



BILLY
GRAHAM
Evangelistic Association
Always Good News.

VICTORY

Preparing for Resurrection Sunday


BY BILLY GRAHAM

He Is Risen!

When in Eastern Europe years ago, I discovered that Christians there often greeted each other with the phrase, “Christ is risen!” Invariably the response came back, “He is risen indeed!” I was struck with their understanding of the reality and excitement of the resurrection, for “*if Christ has not been raised ... we are of all people most to be pitied*” (1 Corinthians 15:17, 19).

This pamphlet provides a devotional





reading for each day of the week, beginning on Palm Sunday and leading up to the observance of the resurrection. The Scripture readings are taken from the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, which has been called the “resurrection chapter”—probably the most thrilling passage in all the New Testament.

The meditations for each day are reflections on Jesus’ death and resurrection that relate to the theme of the passage for that day. As you prepare your heart for Easter, may you find renewed meaning in these wonderful verses.



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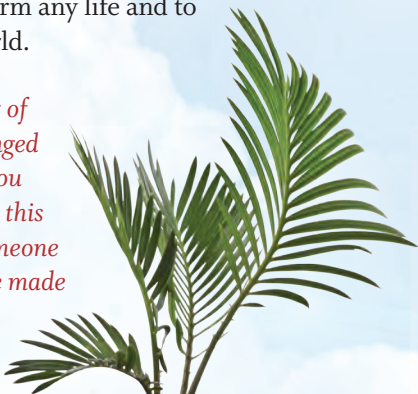
Palm Sunday

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-10

When I picture Jesus Christ dying on the cross, I see the free gift of God's grace in Christ reconciling to Himself all those who believe and repent. Grace occurs when something we don't deserve is given to us freely. It is the free gift of God to needy men and women. Paul said, "*God made him [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). When Christ bore our sin on the cross, He created a value of grace and righteousness that changes the lives of men and women, and it still works today!

The truth "*that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures*" (1 Corinthians 15:3), and that truth alone, has relevance to mankind today. That is because there is saving power in Christ's cross to transform any life and to change the world.

How has the gift of God's grace changed your life? Will you share your story this week so that someone you know can be made alive in Christ?



Monday

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:11-21

As we gaze on a confused and frustrated world, this Scripture comes to mind: “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21). The idea of our world being saved by Christ on the cross was foolishness to the proud and boastful Corinthians of the Apostle Paul’s time, who thought that the wisdom of the world was vested in them. And there are many people like them today. But how different it is for those of us who in simple faith know Christ and Him crucified. For us, as the apostle wrote, the cross of Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

We have been saved by His grace and mercy. We do not deserve it, we did not pay for it, we did not work for it. It has been given to us as a gift. It is by the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross—and by His resurrection—that we can claim any right to the great Kingdom that is yet to come.

When others look at you, do they see the hope that you have in Christ, both for this life and for eternity?

Tuesday

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:22-28

Who looks forward to turning on the news these days? All we seem to hear about are problems. People are losing jobs and savings. A person can get depressed listening to it all, and many people are fearful. If you are facing hardship during these tough times, my heart goes out to you. Life isn't always fair or easy. You may feel you do not know where to turn. But one of the Bible's greatest truths is this: God never abandons us when life becomes difficult. He is always with us and wants to help us, even when things seem to be going wrong. He does not guarantee to reverse every misfortune, but if Christ lives in our hearts, we have His promise that nothing *"in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:39). What a guarantee! Instead of being fearful about the future, this Easter we can trust and believe that God is working a purpose in our lives. We can have hope!

Despite troubles and bad news, are you able to rejoice in the Gospel—the Good News of your salvation in Christ Jesus?

Wednesday

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:29-34

When the devil tempted Jesus, it was a real temptation. He tempted Him to turn stones into bread (see Matthew 4:1-4). What a temptation that must have been! Jesus was hungry; He had the power to turn those stones into bread. But there was another reason that made the temptation so powerful: the great need of the human race. Think of the starving people He could have fed! Jesus could have done it, but He was here to take people to Heaven, to give them eternal life. And He could do that only by going to the cross and taking their judgment and their Hell. From the cross He was saying, "I love you. I love you, whoever you are." He would have died on that cross if you had been the only person in the whole world. He loves you. You are important to Him.

Outside the influence of the cross there is bitterness, intolerance, ill will, prejudice, hatred, crime, and war. That is why—if the world does not turn to Christ, and Him crucified and raised from the dead—we could see the judgment of God falling upon our world.

Have you met Christ at the foot of the cross, turned from your sins, and put your life completely under His control?

Thursday

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-43

As we approach the celebration of Good Friday, I'm reminded of the seven sayings of Jesus from the cross and of the glory and the power in each saying.


Jesus was alone. He had come to His own, and His own did not receive Him. When He was being arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, we are told that “*all the disciples deserted him and fled*” (Matthew 26:56). The crowds who had so recently shouted, “*Hosanna!*” would soon shout, “*Crucify him! ... Crucify him!*” (Matthew 21:9; 27:22–23). Now even His loyal Twelve had left. And at last we hear Him cry out, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” (Mark 15:34). Not only had He been forsaken by His human companions, but now in that desperate and lonely hour, He—because He was bearing our sins in His own body on the cross—had been forsaken by God. Jesus was enduring the suffering and judgment of Hell for you and for me.

How can you show your gratitude to God for allowing His Son to endure the shame and suffering of the cross?



Good Friday

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:44-49



Good Friday celebrates the day our Lord died for our sins on the cross. I have often sat by the hour and tried to imagine the agony and suffering He went through because of our sins. At one point He said from the cross, “*It is finished*” (John 19:30). He meant that God had accepted His work on the cross as the penalty for our sins. Christ’s death on our behalf is the reason God can forgive us and still be just. And His death teaches us the depth and breadth that there should be in our forgiveness of one another. While that holy Friday was tremendous, it was only a prelude to Sunday morning when He was raised from the dead. Godly women had come to see His tomb, but angels made the glorious announcement, “*He has risen!*” (Luke 24:6). His resurrection guaranteed that we, too, will be raised, if we are believers and obeyers of His Word.

As you celebrate the truth that Jesus came from Heaven to redeem you, are you reflecting His likeness to those around you?

Saturday

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:50–54

From Genesis to Revelation, we are warned that “it is later than you think.” Paul writes to Christians in Romans 13:11–12: *“The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”*

There are millions of people around the world who do not have peace at this moment because they have never found the secret of peace. Some of them may have riches today as a result of greed and covetousness; but their souls are lean, their hearts are cold toward God, their consciences are dulled, and their minds are blinded. They need to know that there is a God of marvelous love who sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to this world. And as a demonstration of His mercy, Christ—who is the Prince of Peace—went to the cross to make a way for peace between God and mankind.

Are you living in the reality of Jesus' victory over death? In what tangible ways can you share that victory with others so that they, too, can have life?

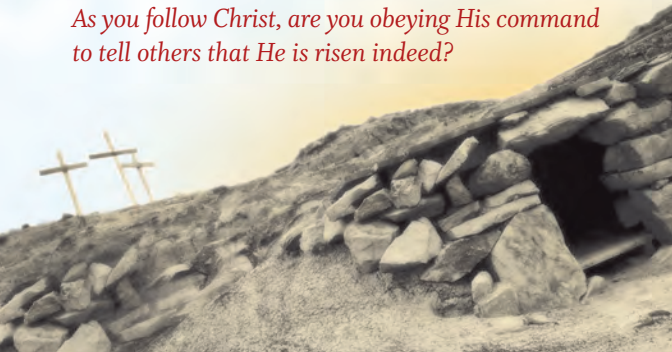
Resurrection Sunday

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:55-58

Easter is a season of great gladness for those who know Christ. But for those who are without “*the light of the knowledge of God’s glory*” (2 Corinthians 4:6), there is nothing to rejoice over.

Jesus left us with the great hope and certainty that He is going to return to bring a new Heaven and a new earth where, we are told, there will be no more sorrow, trouble, or death for those who have believed and followed Him. There *will* be trouble, sorrow, and suffering for those who have neglected or rejected Him. As Christians, our great task is to obey the command to tell the whole world about Christ crucified, buried, yet risen again. My prayer for you during this season of the year, when we meditate on our Savior’s great sacrifice for us on the cross, is that you will be filled with great peace and hope, because “He is risen!” That is the Good News.

As you follow Christ, are you obeying His command to tell others that He is risen indeed?





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