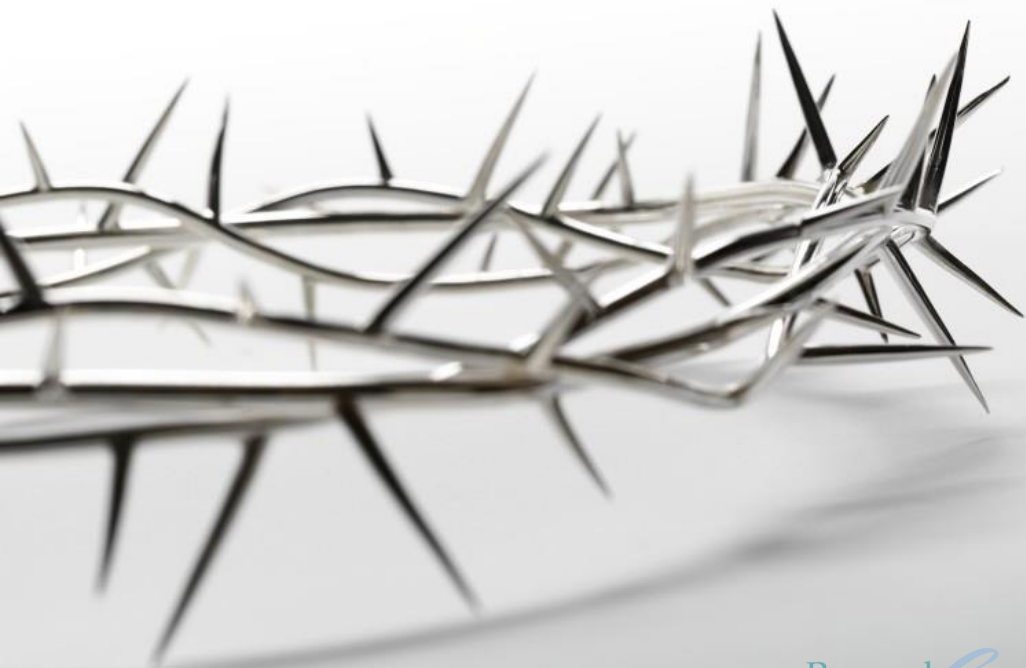


Preparing
Ourselves
For Easter



Part 1

Preparing for Easter is not new clothes, Easter baskets, or bunnies; we need to spiritually prepare our hearts to receive a risen Christ. We also need to share a risen Christ to the world.

Start with Prayer:

Pray that God would search your heart, mind, and attitude. Ask for a glimpse of yourself in Gods eye.

Admit and **repent** of any revealed sin. Psalm 139:1-4, 23-24

As you look toward the cross, let us review Jesus' attitude as he faced the cross: Matthew 21: 1-11 - Humbly, meekly, and obedient

Are you willing to **seek** God with humility, coming before Him with an open heart willing to hear about the sin in your life that needs to be taken care of so you can experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you?

Meek (synonyms: forbearing; yielding; unassuming; calm)

Jesus came into Jerusalem riding a donkey. His ride was not like a king coming home with the whole city there to welcome him; instead Jesus had a crowd that shouted and proclaimed "Hosanna...Blessed...Hosanna in the Highest" but many were still asking who this is.

How do you **come** to your Father?

Are you meek, reverent, and willing to take the time to follow God? Do you rush in and out to do the bare minimum just to say "I gave my time", "I did my duty"; if so, that is not a relationship that is a command center. You rush in tell God your commands and rush out so you don't have to hear what he has to say.

Confess this attitude of carelessness and spend time with the Father confessing. Ask God to give you a humble spirit, a meek attitude and an obedient response to His calling.

Part 2

Jesus went into the Temple in Luke 19:45-46 & Mark 11:15-17.

Our bodies are called the temple in the New Testament, the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Jesus enter the temple in Jerusalem after observing it the evening before (Mark 11:11) then returned the next day to clean house.

This is a time of righteous anger for Jesus; this is not the meek Jesus! He is broken hearted and angry that the temple was being defiled.

Ask God to show you what you need to do to “clean house” for the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was not concerned about how he was perceived, what the people would think, or how unhappy the money changers would be. Many times we care more what our peers think that what God thinks.

Ask God to show you areas you have cared more about what others thought than God and what actions you can take to correct those areas.

_____ Action: _____
_____ Action: _____

As you examine your life, listen carefully! God will show you exactly where you have fallen short, sinned, ignore Him, or misused Him; be ready to respond when He reveals these things to you.

Just as 1 John 1:6-10 says, confess and you will be cleansed.

Confess your Sin-This is house cleaning for the soul. Once you have confessed your sin, ask God to take away the remnants of that sin that will cause you to stumble later or hurt your witness in giving God the Glory.

Pray that you will not be like the Pharisees; Jesus called them “White Washed Tombs” (Matthew 23:27). This is not the time to make the outside look nice; it is a time for truly getting right in God’s sight.

Part 3

In Luke 22:15-20, Jesus spent time with his disciples, even after the foot washing, the Passover meal, and establishing communion, he still took friends with him to the garden to pray. He was teaching them, pouring into them, and encouraging them while he himself knew his own suffering was very soon.

We cannot carry the same burden Jesus carried this night in the garden of Gethsemane, but we can pray with a burden for people. Too many people around us are dying lost because they do not have people who care enough to share the Gospel with them.

We need to follow Jesus' example and pray, ask our friends to pray in preparation for God's outpouring on Easter.

Many people who only attend church twice a year will be in church. Pray that God shows them what an authentic relationship with him really is.

Pray for your Pastor as God's message builds in him to the point of overflowing and pours out over the congregation.

Pray for the Worship Team as they prepare to lead all in attendance to worship God. There may be many first time visitors who have never experience true worship, pray they will understand it is not a show, it is all about the Creator of the universe, God who is "I AM", he is worthy of worship, pray they begin to understand that.

Pray for Sunday School Teachers who may have new people in their classes for that one Sunday. Pray they will hear the Gospel message in Sunday School as well as the Worship service.

Pray for the people you invite to Easter Service. Pray they will come and hear the Gospel and respond to Jesus in a live changing way.

Pray for your church to be sensitive not only to the Holy Spirits prompting for their own lives, but for the prompting to get involved with someone's live. Maybe pray with them, share the Gospel, or just listen, pray we can be all things to all people as God brings them to your church.

Part 4

Pray for those in our community and around the world who are ignorant about Jesus. Pray the truth will be revealed to them. Pray particularly for Escambia County. Many are confused about what to believe or believe more fiction than truth.

Pray for people who have heard the truth but choose to put off responding to it because they want to do their own thing. Pray for an overwhelming desire to accept Jesus as Lord of their lives to fall like rain on them; so they can see Jesus in heaven just as the criminal beside Jesus did.

Pray for the people who have no one in their families. Pray for reconciliation if there are still family members alive. Pray for children to be able to have a healthy relationship with their parents and parent with their children. Jesus still cared about his mother and made sure she would be cared for even from the cross.

Pray for those who feel:

- alone, to find healthy relationships.
- unworthy, to find their lives renewed in Christ.
- beyond hope and useless, to find hope and purpose in Christ as Lord of their lives.
- unloved to allow God to love them.
- forsaken to understand God waits for them.

Pray that God would allow them to see how much they mean to Him.

Jesus came to complete the mission set before Him by the Father. Jesus did this and fulfills scripture in the process. What is the mission God has for you? Who should you be sharing the Gospel with? Who should you be pouring your time into to help? Jesus Christ gave us His ALL, what have you given him?

Jesus finished His earthly job but left us with much work to do. Pray for the Holy Spirit's power to accomplish this work. Pray for an obedient and willing spirit within us to follow wherever He leads, to do whatever He asks, and a cheerful attitude as we follow.

Part 5

Luke 24:1-12

¹But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ²And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." ⁸And they remembered his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, ¹¹but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

Praise God, Jesus is NOT in a tomb!! HE IS RISEN.

Spend time praising God for the miraculous things he is doing at your church.

- Praise God for your church family.
- Praise God for the facility you have to meet in.
- Praise God for the people he saves and allow us to witness to.
- Praise God for the lives that are continually changing to become more Christ-like.
- Praise God for the opportunity to join Him in His work.
- Praise God for Jesus our Savior.
- Praise God for the Holy Spirit that lives in believers.
- Praise God for:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Praise God, He alone is Worthy!!