

# **Crucifixion: Meditating on a Bigger Vision**



**Week of March 12:  
Exodus and Passover**

## Invitation to Crucifixion: Meditating on the Bigger Picture

“Atonement theories seek to express in limited, analogical language the reality of God’s decisive act on behalf of a broken world. There was some kind of victory that took place, some kind of power shift in the universe, some kind of ransom paid, some kind of healing initiated, some kind of ultimate love displayed, some kind of dramatic rescue effected. Of course, the terrible paradox of the Christian faith is that this rescue, this victory, this healing happened because of a death - a notorious public execution. This is the dark mystery of the Atonement. No theory of the atonement can effectively account for that central paradox. Rather, the range of atonement theories attempt to focus our attention, illuminate the truth and point beyond themselves to God.” ~ Leanne Van Dyke

This daily guide is designed to encourage you to slowly contemplate and respond personally to the fuller meaning of Jesus’ crucifixion on the cross. Resources of scripture, reflective quotes, a daily prayer and questions for deeper personal application and group conversation are provided in order to support and guide your meditation.

### Daily Readings/ Reflections

**Monday:** *The Son of God!*

**Scripture** Mark 15:33-39

**Reflection:** “The crucifixion is the touchstone of Christian authenticity, the unique feature by which everything else, including the resurrection, is given its true significance ... it is in the crucifixion that the nature of God is truly revealed.” ~ *Flemming Rutledge*

**Tuesday:** *Seeking a Bigger Vision*

**Scripture:** I Corinthians 2:8-10

**Reflection:** “Scripture gives us a dense, layered, and rich account of God’s saving work and our gratitude for salvation can only grow if we make it a practice to attend to this many-layered goodness.” ~ *Beth Felker Jones*

**Wednesday:** *The Passover Community*

**Scripture:** Exodus 12: 21-28

**Reflection:** “What we are dealing here with then is the metaphor of liberation - as Israel was set free, so the ‘many’ will be set free. But from what? The contexts in Exodus and Isaiah provide the answer: captivity and oppression ... It is the story of liberation from sin and oppression so God’s people can live in the new community just as they were designed by God to live.” ~ *Scott McKnight*

**Thursday:** *The Passover Meal*

**Scripture:** Mark 14:12-25

**Reflection:** “Passover involved the death of a lamb and the smearing of lamb’s blood with the hyssop branch on the door; the blood protected from God’s wrath and liberated Israel. If this is what Passover was about, then this is what Jesus was doing: “storifying” his own death at Passover, claiming that his followers, by ingesting his body and blood, were ‘smearing’ blood on themselves to protect themselves from the judgment of God against the oppressive, violent, and power-mongering leaders of Israel and Rome who were oppressing God’s good people.” ~ *Scott McKnight*

**Friday:** *Jesus the Lamb*

**Scripture:** **John 1-29-34; I Corinthians 5:6-8**

**Reflection:** “The Old and New Testaments do not present theories at anytime. Instead, we find stories, images, metaphors, symbols, sagas, sermons, songs, letters, poems. It would be hard to find writing that is less theoretical.” ~ *Flemming Rutledge*

**Saturday:** *The Kingdom of Peace*

**Scripture:** **Isaiah 53:4-9**

**Reflection** “In Christ as sacrifice, God our judge is judged in our place, reveals our perpetration of and collaboration with sin, ends our rebellion, forgives our guilt, cleanses us, makes us righteous, and establishes us in the kingdom of peace.” ~ *Jonathan Wilson*

## **A Daily Lenten Forgiveness Prayer**

Father, you have revealed your forgiveness to us through Jesus; a deep forgiveness that I cannot fully comprehend. Please continue to show me the depths of your love for me and for everyone.

Jesus, thank you for making forgiveness possible through your death on the cross and thank you for speaking forgiveness out so clearly.

Thank you for forgiving those who crucified you, so that I can know how just how real forgiveness is.

Holy Spirit, help me to receive forgiveness, especially for those areas where I find it hard to forgive myself.

Shine your light on the places where I need your mercy; dark, hidden places of the heart that I am so blind to and unaware of.

Work your forgiveness into my attitudes and my relationships.

Help me to forgive those people in my life that I do not want to forgive.

Please forgive those people I find it impossible to forgive. People who are motivated by politics, religion, race and greed, and who are committing acts of unspeakable, unforgiveable acts of violence this day.

Help me to see that forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus is your way of saving and shaping the world.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, may forgiveness have its way today in my heart, in my family, in my community, my church and in this city.

Help me to live by forgiveness everyday because you are a forgiving God.

## Questions for Personal Mediation and Group Reflection

1. What is your main understanding of Jesus' crucifixion?
2. Why do you think that our picture of Jesus' crucifixion needs to be bigger? How can this be achieved?
3. "It is in the crucifixion that the nature of God is truly revealed." What does this mean for our understanding of what God is like?
4. How is Jesus the Passover Lamb? What is the relationship between Jesus' death and the Exodus of Israel?
5. How are you wrestling with the implications of this week's theme for yourself, for other people and for living in the world?
6. Discuss any idea or theme from the sermon that caught your attention.



# **Crucifixion: Meditating on a Bigger Vision**



**Week of March 19:  
The Blood Sacrifice**

## Invitation to Crucifixion: Meditating on the Bigger Picture

“All the manifold biblical images with their richness, complexity, and depth come together as one to say this: the righteousness of God is revealed in the cross of Christ. The “precious blood” of the Son of God is perfect sacrifice for sin; the ransom is paid to deliver the captives; the gates of hell are stormed; the Red Sea is crossed and the enemy drowned; God’s judgment has been executed upon Sin; the disobedience of Adam is recapitulated in the obedience of Christ; a new creation is coming into being; those who put their trust in Christ are incorporated into his life; the kingdoms of “the present age” are passing away and the promised kingdom of God is manifest not in triumphalist crusades, but in the cruciform witness of the church. From within “Adam’s” (our) human flesh, the incarnate Son fought with and was victorious over Satan—on our behalf and in our place. Only this power, this transcendent victory won by the Son of God, is capable of reorienting the kosmos to its rightful Creator. This is what the righteousness of God has achieved through the cross and resurrection, is now accomplishing by the power of the Spirit, and will complete in the day of Jesus Christ. ~ Flemming Rutledge

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## Daily Readings/ Reflections

**Monday:** *Weakness*

**Scripture:** **Philippians 2:1-11**

**Reflection:** “Many attack Christianity as a tool invented by the strong to oppress the weak. Nietzsche despises it for being exactly the opposite, a sneak attack of the weak upon the strong.”  
~ *S. Mark Heim*

**Prayer:** “Lord Jesus, may I find you today in the humility of the weak and not in the arrogance of the strong. Amen”

**Tuesday:** *Ultimate Insult*

**Scripture:** **Mark 15:21-31**

**Reflection:** “Christians who do not have the feeling that they must flee the crucified Christ have probably not yet understood him in a sufficiently radical way.” ~ *Jurgen Moltmann*

“The way Christians characteristically speak not only of ‘the death’ or ‘the execution’ of Jesus but also quite specifically of “the crucifixion,” as though the manner of his death has special significance. And so it does .... If Jesus’ demise is construed merely as a death - even as a painful, tortured death - the crucial point will be lost. Crucifixion was specifically designed to be the ultimate insult to personal dignity, the last word in humiliating and dehumanizing treatment. Degradation was the whole point.” ~ *Flemming Rutledge*

**Prayer:** “Lord Jesus, even though I am tempted to flee from your crucifixion and its implications, I am asking today that you keep me near your cross so that I might become familiar with your suffering and your salvation. Amen”

**Wednesday:** *Early Grace*

**Scripture:** **Genesis 22:1-18**

**Reflection:** “The Old Testament sacrificial system has a gentleness about it that is hard for us to see from our distance, but perhaps we can grasp the general idea of God’s patience and kindness in giving his perpetually wayward people the means to stand before him. His righteousness is active in making his people righteous.” ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

“The sacrificial system of the Old Testament, however forbidding it may appear to us today, shows that the people of God already stand in grace, even before the sacrifices are offered. God has already told them, You are my people.” ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

**Prayer:** “Dear Lord, I love you today because you loved me first. I pray that the world will come to know your love. Amen.”

**Thursday:** *Atonement*

**Scripture:** **Leviticus 16:1-16, Mark 15:37-38**

**Reflection:** “This does not imply that the ritual acts of sacrifice in the ancient tabernacle ... had any power of themselves to undo iniquity and expiate guilt, for their divinely appointed function in the liturgy was to bear witness to the fact that while the holy and living God could not be approached apart from atoning and reconciliation, he himself promised to provide propitiation for the sin of his people.” ~ *Thomas F. Torrance*

“In the symbolism of the Old Testament liturgy the act of atonement was brought to its completion in the Holy of Holies as the sacrificial blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat of God. Thus the atonement was regarded as an ineffable mystery that takes place in the innermost sanctum completely hidden from public gaze. Likewise, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, we must

think of the atoning act of Christ our great High Priest who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to the Father, penetrating through the veil of all created realities into the innermost sanctum of God’s holy presence.” ~ *Thomas F. Torrance*

*Torrance*

**Prayer:** “Thank you Lord Jesus, for atoning for my sin and for the sin of the world. Amen.”

**Friday:** *Hidden Mystery*

**Scripture:** **Hebrews 9:11-22**

**Reflection:** “No explanation is ever given in the New Testament, or in the Old Testament, why atonement for sin involves the blood sacrifice. Just as God’s love, so God’s atoning act, knows no ‘Why?’. The ultimate reason of God’s act of atonement, like the ultimate reason of his love, is none other than God himself. The atonement is not to be explained or understood simply on the ground of the historical event of the crucifixion of Jesus, as some external transaction enacted by Jesus between God and man describable in moral or legal terms, but as taking place ultimately within the incarnate mystery of the union of divine and human nature in Jesus Christ the Mediator between God and man, and thus as ineffable inexplicable mystery hidden in God himself.” ~ *Thomas F. Torrance*

**Prayer:** “Father, grant my desire to know more and more about the mystery of who you are revealed in the sacrificial death of Jesus. Amen.”

**Saturday:** *Loving the World*

**Scripture:** **John 3:16; Hebrews 4:14-16**

**Reflection:** “Christ’s blood is a metaphor that stands primarily for the suffering love of God. It suggests that there is no sorrow God has not known,

no grief he has not borne, no price he was unwilling to pay, in order to reconcile the world to himself in Christ ..... it is a love that endured the bitterest realities of suffering and death in order that its purposes might prevail ..... the motif of Christ's blood signifies primarily the depth of the divine commitment to rescue, protect, and sustain those who would otherwise be lost." ~ *George Hunsinger*

**Prayer:** "Teach me Lord, to love the world the way you love the world. Amen."

## **A Daily Lenten Forgiveness Prayer**

Father, you have revealed your forgiveness to us through Jesus; a deep forgiveness that I cannot fully comprehend. Please continue to show me the depths of your love for me and for everyone.

Jesus, thank you for making forgiveness possible through your death on the cross and thank you for speaking forgiveness out so clearly.

Thank you for forgiving those who crucified you, so that I can know how just how real forgiveness is.

Holy Spirit, help me to receive forgiveness, especially for those areas where I find it hard to forgive myself.

Shine your light on the places where I need your mercy; dark, hidden places of the heart that I am so blind to and unaware of.

Work your forgiveness into my attitudes and my relationships.

Help me to forgive those people in my life that I do not want to forgive.

Please forgive those people I find it impossible to forgive. People who are motivated by politics, religion, race and greed, and who are committing acts of unspeakable, unforgiveable acts of violence this day.

Help me to see that forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus is your way of saving and shaping the world.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, may forgiveness have its way today in my heart, in my family, in my community, my church and in this city.

Help me to live by forgiveness everyday because you are a forgiving God.

## **Questions for Personal Meditation and Group Reflection**

1. Reflect (and discuss) on Mark Heim's quote about weakness?
2. What part or parts of the sermon stood out to you the most?
3. Why might our view of sin be too narrow?
4. How do you understand Jesus' sacrificial death as the fulfillment of the OT sacrificial system and the subversion of the human sacrificial system?
5. Do you think that Jesus death changed God's mind about loving and forgiving human beings? Why or why not?
6. Read and reflect on Hebrews 4:14-16 and Hebrews 11-16. How do these passages expand our understanding of the meaning of Jesus' death for our ongoing lives?
7. What is the importance of gruesome, humiliating character of Jesus' crucifixion?
8. How does God love the world through Jesus' sacrifice? How do we love the world through Jesus' sacrifice?



# **Crucifixion: Meditating on a Bigger Vision**



**Week of March 26  
Ransom and Redemption:  
The Great Exchange**

## Invitation to Crucifixion: Meditating on the Bigger Picture

"Redemption ....is arguably one of the more popular topics in our culture, because it lends itself to sentimental resolutions that imply that this is readily available and not particularly costly ..... When the theme is applied to the work of Christ, however, all sentimentality falls away as we contemplate the cost." ~Fleming Rutledge

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
fast bound in sin and nature's night  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray -  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed thee." ~ Charles Wesley

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## Daily Readings/ Reflections

### Monday

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:1-12

**Reflection:** "The human predicament is so dire that it cannot be remedied in any ordinary way. If we fail to see this, then we "have not considered the great weight of sin." Redemption (buying back, therefore is not cheap. In the death of Jesus we see God himself suffering the consequences of Sin. That is

the price. When Christian teaching falls short of this proclamation, the work of Christ on the cross is diminished to the vanishing point, becoming nothing more than an exemplary death to admire, to venerate, perhaps even to emulate, but certainly not an event to shake the foundations of this world order." ~ Fleming Rutledge

"The reader of today [is indeed looking for redemption], and rightly so, but what he has forgotten it is the cost of it. His sense of evil is diluted or lacking altogether, and so he has forgotten the price of restoration." ~ Flannery O'Connor

### Tuesday

**Scripture:** Isaiah 43: 3-7; Isaiah 53:1-12

**Reflection:** "The singular theme of these verses in Isaiah is simple: a death, understood as a ransom price, leads to the liberation of others." ~ Scot McKnight

"[Jesus] came to liberate people from their sins and the world's unjust systems. He accomplishes that liberation by entering into enemy territory (sin and enslavement), by being captured to the point of death instead of and for the benefit of others, and by escaping from that captivity through the resurrection. This is what the "ransom price' was all about." ~ Scot McKnight

### Wednesday

**Scripture:** I Corinthians 6:19-20; 7:23

**Reflection:** "Pushing the idea of price out of the picture ..... deprives us of the heart of the gospel message, namely that God is involved in our deliverance." ~ Fleming Rutledge

## Thursday

**Scripture: Mark 10:35-45**

**Reflection:** “Why did he die? .... The death of Jesus is part of his service for others; he dies as a ransom for many ..... the word “ransom” (lutron) means something that is paid in order to get something back, (while the verb lutroo is used in the Old Testament of God’s redemption of his people, first of all from slavery in Egypt, and later of his bringing them back from exile in Babylon.)” ~ Morna Hooker

## Friday

**Scripture: 1 Peter 1:18 -21**

**Reflection:** “The church needs to hear the apostolic truth that the death of Jesus was an offering of incomparable value. That is the basic idea in ransom and redemption: not just any deliverance but, deliverance at a cost ..... if we are to account for the particular horrors of crucifixion, we must retain the idea of cost.” ~ Fleming Rutledge

## Saturday

**Scripture: 1 Timothy 2: 3-6**

**Reflection:** “Some interpreters have pointed out that God is actively engaged in the deliverance of Israel in a way that involves exertion and personal commitment.” ~ Fleming Rutledge

## A Daily Lenten Forgiveness Prayer

Father, you have revealed your forgiveness to us through Jesus; a deep forgiveness that I cannot fully comprehend. Please continue to show me the depths of your love for me and for everyone. Jesus, thank you for making forgiveness possible through your death on the cross and thank you for speaking forgiveness out so clearly.

Thank you for forgiving those who crucified you, so that I can know how just how real forgiveness is. Holy Spirit, help me to receive forgiveness, especially for those areas where I find it hard to forgive myself.

Shine your light on the places where I need your mercy; dark, hidden places of the heart that I am so blind to and unaware of.

Work your forgiveness into my attitudes and my relationships.

Help me to forgive those people in my life that I do not want to forgive.

Please forgive those people I find it impossible to forgive. People who are motivated by politics, religion, race and greed, and who are committing acts of unspeakable, unforgiveable acts of violence this day.

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# Questions for Personal Meditation and Group Reflection

1. What idea or theme stood out for you in this week's sermon, scriptures and reflections?
2. How do you understand the idea of "ransom"? Why was a ransom necessary? What were we ransomed from?
3. "God himself is the "ransom." Discuss.
4. What is the unique contribution of ransom to our bigger understanding of Jesus' death on the cross?
5. Reflect on the importance of price or cost with respect to our salvation.
6. "For ransom/redemption to be felt/understood, people need to understand the enslaving power of sin. "You don't do sin; sin does you." Discuss.
7. Reflect on / share about a powerful ransom story that you know about.
8. How does the ransom theme apply to the Christian life or the ministry of the church?

# **Crucifixion: Meditating on a Bigger Vision**



**Week of April 2:  
The Great Courtroom**

## Invitation to Crucifixion: Meditating on the Bigger Picture

"When I long for God's forgiveness, I don't wonder about which doctrine of the atonement might be correct. I link my hand with the hand of the crucified Christ and look into the face of love."

~ Helen Cepero

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## Daily Readings/ Reflections

**Monday:** *Responsibility of a choice*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 30:19; Isaiah 53:6

**Reflection:** "The bible takes sin seriously because it takes man (male and female) seriously ... diminished responsibility always entails diminished humanity. To say that somebody 'is not responsible for his actions' is to demean him or her as a human being." ~ John Stott

**Tuesday:** *The world needs a judge*

**Scripture:** Matthew 25:31-46

**Reflection:** "For all that is wrong in the world, a cosmic reckoning is required. The scriptures envision what Markus Barth has called, in a powerful phrase, 'the great and final litigation.' ... Yet ... the whole set of ideas associated with judgement has become anathema... We seem to have lost the ability to understand 'judgement' as having any positive connotation." ~ Fleming Rutledge

**Wednesday:** *Love that burns like fire*

**Scripture:** Malachi 3:1-4

**Reflection:** "The wrath of God is the love of God in the form in which the [person] who has turned away from God and turned against God experiences it."

~ Emil Brunner

"God will not allow anything to stand the way of this love. The holiness of the Divine love is its irresistibility. God's will to love the creature will not be stopped by the will of the creature to resist that love. God's love will reach its goal, even if the path to that end lies through condemning, excluding, and annihilating all resistance to it. God's love turns to wrath when it is resisted, but not for a minute does it cease to be love even when it expresses itself as wrath." ~ Bruce L. McCormack

**Thursday:** *Justly Justified*

**Scripture:** Romans 8:1-4, 31-39

**Reflection:** "Justification is not a synonym for amnesty, which strictly is pardon without principle, a forgiveness which overlooks - even forgets - wrongdoing and declines to bring it to justice. No, justification is an act of justice, of gracious justice."

~ John Stott

"By claiming that those in Christ are already justified, Paul is declaring that the future judgment of God is reaching into time now - final eschatology is in the process of realization now ... the justified community of faith is living now in light of a future finality through union with Christ."

~ Scot McKnight

**Friday:** *Cross-Shaped Court*

**Scripture:** **Isaiah 53:8-11**

**Reflection:** "Under the foot of the cross we learn, however, that in a world of irreversible deeds and partisan judgments redemption from the passive suffering of victimization cannot happen without the active suffering of forgiveness." ~ *Miroslav Volf*

"The certainty of God's just judgment at the end of history is the presupposition for the renunciation of violence in the middle of it." ~ *Miroslav Volf*

**Saturday:** *Every Nation, Tongue, and Tribe*

**Scripture:** **Revelation 7:9-10, (cf. Matthew 25:32)**

**Reflection:** "Even though 'all the nations' are said to be gathered before the Judge, our tendency is immediately to think of individuals. We imagine ourselves personally before the bar and feel some degree of unease. Indeed, there is no one who will not be there ... again, however, if we think exclusively in terms of individual judgment, we will be misunderstanding the corporate nature of the biblical message." ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

## **A Daily Lenten Forgiveness Prayer**

Father, you have revealed your forgiveness to us through Jesus; a deep forgiveness that I cannot fully comprehend. Please continue to show me the depths of your love for me and for everyone.

Jesus, thank you for making forgiveness possible through your death on the cross and thank you for speaking forgiveness out so clearly.

Thank you for forgiving those who crucified you, so that I can know how just how real forgiveness is.

Holy Spirit, help me to receive forgiveness,

especially for those areas where I find it hard to forgive myself.

Shine your light on the places where I need your mercy; dark, hidden places of the heart that I am so blind to and unaware of.

Work your forgiveness into my attitudes and my relationships.

Help me to forgive those people in my life that I do not want to forgive.

Please forgive those people I find it impossible to forgive. People who are motivated by politics, religion, race and greed, and who are committing acts of unspeakable violence this day. In response to what I judge as unforgiveable, give me the grace of the cross.

Help me to see that forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus is your way of saving and shaping the world.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, may forgiveness have its way today in my heart, in my family, in my community, my church and in this city.

Help me to live by forgiveness everyday because you are a forgiving God.

# Questions for Personal Meditation and Group Reflection

1. What idea or theme stood out for you in this week's sermon, scriptures and reflections?
2. What is your first response to the 'judgement' of God? Does it make you feel comfortable or uncomfortable? Why?
3. What does it mean for God to be 'just'? How might God's justice and judgement "good" (and not necessarily something we should avoid)?
4. Why do you think people be held accountable for sin they even commit unknowingly (Leviticus 5:17)? How does this contradict our contemporary notions of justice?
5. How is 'justification' different from 'amnesty' or 'lack of judgement'?
6. Reflect on the suggestion that God's wrath is an expression of God's love. Consider sharing stories of where you have seen or expressed anger which is rooted in love.
7. What are the community/corporate ramifications of God's judgement? What might be some judgements (good or bad) that God could make of our: culture, city, church? (Pray as a home church for each of the good and bad community-judgements God could make of us, that we would see more justice in our communities and recognize it when it is present!)



# **Crucifixion: Meditating on a Bigger Vision**



**Week of April 9:  
Christus Victor**

# Invitation to Crucifixion: Meditating on the Bigger Picture

Introduction to Christus Victor

“The Word of God, who is mighty in all things, and in nowise lacking in the justice which is His, behaved with justice even towards the [devil] itself; and He redeemed that which was His own, not by violence (as the [devil] had by violence gained dominion over us at the first, insatiably snatching that which was not its own), but by persuasion, as it was fitting for God to gain His purpose by persuasion and not by use of violence; that so the ancient creation of God might be saved from perishing, without any infringement of justice.” ~ *Irenaeus*

“The ‘apocalypse’ of the cross and resurrection, therefore, was not an inevitable final stage in an orderly process, or an accumulation of progressive steps toward a goal; it was a dramatic rescue bid into which God has flung his entire self. The human situation is so desperate that nothing else will do. Repentance, so central in the traditional view, can no longer solve the problem. Nothing short of the crucifixion of the old kosmos (Gal 6.14) will suffice.” ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

“When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness ... And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” ~ *Colossians 1:13-15*

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## Daily Readings/ Reflections

(At the end of each day’s devotion, ask yourself how the scripture and theme of the day might shape your prayer and then pray that prayer.)

**Monday:** *Victory Celebration*

**Scripture:** **Zechariah 9:9-12**

**Reflection:** “When Christ overcomes the tyrants which hold mankind in bondage, His victory brings with it the Divine blessing, justification, grace, life; the note of triumph rings out.” ~ *Gustav Aulén*

**Prayer**

**Tuesday:** *Satan’s Way*

**Scripture:** **Matthew 4:1-11; John 13:27**

**Reflection:** “Our salvation is played out with the Devil, a Devil who is not simply generalized evil, but an evil intelligence determined on its own supremacy.” ~ *Flannery O’Connor*

**Prayer**

**Wednesday:** *Real Power*

**Scripture:** **Ephesians 6:10-17**

**Reflection:** “God is acting in the present. By the power of the Holy Spirit working through the ‘lowliest of men’ (Dan. 4.17), God is continually pushing into the occupied territories with dynamic force: ‘the weapons of our warfare are not worldly

but have divine power to destroy strongholds' (II Cor. 10.4). Resistance against the Powers, therefore, is a Christian imperative." ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

### Prayer

**Thursday:** *Salvation as Divine – Human Work*

**Scripture:** **John 1:14; Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:16-18**

**Reflection:** "If man had not defeated the enemy of man, the enemy would not have been fairly overcome. Again, if God had not bestowed salvation, we should not possess it securely. And if man had not been united with God, he would not have been able to become partaker of immortality. For the mediator between God and man must through His relation to both bring both together into friendship and concord, that He might both present man to God, and that man might learn to know God." ~ *Irenaeus*

### Prayer

**Friday:** *Cosmic Results*

**Scripture:** **Colossians 1:15-30; 2:13-15**

**Reflection:** "Christ... dealt a death blow to Satan and recaptured his rightful rule over the whole creation. This is, first and foremost, what Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection are all about. Evil can be overcome in our life only because the 'evil one' who previously ruled the cosmos has himself in principle been overcome. We are set free only because the entire cosmos has in principle been set free from the one who had previously enslaved it. And we are reconciled to God only because the entire cosmos, and the whole of the spiritual realm, has in principle been reconciled to God."

~ *Gregory A. Boyd*

### Prayer

**Saturday:** *The Lamb's Reign is Different*

**Scripture:** **Revelation 22:1-5**

**Reflection:** "At the very heart of 'the One who sits on the throne' is the cross. The world to come is ruled by the one who on the cross took violence upon himself in order to conquer and embrace the enemy. The Lamb's rule is legitimized not by the 'sword' but by its 'wounds'; the goal of its rule is not to subject but to make people 'reign for ever and ever' (Rev. 22.5). With the Lamb at the centre of the throne, the distance between the 'throne' and the 'subjects' has collapsed in the embrace of the triune God." ~ *Miroslav Volf*

### Prayer

## Questions for Personal Meditation and Group Reflection

1. Identify something in the sermon that stood out to you? How did it stimulate or expand or change your thinking about the cross?
2. According to the material in this devotional guide and the sermon, try to capture the main idea, key themes and uniqueness of the Christus Victor approach to the death of Jesus?
3. How might the Palm Sunday event be connected to the Christus Victor view?
4. Discuss the tension or relationship of the various results of Jesus' death according to the main themes of Colossians 1:13-15 as expressed in the following quote:

“...since the cosmos itself is in bondage, depressed under evil forces, the essential content of the word “salvation” is that the world itself will be rescued, or renewed, or set free. Salvation is a cosmic event affecting the whole of creation... Salvation is not simply the overcoming of my rebellion and the forgiveness of my guilt, but salvation is the liberation of the whole world, a process of which I am only a small part.” ~ *James Kallas*

5. Why is the Christus Victor view of the way and the effects of the cross be so important for our lives and for the entire World's situation?

6. How does Christus Victor make sense of the relationship between the cross and the resurrection in our Christian understanding?