

# **Meditations for Passion Week**

## **Mark 11—15**

Pastor Guy Gray

### **Final Week - Ultimate Meaning**

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, the word passion means: “Ardent love; the object of such love or desire; boundless enthusiasm; or – the sufferings of Jesus in the period following the Last Supper and including the Crucifixion, as related in the New Testament.” It makes perfect sense! In the history of the world, there has never been a greater demonstration of ardent, boundless love than what Jesus demonstrated in the final week leading up to and including His Crucifixion. Most amazing of all is that the object of this great passion, the object of His love, is you and me.

There is a reason why the final week of Jesus takes up such a huge portion of the Gospels. It is this final week that gives ultimate meaning to all the rest of the Gospel story. This is also why Passion Week is such an important week in our lives as Christians. This week is our opportunity to meditate deeply on the Passion of Christ and all it means for our lives. What we find in the Passion Week is “The Way of Christ in a Fallen World.” We see lived out before us in real life the lessons we have focused on in Corinthians. The way of Christ IS the way of love. This love is much more than a feeling—it is the ultimate act of sacrificial giving. Let’s take some time on this special week to enter into the Passion of Christ. Each day take a bit of the story as a focal point for reading, reflection and prayer. Below is a suggested plan for each day leading up to our Good Friday Services. Read the chapter assigned for each day and follow up by asking God what you can learn from it about the love of Christ for you. Reflect also on “the way of Christ, which is the way of love and the cross.” Ask what this means for you as you learn to follow in the way of Christ in your own life, attitudes and behaviors.

### **Monday—Mark 11**

Passion Week begins with the “Triumphal Entry” as recorded in Mark 11. This sets the stage perfectly. It is the contrast between this scene at the beginning of the week and the Cross at the end of the week that puts it all in perspective. Jesus enters Jerusalem to the cheers of adoring crowds. However, within a week He will hang upon the cross and many of these same people will be the ones who have called for His torture and crucifixion. Jesus knew His mission, but the people didn’t have a clue. Jesus knew He must go to the Cross to truly finish the mission of God—the forgiveness of sins—the defeat of Satan and Evil—the way of Salvation for all who trust and follow Jesus. Jesus will not be swayed. Not by the adulation of the crowds, with their skewed and self serving view of what God should do for them. Nor will He be swayed by conflict or rejection as people begin to turn against Him. Jesus is going to the Cross by His own choice—driven by passionate love for each of us.

### **Tuesday—Mark 12**

Conflict is the consistent theme in Mark 12. It actually starts in Mark 11:12 and doesn’t stop until the Cross. Jesus clears the temple—Conflict! Jesus curses the fig tree, a symbol of Israel’s failed religiosity—Conflict! The Pharisees ask questions trying to trap Jesus and Jesus fires questions back—Conflict! Hidden in all this conflict are lessons about the real heart of faith and a true relationship with God. Can you find those hidden lessons in these conflicts?

### **Wednesday—Mark 13**

Here is a huge lesson about the end of the world and the return of Christ. Without trying to figure out all the details, ask yourself—why is this lesson so vital at this particular point? Why do we need to look past the Cross to the ultimate big picture plan of God?

#### **Thursday—Mark 14**

Here we have the anointing with perfume, the Lord's Supper and Gethsemane. Here is where we feel the heart level intensity of this Passion story. How should we respond to the Passion? You can see it right here. What is the meaning of the Cross? You will find it in the Lord's Supper. What was the heart level agony of Jesus? You can see it in Gethsemane. Listen. Pray. Worship.

#### **Friday—Mark 15**

Finally, we need to read through the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. It is hard. It is graphic. It is here for a reason. This is where we see the way of Christ in a fallen world demonstrated at the highest level. This is His love for you and me. It is also His example for us to follow. This is a world changing, costly love. May this radical love touch our hearts and empower our lives. As we have learned, the message of the Cross of Christ IS the power of God for those who are being saved (1 Corinthians 1:18). May it be powerful in and through each of our lives this week and for a lifetime!

### **Coming Up**

#### **Friday, March 21st**

#### **Good Friday 6:30 & 8:00pm at River West Church**

Good Friday is always an awesome opportunity to come remember the sacrifice the Lord made on the cross and the redemption that we find through that. Childcare available birth-3rd grade @ 6:30 only.

#### **Sunday, March 23rd**

#### **Easter Services, 9:00 & 11:00am @ Lakeridge High School Performing Arts Center**

Experience the passion, the power & the life changing presence of the risen Christ. For more information, contact Pastor Adam McMurray @ 699.2226 or [adam@riverwest.org](mailto:adam@riverwest.org)

#### **Tuesday, March 25th—Saturday, March 29th NIKO**

High Schoolers are heading out on a wilderness adventure like no other over spring break—NIKO is a leadership training program where students discover more about who God has made them to be. For more information contact Pastor Josh at 699.2226 or [josh@riverwest.org](mailto:josh@riverwest.org)

#### **Sunday, April 13th Baptism Service, 7pm @ RW**

Baptism is an exciting and important step in the lives of believers. Come join us as people make this outward display of the inward change that has taken place in their hearts. If you are interested in Baptism or have questions about what Baptism is contact Adam at 699.2226 or [adam@riverwest.org](mailto:adam@riverwest.org).