

Remnant Life Church
March 24, 2021
What is Holy Week?

There are many words, terms, and events in the church that are so familiar sounding that the meaning is often lost or never fully explored

- Words like justification, atonement, and sanctified are often heard but many times not understood
- So, too, are several services that the church has this time of year

We are about to come into the time within the church calendar of Holy Week also called Passion Week

- Holy week is pretty easy to understand
- It is the most important of days for the Christian as Jesus gave up His life on the cross
- Then rose again 3 days later defeating satan, death, and hell
- The term Passion week comes from the word *pass-kho* from the Greek word for passion
 - Translates as suffering or to suffer
 - Certainly, Christ suffered for that entire week leading up to the crucifixion on Friday
 - Not just a physical suffering
 - But emotional, mental, and relational (Judas)
 - Passion Week was the week of total suffering for Jesus

Why is it important to focus on the suffering of Jesus leading up to the crucifixion, death, and resurrection?

- Dennis Bratcher – a former professor of New Testament studies at Union Theological Seminary in Va.
- *It is important to place the hope of the Resurrection, the promise of newness and life, against the backdrop of death and endings. It is only in walking through the shadows and darkness of Holy Week and Good Friday, only in realizing the horror and magnitude of sin and its consequences in the world incarnated in the dying Jesus on the cross, only in contemplating the ending and despair that the disciples felt on Holy Saturday, that we can truly understand the light and the hope of Sunday morning!*
- When we are able to consider and understand that it enables us to see the parallel within ourselves
 - It is by recognizing the depravity of your own life that you can realize what God did for you by sending His Son to die in your place

Holy week is the time from Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday

- However, the three most commonly observed in the evangelical church...
- Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday

Palm Sunday (Passion Sunday)

- This day observes Jesus' entry into Jerusalem

- The crowd is huge because of Passover and they are waving palm branches and proclaiming Jesus to be the messianic king foretold by the OT prophets
- We read in **Matt 21**, **Mark 11**, and **Luke 19** that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey
 - It fulfilled the prophecy spoken by Zechariah 500 years earlier that the savior of the people would come to them riding on a donkey (**Zech 9:9**)
 - It was a symbol of humility and of peace
 - But it was also a symbol of royalty
 - Solomon rode on a donkey (**I Kings 1:38**)
 - The one that belonged to his father, King David
 - Jesus entered the city in peaceful, humble authority
 - One other thing of note about the donkey
 - There was a foreshadowing of what would take place found in the OT regarding a father's sacrifice of his son
 - In **Genesis 49**, Abraham used a donkey to transport the items needed to sacrifice his son Isaac
- Why were palm leaves waved as Jesus rode through the crowd?
 - This was a symbolic gesture of that time and region
 - It was a symbol of many things
 - Victory, peace, triumph
 - Also of eternal life
 - By what Jesus was about to do, He would fulfill every one of those symbols

Maunday Thursday (Holy Thursday)

- Several key events that took place on this last day of Jesus' freedom
- The word maundy comes from the Latin *mandatum* (where we get the English word mandate)
- To give, entrust and to order
- The word is usually translated as commandment
 - Jesus gave the disciples a commandment on this last night they spent together
 - **John 13:34-35** – *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, you also ought to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*
 - What did Jesus use as the physical demonstration of this command?
 - The washing of the disciples' feet – serving in humility
- The key events for that night are recognized as...
- First, the Passover meal that became known as the Last Supper (which is why communion in many church services on this night)
 - Notice that even though He knew these were his final hours, Jesus honored the Word of His Father and followed the instructions of the Torah for the Passover meal
- Second, the washing of the feet
- Third, the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Fourth, the betrayal and arrest of Jesus

Good Friday (Holy Friday)

- Jesus is arrested sometime in the middle of the night between Thursday and Friday
- He is immediately taken to the first of six trials He will endure that night
- These were, according to Jewish law, all forbidden and illegal
 - Isn't it interesting to see that what took place in Jesus' day by the leaders and ones in authority was done in spite of the law to accomplish their objective?
 - Much in the same way things are being done today
- Many churches hold a day-long service with seven sermons preached by various pastors and leaders
 - These correspond to the seven last words of Jesus recorded in the Gospel traditions
 1. Father, forgive them (Luke 23:34)
 2. Today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43)
 3. Woman, behold your Son (John 19:26-27)
 4. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34)
 5. I thirst (John 19:30)
 6. Father into your hands (Luke 23:46)
 7. It is finished (John 19:30)

Holy Week is the time when the church puts its focus on one thing

- The final week of Jesus and all that was done
- He stayed that week in the town of Bethany, two miles outside of Jerusalem
- He was at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus
 - Interesting that Jesus would spend the last days of His life leading to His death at the home of a man that He raised from the dead
 - The human part of Jesus' life needed to be around those who loved Him most
- Because He was about to surrender Himself to the most humiliating and physically agonizing punishment a man could endure in that time
 - But punishment for no crime committed
 - He did it for you and for me
 - For the salvation of the world

Jesus will be entering Jerusalem once again

- But it will not be on the back of a donkey in humility
- It will be on the back of a great steed the symbol of a king going to finish a battle