

## Easter Week Prayer Guide

### *A Seven-day Journey in Prayer Through the Last Words of Jesus*

As we approach Easter 2023, we want to pray with eager expectation that God will move among us. Each day, we will focus our prayers on one of the **seven last words of Christ**. These last words, spoken from the cross, reveal what was on Jesus' heart as he faced his last moments on earth. They uncover what was important to him and give us an appropriate guide for our prayers. We want to journey both to the cross and to the empty tomb this week, by praying and reflecting on the last words of Christ.

### **How to Pray This Week**

Praying is spiritual breathing, essential for our life in God. As we meditate on God's Word, we breathe in the promises and purposes of God. In prayer, we also breathe out, responding to God's Word. We want to encourage you to set aside some time each day for focused prayer. You may want to begin your day with prayer. Use the prayer points to guide you. Read through them and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you as you pray. Don't try to move quickly through your prayers, but take time to listen and interact with God. Trust that God wants to meet with you and share his heart as you share your heart with him.

Below are some helpful tips on how you could pray this week:

- **Commit to a specific time each day to devote to prayer.** Find a place where you can be free of distractions and be alone with God.
- **Use the prayer points and Scripture** in this guide to focus and fuel your praying. **Write** the Scripture and prayer point on a card and carry it with you, post it on your social media, make it the **screensaver on your phone**—whatever you can think of to keep these prompts in front of you. Use them throughout the day and invite others to join you in praying. You could even set up a Zoom call with friends, or members of your small group. Pray together as a family.

- You can take it a step further by **journaling** your prayers each day, simply writing out your prayers to God. This is a great opportunity to hide God's Word in your heart, working to memorize the verses as you meditate and pray.

### **How to Fast This Week**

Once again, we are inviting you to consider fasting one or more days during this time of prayer.

**Why do we fast?** Simply put, the goal of fasting is to turn ourselves from worldly things and set our minds and hearts fully on God. It is not a way to manipulate God or coerce him to hear and answer our prayers; rather, it acknowledges our complete dependence on him. Fasting awakens us to the reality that we are so often driven by our fleshly desires and appetites. It humbles us and awakens us to our great need for and reliance on God. As you consider fasting, we want to encourage you to listen to the Holy Spirit. You may choose to skip a meal and use that time to pray.

**If you are new to fasting**, here are a few resources to help you get started: [Fasting for Beginners \(3min read\)](#), [The Secret Benefit of Fasting \(2min read\)](#) , [Pastor J.D.'s Wisdom on Fasting \(2min read\)](#)

\*\*\* On Good Friday, the day that we reflect on Jesus' death on the cross for our sins, we are encouraging our whole church family to join us to fast for at least one meal that day. We believe this is a way for our church family to corporately reflect on and remember the power of the cross.\*\*\*

## **Monday, April 3**

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." - Luke 23:34a (ESV)

What Jesus spoke that day on the cross is for us today. We've been offered forgiveness and cleansing. If we confess our sins, agreeing with what he says about who we are and what we've done, he has promised to forgive and cleanse us.

### *A Prayer for You*

- Start by asking God to reveal any unconfessed sin or rebellion. Confess, call it by name, admit that you were wrong, and repent.
- Ask God to help you live in complete surrender and obedience to him.
- Is there anyone from whom you have withheld forgiveness? Ask God to give you the grace to forgive and release them.

### *A Prayer for Others*

- Pray that God would make you aware of those around you who have not received forgiveness in Jesus. Pray for boldness in sharing and inviting them to hear the gospel this Easter.
- Ask God, through the preaching of the Word and by the power of his Spirit, to bring conviction of sin and release from bondage.
- Pray that we would see many, including our own family and friends, come this Easter to hear and believe the offer of forgiveness and cleansing in Jesus.

## **Tuesday, April 4**

"...today you will be with me in paradise." - Luke 23:43b

If there was ever proof that salvation is by grace through faith and not by works, this is it. Jesus offers salvation and eternal life to the worst of sinners, regardless of what they have done.

### *A Prayer for You*

- Praise God today and thank him for so great a salvation, that death has lost its sting and that we have eternal life through faith in Jesus.
- Ask God to help you cultivate eternal hope, as you set your mind and heart on things above and not on earthly things.
- Pray that you would always be aware of eternity—and that you would joyfully and sacrificially live with Christ's return in mind.

### *A Prayer for Others*

- Today, pray for specific people in your life who have yet to trust Jesus. Ask God to cause them to see and know, believe and confess that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of the world.
- Pray that your brothers and sisters in Christ would live with confidence and joy, knowing they are forgiven.
- Ask God to give us patience and endurance as we wait for Jesus' return.

## **Wednesday, April 5**

"Woman, behold, your son!" - John 19:26b

Even in the midst of his own agony, Jesus was mindful of the pain of others. His own pain didn't keep him from noticing and even making provision for his mother. He sees your pain today, and he cares.

### *A Prayer for You*

- Cast all your anxiety on him. Tell him what troubles you. Believe that he cares for you in everything you face.
- Ask God to supply whatever it is that you need today.
- Pray that you would be satisfied in his love, joyful and confident that he cares for you.

### *A Prayer for Others*

- Ask God to open your eyes to those who are hurting around you. Pray that by his Spirit, he would show you how to care for them.

- Ask God to lead us, as a church, to protect, advocate, and care for the hurting around us.
- Pray that God would make us a church family who cares well for one another and for our community.

## **Thursday, April 6**

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" - Mark 15:34b; Matthew 27:46b

Because Jesus bore our sins, because he became sin for us, he was cut off from the presence of God. He endured the agony of separation from the Father so that we wouldn't have to be excluded from his presence. It was the will of the Father that Jesus bear the penalty for our sin so that we could be made righteous by faith in him.

### *A Prayer for You*

- Rejoice in this glorious truth: He was forsaken so that you never have to be!
- Ask God to keep you from fear and make you aware of his presence even in difficulty and hardship.
- Pray that God would make his presence real and known to you today.

### *A Prayer for Others*

- Pray that those who feel forsaken would come to know the acceptance of the One who loves them.
- Ask God to lead you in sharing the good news with your family and friends that God has come to us in Jesus.
- Pray that many would respond to the invitation to come and hear the gospel this Easter.
- Pray that we would all experience the presence of God as we worship together.

## **Friday, April 7**

"I thirst." - John 19:28b

John 19:28 indicates that Jesus said this so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, specifically Psalm 69:21, which says, "They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst" (NIV). All along

the way, God foretold his plan for our salvation through Jesus and then fulfilled it according to the Scriptures.

#### *A Prayer for You*

- Give thanks for the testimony of Scripture, where we see the thread of God's redemption story from Genesis to Revelation.
- Praise God that all his promises are "Yes" and "Amen" in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20).
- Ask God to give you a greater hunger for his Word and a deeper commitment to abiding in it.

#### *A Prayer for Others*

- Ask God to make us a people who know and believe the Word of God. Ask God to give insight and wisdom to those who teach our kids and students.
- Pray that God would speak powerfully through the preached Word at the Summit.
- Pray specifically for Pastor J.D. and the message he will preach on Easter Sunday. Pray for clarity and conviction.
- Ask God to awaken those who hear the Word of God declared this Easter.

### **Saturday, April 8**

"It is finished." - John 19:30

Completed. Fulfilled. Finished. Done. At what looked like the moment of defeat, Jesus cried out in victory. Pray that on Easter we would joyfully celebrate the victory won by Jesus on our behalf. It is finished. There's nothing more to be done. The price has been paid. Jesus did what God purposed for him to do. He was obedient, and God gained the victory.

#### *A Prayer for You*

- Thank God for Jesus' finished work. Praise him for the victory won by Jesus' humble submission and obedience unto death.
- Ask God to give you clarity about what he has called you to do. Pray for a steadfast commitment to live out that calling—to go where he calls you to go and to do what he calls you to do.

### *A Prayer for Others*

- Pray that The Summit Church would faithfully commit ourselves to the work God has given us to be witnesses in RDU and around the world.
- Pray that we would be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord [y]our labor is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58 ESV).
- Ask God to use us to raise up the next generation to be devoted disciples of Christ.

### **Sunday, April 9**

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" - Luke 23:46

Just as he had prayed throughout his life and ministry, Jesus now cries out again to his Father. Having declared victory, Jesus now speaks a word of surrender, entrusting himself to the One who loves him. Even in death, he knows he can trust the Father.

### *A Prayer for You*

- As we celebrate the Resurrection today, ask God to fill you with joyful hope and eager expectation as you surrender to him.
- Pray that God would help us set our hopes on his purposes and plans for us.
- Even as you began in faith, ask God to strengthen your faith today.

### *A Prayer for Others*

- Pray that today, Easter Sunday, many would come to our Easter service and would respond in joyful surrender to God and his offer of eternal life.
- Ask God to give faith and courage to respond to the call to be saved.
- Pray that those who submit their lives to Christ today would commit to being disciple-making disciples for the rest of their lives.