destroyed. Jesus’ disciples were concerned about knowing the details of when Christ would begin to reign, He directed them to be more concerned about remaining watchful and to be prepared. They would need to stay on guard in a world full of distractions and false prophets.

Keeping our watch today for Jesus can be pushed aside with our busy schedules and we can also be easily deceived. Our best way to keep our focus on Christ is to be in His word and do battle through prayer. We

also remember the greatest commandment that Jesus left to ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ We were created to Love the Lord, we are commanded to love the Lord, and we find purpose and blessing in loving the Lord. We love the Lord in how we posture our days and how we love those that God has brought across our path in life. We do this faithfully knowing that He is coming back.

Darrell Johnson says, “For if we know what the future holds it determines the choices we make in the present.”

If you knew the number of days you had left, how intentional would you be with that time?

Who or what are you spending your time loving? Take time to sit and listen at the feet of Jesus just as His disciples did that Holy Tuesday 2000 years ago.

PRAYER

Lord we thank you that you are the head to the Church—the one who in His great mercy came to establish a new order. May we have hearts full of joy and hope as we keep our eyes focused on you, but above all would you remain our first love. Help us to love you and love others well, that the world may know we are your disciples by our love.

Spy Wednesday

“Instead”

Written by Jon Reesor

“Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.”

MATTHEW 26:14-16

‘Spy Wednesday’ is when Judas agreed to ‘spy’ for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

Why would Judas do such a thing? How could he betray Jesus? Some suggest Judas was disillusioned. Jesus didn’t dismantle the rule of Rome or restore Israel to an independent nation. Instead, He preached about ‘loving your enemies’ and a ‘heavenly kingdom.’ Disappointed, perhaps Judas betrayed the one he felt betrayed by.

Judas saw first-hand the arrival of God’s Kingdom: hundreds of people transformed by the miracles and teaching of Jesus, but Judas was unchanged. 30 pieces of silver wasn’t a lot – basically a couple of paycheques – but it was enough that he sold his stake in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus and His followers were heading towards suffering. Instead an escape plan, Jesus said “pick up your cross.” And so Judas began to ‘spy’ for a way out.

We might see a ‘bad guy’ when we look at Judas, but do we also see ourselves? Have we ever looked for a way out?

I’ve been disappointed by Jesus. I pray a prayer for someone to be transformed. “Change the world,” I ask God, “and start with them!” Instead, Jesus held up a mirror. I’ve given Jesus a shopping list - things I am convinced will make life wonderful. Instead, He offers me daily bread.

I’ve begged Jesus to take me out of a tight spot. Instead, Jesus joined me in the mess. I’ve asked Jesus to make the future clear. Instead, He led me step by step like a shepherd.

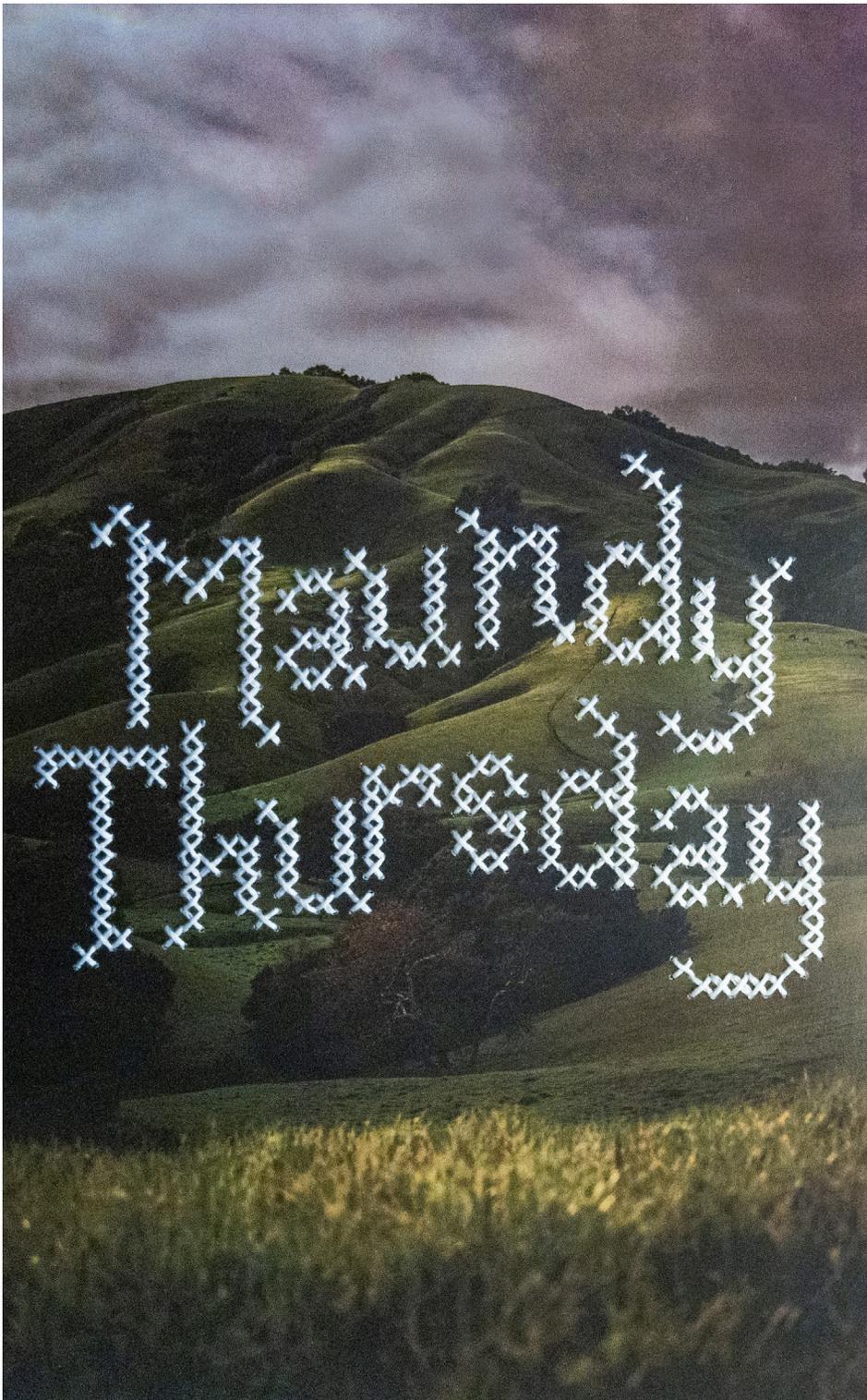
Jesus isn’t always who I want Him to be and in my disappointment I sometimes ‘spy’ for a way out.

Have you asked Jesus to conquer your enemies? To bring you everything you want? To establish your kingdom? To take you out of a difficult situation? And if He hasn’t done all you’ve asked in the way you wanted, how have you handled your disappointment?

Today, instead of looking for a way out, listen to the voice of the Shepherd and trust Him as He leads.

PRAYER

Jesus, I confess I have wanted my kingdom to come. Forgive me when my disappointment has made my heart ‘prone to wander.’ Instead, tune my heart to yours. May Your Kingdom come and Your will be done.



Maundy Thursday

“Love One Another”

Written by Rodrigo Justino

“A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

JOHN 13:34

Today is Maundy Thursday, from the Latin word meaning “command”. We read these words of Jesus, and see that there is something old, something new, but also something different in this command.

What is old? The command is found in Leviticus 19:18: *“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* Leviticus tells us that love is the antidote to revenge and grudges in a world where we are constantly hurting one another. There is no novelty here; what, then, is new in this old command?

From the lips and life of Jesus, an ancient command finds new motivation and reference: Christ himself! *“Love one another” he tells us, “in the same way I have loved you.”*

This is not only new, but radically different. How did Jesus love his disciples? He welcomed them into his life, called them friends, wept with them, served them, suffered for them and, ultimately, gave his life for them on the cross. That is what Jesus did. That is what he commands us to do.

There is another way in which this command is different. In the Greek, the verb is not in the imperative—less a command, and more like a plea: *“Love, as I loved you!”* Not out of obligation (for that is a love-killer) but out of the imprint of God’s love. Seeing just

how much we have been loved by Jesus, we cannot afford to remain the same, or to do nothing, for *“Christ’s love compels us”* (2 CORINTHIANS 5:14).

We cannot love this way by ourselves, and God knows that. We are broken and weak. If we are to love this way, we need power from above. That is why Jesus pleads—not only to us, but also for us: *“I pray, Father, that all of them may be one just as you are in me and I am in you.”*

Ultimately, it is God’s transforming power in us, in response to our Saviour’s prayer, that enables us to love one another like Jesus. We obey an old command, given different meaning, in a new way—a way never seen before.

What is one remarkable or new way in which Jesus has shown his amazing love for you? How can you love others in that same way?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thanks for your amazing love for me. Help me express your love for others through the things I say and do.



Good Friday

“In His Hour of Suffering”

Written by Robbie Down

“When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’”

LUKE 23:33-24

Good Friday remembers the crucifixion of Jesus on a Roman Cross.

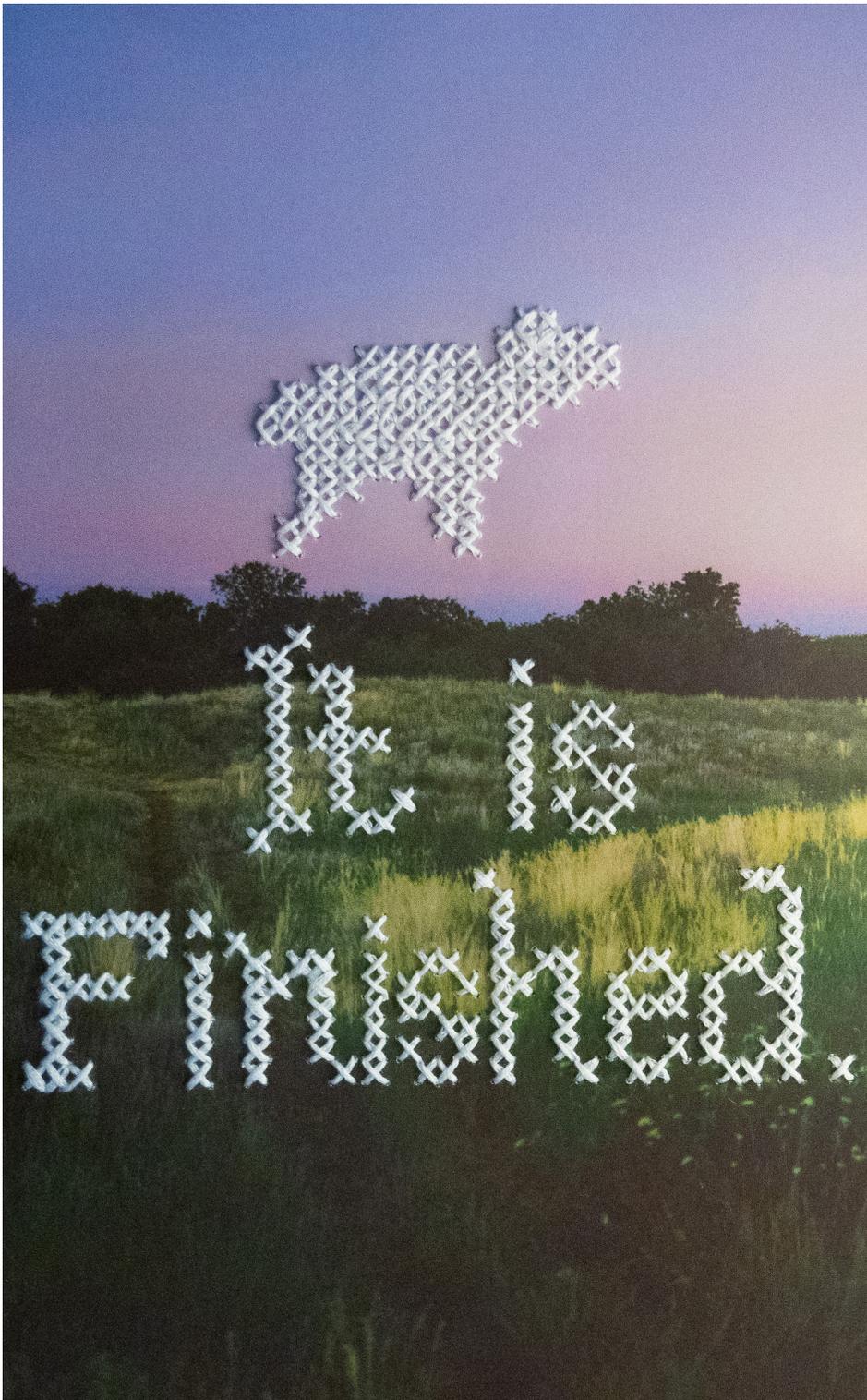
So, what about the event is good?

It is almost impossible to believe that at the very hour of his suffering, Jesus would think first to request His Father’s grace upon the people who unjustly murder Him. However, we shall not be persuaded by the tenderness of this speech to think Jesus does not feel strongly against injustice and irreverence. Just a few kilometres away from where Jesus hangs are the cracked and dented wood tables that He recently overturned in Herod’s temple in response to corruption. Yet, Jesus highlights the ignorance of his crucifiers, “they know not what they do.” They misjudged what was taking place. When His death on a Roman cross seemed to confirm the falsehood of all His teaching, Christ had reached the pinnacle of His ministry. As Jesus cries out “It is finished,” our suffering – both in a moment, and now forever – is made one with His. Whether physical, spiritual, or emotional suffering, Christ is not estranged from the hardship we all experience. From the pain of a lost friend to the devastation of one’s city turned to rubble, Christ cried out for

all humanity. He spilled his blood to set the course of death in reverse, becoming the hope for a new creation. He tore the veil that separated us from God from top to bottom – what God, not man, could only do. This is why it is a Good Friday.

PRAYER

We praise and thank you, Lord Jesus, for the gift of your sacrifice on the cross. On this day of remembrance, as we contemplate Your suffering for us, help us find meaning in the wounds we endure and the pain of the world we live in. You have called us to accept our mortality, and to serve one another in love. Keep us firm in our faith, as we are called to suffer with you. May we find a deep hope in our certainty that you are the God of a Kingdom of justice and love and life.



Holy Saturday

“Waiting in the In-Between”

Written by Ben Frederiksen

“The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. ⁵⁶ Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.”

LUKE 23:55-56

In between the earth-shattering drama of Good Friday and the tomb-shattering celebration of Easter Sunday lies the strange silence of Holy Saturday. As Christians, we understand and mark the sombre events of Jesus’ death on the cross, and we rightly rejoice in his resurrection, but we’re not sure what to do with the day in-between. And yet I think it’s here, in this liminal, in-between space, that we can encounter God in profound ways.

Holy Saturday is a time of waiting, of not knowing, of grieving. The women who prepared the spices for Jesus’ body were grieving as they rested on the Sabbath, not knowing what we who have heard the story already know. Waiting is hard even when you know the outcome – it’s even more difficult and painful when the outcome is uncertain or unwanted.

Holy Saturday looks like young parents huddled in the NICU, desperately willing their child to breathe, to live. Holy Saturday might look like the single woman still hoping for a companion to share her life with. The couple in the chemo ward are living in Holy Saturday, praying that this

round will be the last. You might find yourself living in Holy Saturday between jobs or relationships, waiting for a diagnosis, or as your children grow up and leave home. Waiting. Not knowing. Grieving, perhaps.

The hardest part of Holy Saturday might be the silence – the silent body in the stone-cold tomb, the silence from the heavens above. Where is God in the silence? It’s a question I wrestled with as a young adult, feeling like God was distant, silent, unconcerned with my questions and unmoved by my tears. Only later did I recognize his unmistakable presence, his hand on me in a friend’s hug, his love in the prayers of my parents, his Spirit that would not let me go.

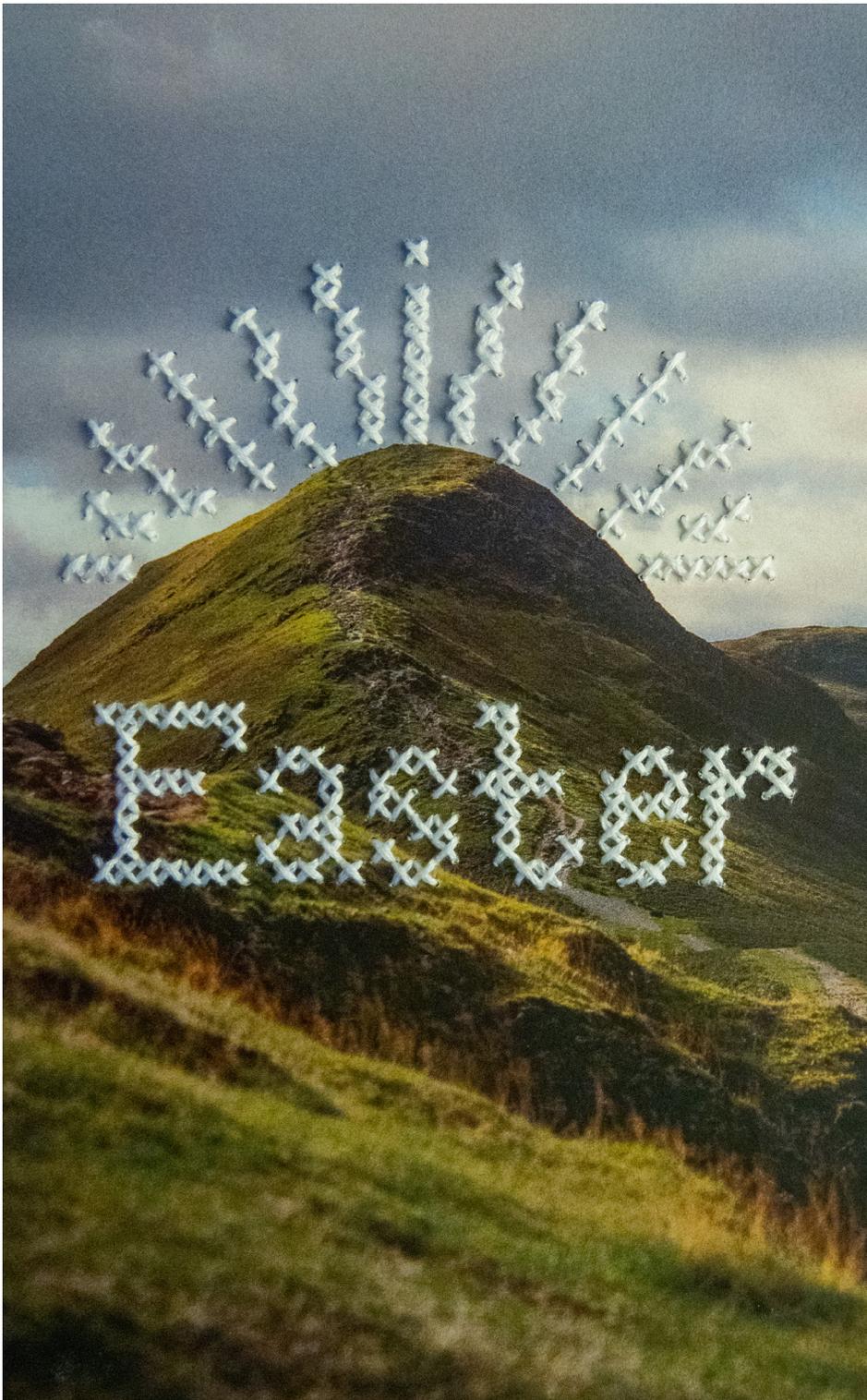
Holy Saturday forces us to stop our head-long rush into whatever is next long enough to hear the silence. To be still and wait for God. To long with all our body and soul for resurrection.

PRAYER

God, on this Holy Saturday, teach us to wait patiently in the in-between for you to do what only you can do. Amen.

POINT TO PONDER

Take 5 minutes (or more if you can) to simply sit in silence in God’s presence. Use these words from Psalm 46 to help you focus: *“Be still and know that I am God.”*



Easter Sunday

“Death in the Garden, Life in the Risen Christ”

Written by Dane Smith

Easter invites us to look honestly at both the sorrow of our world and the hope of our Saviour. We know that something is not as it should be. We feel it in our fear, our shame, our fractured relationships and the quiet ache in our hearts.

In Genesis 3, we see the beginning of death. Humanity chooses rebellion (GEN 3:6). “Immediately”, the effects of sin begin to unfold. Shame (GEN 3:7), withdrawing and hiding from God (GEN 3:8), fear (GEN 3:10), blame (GEN 3:12-13) all suddenly enter the fray. What was whole, beautiful and perfect was now fractured.

We see three deep realities that begin to mark humanity:

- Spiritual separation
- Relational fracture
- Internal corruption

Humanity, made in the image of God, now lives under the shadow of death.

But there is hope. In Matthew 14, Peter steps out onto the water toward Jesus. For a moment, he walks in faith. But he experiences the human realities mentioned above, and takes his eyes off Jesus, focuses on the storm, and begins to sink. Isn't that like our story? We take our eyes off Jesus and become overwhelmed by the noise around us. The garden death still shows up in us.

Recently, I reached a point where I needed some extended time off. I had been carrying so much for so long that I did not

fully realise how deeply worn down I had become. My eyes were no longer fixed on Jesus, but on the storms around me. I felt overwhelmed, weak, and ashamed. It felt like I was sinking.

When Peter was sinking, Jesus “*immediately* [(notice the immediacy of the death in the garden, and the immediacy of Jesus’ rescue)] *reached out His hand and rescued Him*” (GEN 14:31). Jesus here demonstrating His rescue plan of death to life – resurrection power. Jesus has been doing the same for me, bringing me out the water into new life and He does the same for you.

This is the hope of Easter. From the very beginning where death suddenly entered, a rescue plan was in place. Jesus’ interaction with Peter is a depiction of His resurrection power – Jesus is not far from those who are sinking but reaches out His hand. He entered our death, breaks its power, and brings life where it was gone.

Shame gives way to acceptance. Hiding gives way to nearness. Fear gives way to peace. What was dead, Jesus made alive.

PRAYER

Jesus, as I reflect today, bring to mind the places where death has touched my life. Thank You for lifting me up, bringing new life, and meeting me with grace. I respond with gratitude and praise.

