

Greetings friends,

I ask that as we begin our spiritual journey together we begin to take some time daily (if you are not already) to read the Scripture and pray. I thought it would be beneficial for us to focus on the same passage of Scripture for the week. This week, we will focus on Sunday's texts (See below). If you were not present in worship on Sunday and have not yet watched it, I encourage you to do so. The Scripture used on Sunday was **Mark 14:12-26**. Mark's Gospel is the oldest written account of Jesus' ministry. It was written by John Mark, nicknamed Mark, who was close to the Apostle Peter. Papias, bishop of Hieropolis, writing about A.D.140 wrote, "And the presbyter [the Apostle John] said this: Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered." It was written in Rome, and scholars date it between 50-70 A.D.- before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. The Gospel was written for Roman believers, particularly Gentiles.

As an expression of Peter's remembrance of events, and knowing Peter's character and impulsivity, the Gospel seems to reflect that. The Gospel of Mark is succinct, fast-paced, and action packed. He is known for using the word "immediately," which emphasizes the urgency of the action and the mission.

In Peter's first epistle he referred to him as "Mark, my son" (1 Pet. 5:13). When Peter was released from prison in Acts 12:12, he went straight to John Mark's mother's home in Jerusalem. John Mark was the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10), and he joined him and Paul as they traveled on missionary journeys. Unfortunately, John Mark deserted them along the way in Perga and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). Barnabas wanted to John Mark to go on the second missionary journey, but Paul refused, causing friction that resulted in their separation (Acts 15:38-40). Later, we learn that John Mark had somehow gained favor again, and when Paul wrote the Colossians he instructed them to welcome him (Col. 4:10). Paul even listed him as a fellow worker (Philemon 24). And in 2 Tim. 4:11 Paul told Timothy to "Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

The setting for this week's passage is in Jerusalem in what is now referred to as the "Upper Room." It is during the gather of the Jews to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. Within 24 hours of this passage, Jesus will face the crucifixion. It is in these moments in the Upper Room that Jesus washed the disciples' feet, I believe, as part of the ritual hand cleansing as part of Passover (John 13:1-17). During this evening Jesus shares what is now referred to as his "farewell discourse" (John 14-17) where he teaches and urges his disciples to love one another and prays for them. In this passage, Passover ritual and celebration is used to express a new and deeper theological understanding, Jesus revealing himself and his mission through what is now the sacrament of Holy Communion. "Giving thanks" in the original Greek is *eucharisto*, which is where we get the term "Eucharist."

**Format**-this is a repeat from every week, and will be consistently present for anyone new and as a reminder for all. It is listed at the bottom for review and for anyone who is new to this exercise. Please remember that it is a suggestion. There is no pressure to do it in the format suggested, to do everything on the days that are listed, or to even to answer all the questions.

Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you. If one question takes up the time because you are moved in your spirit, then stay with it. The idea of this is to spend some intentional time with the Scriptures, in the presence of God, and in prayer and reflection- in whatever way that works for you!

**Scripture: Mark 14:12-26 (NIV)**

<sup>12</sup>On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

<sup>13</sup>So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. <sup>14</sup>Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' <sup>15</sup>He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

<sup>16</sup>The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

<sup>17</sup>When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. <sup>18</sup>While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

<sup>19</sup>They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?"

<sup>20</sup>"It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. <sup>21</sup>The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

<sup>22</sup>While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

<sup>23</sup>Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

<sup>24</sup>"This is my blood of the<sup>[c]</sup> covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. <sup>25</sup>"Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

<sup>26</sup>When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

**Other Scriptures referenced:**

**1 Corinthians 11:27-29** <sup>27</sup>So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. <sup>29</sup>For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

**1 Corinthians 10:16** <sup>16</sup>Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

**1 Corinthians 10:21** <sup>21</sup>You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

The story of the Israelite captives being set free by God's mighty hand, including the institution of Passover, is found in **Exodus 5-15:20**.

### **DAILY QUIET TIME WITH GOD:**

**Monday:** v.12a "On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb"- the Feast of Unleavened Bread was first introduced in Exodus 23:15 and 34:18, and originally was not associated with Passover. However, due to Passover also using unleavened bread, by Jesus' day, the two were associated together and Passover was celebrated first followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately after. Passover is instituted in Exodus 12. Passover is what is being focused on here, and it is a celebration of Israel's exodus from Egypt. Passover recalls the events of when the Israelites had been slaves in Egypt and God called Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that the people be set free. The suffering of slavery is remembered as well as the ten plagues. Passover, especially, recounts the tenth plague- the death of the firstborn. God commanded the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb for each family and to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel so that the angel of death, seeing the blood, would "pass over" the homes of the Israelites. The firstborn of the Egyptians, including Pharaoh's son, died. It was after this that Pharaoh agreed to let the people go, and they followed Moses to the Red Sea, where they again witness God's miraculous hand as the sea split and the people were able to walk through. Passover is an experiential celebration, with much imagery that points to people needing to be delivered and set free, of God's redeeming power, and of hope that the Lord who redeemed the past will redeem again. We celebrate and remember in many ways in worship, and especially with Communion. What are some other ways to you celebrate and remember what God has done and is doing for you? Why is it important to do that? What are some other ways that you can celebrate and remember? As always, as part of that recognition, make sure to give thanks to God.

The "Passover lamb" is *pascha* in the original Greek, which is where we get the term "paschal lamb." The lamb needed to be a year-old male without blemish (Ex. 12:5; Lev. 22:20-21). The lamb would be sacrificed, taking care to not break any bones. All of this is a foreshadowing of Jesus. It points to who God is, who Jesus is, our need for redemption, and how God saves us.

The New Testament directly connects Jesus as our Passover lamb. In John 1:29, John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!" In Paul's first epistle to the Corinthian church he wrote, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7b). In Peter's first epistle he wrote, "the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Pet. 1:19). In Revelation 5:6a it says, "Then I saw the Lamb, looking as if it had been slain," and in v.12 "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" and finally in v.13, "To

him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!" Consider the analogy and imagery- how does Jesus specifically become the Passover lamb? What does that mean to you? What does that mean for your life? Take a moment and pray, asking God to open your heart to the fullness of what it means. Take time to experience God's presence, and give thanks.

**Tuesday:** v.12b "Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"- Passover lambs were required to be sacrifices in Jerusalem at the Temple and eaten in the city. This was an annual celebration, which means that every year at least a couple hundred thousand Jews would come to Jerusalem for Passover. Imagine that it is extremely crowded, putting especially the Roman soldiers and leaders on edge, as well as all of the religious leaders. Jesus and the disciples did not live in Jerusalem, and it is presumed that they have been staying in Bethany, where Jesus was anointed. Especially with it being so crowded, finding and securing a place for the Passover was necessary. Passover includes a shared meal, but also specific elements that allow the participants to remember and celebrate experientially. There was not only lamb, but unleavened bread, bitter herbs (maror) to remember bitterness and tears, charoset- like an apple chutney with nuts that was mashed to look like mortar that the Israelites used to make bricks, vegetable (karpas), usually parsley or celery, to dip into salt water to recall the tears of slavery, much wine, and more. The disciples recognized the need to find a place and prepare, but instead of taking it upon themselves to just handle it, they went to Jesus- Jesus will direct the way and make a way. This is an example for us, and how to approach concerns and needs in our lives. Once we recognize it, the very first thing we should do is go to Jesus. Ask Jesus specifically what needs to be done, listen, and follow. How apt have you been to begin with Jesus in those circumstances? Why? Take a moment and pray about something in your life where you have a need or concern. Ask Jesus about what is going on, and how he would want you to handle it. Listen closely, trying not to have any preconceived ideas. Open your heart and mind to hear God's voice, and if you are struggling with that, ask God to open you to hearing.

V.13 "So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him."- from our perspective this doesn't sound like much, but seeing a man carrying a jar of water would have been extremely strange and rare. Women carried water in pitchers, not men. Jesus once again says look for the unusual, my ways are not your ways. Once the disciples see the man, they are to follow him. Jesus points the way for them (and us) to follow. Though some scholars try to suggest that Jesus arranged all of this ahead of time, but the practicalities of arranging such a thing would've been difficult. Mark gives no indication of this, and instead, I believe, the intention was to show Jesus' divine foreknowledge. V.14 "Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'"- this mimics the way the disciples were sent to get a donkey for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday for his triumphal entry. The people who lived in Jerusalem were expected to open their homes to accommodate the great influx of people, but it would be overwhelming. That the homeowner would readily respond with an invitation and provide a guest room is a sign of divine providence. V.15 "He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there"- homes in Jerusalem were typically simple, single story houses. A

large room upstairs, furnished and ready, suggests the homeowner has a certain amount of prosperity. In Acts 12:12, we learn that the disciples gathered after Jesus' resurrection and ascension at the "house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying." This is Mark, who wrote this Gospel, and it is possible that the upper room of the Passover belonged to the mother of the author of this Gospel. We can't be sure- what do you think, and why? The way it is handled implies secrecy, and in such a crowded and powder-keg type of climate, it would make sense. Jesus is controlling the timing of his arrest. V.16a "The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them"- again, mimicking the precursor to Jesus' triumphal entry on the donkey. "Found things just as Jesus told them"- it's interesting that this was added, but it definitely makes the point- Jesus knows, and things will be as he says. Have you ever questioned God, perhaps what was said did not make sense to you or seemed impossible, but it ended up being just as God said it would be? Consider the times when it was difficult to accept, comprehend, or move toward what God said would be. How did you feel? Do you think the disciples felt uncertain and wary because it was so unusual, or do you think that they freely accepted because they had experienced this with Jesus so many times before? What do both of those responses indicate about the level of faith and trust they had in Jesus. What does that say to you? Take a moment and pray, asking God if there are any things in your life for which he has a plan and purpose that you are not yet able to see clearly and accept. Ask God for clarity, assurance, and increase in faith, and empowerment to trust. Thank God for always being with you, for always loving you, and for all the care he continues to give to you.

**Wednesday:** v.17-18 "When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me- one who is eating with me"- Jesus is with his disciples, sharing a meal together as part of the Passover. Reclining is actually part of the Passover ritual. At the first Passover, God commanded everyone to eat the meal standing up and ready to leave Egypt (Ex. 12:11). Once in the Promised Land, people would eat the Passover reclining, because now they were at rest in the land God gave them. Consider that God knows that we learn from more than just seeing or hearing. God engages all of our senses and here embodies the teaching. What is the greater message given by reclining at the table, and how does that relate to Jesus?

"One of you will betray me"- though the Gospel writers note Judas, truly they will all betray Jesus soon. Betrayal is ugly and painful. It is likely that all of us have, at some point in our lives, betrayed another- whether by sharing information that wasn't ours to share, saying something untrue, choosing sides in an argument, and so much more. Take a moment and recall any times that God brings to mind. What was going on, what happened, how did you and the other feel, and what was the outcome? Was there forgiveness? Have you ever felt betrayed? What words describe how that felt? Consider that there have likely been times when you have been betrayed in some way by another. If God brings any to mind, check your body and feelings. If there is tension, anxiety, anger, etc. with the memories, then it may be that you have not yet fully forgiven the other person. Forgiving is vital for believers. Unforgiveness blocks God's power and blessing in your life (and worse), and can make you a captive to it. If you have discerned that you are carrying unforgiveness toward someone, take some time now to pray, forgiving and

releasing. It's not an acknowledgement that the betrayal was okay, but rather letting go of the unforgiveness that has been binding you. What words describe a person who does not betray others? Are those words that describe you? As people with sin in our life, we have all betrayed God, and with every sin continue to do so. It's definitely something we do not want to be doing! It's why the Holy Spirit's conviction and guidance is so important, and why we need to listen and grow in our faith, and become more and more sanctified. Pray for an increase- in faith, forgiveness, acceptance, and love.

**Thursday:** v.18 cont. "One of you will betray me- one who is eating with me" In that culture, sharing food with another is a sign of significant friendship. Truly, they were all eating with Jesus. In this story, all the disciples had been living, traveling, and ministering together for three years. They believed they were brothers, and the idea of betrayal after all that they had been through together would've likely been shocking, even absurd. In Middle Eastern culture, betraying a friend especially after eating a meal with him was the worst kind of treachery. V.19 "They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?""- the original Greek for "saddened" is *lupeó*, which is severe sorrow and grief. That same word is even used to describe the pain of childbirth. It's heart wrenching to think that Jesus would accuse someone in the group, more heart wrenching to believe that someone could be one you are close to, and the worst is even considering that it actually be you. "Surely you don't mean me"- when we are in a good state, it's difficult to imagine that we would ever sin, that we would ever hurt another, that we would ever... yet how often have we sinned in some way and look back thinking, "I can't believe I did that." But it was done. It's painful to think about sin that we have committed, or that we will commit. We are thankful for Jesus, who forgives our sins, as we continue to grow more and more into his likeness. Life with Jesus is not condemnation, but forgiveness, reconciliation, and growth. V.20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me"- again it could be any one of them, and would be all of them. Here, it's not pointing to anyone in particular, and the custom is to have a common bowl that everyone dips bread into. In John's Gospel, he notes that Jesus then dipped the piece of bread and then gave it to Judas (Jn. 13:26). Why would Jesus bring it up at all? First, so that when it happened they would be prepared, hopefully understanding that this was all part of Jesus' redemptive plan. Second, I believe, that it gave Judas an opportunity to confess and repent, which sadly, he did not. It's like when God was asking where Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, even though he knew (Gen. 3:9).

V.21a "The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him"- the Old Testament is filled with Messianic prophecies. It's far too much to tackle here, but look at Isaiah 53 as an example. V.21b "But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born"- "woe" in the original Greek is *ouai*, and it is to show grief or denounce something- in this case probably both. Jesus makes what seems a harsh judgement, and yet it is true- that there are dire consequences that happen for betraying Christ, completely turning our back to him. Eternal life is at stake. Jesus is warning Judas, and I believe, urging repentance. Yet, Judas' own sinful motives, even though Judas' actions fulfilled Scripture, would intentionally separate him from the Lord. The hard truth is that Jesus loved Judas. Jesus' love for Judas is fundamental in understanding the story, and understanding grace. Jesus knew, and yet

continued to love him, wash his feet, share a meal. Grace can sometimes be painful, and a stretch of compassion and mercy for us to have for others. And yet that is who Jesus is. Take a moment and reflect. What is God saying to you? What is God calling you to do? Pray, and give thanks for God's amazing grace.

**Friday:** v.22 "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body"- This is during the ritual part of Passover. Bread for Passover must be unleavened to remind all about the need for a hasty escape from Egypt. There are specific prayers given over the bread, "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth." The bread is not only unleavened (aka- flat, unrisen, because when the Israelites had to flee there was no time for bread to rise) but also crisp. Jewish people today use Matza- it's like a large cracker. The idea is that when it is broken it will make the sound of a "crack!" When presenting the bread before breaking, the head of the meal would say, "This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who are needy, share the hope of Passover." The bread cracking symbolized the shackles of slavery being broken. Here, Jesus gives it new meaning, reinterpreting it by saying "Take it; this is my body." This is what we now have as our sacrament of Holy Communion, the Eucharist. The bread transitions from breaking the shackles of physical slavery to breaking the shackles of spiritual slavery- slavery to sin and death, oppression by the enemy and breaking free from bondage. Consider how Jesus' physical body fulfills this grace-filled symbol found in the bread. One of the Messianic prophecies is Isaiah 53, and in v.5-6 it says, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Jesus told the disciples to take the bread and eat it. It was being offered, not forced, and we need to choose to receive. As we physically eat the bread, we spiritually receive the grace of Christ in our innermost being.

v.23 "Then he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it"- Passover has four cups- five actually, but the fifth is left for Elijah. The drink is wine, and the four cups in order are, 1. The Cup of Sanctification (Kiddush, or Thanksgiving) 2. The Cup of Judgement (Makkot), when the ten plagues are recalled 3. The Cup of Redemption (Ha-Geulah, or Blessing) 4. The Cup of Praise (Hallel- where we get the word "hallelujah"). I believe it was the third cup, the Cup of Redemption, when Jesus said these words of grace. The imagery of the blood being poured out, as red wine is poured. Jesus' blood being shed would offer redemption for humankind. What does the imagery make you feel? Why?

v.24 "This is the blood of the (new) covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them"- Imagine the surprise, and likely confusion, that the disciples would have had when Jesus went "off script." What Jesus said about the bread and cup are called the "words of institution" in the church when referring to the sacrament of Communion, because Jesus instituted Holy Communion at this time, with those words. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, believed the Lord's Supper to be "the grand channel whereby the grace of his Spirit was conveyed to the souls of all the children of God." He also strongly emphasized the importance of Holy

Communion and partaking often. To read more about this, check out:

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/blog/a-wesleyan-practice-of-holy-communion>

What has been your experience with Communion? What are some memories you have about it? Why do you think God wants us to celebrate Communion? What impact does it have on faith and life? Why do you think God made the sacrament of Communion something tactile and participatory? What does that say to you? Will the way you approach Communion be different than what's it's been? Why, or why not? I encourage you to partake of Communion as often as you are able. Take a moment and reflect on the words and imagery of Communion. Consider the forgiveness and grace. Pray about its meaning for you. Sing a song of praise. Give thanks!

**Saturday:** v.24 “This is the blood of the (new) covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them”- Some manuscripts have the word “new,” and “new covenant” is the term used in Matt. 26:28 and Luke 22:20. The Old Testament contained primarily four covenants- the Noahic Covenant (God and Noah), the Abrahamic Covenant (God and Abraham), The Mosaic Covenant/nation of Israel (God and Moses), and the Davidic Covenant (God and David). A covenant is in some ways a partnership with someone to accomplish a goal together. For instance, think of the marriage covenant. In the Bible and the covenant with God, God would make promises, while having an agreement that the other would fulfill certain commitments. The covenant would be the impetus for renewing and restoring God’s partnership with others- Israel, humanity. Through Jesus, all of these covenants are fulfilled, and now Jesus created a new covenant through his blood. Through Jesus, anyone can be reconciled to God, with a renewed relationship and partnership with God. With the new covenant, Jesus becomes our mediator, so that we can all can go directly to God. The chasm of sin that separated us from God is forgiven, with Jesus being the bridge, reconciling sinful humanity with holy God. For Jesus to institute a covenant between God and people puts him into the role of divine authority, the Christ who is God incarnate. For more on the new covenant, I recommend reading all of Hebrews 8-12, but note Hebrews 8:b-12 when the writer quotes Jer. 31:31-34:

“The days are coming, declares the Lord,

when I will make a **new covenant**

with the people of Israel

and with the people of Judah.

<sup>2</sup>It will not be like the covenant

I made with their ancestors

when I took them by the hand

to lead them out of Egypt,

because they did not remain faithful to my covenant,

and I turned away from them,

declares the Lord.

<sup>10</sup>This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel

after that time, declares the Lord.

**I will put my laws in their minds  
and write them on their hearts.**

**I will be their God,  
and they will be my people.**

<sup>11</sup> No longer will they teach their neighbor,  
or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,'  
because **they will all know me,**  
**from the least of them to the greatest.**

<sup>12</sup> **For I will forgive their wickedness  
and will remember their sins no more."**

Amen and Hallelujah!!

v.25 "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God"- though the disciples are still not understanding, Jesus confirms again that he would die soon. He also reminds of the promise of celebration together in the kingdom of God, through the bread and cup, and all that that means. Believers, redeemed by Jesus Christ, can expect to have fellowship with him in the kingdom of God. It points the last supper toward eschatology (end times-new creation), and therefore the Church's Communion liturgy does as well "until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet." What are your thoughts- did Jesus mean the kingdom after the resurrection, or at the end of time with the new creation, or both? Why? What do you think it meant to the disciples to hear Jesus speak v.25? What does it mean to you?

v.26 "When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives"- typically at Passover participants would sing Hallel, which are Psalms 113-118. They sang songs of praise! Imagine Jesus singing the Psalms!!

With all that was studied this week, take some time and reflect on what happened, what Jesus did, and why. Reflect on what Jesus' offering of grace means to and for you. Pray, and talk through it all with God, allowing the images to flow. Listen to what God is saying to you, be mindful of any visions the Spirit brings, and any feelings in your body. What is God saying to you? How does that make you feel? How will you respond? If possible, journal. As always, thank God for his many blessings, and for his abundant love!

**Other items:**

**Responsive Reading** (adapted from Psalm 116)

L: We love You, Lord, for You heard our voice;  
You heard our cry for mercy.

**P: Because You turned Your ear to us,  
We will call on You as long as we live.**

L: The cords of death entangled us,  
the anguish of the grave came over us;  
We were overcome by distress and sorrow.

**P: Then we called on Your name:  
“Lord, save us!”**

L: You, Lord are gracious and righteous;

**P: You are our God, and full of compassion.**

L: For you, Lord, have delivered us from death,

**P: our eyes from tears,  
our feet from stumbling,**

L: that we may walk before You, Lord  
in the land of the living.

**P: We will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the Lord.**

L: We will fulfill our vows to You, Lord  
in the presence of all Your people.

**P: Truly we are Your servants, Lord;  
You have freed us from our chains.**

**We will sacrifice a thank offering to You  
and call on Your holy name.**

**All: We will fulfill our vows to You  
in the presence of all Your people,  
We Praise You, Lord!**

### **Unison Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the light of the world! Shine Your light into our darkness. We come as we are, for You are merciful. Forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We come to Your table to taste of Your grace. For You are the bread of life, and You nourish our souls. Your cup of salvation was poured out for us. We give You the glory for all that You have done and praise Your holy name. Amen.

### **Song Lyrics:**

#### **To God Be the Glory #98 v.1,2**

1. To God be the glory, great things he hath done!  
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,  
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,  
and opened the lifegate that all may go in.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father thru Jesus the Son,  
and give him the glory, great things he hath done!

2. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
to every believer the promise of God;  
the vilest offender who truly believes,  
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.  
(Refrain)

**Lord Have Mercy** by Michael W. Smith

Jesus, I've forgotten the words that you have spoken  
Promises that burned within my heart have now grown dim  
With a doubting heart I follow the paths of earthly wisdom  
Forgive me for my unbelief  
Renew the fire again

Lord have mercy  
Christ have mercy  
Lord have mercy on me

I have built an altar where I worship things of man  
I have taken journeys that have drawn me far from you  
Now I am returning to your mercies ever flowing  
Pardon my transgressions  
Help me love you again

Lord have mercy  
Christ have mercy  
Lord have mercy on me

I have longed to know you and your tender mercies  
Like a river of forgiveness ever flowing without end  
I bow my heart before you in the goodness of your presence  
Your grace forever shining  
Like a beacon in the night

Lord have mercy  
Christ have mercy  
Lord have mercy on me

**Come, Sinners to the Gospel Feast #339 v.1**

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast;  
let every soul be Jesus' guest.  
Ye need not one be left behind,  
for God hath bid all humankind.

**Jesus Messiah** by Chris Tomlin

He became sin, who knew no sin  
That we might become His righteousness  
He humbled himself and carried the cross  
Love so amazing, love so amazing

Jesus Messiah, name above all names  
Blessed redeemer, Emmanuel  
The rescue for sinners, the ransom from Heaven  
Jesus Messiah, Lord of all

His body the bread, his blood the wine  
Broken and poured out all for love  
The whole earth trembled, and the veil was torn  
Love so amazing, love so amazing, yeah

Jesus Messiah, name above all names  
Blessed redeemer, Emmanuel  
The rescue for sinners, the ransom from Heaven  
Jesus Messiah, Lord of all

All our hope is in You, all our hope is in You  
All the glory to You, God, the light of the world

Jesus Messiah, name above all names  
Blessed redeemer, Emmanuel  
The rescue for sinners, the ransom from Heaven  
Jesus Messiah, Lord of all

Jesus Messiah, Lord of all  
You're the Lord of all  
The Lord of all

**Format** (this is a repeat from last week, and will be consistently present for anyone new and as a reminder for all):

Find a quiet place and time to focus on the Word, and to hear from God through it. It doesn't have to be long, for some it will be longer than others. I encourage you, if possible, to do this practice in the morning. You will then find that God brings it to your mind throughout your day.

For greater impact I encourage you to get some paper and a pen and journal daily what thoughts and impressions God brings to mind. Write out also your own thoughts and your own prayers, making sure to leave space within your time for God's response. Listen intently, and notice what rises up within you- what you are thinking, feeling, memories that arise and ideas that spring up. It may be something God would want you to address within yourself and/or with others. It may be something God is inspiring you to begin or end. God's possibilities are infinite! After time, it is often beneficial to go back and read what you have written, and notice how God has been moving in your life (and praise God for it!).

Begin with prayer, quieting yourself within and opening up to hearing what God would like to reveal to you. Praise God for who he is, for loving you, being with you, and more. Then ask God to speak to you; to open your heart and mind to hear his message. (if you are journaling, you could write out the prayer)

Read the Scripture passage over twice; once as a read through, and the second time slowly, meditatively. Notice what God illuminates for you. Notice what words or ideas are "jumping off the page at you," impacting you from the Scripture. Ask God why that is being highlighted for you. What is God saying to you? What is God asking you to say, do, change, pray about, etc.? What is the application for my life today? \*\*Most importantly- what am I going to do about it? (If you are journaling you could write it all out, which reinforces it in a greater way)

I have put together some daily questions based upon the Scripture. You may use those, but also feel free to deviate away from it if God is leading you there. They are simply offered to prompt contemplation with God. There is much more in this passage, feel free to delve in more!

At the end of your time pray again. I recommend praying throughout, but the ending prayer would include praise, thanking God for revelation, and asking for the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal, bringing to mind God's will. Ask God for the courage, empowerment, and opportunity to do what you have determined God is asking you to do.