

3 BOWLS & A CROWN OF THORNS

instructions

When You're Feeling Spiritually Dry during Holy Week

WHAT YOU NEED:

1. a bowl of figs
2. a bowl of almonds
3. a bowl of toothpicks (tea or coffee stained)
4. a small grapevine wreath



WHAT YOU DO:

Set the Three Bowls (figs, almonds, toothpicks) & a Crown of Thorns on a table during Holy Week.

1. **Read of Jesus' last miracle before His death:** The Withering of the Fig Tree. Share how Christ is looking for fruit in our lives of faith. And the first fruit is to believe that Jesus Christ is our Saviour, that without Him, there is no fruit. Have a time of personal and family reflection: What are the fruits of the Spirit? How does my life bear each of the fruits of the Spirit?
2. **Read the story of Aaron's dry as death rod budding and blossoming and bearing fruit.** Give glory to God for doing miraculous work in your life, to bear unlikely faith, by His grace alone! Share God-glorifying stories of unexpected fruit!
3. **Leave out the bowl of figs and almonds to eat throughout Holy Week**
A literal reminder of what Christ seeks and how He surprisingly saves.
4. **Set out the bowl of thorns {toothpicks stained} and the grapevine "crown" Throughout Holy Week,** as issues arise that beg repenting, slip a toothpick thorn into the grapevine wreath — and thank Him for His painful grace that He offers to bear fruit in our lives...

Without thy grace, we waste and wither away.

a bowl of figs

The days after Psalm Sunday, we eat figs.

Because the day after Palm Sunday, Jesus, hungry for fruit, he sees a fig tree and

“He went to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only.

And He said to it, “May no fruit every come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once”

(Matthew 21:18).

The first act after the fall, it's the first Adam come looking for fig leaves.

The last miracle before being nailed to the Tree, it's the Second Adam, Jesus, come looking for figs.

Ask Adam: The authentic Christian life has got to be more than leafage.

Faith has to have fruit.

It's the fig-bearers who live a faith that bears fruit.

And it's the leaf-wearers who just live this front that wears thin.

And Christ? He inspects our lives for more than intentions; He intends for intimacy.

He searches the limbs not for leaves — not leaving for conferences or for meetings or for front seats.

He looks along the the leaves for the love.

For the seed that swells with the Spirit, the faith that unfurls, the flower that unfolds into fruit. Can belief ever be barren? Doesn't belief always mean living in the Beloved? Living like the Beloved?

Breaks the fig open and see all the seeds, all this possibility.



a bowl of almonds



What if you're the one feeling dry and brittle?
What if all you feel like you ever bear is.... frustrated kids
and edgy words and a whole string of "grin and bear it
days"?
What if you're the one who feels like you're withering
right up?

How often am I like Aaron's rod, dry and brittle, who just
has to lay everything before the Lord —
I lay out a bowl of almonds too.

Because Aaron's dry-as-death rod, that rod budded
and blossomed, white almond flowers unfurling this
impossible faith by grace.



These brittle, dry days — they can be kindle for burning
bushes and God can come upon the dry bones and they
can bud and blossom. And we can eat almonds and taste
miraculous fruit from limbs just surrendered.

After Palm Sunday and before Good Friday, that's what
we eat — the almonds and the figs and the fruit, because
by Grace, God can get a fig out of even this dry stick.

a bowl of toothpicks

AND A GRAPEVINE WREATH

All through Holy Week, every time we need
to repent, we slip one of the toothpicks into the
grapevine wreath.

As the wreath fills, our hearts fill with repentance
and our souls are laid low in gratitude for His gift of
forgiveness.

I slip in a toothpick thorn, repenting of fruit that isn't and believing in Him who is, and it's
there in these hands, this snapped, withered wood that will bear the impossible life and right
everything again.

This hope encircling like a crown...

