

WEEK OF ASH WEDNESDAY: PARTICIPANT  
WEEK 1: WEEK OF MARCH 3  
A PLACE AT THE TABLE FOR YOU  
Luke 22:1–23

OPENING

Jesus, I will ponder now  
    On your holy passion;  
With your Spirit me endow  
    For such meditation.  
Grant that I in love and faith  
    May the image cherish  
Of your suff'ring, pain, and death  
    That I may not perish.

—“Jesus, I Will Ponder Now” (*LSB* 440, v. 1)

SERIES INTRODUCTION

“Places of the Passion” is a Lenten series that meditates on the Passion Narrative of St. Luke. Each portion of the series focuses on a different place in the Passion of our Lord and discovers in that place the gracious work of God.

What is important in these places is not the physical surroundings but the spiritual dispositions of the people who gather there. Again and again, we will see God’s people, from the religious and political leaders to the disciples, revealing the sinful ways of the human heart. Yet, again and again, Jesus will reveal how He enters these physical places to bring about salvation and spiritual change. The most troubling places of our lives become the most amazing places of God’s grace when Jesus visits them.

As you read through these studies, you will be invited to see a stark contrast between the ways of sin, manifested in all the variety of human life, and the way of salvation, made known in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By listening closely to these texts, by meditating on the work of God revealed in and through them, we will learn to bring our sins to Jesus that He might save us with his powerful and passionate love.

INTRODUCTION

In Exodus 12:1–14, God offers Israel directions for keeping the Passover. The first portion of the text (vv. 1–11a) describes Israel’s actions: from selecting the lamb, slaughtering it, and placing its blood on the doorposts, to preparing the lamb and eating the meal. The second portion of the text (vv. 11b–14) describes God’s actions. God will pass through Egypt, striking down the firstborn, but He will pass over His people because of the blood on their doorposts.

Thus, in Exodus, when the Passover is introduced, we are asked to contemplate two actions: the action of the people and the action of God.

Luke uses a similar technique when he retells the story of our Lord's celebration of Passover with His disciples (Luke 22:1–13). The first section of the text (vv. 1–6) focuses on the actions of the people, and the second section of the text (vv. 7–13) focuses on the actions of Jesus. In this way, Luke presents us with two vastly different Passover preparations.

By contrasting these two different Passover preparations, Luke invites us to see that Jesus graciously works through His Word even in the face of evil.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When we think of the Lord's Supper, we remember Jesus and "the night when He was betrayed." Our thoughts turn to how Jesus graciously gives us His body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of our sins. For the disciples, however, Passover meant something different. What was the meaning of Passover? How did God's people celebrate it? (See Exodus 12:1–14.)

2. Scripture offers explicit directions on how to prepare for Passover physically. Knowing what Passover celebrated, how do you think God's people would prepare for it spiritually?

3. In the beginning of the text (22:1–7), Luke records how people were preparing for Passover. What are people doing? What do these details tell you about the spiritual state of God's people?

4. How does Luke's description of Jesus preparing for Passover (22:7–13) contrast with the description of the preparations of others?

5. Luke reveals that Jesus works through His Word in the midst of evil to graciously provide a place to celebrate the Passover. Why is this of great comfort to us today?

### CONCLUSION

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent, a time when God's people engage in repentant preparation for the celebration of Easter. There are many different activities, spiritual disciplines that God's people do in repentant preparation. In the midst of all of those activities, Luke turns our eyes to Jesus, to His Word and His work for us. In Him, we see how God has worked in the midst of evil, to prepare a place for us to gather at His table and be fed with the bread of life.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, when Your people suffered from slavery, You brought them a great deliverance and, when Your disciples were caught in deadly conflicts, You prepared for them the Passover.

Be with us now, as we begin the season of Lent. Teach us to repent of our acts of evil and open our eyes to see Your Son's acts of love, our ears to hear His words of grace, and our hearts to trust that, in all places, He has prepared a table for us.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.



MIDWEEK OF LENT 1: PARTICIPANT  
 WEEK 2: WEEK OF MARCH 10  
**THE UPPER ROOM**  
**Luke 22:24–38**

OPENING

- L In the name of Jesus, our humble Savior.  
 C **Amen.**  
 L To You, I lift up my eyes,  
 C **O You who are enthroned in the heavens!**  
 L Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master,  
 C **as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress,**  
 L so our eyes look to the LORD our God,  
 C **till He has mercy upon us.**  
 L Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us,  
 C **for we have more than enough of contempt.**  
 L Our soul has had more than enough of the scorn of those who are at ease,  
 C **of the contempt of the proud.**  
**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning,  
 is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

—Psalm 123

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative, Luke takes us to the Upper Room, where Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples. The Upper Room is filled with powerful memories. In John's Passion Narrative, we remember that moment in the Upper Room when Jesus stripped Himself for service and washed His disciples' feet (John 13:1–20). There, we see Jesus kneeling and washing the feet of disciples who would desert Him and of one who would betray Him.

Luke does not include that event in his account of the Upper Room. He does, however, offer us the teaching that Jesus embodies in that act of selfless service.

After Jesus had celebrated the Passover with His disciples, an argument arose among them about which of them was the greatest. Faced with the prediction that one of them would betray Jesus (22:21–22), the disciples responded by arguing about their greatness (vv. 23–24). How easily we turn to our own good works as a way of defending ourselves from any accusation of sin!

Our truest defense, however, lies in Jesus. He is the one who gave His sinless life that we might be forgiven. So, we stand before God and the world in His righteousness rather than our own.

In this passage, Jesus invites us to follow Him in lives of self-sacrificial service. Jesus uses this strife about glory to teach the glory of service. He invites His disciples then and now to live in humble, self-sacrificial service as they stand in His righteousness and serve in His love.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Throughout the Gospel of Luke, Jesus has taught His disciples about greatness (Luke 9:46–48; 14:7–14; and 18:9–14). In doing so, He gave them a radically different view from the world. In this text (22:24–30), how does the radical greatness of God differ from the ways of the world?

2. How does this teaching prepare the disciples to understand what Jesus is about to do? (cf. Philippians 2:5–11).

3. How does this teaching prepare the disciples for their future service? (See Luke 22:35–37 and compare with Romans 8:16–25 and 2 Corinthians 4:7–18.)

4. How does this teaching prepare us for service in God's kingdom?

### CONCLUSION

Every age has its ways of glory. For us, magazines anoint men and women of the year with the glory of fame, and markets crown new rulers with the glory of wealth.

Jesus, however, comes into a world filled with arguments about greatness and reveals the true glory of God. God's glory is found in self-sacrificial love for the least. By humbling Himself as a servant, offering His life for the forgiveness of sin, Jesus revealed the glory of God.

Forgiven by Him, we now live in Him. He calls us, His disciples, to follow the servant's way, walking with God in self-sacrificial love for the least.

### CLOSING

Almighty God, You rule the heavens and the earth, and earthly temples made with human hands cannot contain Your glory. Yet, on that night when He was betrayed, Your Son stretched forth His hands and brought Your saving glory to our world, revealing Your love in His suffering service for the least.

Visit us now, we humbly pray, that we might repent of our vain attempts at glory. Forgive us our sins and renew our humble service, that we might live as Your children, brought by grace into Your glorious kingdom and sharing Your gifts in self-sacrificial love with the world.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.



## MIDWEEK OF LENT 2: PARTICIPANT

Week 3: Week of March 17

## GETHSEMANE

Luke 22:39–46

## OPENING

Go to dark Gethsemane,  
 All who feel the tempter's power;  
 Your Redeemer's conflict see,  
 Watch with Him one bitter hour;  
 Turn not from His griefs away;  
 Learn from Jesus Christ to pray.

—“Go to Dark Gethsemane” (*LSB* 436, v. 1)

## INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 22:39–46), Luke takes us to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prays to His heavenly Father and submits Himself to His Father's will. At the heart of this scene is the humble obedience of Christ to His Father's will for our salvation.

Surrounding this scene, however, is a picture of disciples who are struggling to pray and in need of encouragement from their Lord. Their sorrow overwhelms them, and Jesus not only encourages them to take solace in prayer, but He also gives Himself to suffering for our salvation that He might open to us the gift of prayer.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Luke's Passion Narrative simplifies the story of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Read the Passion accounts of Matthew (26:36–46) and Mark (14:32–42) and identify the ways in which Luke's account differs from theirs. What does Luke accomplish by relating the event in this way?

2. Jesus encourages His disciples to “pray that you may not enter into temptation” (Luke 22:40, 46). What are possible temptations that could have assaulted the disciples?

3. Why is prayer a good response to temptation?

4. Though the disciples fall asleep in the midst of their suffering, Jesus prays in the midst of His suffering. What does Jesus mean when He asks His Father to “remove this cup from Me”? (cf. Isaiah 51:17–23; Jeremiah 25:15–29).

5. Why is the fact that Jesus submits to His Father’s will good news for the disciples and for us?

### CONCLUSION

Luke places the willing obedience of Jesus to His Father’s will in the context of the disciples, who are struggling to pray in the midst of temptation. This stark contrast reveals the wonder of God sending us a Savior from sin. Although we are weak and unable to pray in the midst of temptation, there is one who is strong and endures the wrath of God for us. By grace through Him and faith in Him, we are encouraged to pray.

As the writer to the Hebrews reminded the early Christians, “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with us in our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15–16).

### CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, You sent Your Son to accomplish Your desire for our salvation. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He humbly submitted to Your will and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Send us Your Holy Spirit and inspire our prayers. In times of temptation, turn us to You. Teach us to see Jesus, who accomplished Your will for us, that by His grace and through His Spirit, we might accomplish Your will in the world.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.

MIDWEEK OF LENT 3: PARTICIPANT  
WEEK 4: WEEK OF MARCH 24  
**THE BETRAYAL**  
**Luke 22:47–53**

OPENING

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
All Thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,  
Pure, unbounded love thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation,  
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

—“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (*LSB* 700, v. 1)

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 22:47–53), Luke relates the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and His arrest by the religious leaders. At the heart of this scene is the contrast between the powers of darkness and the eternal love of God.

Jesus summarizes the events at hand when He tells the religious leaders, “this is your hour, and the power of darkness” (v. 53). Yet, even in the darkness, we see the gracious light of Christ. Throughout the betrayal and arrest, Jesus demonstrates the love of God. He willingly bears this suffering as part of God’s work of salvation, and He acts in the midst of this suffering to teach, to protect, and to heal.

Though we see the hour and the power of darkness in this moment, Luke also reveals to us the eternal love of God.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Luke 6:16, Judas is introduced into the narrative as the one “who became a traitor.” Here, Luke records that Jesus asks Judas if he “would betray the Son of Man with a kiss” (22:48). Luke invites the reader to see Judas’s betrayal as one of a series of events, each offering its own form of betrayal to the powers of darkness. Consider each of the scenes in this section of the Passion Narrative and identify the betrayals. Who are the individuals, what has God called them to do in relationship to Christ and His Word, and what are they doing that betrays this calling?

2. In 2 Timothy, Paul encourages Timothy that “if we are faithless, [Christ] remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself” (2:13). At His birth, the angels revealed Jesus to be the Savior (Luke 2:13), and in His ministry Jesus repeatedly highlighted saving the lost as His mission both in parables (15:1–32) and in direct teaching (19:10).

In this section of the Passion Narrative, how does Jesus demonstrate in word and deed His faithfulness to God’s mission to save those who are lost?

3. Lent is a time for repentant reflection. As we meditate on this text, Luke invites us to consider the powers of darkness in our own lives. What tempts you to betray the work God has called you in vocation to do?

4. In the face of such sin, Luke reminds us of the mission of Jesus: to seek and to save the lost. How is Jesus still engaged in that mission in this place?

### CONCLUSION

In Psalm 136, Israel learned to sing of God's enduring love in a responsive song. The first voice declared a work of God and then the second voice responded with the refrain, "for His steadfast love endures forever." So Israel praised God for the wonder of creation, remembering His steadfast love.

In this text, Luke helps Christians continue to sing that song. Faced with the powers of darkness, Christ responded with an eternal love. In repentance, we come before God confessing the ways we have betrayed His calling in our lives, and yet, even now, because of the willing suffering and death of Jesus Christ, God proclaims us forgiven, "for His steadfast love endures forever."

### CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, in Your eternal love for us, You sent Your Son into this world, to save us from our sin. In Him, you made us Your children, heirs of Your heavenly kingdom and partakers of Your heavenly grace.

Forgive us, we pray, for those times when we have not lived as Your children and, in Your eternal love, renew us, that we might grow in faith and love toward You.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.



MIDWEEK OF LENT 4: PARTICIPANT  
WEEK 5: WEEK OF MARCH 31  
THE COURTYARD  
Luke 22:54–62

OPENING

O God of light, Your word, a lamp unfailing,  
Shall pierce the darkness of our earthbound way  
And show Your grace, Your plan for us unveiling,  
And guide our footsteps to the perfect day.

From days of old, through blind and willful ages,  
Though we rebelled, You gently sought again  
And spoke through saints, apostles, prophets, sages,  
Who wrote with eager or reluctant pen.

Undimmed by time, those words are still revealing  
To sinful hearts Your justice and Your grace;  
And questing spirits, longing for Your healing,  
See Your compassion in the Savior's face.

—“O God of Light” (LSB 836, vv. 1–3)<sup>1</sup>

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 22:54–62), Luke relates Peter's denial of Jesus in the courtyard. At the heart of this scene is the contrast between losing one's life and saving it.

Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus taught His disciples, “whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it” (9:24). That teaching becomes concrete in this text.

Peter looks like he is willing to lose his life. He follows Jesus to the high priest's courtyard. Yet, when questioned about his relationship with Jesus, Peter denies Jesus in order to save his life. By seeking to save his life, he loses it. His denial of Jesus is the way of death.

Jesus, however, is literally losing His life. Here, He is taken to trial and, from there, to His crucifixion. By losing His sinless life, however, Jesus rises to save the lives of sinners. The way of death for Jesus becomes the way of life for all.

Luke surrounds Peter's denial (22:55–60) with the story of Jesus' faithfulness (vv. 54, 61). He wants us to read both of these together. When we look at Peter's denial and reflect on our sin,

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<sup>1</sup> Words: Sarah E. Taylor. © 1952, Ren. 1980 The Hymn Society (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Luke wants us to see Jesus, looking at sinners and willingly dying for their sin. This vision of Jesus comforts all sinners. Jesus lost His life for sinners that sinners might be forgiven and find their true life in Him.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At the heart of this text is Peter's denial of Jesus (vv. 55–60). Luke records three conversations with Peter in the courtyard and, with each conversation, the stakes are raised and Peter's denial becomes more fervent. Read through the three conversations and identify how the challenges become broader and Peter's denial grows greater with each one.

2. When the rooster crows, Peter remembers the words of Jesus predicting his denial (v. 61). These words bring about repentant sorrow for Peter. For Luke's reader, however, they offer something more. Read Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial in Luke (22:31–34) and reflect on how this prediction shapes our meditation on this event.

3. While all Gospel writers include the rooster's crow, Luke is the only Gospel writer to include the moment when Jesus looks at Peter (v. 61). What is the importance of that glance?

4. The verses from our opening hymn (*LSB* 836, “O God of Light”) turn our attention to the watchfulness of God and His work through His Word. Identify how the hymn describes God working through His Word. Then meditate on how God works that way for Peter in the larger Passion Narrative and how God works that way for you.

### CONCLUSION

In this text, Luke reveals how the word of Jesus was fulfilled. Jesus predicted Peter’s denial and it came to pass. Jesus also, however, predicted Peter’s repentance and called him to strengthen his brothers in the faith, and that happened as well.

When our eyes are focused only on our sin, we can be led into despair. For that reason, it is good to remember the words of Jesus. Jesus turns our eyes away from our sin to see His work of salvation. He offers us the comfort that, even when we fall into sin, He is praying for us, watching over us, and offering us His Word and work that forgive and bring new life.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, You watch over our coming and going and are acquainted with all our ways. Seeing our sin, You sent Your Son to be our Savior and have laid on Him the just penalty of our sin that He might bring us the joys of Your salvation.

Receive our thanks for Your watchful care. Open our ears to hear Your Word and open our eyes to see Your work, so that with our lives opened by Your Holy Spirit we might share Your life with a fallen world.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.



MIDWEEK OF LENT 5: PARTICIPANT  
WEEK 6: WEEK OF APRIL 7  
THE TRIAL  
Luke 22:63–23:25

OPENING

O dearest Jesus, what law hast Thou broken  
That such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?  
Of what great crime hast Thou to make confession,  
What dark transgression?

What punishment so strange is suffered yonder!  
The Shepherd dies for sheep that loved to wander;  
The Master pays the debt His servants owe Him,  
Who would not know Him.

—“O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken” (*LSB* 439, vv. 1, 4)

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 22:63–23:25), Luke relates the trial and condemnation of Jesus. At the heart of this scene is the contrast between the changing will of humans, seen in the condemnation of Jesus, and God’s eternal will, seen in the fulfillment of prophecy.

As we meditate on this section of the Passion Narrative, Luke reveals how, in the midst of our changing, sinful human will, God’s eternal saving will is done.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Luke’s account of the trial directly follows Peter’s denial of Jesus. In Peter, we see the sinful power of a changing will. Peter desired to follow Jesus “to prison and to death” (22:33), and yet he ended up denying Jesus to save his own life.

This theme of the sinful changing human will continues throughout the trial. Identify the ways in which different people manifest a sinful changing human will.

2. In this midst of such changing human wills, God's eternal will is done. Luke opens with the guards mocking Jesus as a prophet. How is this theme of Jesus as a prophet significant to discerning God's eternal will in these events?

3. To all of the changing wills in this text, Luke gives us a hint of one more change that will occur—the repentance of God's people. How does the threefold denial that occurs at the end of this section (Luke 23:13–23), when read in light of Jesus' prophecy of Peter's denial (22:31–34), offer hope for the repentance of God's people and offer hope for us today?

### CONCLUSION

Earlier in Luke, Jesus wept over Jerusalem (19:41–44). He lamented that they were blind to “the things that make for peace” and did not know “the time of your visitation.” The hopes of Israel were being fulfilled in Jesus, even though no one in Israel could see the reign and rule of God that had come in Him.

By grace, we now see the wonderful patience and mercy of God, working for the salvation of people who had turned away from Him. That patience is still present among us today, gathering us as His people around His Word, whereby He reveals His work of salvation until He comes again (2 Peter 3:1–9).

### CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, Your faithfulness endures throughout all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or the sea was formed or the earth was filled with Your creatures, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

In grace, You sent Your Son to a people of changing wills that He might accomplish Your eternal will and bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

Comfort us now with Your eternal love. Forgive us our sin and fill us with Your Holy Spirit that we might live in unchanging love of You and willing obedience to Your commands, bringing Your message of salvation to the ends of the earth.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.

HOLY WEEK: PARTICIPANT  
WEEK 7: WEEK OF APRIL 14  
GOLGOTHA  
Luke 23:26–56

OPENING

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,  
Was there ever grief like His?  
Friends through fear His cause disowning,  
Foes insulting His distress  
Many hands were raised to wound Him,  
None would intervene to save;  
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him  
Was the stroke that justice gave.

—“Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted” (*LSB* 451, v.21)

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 23:26-56), Luke relates the journey to Golgotha and the crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus. Golgotha (translated as “The Place of a Skull” was a place named either for the shape of a rock there or for how much death happened there. It was hard to miss this place of shame as you exited the city of Jerusalem so all could see the penalty for being a criminal in the Roman world.

As Luke details the response of the crowds that followed throughout the day to see Jesus die, the differences between the sinful human actions and Jesus’ final act of true love are shown in stark opposition. Yet despite the vile acts of the human heart, Jesus’ death is a pure sacrifice of atonement made for them and for us.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As Jesus is being led to the cross, and a crowd of curious onlookers and mourners follow after Him, He prophesied by speaking to the “Daughters of Jerusalem”. What is He foretelling of here and how does it show His love shining through these intense moments leading up to His death?

2. The sinful people at Jesus’ crucifixion, both onlookers and soldiers, scoffed at Jesus. In what ways do verses 34-38 tell that they mocked him? Ironically, how is Jesus responding to their mocking?

3. The moment of Jesus’ death was known by many. Compare verses 44-47 with Matthew 27:45-54. What image of the city develops in your mind? What are some physical events that took place at the death of Jesus?

4. What irony do we see in the change of the people’s actions at Golgotha after the death of Jesus?

5. Read Deuteronomy 21:22-23. How is this good news for us and how does Luke 23:50-56 fulfill that passage from Deuteronomy.

### CONCLUSION

As sinful people Holy Week is a time of reflection and repentance. It is uncomfortable to be aware of how much suffering our sins caused Christ on the cross. Christ's payment on the cross was the one act in history strong enough that the temple curtain could be torn in two. Because of that sacrifice of the innocent lamb we now have a direct line to go to God with our petitions. Christ's death and rest in the tomb fulfilled the words of the Old Testament prophets that promised a savior: "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed." – Isaiah 53:5.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, you put the weight of all of our sins on your Son so that He could bear the punishment we deserve. Instead of answering His prayer to remove Your cup of suffering You laid it all on Him because of Your love for us.

As we repent of our sins and acknowledge the cost that our sins had on Jesus, help us to be always reminded of Your love that put this plan of Salvation into motion. Thank you for making us holy through Jesus' payment on our behalf and help us to live in the joyful knowledge that we are holy to You.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who died on the cross for us. Amen.



EASTER WEEK: PARTICIPANT  
 WEEK 8: WEEK OF APRIL 21  
**THE EMPTY TOMB**  
 Luke 24:1–11

OPENING

- L Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
 C **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**  
 L Almighty God, as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
 C **so are Your ways higher than our ways and Your thoughts than our thoughts.**  
 L But You made Your way of salvation known  
 C **in the proclamation of Your Holy Word;**  
 L in the death of Jesus Christ, our Savior;  
 C **and in His resurrection from the dead.**  
 L Now work in our lives through Your Word and Spirit  
 C **that we might be living witnesses of your life-giving work.**  
 L Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
 C **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 24:1–11), Luke relates the resurrection of Jesus. At the heart of this scene is the contrast between confusion and clarity.

The women go to the tomb with spices to care for the body of Jesus. Upon finding the tomb open and empty, they stand there confused about what they see. When they leave the tomb, however, they have clarity. They run to the disciples, proclaiming the resurrection. What accounts for this reversal?

The words of Jesus.

In the center of the narrative, between the coming and the going of the women, stand angels. Angels are messengers, and these angels bear the message of the words of Jesus.

Thus, Luke reveals to us how the words of Jesus bring clarity to the meaning of His Passion and inspire God's people for witness to the world.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you read Luke's account of Easter, you will notice that Luke has three events that follow the resurrection: the appearance of angels to the women at the tomb (24:1–12); the appearance of Jesus to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13–35); and the appearance of Jesus to His disciples (24:36–53).

If you read these events as a sequence, how do you see a greater and greater revelation of Jesus in the movement from morning to evening on the first Easter day?

2. As Luke offers us a fuller and fuller revelation of Jesus, Luke also offers a fuller and fuller remembering of God's Word. As you read these three events as a sequence and focus on the sections of dialogue, how do you see a fuller and richer revelation of God's Word?

3. In Luke's Gospel, when the words of Jesus and the words of Scripture are remembered, one has the fullest revelation of the resurrected Jesus who rules over all, and one sees how God's people become witnesses of God's work in the world.

What happens in the ending of each of these events, and how does that ending encourage us in God's work among us today?

## CONCLUSION

The apostle Paul often speaks of the Gospel as the mystery of salvation (e.g., Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 3:9).

On that first Easter morning, Luke reveals how that which was hidden for ages was made manifest to the world. Christ not only opened the grave, but He also opened the Scriptures, opened His teachings, and opened the mouths of His disciples that they might bear witness to the clarity of salvation from sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ.

Today, as we remember Easter, we also remember the words of Jesus, the words of the Scriptures, and the words of all who have borne witness to this work of God for us. By remembering God's words, we, too, become witnesses of God's saving work in the world.

## CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, when the women came to the tomb that first Easter morning, You sent angels to teach them Your Word, and You changed their lives forever.

Be with us now as we celebrate Easter. Open our minds to understand the Scriptures, open our hearts to trust in Jesus Christ, our risen Savior; and open our lives to be witnesses of Your work in this world until Your Son returns and brings His glorious kingdom that never ends.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.