

# the final days

## The Lenten Journey DEVOTIONAL | WEEK 6 | APRIL 13

“Remember finally, that the ashes on your forehead are created from the burnt palms of last Palm Sunday. New beginnings invariably come from old false things that are allowed to die.” – Richard Rohr

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### RECEIVE

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As you read **John 12:12–19 & 17** for today, consider the sharp contrast between what the crowd expected when Jesus entered Jerusalem and what Jesus ended up facing as He prayed in chapter 17. As you consider the differences in their expectations, note what you think the crowd was likely feeling at the start of these chapters in contrast to how they end.

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### REFLECT

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1. This historic Palm Sunday passage (12:12–19) is celebrated in congregations around the world. What do we celebrate on Palm Sunday? What sentiments from this passage do you resonate with? Where do you think they are misguided?
2. What did the crowd think Jesus was going to do for them? The Jewish community at that time believed Jesus would be a political revolutionary who would overthrow the Roman oppression under which they lived. Knowing this, what did they want Him to do for them?

3. Skipping to chapter 17, Jesus is in prayer before His arrest and eventual crucifixion. This is a sharp turn from the events of chapter 12. What has happened in the intervening chapters that leads Jesus to this place of prayer?
4. John 17 is often referred to as Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer," a sacred moment where He turns His attention to His Father in the presence of His disciples, and in some ways, to us. It is a prayer of profound intimacy, humility and love. Jesus prays not only for Himself but for His disciples and for all those who will come to believe through their words. What does Jesus say the Holy Spirit/Counselor comes to do with and for us?
5. In John 17:1–5, what does it mean to you that Jesus begins His prayer by asking to be glorified, not for His own sake, but so that He might give glory back to the Father? What does that tell us about how God's glory is intertwined with our life's work?
6. In 17:6–10, Jesus expresses deep gratitude for the disciples, recognizing them as God's gift to Him. Who has God entrusted to you in your life? What does it mean to you to recognize others as gifts from God, even in their imperfection?
7. In 17:11–17, Jesus speaks of sanctification, what do you think it means to be "sanctified" in the world today? How can you actively engage in both the protection and transformation that Jesus prays for in your own life?
8. Jesus eventually prays unity among all believers, what kind of unity is Jesus praying for? How do we see this unity lived out in our relationships with other Christians, especially when we disagree? What might be the cost of true unity in the body of Christ?

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## RESPOND

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Modeling after the prayer of Jesus in chapter 17, consider structuring your prayers similarly this week. When you pray, begin with a heart that looks heavenward. This means a posture that honors God and submits all that you will pray to the God of heaven and earth. After your posture of submission, pray for your own needs, what do you want God to do for you? What pain and pressure do you want Him to ease? From there, pray for those close to you. Thank God for those in your community

and pray for God's wisdom and grace to be upon them. And finally, ask God to be with all those who believe and those who have yet to believe. Ask for God's presence and power to be with them and for the love Christ has for us to be felt and experienced by others.

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## BLESSING

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Lord, You call us to pray our way through this life so here we are, standing under the banner of heaven and giving You all honor and glory. We humbly submit our prayers to You. We ask that Your glory would be made known in us and that we would be a people who live out Your love. We ask that You would be with those whom we love, keep them and protect them, guide them and hold them close to Your heart. And we ask that Your love for this world would also be made known through us. Teach us to be people who love well and lead with the grace and hope with which You so faithfully lead this world. May we be people like You who love like You. Amen.

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## READ FOR NEXT WEEK

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### **Reading Plan | The Final Days**

Week 1 | March 9 | John 11

Week 2 | March 16 | John 12

Week 3 | March 23 | John 13 & 14

Week 4 | March 30 | John 15

Week 5 | April 6 | John 16

Week 6 | April 13 | John 17

**Good Friday | April 18 | John 18 & 19**

**Easter | April 20 | John 20**