

## NOVEMBER WEEK ONE: CRUCIFIXION

Monday

# Luke 23:18–24:12

Soldiers arrested Jesus. Important religious leaders and government rulers questioned him. Soldiers beat him and put a crown of thorns on his head. Finally, the Roman governor Pontius Pilate asked the crowd if Jesus should be set free. The crowd yelled, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" That is what happened.

On Good Friday, soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. While he hung on the cross in our place, Jesus prayed for others. He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Meanwhile, soldiers fulfilled prophecy of Scripture by dividing Jesus' clothing while the religious leaders continued to make fun of him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One!" But Jesus said nothing back.

The soldiers made fun of Jesus, too, and offered him sour, stinky wine. They said, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" Again, Jesus said nothing.

Two criminals were crucified along with Jesus. One of the criminals said to Jesus, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" Still Jesus said nothing.

The other criminal said the first one was wrong to speak like that. He said the two of them deserved to die, but Jesus had done nothing wrong. He said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus said to that man, "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

At about noon, darkness covered the land until three in the afternoon. At that time, Jesus called out in a loud voice and said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And then Jesus died.

A Roman soldier, who was watching all these things nearby, praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." He knew that Jesus had done nothing to deserve death.

Joseph of Arimathea, a religious leader who had befriended Jesus, wrapped Jesus' body in a linen cloth and laid him in a new stone tomb. Since the next day was the Sabbath – the day everyone was supposed to rest according to the Jewish laws – they had to just leave him there in the tomb, without doing much more to his body to show their love and respect for him.

Early on the first day of the week, when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women went to the tomb. They took potpourri spices to put on Jesus' body. But when they got to the tomb, they were surprised. The big stone in front of the tomb was toppled away. The women found the tomb empty.

Two dazzling angels suddenly stood by them and said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen!" With joy, the women left the tomb and returned to tell the disciples.

Jesus' resurrection was a victory over sin, over death, and over the devil. That victory is God's gift to you! Thanks be to God for his gifts through Jesus!

- **For whom did Jesus pray while he was on the cross?**
- **How was Jesus treated like a king?**
- **What did Jesus promise the criminal who asked Jesus to remember him in his kingdom?**
- **What do Jesus' death and resurrection mean for your life today?**

Close with prayer of thanksgiving

## NOVEMBER WEEK ONE: JUDGMENT DAY (REVELATION)

Tuesday

# Revelation 21–22

Jesus gave the apostle John an amazing vision, and the Holy Spirit led John to write down and record everything he saw in that vision. The vision was like a dream, but John was awake and knew the pictures and ideas were given to him from God.

Part of the vision showed John what is going to happen in the future – the things that will happen when Jesus comes back on Judgment Day at the end of the world to take us home with him. John wrote down everything he saw and heard, so that we could look forward to our new life with Jesus when he comes back.

In the vision, John saw that the old earth – the one we live on now – had been completely destroyed and changed and had been made new. All the sin and sadness and death of this earth were all gone!

John saw the new holy city, the new Jerusalem, in all its magnificent splendor and beauty. John heard a voice from God's throne saying that God would live in this city with his people forever. "He will dwell with them," the voice said, "and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be crying, nor pain anymore."

Then an angel showed John how the holy city would come down from God in heaven. It looked like a bright jewel, shining with the glory of God! In the wall around the city there were 12 gates of pearl, with an angel standing guard at each gate.

The new Jerusalem had no temple building, because Jesus, the Lamb of God himself, was the center of worship. There the people of God will dwell with him forever and ever.

And the city did not need the sun or moon for light, because the glory of God shown everywhere.

And nothing evil or bad or wrong could ever come into this city. The only people inside would be Christians – people from every nation, whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life.

The angel showed John the river of the water of life, as bright as crystal. The river flowed from the throne of God through the middle of the city. And on both sides of the river was the tree of life.

Jesus told John that all the words John had heard were trustworthy and true. Then Jesus promised, "Surely I am coming soon."

John wrote, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come!" Now we look forward to that day when Jesus will come again in power and great glory. And we join with John in saying, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus, come!"

- Can you describe the amazing vision that Jesus gave to John?
- Why do we look forward to the day when Jesus will return?

Close with prayer of anticipation

## NOVEMBER WEEK ONE: HEAVEN (GOOD SHEPHERD)

Wednesday

# John 10:1–21

Jesus sometimes used word pictures to teach people important truths. For example, when Jesus was talking about the Church, he used the word picture of sheep and their shepherd. Jesus said that he is like a good shepherd, because a good shepherd would be willing to give his very own life to save his sheep, just as Jesus went on to give his very own life to save each of us. Jesus said that he is the only one who can keep people safe forever. He is the only one who can guide people to heaven. There is no other way. People who trust in Jesus follow him.

Just as a flock of sheep has many different sheep, including young and old, tall and short, cautious and adventuresome, the Church has many different types of people. But Jesus, our Good Shepherd, knows each of us. He calls us by name. And, as members of his Church on earth, we follow him. Since we follow the Good Shepherd, Jesus, he would have us love and care for others in the flock in the same ways that he lives and cares for each of us.

Jesus will lead us to the peaceful pasture of heaven, where we will live forever being loved and cared for by him and all those others with us. Trust and follow the Good Shepherd all the way home.

Dear God, thank you for filling the world with other believers. Help us to support one another as we live together as your people, your flock. Help us to grow your Church by sending your Holy Spirit so that more people can be brought to faith in Jesus. Amen.

## NOVEMBER WEEK ONE: EASTER

Thursday

# John 20:1–18

Jesus had been dead since Friday afternoon. His followers and friends were sad and quiet on Saturday, the Sabbath day – the day the Jewish people set aside each week for rest and worship.

But early in the morning on Sunday, the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the place where Jesus was buried. How surprised she was when she got there! Someone had rolled away the large stone from the tomb! When she saw this, Mary hurried back to tell Jesus' close friends Peter and John that someone had taken the Lord's body from the tomb, and she did not know where Jesus' body was.

Peter and John ran to Jesus' tomb to see for themselves. John got there first and peeked inside, but he didn't go in. He saw the cloths that had been used to wrap up Jesus' body. Then Peter ran up and went inside. Near the pile of clothes he saw the cloth that had covered Jesus' face, neatly folded. Then John went inside too, and "he believed." But they did not see Jesus!

The disciples hurried back home, but Mary stayed in the garden, crying. She did not know that Jesus was alive. She looked into the tomb and saw two angels, dressed in white. They asked her why she was crying, and she said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Then Mary turned around and saw Jesus standing there right in front of her, but she did not recognize him right away. She thought maybe he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

Then Jesus said her name: "Mary." Immediately, Mary knew it was Jesus! Mary stopped crying. She was so happy Jesus was alive!

Jesus told Mary to go and tell his disciples the good news. Mary joyfully hurried to tell them: "I have seen the Lord!"

Jesus' friends were happy that Jesus was alive. We also share in the joy and excitement that Jesus is alive and our sins are forgiven. We celebrate Jesus' resurrection every Sunday.

- **What did Peter and John see when they looked in the tomb?**
- **When do we celebrate Jesus' resurrection?**

Close with prayer



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## NOVEMBER WEEK ONE: DEATH (JAIRUS' DAUGHTER)

Friday

### **Luke 8:40–42, 49–56**

Jesus is not afraid of death, for he has conquered and overcome it. Because we know and believe in Jesus, we need have no fear of death either.

Jesus once was returning from a trip when Jairus, a ruler at the synagogue, came up to him. Falling at Jesus' feet, Jairus pleaded with Jesus to come to his house. His twelve-year-old daughter was very sick and was dying. Jesus agreed to go with Jairus.

While they were walking along, Jesus healed a woman who had been sick for many years. Just as Jesus finished healing the woman, someone from Jairus' house came with sad news that the little girl had died. But Jesus told Jairus, "Do not be afraid. Only believe, and she will be well."

When they arrived at the house, everyone was crying. Jesus said to them, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." But the girl was really dead, and the people laughed at Jesus. Jesus took the girl by the hand and said, "Child, arise." With that, the girl came back to life and sat up.

For those who love and trust in Jesus, death is no more to be feared than sleep. One day, Jesus will raise us up, together with all who believe, and take us to live with him forever in heaven.

Dear Jesus, thank you for giving me the gift of eternal life through your death and resurrection. Comfort me when I have to deal with earthly death. Help me remember that I will see you and all Christians in heaven someday. Amen.