

Remarkable: Jesus the Resurrected One

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Easter Sunday

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Mark 16:1-8

What a week! “Holy Week” began on “**Palm SUNDAY**” with His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He was a rock star surrounded by an adoring crowd who cheered Him/His disciples. As Jesus descended from the Mount of Olives riding a donkey, it sharply contrasted him with the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, who had come to Jerusalem from Caesarea. Jesus rode into Jerusalem with confident humility while Pilate went to town with the privileges, comfort and arrogance of power.

On **MONDAY**, Jesus and cleansed the Temple of their money changers

On **TUESDAY**, Jesus wept over Jerusalem and gave what “the Olivet discourse” (spoken from “The Mount of Olives”). He predicted that not one stone in the Temple area would be left on top of another; every stone would be thrown down.

This came true in 70 A.D.

“**Silent**” **WEDNESDAY** is “silent” as scripture records nothing happening on this day (though obviously something did)

On “**Maundy**” (a French word – our English word is “mandate” meaning “to give” – Jesus “gave” a new commandment “to love one another”) **THURSDAY**, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet before the Last Supper. After Judas left to betray him, Jesus and the disciples went to Gethsemane late at night to pray. Judas led the religious leaders to Jesus and identified Jesus as the leader by kissing Him on the cheek. Jesus was arrested. He was taken to the High Priest’s house for a sham trial. Jesus “rock,” Peter denied before a servant girl that not only was he not a disciple, but that he did not even know Jesus.

“**Good**” **FRIDAY** is “Good” only because of Sunday’s outcome. There seemed nothing “good” about it that day. There were a series of unjust trials resulted in Jesus being flogged and crucified between two thieves. Jesus last words from the cross, “*It is Finished*,” appeared to truly be the last words.

“**Holy**” **SATURDAY** is a 2nd day of silence. The “rock star” 6 days ago is now cold and dead in a tomb. Jesus drank the cup of wrath to its dregs. He didn’t just taste death, spit it out and fly up to heaven – he descended to the dead. For all that His disciples knew, He will stay forever. Every human knows that the last enemy to be conquered is death. Those who have faced loss and have drunk from that cup, know of this great pain. “*Low in the grave he lay, Jesus My Savior*”

Let’s recast Holy Week in terms of the **HUMAN EMOTION** behind the events:

PALM SUNDAY = great celebration, victory, triumph, “mountain top” experience

MONDAY/TUESDAY = Jesus’ sadness/anger for what’s happening now + what will happen

WEDNESDAY = silence **THURSDAY** = friends, goodbyes, betrayal, stress, anxiety

FRIDAY = innocence, abuse, mistreatment, doing the hard thing, excruciating suffering + pain, defeat

SATURDAY = silence, death, loss, grief, despair, hopelessness, fear. The disciples had some great memories, but they had no hope now. Fearing for their own lives, they retreated into hiding.

Many say they don’t believe in God because they are **DISAPPOINTED** with some aspect of life. This seems more of a modern and western philosophy than it does even of a couple of generations ago in America. Great Depression kids tended to work hard/together and had low expectations with deep gratitude, not high expectations. They tended not to grumble or complain. People who suffer around the world today also realize that life is difficult. They tend to have low expectations. Westerners tend to expect life to go well and believe that this is how life should work. Invariably, it doesn’t, if for no other reason than we end up with our own Friday/Saturday scenario. We, and everyone we love, will eventually die. If the sting of death is our ultimate end, it is hard to put a smiley face on that.

So “Where is God in all of this?” We believe that God came in human form in the person of Jesus Christ. Yet, Jesus didn’t have His prayers answered, either. On Thursday, He prayed that, “*this cup could pass from Him.*” The cup led to Jesus’ agony. On Friday, he cried out to God, “*My God, My God, why have you deserted me?*” He was quoting from Psalm 22. God was silent. There was no answer from the cross. There was no descending dove or booming voice from heaven: “*This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.*” There were no miracles. The nails didn’t fly out of his hands. The angels didn’t smite the Roman soldiers. By Friday afternoon, Jesus’ frightened disciples knew they could well be next – so they went hiding. On Saturday, Jesus body lay in the grave. His disciples were in incredible pain, too. They thought they had the world by the tail only to find they were crushed. They were suckers! Where is God? The “Messiah” is lying dead in the grave. The religious leaders and the Romans had destroyed their dreams.

Furthermore, they would be next. There is a LOT of disappointment in Holy Week.

Sometimes people object to the Christian claim that “Jesus is THE Way, truth & life” not A way, truth & life. Why do we make this claim? Because while I’ve been talking about “Holy Week” I’ve not mentioned TODAY: “Easter Sunday. Without Easter Sunday, all we end up with would be, “Bad Friday and Dead Saturday.” But the church wasn’t formed because of Friday and Saturday, it was created because of what happened on Sunday. That’s why these fiercely monotheistic, worship on the Sabbath Jews changed their day of worship to Sunday – it was The Day of

Resurrection.” If anyone else can be resurrected from the dead, we’ll follow them. But Jesus is the one and only. Take away the resurrection and we have nothing. With it, all of Jesus’ promises are validated for all time.

“Easter” SUNDAY: the “Day of Resurrection.” *When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.* ² *Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb* ³ *and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"* The large stone blocking the tomb was an afterthought for them.

⁴ *But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.* You can imagine their thoughts – someone must have rolled the stone away and stolen Jesus’ body – further indignity. But why? And what about the soldiers? Jesus in His resurrected body could pass through locked doors so the stone was not rolled away so He could exit the tomb- it was the first sign that something was “up.” The stone’s removal allowed the disciples to enter the empty tomb and investigate.

⁵ *As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.* Luke’s gospel (24:4) says, *suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.* ⁶ *"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.* ⁷ *But go; tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"*

⁸ *Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.*

There are two wonderful, extra words found only in Mark’s gospel: ⁷ *go, tell his disciples* **AND PETER**

The denying disciple, the leader of the group, the big talker, gets a special word from Jesus.

Jesus’ confident humility brought exaltation. Peter had been humbled...but he was also exalted as the leader of the early church. (1 Peter 5:5-7) ***God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.***

We live in one of two ways: PRIDE/HUMILITY. Until we recognize and admit our need there will never be any significant change. Once we humble ourselves, we open ourselves up to the possibility of being “lifted up.”

We will live in one of two ways and days: BEFORE/AFTER Easter. It’s Friday/Saturday or Sunday. Do nothing and death wins. We are crushed and

defeated. But if we want life, we choose to follow Jesus. It leads to many benefits: Eternal Life, Forgiveness of Sin and a Mission in Life. It is a gift we receive. We get the gift by asking for it. **Recognize** our need – **repent** of our pride – + **receive** Jesus as our savior. Commit to follow Him.