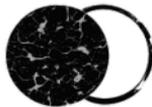


LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

2026 HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONAL



ROCK CITY CHURCH

SPRING FAST DEVOTIONAL

HOLY WEEK 2026

THIS DEVOTIONAL BELONGS TO

THE LIGHT THAT FEELS

MARCH 30, 2026 BY ANTHONY ORTEGON

SCRIPTURE

LUKE 19:41-44 NKJV

“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

DEVOTIONAL

At the beginning of Luke 19 we find Jesus entering Jericho, a city previously conquered by God. There, he seeks out Zacchaeus, a sinful chief tax collector. Jesus invites Himself into his home with the words, “...today I must stay at your house.” Zacchaeus receives Him joyfully, repents and is transformed. It is then that Jesus declares His mission: “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

He then teaches a parable about stewardship, showing that the Kings servants are rewarded according to their faithfulness, and that the rebellious will face judgment. The parable reveals: Jesus is King, recognized or not.

After a 17-mile ascent up the Mount of Olives and now on the back of a donkey's colt, Jesus makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, a symbol of peace, not war.

As Jesus is nearing Jerusalem (the place where he knows He will be arrested to be crucified) He begins to weep. His tears are not out of self-pity. Instead, He is mourning the people's inability to recognize the peace He offered them. He weeps over their spiritual blindness and foretells the destruction that will come because they rejected Him. His sorrow is not rooted in anger, but in deep compassion for those who failed to see salvation before them.

THE LIGHT THAT FEELS

MARCH 30, 2026 BY ANTHONY ORTEGON

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for saving me and including me in Your kingdom. Thank You for Your finished work that has defeated my enemy. Today I chose to walk in Your victory. Reveal the things in me that I need to repent of and realign my heart with Your sovereign word. Cause me to see You rightly, so that I will worship You rightly.

Lord, Your word says that the Kingdom of God is inside of me. Lord, I submit to Your authority. Be seated on the throne of my heart, so that You can rule and reign rightly in my life.

In Your matchless name. Amen.

THE LIGHT THAT PURIFIES

MARCH 31, 2026 BY THOMAS TREVINO

SCRIPTURE

LUKE 19:45-48 NKJV

“Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house is a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.”

DEVOTIONAL

In this passage, we see the prophesied Messenger of the covenant coming to the temple with great zeal and holy violence. Some of us have not known or encountered this confrontational side of Christ before. It is true that Jesus describes Himself as gentle and lowly in heart, which are the key characteristics that rightfully place Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. But our Christ is filled with jealousy for the utmost purity, and He will not sit idle and watch anything come between or against communion with Him.

In this text, Jesus enters the temple and what He finds are infiltrators occupying His Father’s house with selfish motives, charging the people of God to worship. These religious elites have perverted unadulterated worship and made it so that, in order to be with God, you must pay a price. This is why we see Jesus fulfill prophecy by saying,

“My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers.”

Do you not know, beloved, that since you have been born again, you have now become the temple of the living God? Christ paid the ultimate sacrifice with His precious blood to cover your sins and to make you a holy dwelling place of the Most High God. Since you are now the temple, not built with hands but bought and fashioned by the Lord, what occupies you matters to Him. You were created to be a house of prayer.

In light of this truth, what does this look like for the everyday believer? Jesus has a strong desire to enter into your personal space and overturn unwanted occupiers. He is the Light of men, and He wants to shine His light, which is His life, upon every dark thing that dwells within. These enemies of truth can look like shame, condemnation, orphan mentalities, self-hatred, comparison, hopelessness, bitterness, insecurity, and the list of robbers goes on. These and many other thought patterns can blind us from truth and keep us from worship, and they must be dealt a death blow.

THE LIGHT THAT PURIFIES

MARCH 31, 2026 BY THOMAS TREVINO

DEVOTIONAL

The wonderful part of this is that whatever the Lord overturns in your life, He intends to replace with something more glorious than before.

The text goes on to say, “and He was teaching daily in the temple.” Here we see that every day Jesus, who is full of grace and truth, is speaking to us. Every day is an opportunity for light to invade darkness. The key is to encounter Him daily and to hang onto His every word. Here is where those seeking to destroy you will not be able to find anything they can do, because the temple is full of His glory.

PRAYER

Beloved, there is a table prepared for you in the presence of your enemies that cannot be overturned. I encourage you to sit at the Lord's table and ask Him what parts of your heart He desires to shine His light upon. You no longer have to work your way to Him. Come boldly to the throne of grace today and pray this with me:

Jesus, I open up my heart to You in this very moment, and I ask that You would reveal every area of my life that You desire to overturn. I give You permission to invade my heart with Your light. I declare that Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I declare that I belong to You and You alone. I declare that I am free to worship and commune with You all the days of my life. I ask, Lord, that You would fill me with Your grace and truth. Open the eyes of my understanding. Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.

THE LIGHT IS WORTHY OF IT ALL

APRIL 01, 2026 BY NIKKI FOSSETT

SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 26:6-12 NKJV

“And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.” But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.”

DEVOTIONAL

What is the shortest distance between two points? It's a straight line. Direct connection. John 4:24 tells us that the Father is looking for true worshippers, those worshipping in spirit and in truth. That kind of alignment equals connectivity. When our spirit (who always wants to worship) and our reality recognizes Truth, the result is pure worship! Let's see this play out in a story in Matt 26:6-13.

A few days before Passover, in a private home, not a public setting, a woman pours out a very costly perfume on Jesus' head. Something rare, extravagant, and impossible to take back. The disciples, seeing this, thought it quite irresponsible. Very wasteful. Their perception of what she did was misjudged. What they see as excess, Jesus sees as love. He calls it beautiful.

She doesn't calculate a return on her gift. She didn't even question if this was the right place, time, or in the right order. She just responds to who Jesus is and what her heart knows to be true. Straight line connection.

This deliberate, intimate act quietly looks very prophetic. Jesus is worth everything, even when others don't understand or misunderstand it. She didn't know at that time what was coming.

But Jesus did. She made the sacrifice of all she had. He became the sacrifice.

True devotion isn't about approval or duty. It's about offering what we have without restraint or holding back—our time, attention, resources, our obedience.

THE LIGHT IS WORTHY OF IT ALL

APRIL 01, 2026 BY NIKKI FOSSETT

DEVOTIONAL

Love that is measured is safe. It's fairly predictable.

Love that is poured out is memorable. Jesus says her story will be told worldwide when the good news is preached; not because of the alabaster flask or the expense of the perfume, but because her worship was a wholehearted, straight line connection. The shortest route to the heart of God.

PRAYER

Father, My heart's true desire is to please You above all else. Forgive me for putting limits on my worship; for holding back the things I value most, for caring what anyone else thought about it.

Help me to see and then remove any obstacles in my thoughts and beliefs that are untrue about You, so that my connection is unhindered. My desire is for You to have all of me so that when others see me, I'm reflecting You.

Thank You for Your limitless love.

In Jesus' Name,
Amen

THE LIGHT THAT WASHES

APRIL 02, 2026 BY LAUREN JONES

SCRIPTURE

JOHN 13:5-10 NKJV

“After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.” Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!” Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”

DEVOTIONAL

They didn’t come to the table dirty. Well, at least not in the way we often think of when we think of this story, not in the way I was taught in Sunday school. The disciples didn’t come straight to the dinner table after walking miles on dirty, dung-filled roads, mud covering their heels and crusted under their toenails. This was the Passover! A sacred tradition the Jewish people had been celebrating since the time of Moses.

The disciples had been in preparation for this for days! They came to the table bathed, in their “Sunday best” as we would call it, ready to sit at the table. The house had been meticulously cleaned, all the linens thoroughly washed, not a speck of leaven to be found.

As commanded in Exodus, all leaven in the house had to be thrown out prior to the Passover meal. Absolutely no leaven could be left in the house. Why the big fuss about leaven? Jesus had already revealed what leaven symbolized in Luke 12:1-3.

“Beware the leaven of the Pharisee, which is hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.”

Jesus made it clear that leaven represents not just sin but specifically hypocrisy. Pretense. Hiding all faults and pretending to have it all together. Pretending to be clean.

THE LIGHT THAT WASHES

APRIL 02, 2026 BY LAUREN JONES

DEVOTIONAL

The disciples reclined at the table with the one they now freely acknowledged as the Messiah. Some felt comfortable in this environment, like John, who rested fast assured of Jesus' love for Him. In contrast, another in the room we can assume felt anxious, jumpy, watching the time, ready to leave the table at the first opportunity.

Jesus, Lord and Teacher, already knew their hearts as His eyes scanned the room. As He looked at each disciple His heart flooded with love for them. The ones He had "been given." He had loved them to the end. He knew what each one had brought to the table with them that night. Their strengths and weaknesses, their doubts and fears, their pasts and futures. He held closely the joyous memory of their first encounter with Him, and the many miracles they had already been a part of. Yet, He understood something in that moment that they didn't; they ALL needed to be washed clean, again, by Him.

He took off His outer garment, modeling the removal of our "Sunday best." He wrapped a towel around His waist, something only a servant in the house would do. He then knelt, taking the lowest position in the room and asked them one by one for their feet. They were reclining around the table, their feet most likely hidden under a freshly washed, linen tablecloth. Now they were being asked to expose them; to bring their feet out into the open...to bring them to the Light. To place their feet in the hands of Jesus, close to His face as He knelt before them.

I can imagine this closeness, this proximity to the Light, caused a manifestation of insecurity to race through their minds, "Did I wash well enough? What if there is still dirt under my toenails? I should have scrubbed harder!" Things that felt clean before, now in the face of Jesus, felt dirty, exposed, raw, and broken.

Perhaps some of them in their insecurities wanted their feet to remain hidden under the table, feeling an inward resistance to this level of exposure and intimacy.

How often do we do the same? How often do we want to stay hidden in pretense? We tend to want to keep our feet under the table. We don't want to bring things from darkness into the light. We want to keep our leaven (or dare I say hypocrisy) because we think this is how we rise. We try to "fake it till we make it." Yet, there He is, kneeling before us, asking if we will expose ourselves and let Him make us clean.

THE LIGHT THAT WASHES

APRIL 02, 2026 BY LAUREN JONES

DEVOTIONAL

When He came before the disciples that night, they had a choice to make. To place themselves in His hands, or not. To let Him wash them, or not. To take part in Him, or not. We still have to make that choice daily.

One of the things I love most about this story is that Jesus knew Judas was about to betray Him and washed his feet anyway. Jesus loved even the one who betrayed Him, to the end. We have all betrayed Jesus. Yet, Jesus did for us exactly what He did for Judas. He “prewashed” us before we were even born. He saw our betrayal and still chose to lay himself down.

No amount of prior scrubbing could make the disciples as clean as they were in that moment. For when things are brought to the Light, the Light cleanses. It matters not how dirty the roads of our pasts have been or the dung we have stepped in. We are now clean, pure and spotless.

His instructions in this passage are clear. Take off the “Sunday best” and quit worrying about outward appearances or looking put together. Get rid of all hypocrisy and come to the table. Wash each other. Serve each other. Take the lowest position in the room. “Do just as I have done to you.” because “A servant is not greater than the master.” Jesus modeled being a servant of all, to show us how things work in the Kingdom of Heaven. The greatest king is the most humble servant.

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for Your love, thank You that You love us to the end. Even when we betray You, You wash us anyway. Thank You for washing me again today. Your water is alive. Help me love the ones You have given me. Help me to wash them as You have washed me. I want to be a servant. I want to love like You do.

THE LIGHT THAT YIELDS ITSELF

APRIL 03, 2026 BY NATHAN REININGER

SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 27:45-50 NKJV

“Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, “This Man is calling for Elijah!” Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.” And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.”

DEVOTIONAL

In this passage of scripture, as Jesus is hanging on the cross, darkness covers the land. Then, Jesus cries out to the Father, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ Those that hear Him think He is crying out to the prophet Elijah and waited to see if He would somehow be rescued or saved. Jesus cries out a second time, gives up His life willingly, and surrenders Himself to the Father in death.

As Jesus is enduring the most painful and difficult time in His life, the sky becomes dark. Hearing Him cry out and then die, the bystanders may have thought that God didn’t save Jesus from death even though He could have. Those bystanders may have seen God as silent during Jesus’ death, a hopeless feeling. But, we know that the Father had a plan and purpose for His suffering and ultimately, His death. Jesus became the light in the midst of the darkness around Him!

There are times when we are in the hardest and most painful situations and it feels like we are in the dark with no hope. We cry out to God and we feel like He doesn’t hear us or our situation doesn’t change. But just like Jesus wasn’t actually forsaken by God, neither are we. In Jesus’ cry to God, He was speaking the words from Psalm 22 which David had written about a time he was in great pain and suffering, but in the psalm, David chose to remember how God was good to him throughout his life and he praised God because he knew God would deliver him.

In the same way, when Jesus cried out, He ‘yielded’ up His spirit which means He willingly gave up His life, no one took it from Him. Jesus wasn’t defeated by death, He chose to die and in doing so, He defeated death itself! So even in his pain, suffering and darkness, He trusted the Father to take His life so He could be the sacrifice for us.

THE LIGHT THAT YIELDS ITSELF

APRIL 03, 2026 BY NATHAN REININGER

DEVOTIONAL

Jesus is our example of how we should surrender our spirits to God during our struggles and darkest times. After being dead for three days Jesus rose back to life showing that He conquered sin and the grave and redeemed us back to God. Jesus shows us that if we put all our trust in the Father that He can use a willing and yielded spirit and there is redemption from darkness.

PRAYER

Father, we ask you today to help us see through our pain and show us your plan and purpose. Remind us of the many times you have been faithful and delivered us in the past. We praise you for what you've already done and we ask for your help with getting through today's struggles and knowing you have a plan for us.

Jesus, we thank You for being the light in our darkness and showing us that by our surrender, You can redeem us back to the Father. We pray over our dark situations that we are going through today and we willingly yield our spirits to You. We ask that You shine Your light over our hearts and minds and redeem our pain and suffering. We give up control of our lives and ask You to use us! In Jesus name, Amen!

LIGHT WAITS IN SILENCE

APRIL 04, 2026 BY MORGAN BARTEL

SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 27:57-60 NKJV

“Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.”

DEVOTIONAL

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, couldn't help but recount every detail. The sounds of His crucifixion, the whip striking His flesh, the hammer hitting the nails, and the agonizing cry of His mother replayed over and over. Why did this happen? Why did it have to happen to Him? Why did God allow this?

The weight of the stone could be felt as it rolled to seal the tomb that now held the Savior they loved, their friend. Emotions didn't make sense. In the midst of excruciating grief, they held gratitude. Although Jesus had been publicly humiliated, Joseph of Arimathea had displayed a tremendous act of worship by offering up his own unused family tomb. Victims of crucifixion never received treatment such as this. They were usually left for the animals to devour or thrown into a common criminal pit, never buried. This alone was something to be thankful for.

The air grew heavier, the magnitude of what took place settled in, what would they do now? The sun setting on that Friday evening was a firm reminder of what had to happen. Saturday was Sabbath which meant no work, no travel, no carrying items in public, no burial activity, no mourning rituals at a grave site. That all counted as labor. The tomb was outside the city. Remaining there violated Sabbath laws. So when the sun went down, they left and everything froze.

Their grief had nowhere to go. They had heard what the Scriptures say. Jesus had taught them. But now the very Word of God and the reality of a world without the Messiah were being held in tension. They were living in the gap between what God said and what they could see. From heaven's perspective, the resurrection had already begun yet from earth's perspective God was silent, brutally silent.

LIGHT WAITS IN SILENCE

APRIL 04, 2026 BY MORGAN BARTEL

DEVOTIONAL

It's easy for us to read this account with the knowledge of what Sunday would bring. They did not know resurrection was just hours away. We cannot overlook the pain those who loved Jesus felt on this dark day. What they didn't see was that God was moving where no human could even observe. To redeem humanity, Christ had to enter every human experience, from birth to death. If He had stopped before death, death would have remain unconquered.

Hours felt like years that Silent Saturday but just as it happened before at Creation, light was about to break forth. Sunday morning came, and the women gathered the spices needed to give their Messiah a proper burial. They approached the tomb before the dawn to find the stone rolled away and heard the voice of the angel asking, "why are you looking for the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5)

What does this mean for us today? We can hold onto hope in the unseen, the not yet and the quiet seasons. It's okay to experience discomfort in the unknown and the prolonged waiting. God's promises are Yes and Amen. We may not understand the when, why or how but we can trust the One who does.

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You. Thank You for cleansing us of all unrighteousness, for the price You paid upon the cross that was our debt to pay. We praise you for silent moments. Help us to never take for granted the gift we have of knowing the fullness of salvation.

Ignite faith within our bones that constantly reminds us that when we are in the in-between moments of promise and fulfillment we can trust You. May all that we do in the quiet seasons glorify and honor You.

We love You, Lord.



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