

Maundy Thursday



Humility

***"He did not consider equality with God
as something to be grasped..."***

Philippians 2:6

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, who did empty Yourself of Your eternal glory and become a little child for love of us, empty us wholly of ourselves; that we may love you truly, as you love us infinitely, and serve You faithfully, for Your love and mercies' sake.

Amen

(Evelyn Underhill)¹⁴

Thought to Ponder ...

In what ways is it hard to put others before yourself? In what ways does this come easily?

Humility

Sometimes people get the wrong impression of humility and have a false humility that is neither honest nor allows you to fully live into God's gifts. True humility is about position, choosing a different position than you are warranted. It is not about downplaying your talents and gifts. It is a common saying that "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less." Humility is about an orientation toward God and others.

God's choice to become one of us is the ultimate act of humility. Jesus continues to think of others rather than only of himself. On the night before he died, he washed his disciples' feet as one last act of humble love, stooping beneath his friends, touching the dirtiest part of them to show love. When Jesus shows humility in washing the feet of his disciples, he is choosing the position that servants take rather than his position of honour as Rabbi (or his position as God's self).

Jesus calls us into this active humility in consistently putting others before ourselves.

Read the Story: John 13:1-17 and Philippians 2:5-11

¹⁴ Underhill 33 Robyn Wrigley-Carr, ed. *Evelyn Underhill's Prayer Book*. London: SPCK, 2018.



Questions for Reflection

1. What steps can you take in your life to orient yourself toward God more?
2. What steps can you take to orient your life toward others more?
3. What is one thing you can do *today* to show humility and put others first?

Practicing Jesus' 7 Last Words

Foot washing: Fill a bowl with warm, soapy water. Take turns in your household washing one another's feet and drying them with a towel. After you are done, talk about what this experience is like for you and your household.

Closing Prayer

Jesus,
Let me have too deep a sense of humour to be proud.
Let me know my absurdity before I act absurdly.
Let me realize that when I am humble, I am most human,
Most truthful,
And most worthy of your serious consideration.
Amen
(Daniel A. Lord, SJ)

And/Or O God, when I have food,
help me to remember the hungry;

When I have work,
help me to remember the jobless;

When I have a home,
help me to remember those who have no home at all;

When I am without pain,
help me to remember those who suffer,

And remembering,
help me to destroy my complacency;
bestir my compassion,
and be concerned enough to help;

By word and deed,
those who cry out for what we take for granted.
Amen.

(From Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Written by Samuel F Pugh (1850-1922),
quoted in "Overflowing: Prayers for a More Sustainable, Compassionate
and Just World," Presbyterian World Service & Development.)



Good Friday



Grief

"Surely he was the Son of God!"

Matthew 27:54

Opening Prayer

Let our mourning be:

For the earth that is blasted and burned.

For the olive trees that are bare and for the vines that do not bear fruit.

For the children who are lost and for the parents whose arms are empty.

For those who seek refuge and do not find peace.

Jesus said, "Stay with me. Watch and Pray."

Thoughts to Ponder ...

Have you ever lost someone special in your life? What were some of the things you felt? And what were some of the things you did to work through that mourning?

15 Carvalhaes, Claudio, ed. *Liturgies from Below: Praying with People at the End of the World*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020. *This book has dozens of participants from different organizations globally, but the individual prayers are not credited to particular people, they are collective from individuals associated through the Council for World Mission.



Grief

Grief is the sorrowful emotion (or “process that includes many emotions”¹⁶) of missing something or someone. In her recent book on emotion, connection, and meaning, Brené Brown concludes that grief has three components: loss, longing, and feeling lost.¹⁷ This pretty much sums up the experience of the disciples on Good Friday. On the Friday before Easter, at the death of Jesus, the disciples and other followers of Jesus lost their best friend, confidante, teacher, leader, and Rabbi. The loss they experience is immense because following Jesus was not just a job but a vocation, a lifestyle, and a belief system.

The people present at Jesus’ death who were crying out in anguish at the loss of their loved one, did so, fully believing that Jesus was the Messiah (saviour). What made this complicated for Jesus’ family and friends was the loss and longing they felt for their beloved and the complete confusion about what to do next. If the Messiah was dead, what now?

Though Jesus said on numerous occasions that he was going to die and rise to life, you have to remember that we are viewing the story in hindsight. Imagine being in the story, knowing that the Messiah had been killed on a cross, and waiting in the sadness, longing, and loss that entailed. The disciples felt lost in their vocation of spreading God’s word, and it went so far beyond only personal loss—it was a loss of hope, of deliverance, of salvation.

Today we call it Good Friday because we look backward in history through the lens of Easter resurrection. But try to place yourself in the shoes of Jesus’ followers. What immense grief!

Read the Story: Matthew 27:45-54

Questions for Reflection

1. Why do you think the Centurion reflected, “Surely he was the Son of God!”?
2. What is hard about grief for you? Why do we naturally try to jump to Easter?
3. What might it have felt like to celebrate the Sabbath the day after Jesus’ death?

Practicing Jesus’ 7 Last Words


Choose one (or more) of the following activity options to do this weekend as you consider grief.

Write a “eulogy”: A eulogy is literally a “good word” that someone speaks about a loved one. Spend some time writing about what Jesus’ life and teaching mean in your life and what you are grateful for from the reconciling Good News of the Gospel that Jesus gives and lives.

¹⁶ Brené Brown, 110 Brown, Brené. *Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience*. New York: Random House, 2021.

¹⁷ 110-111





Sabbath: The day that Jesus died was the day before the Sabbath, which he and his followers all celebrated. This meant that the followers of Jesus could not prepare his body for burial and would have to wait until Sunday. Spend some time Friday night preparing for a Sabbath. And take time on Saturday to consciously rest and wait, in the reality of the death of Jesus, for new life.

Closing Prayer

Let our mourning be:

A vigil in the darkness.

A light that searches out the lost.

A hand that reaches out to save and hold.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the ones who mourn. They shall be comforted."

Amen

(From *Liturgies from Below*,¹⁸ 216)



¹⁸ Carvalhaes, Claudio, ed. *Liturgies from Below: Praying with People at the End of the World*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020. *This book has dozens of participants from different organizations globally, but the individual prayers are not credited to particular people, they are collective from individuals associated through the Council for World Mission.

Easter Sunday



Resurrection

"He has risen!"

Luke 24:6

Opening Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for your goodness and mercy.
You are a mighty God and death could not hold you.
You took away the sting of death.
Help us to live in the grace of your resurrection.
Your resurrection has brought us hope that one day we will be with you.
Amen.

(From *Liturgies from Below*,¹⁹ Easter #2)

And/Or

Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death,
and on those in the tombs bestowing life!

(The Paschal Troparion, a hymn from the Byzantine rite of the Orthodox Tradition)

Thought to Ponder...

What does it mean to live in the hope of the resurrection?

¹⁹ Carvalhaes, Claudio, ed. *Liturgies from Below: Praying with People at the End of the World*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020. *This book has dozens of participants from different organizations globally, but the individual prayers are not credited to particular people, they are collective from individuals associated through the Council for World Mission.



Resurrection

Easter is the quintessential holy day in the Christian calendar, where God seals the deal with God's people, triumphing over sin and death so that we might be reconciled to God in this life and the next. As Christians, we often celebrate the holidays in the liturgical calendar each year, knowing full well what comes next. We do this ritually as we remember each important step in God's story coming into fulfillment. But Easter is a day which should not just be celebrated for 24 hours. Instead, it should change the way we live each day, 365 days a year.

In Jewish practice, when someone dies, they gather friends and family together around the next-of-kin to "sit shiva," a practice which involves seven days of community mourning. The beauty of the practice is both in recognition of the grief someone has experienced and in the collective, communal outpouring of emotion. This practice would have taken place around Mary, the mother of Jesus, after his death. Instead, we witness the miraculous story of the resurrection and its power over death. It seems inconsequential to spend only one day in celebration after the extravagance of God's plan is fulfilled.

So, this year, when believers would have spent seven days mourning the loss of a dear friend, let us spend seven days celebrating the resurrection of the Messiah, the Saviour of the world!

Read the Story: Matthew 28:1-10

Questions for Reflection

1. What was the most memorable experience for you during Lent this year? What made it memorable?
2. What practice(s) would you like to continue in your life as you move beyond Lent into Easter?
3. How has your life changed because of the resurrection of Jesus? If it hasn't affected the way you live today, why not? What things might you change in how you live to reflect the gift of the resurrection?


Practicing Jesus' 7 Last Words

Choose one (or more) of the following activity options to do this week as you consider the resurrection.

Easter sunrise: Wake up before dawn and go somewhere where you can see the sunrise. Bring hot drinks, warm coats, and blankets along. Go somewhere beautiful where you can sit and watch the sunrise. As it crests over the horizon, read together out loud the passage from John 20:1-8.

Party favours: Invite some neighbours, family, or friends for an after-Easter celebration at the end of the week. Make party favour bags of things to help you celebrate the good news that Jesus is risen! Don't go out and buy plastic chicks, ducks, and bunnies. Think about what you can make around your house that points to the excitement of the resurrection.





Eucharist: Participate in a celebration of Holy Communion. As you do, celebrate the words of Jesus, as if for the first time, knowing that new life has arisen out of the broken body of Christ.

Fish for breakfast: Gather around the table for a fish breakfast. Alternatively, you can cook the fish another way—tuna fish sandwiches, bagels and lox, fish cakes, or some other creative fish breakfast. Read John 21:1-14 as you eat.

Broken creations: Gather together things from your house that are going to be thrown out (broken pieces of something, recycled containers, toilet paper tubes, old dried-up play dough, puzzles missing pieces, etc.). As a household, use the items to create something new and entirely different from the pieces. It can be artistic or practical. Just be as creative as possible. Talk about what it is like to see new life come from the broken pieces.

Sabbath practice: Talk with someone or as a household or group about something you can do together to honour the Sabbath moving forward. What might it be like to incorporate a household or group Sabbath practice into your weekly lives? Think of some of the things that have benefited you during Lent. Could any of these things be incorporated into a weekly Sabbath routine?

Celebration!

Closing Prayer (based on Psalm 117)

Praise the LORD!

Extol him, all you peoples!

Great is God's enduring love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.

Praise the LORD!

Christ is risen!

Amen.



presbyterian.ca/worship

1-800-619-7301

50 Wynford Dr.

Toronto, ON M3C 1J7

