



# Devotional Guide for the Season of Lent 2017

*As we journey together through the season of Lent, this devotional guide is meant to serve as weekly preparation for the Sunday to come. Email subscribers will receive each week's devotion early in the week prior, giving them several days to study the Scripture passage for the week and meditate on the questions, hymns, and prayers provided.*

*You are encouraged to spend the days leading up to each Sunday in prayer and meditation with the Scripture, opening your hearts to hear what message God may have for you. We hope that this guide will be a blessing to you, and that your season of Lent may be a time in which you are renewed and refreshed.*

*We suggest that you use this guide in this manner:*

*Day One: Read the Scripture and commentary. Circle words and underline phrases that speak to you. Reflect on them.*

*Day Two: Read the Scripture again and focus on one of the questions.*

*Day Three: Read the Scripture again and focus on another of the questions.*

*Day Four: Read through the hymn lyrics, and sing them if you so desire. How does the hymn deepen the message of the Scripture?*

*Conclude each day by praying the prayer.*

## April 9th, 2017 - Palm Sunday

### Matthew 21:1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

“Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

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“Hosanna, hosanna!” cry the crowds as Jesus enters the city. He is acclaimed as the Son of David, the one who comes in the name of the Lord, and blessings are called upon him from the highest heavens. The people get caught up in a whirlwind of emotions, riding high on the adrenaline of the people around them.

And yet, imagine: in a mere five days’ time, those

“Hosannas” will become “Crucify him!” In an about-face as unlikely and unpredictable as anything else we can imagine, the very people proclaiming Jesus as the one who comes in the name of the Lord will denounce him as a criminal and call for his most horrifying and painful death at the hands of their Roman occupiers.

It is all too easy to get caught up in those whirlwinds, to proclaim the Gospel with our words, and then walk out of the church and deny God by the way we live our lives. We must always be on guard, remembering to live our lives in the world but not of it, keeping watch over our “Hosannas”, so that they never again become, “Crucify him.”

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### Questions to Consider

- 1) There is a phenomenon known as a “mountaintop experience”, wherein we have what seems to be an incredibly powerful and close encounter with God, that we swear would transform our lives forever; however, much like those proclaiming loud Hosannas on the road to Jerusalem, we find our mountaintop experience quickly fading and becoming a mere memory. Why do we allow these experiences to fade from truth to memory, and what can we do to keep them strong and active in our lives?
- 2) Sometimes, we just tend to go along with the crowd, whether that means shouting, “Hosanna,” or crying, “Crucify him!” As Christians, we are called to be in the world but not of the world. How can we separate ourselves from the crowd, being faithful to the lives to which we are called while still living in community with those all around us?
- 3) What can we do in our lives to maintain our own faith, ensuring that our “Hosannas” indeed never become “Crucify him”?

## **Hymn for the Week - “All Glory, Laud and Honor”**

All glory, laud, and honor, to you, Redeemer, King,  
To whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring!  
You are a child of Israel, great David’s greater son;  
You ride in lowly triumph, Messiah, blessed one!

The company of angels are praising you on high,  
And we with all creation in chorus make reply.

The people of the Hebrews with palms before you went;  
Our praise and prayer and anthems before you we present.

To you before your passion they sang their hymns of praise;

To you, now high exalted, our melody we raise.

As you received their praises, now hear us as we pray.

Since you delight in goodness, rule in our hearts today.

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## **Prayer for the Week**

O God, guard our hearts, we pray. Preserve us from our failings, keep us from the snares of the world. Guide us away from the calls of crucifixion, and give us joy as we proclaim our loud Hosannas. Grant us the strength, we pray, to remain always faithful. Hosanna, blessed is the one in whose name we pray, he who comes in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, AMEN.