

# STAYING STRONG

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL BRING US  
THROUGH EVERY TRIAL

*April 2025*

## PALM SUNDAY



### This Month's Topics:

- "Palm Sunday "
- "A Look at the Stone"
- Self-Care Corner
- Random Holidays You May Not Know About
- The Importance of Staying Connected

### Bible Verse:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13

### PALM SUNDAY

*Reflecting on Our Humble, Selfless, and Unconditionally Loving King*

In the Gospel of John in the New Testament of the Bible, we find the story of Palm Sunday. When we look at the verses around John, chapter 12, we see that, six days before Passover, Jesus is with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. A few days before this, we see that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Just take a second to visualize the timeline of what's going on. Jesus had traveled to raise Lazarus from the dead; is now present with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha; will ride into Passover on a baby donkey; predict His own death; have people not believe Him, despite all the miracles He has shown them; and then wash His disciples' feet – all on the way to giving His life for us all. What a humble, selfless, and unconditionally loving king!

We remember Palm Sunday as part of the last week of Lent and the beginning of Holy Week. It is the Sunday before Easter. Scripture tells us in John Chapter 12 beginning at verse 12:

*"The next day, the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him shouting: 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!'" Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written. "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."*

A typical king would not be seen on a donkey, let alone a baby donkey. They would enter on horseback in an extravagant

way. We see our humble, selfless, and unconditionally loving king enter on the back of a baby donkey, showing us how different He is from worldly kings. Most kings would move in plain power, Jesus moved in pure peace.

The palm branches were seen as symbols of victory in the culture and time period. The people shouted praises to Jesus and laid down symbolic palm branches showing that they trusted He was victorious.

As we anticipate Palm Sunday, don't let this season pass without taking time to reflect and respond. As we look at how Jesus lived His life in the weeks and days before He sacrificed His for ours, may we seek for ways amid the mundane moments of busy life to imitate His humility, selflessness, and unconditional love in our own lives.



## **A LOOK AT THE STONE**

The stone that enclosed Jesus' tomb was the only barrier to someone getting inside the tomb to steal Jesus' body. That's because the tomb was one big solid rock. There was no underground passage or back wall opening. The only access inside the tomb was through the front which was covered by the big rock and guarded day and night. The chief priests and Pharisees wanted to make sure no one could steal the body after Jesus promised He would rise on the third day.

Why did the angel roll the stone away? Why didn't Jesus do it Himself? The simple answer is that He chose not to. According to Matthew Henry's commentary, if Jesus had rolled the stone away, it would have been like a prisoner breaking out of jail. Jesus didn't want anyone to think He was breaking the law, so the angel acted like an officer to open the tomb.

Spiritually speaking, the large stone represents our sins. When it was rolled away, our sins were overtaken by Jesus's resurrection. Death was conquered. Jesus proved He was who He said – the Son of God. The empty grave showed the world He had risen. His mission was complete.

He has risen indeed! Happy Resurrection Day!

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**Easter is a reminder that God is in the business of awakening hope in the hearts of people who feel hopeless.**

**He does this in ways that only he can do. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of the Gospel and the resurrection hope.**

## SELF-CARE CORNER

The goal of self-care is reducing stress and feeling recharged. You have to make that a priority so that you can be your best self. When you take care of yourself, you are more prepared to help others in your life and find joy doing it.

### A Reminder to Stay Hydrated

Stay hydrated throughout the day and on the go! Take a BPA-free water bottle with you whenever you're out and about. Be actively aware of how you are feeling and how much water you are drinking. Be sure to listen and pay close attention to your body's needs to stay sufficiently hydrated. If you're feeling really thirsty, chances are you have waited too long for that refreshing drink. You are already dehydrated and you have waited too long for that refreshing drink. Your body is telling you in no uncertain terms that you should be drinking more water.

### Set a Positive Morning Intention

*Would you like to start your days with more energy and purpose? Try setting the tone with a positive intention.*

- ★ Listen to inspirational music or a podcast, or allow yourself to just listen to the sound of nature.
- ★ Practice paying attention to your surroundings especially when outside.
- ★ Reflect on people and things you feel grateful for.
- ★ Meditate on your breathing patterns.
- ★ Invite a friend to join you and focus your conversation on things you feel grateful for or looking forward to.
- ★ Communicate with your Lord and Savior with prayer and Bible Study.

### Always remember:

Self-care is not selfish. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.

Finding and affirming your true value, worth, and wealth is a matter of self-care which allows us to express compassion, loving kindness, and true generosity to others. And where does this love come from? "We love because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19. From this love that God has for us flows our love for God, our love for others, and our love for ourselves.

The thankful heart opens our eyes to a multitude of blessings that continually surround us.

## RANDOM HOLIDAYS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT      Have a laugh!

April:

- 7th      National No Housework Day
- 16th     Go Fly a Kite Day
- 18th     Velociraptor Awareness Day
- 26th     Hug a Friend Day
- 29th     International Dance Day

## THE IMPORTANCE OF STAYING CONNECTED

Isolation and loneliness are not just sad situations. They have been shown to increase the likelihood of dementia, depression, and heart disease in older adults. Even early death. Below are some ideas to boost connection. Some require technology, others do not. Here are some ways that we can help each other:

- Video Calls.
- Old-fashioned snail mail.
- Telephone calls with an activity.
- Explore reminiscence activities.
- Consider a telephone check-in service.
- Communicate with neighbors, friends and relatives. Don't wait for calls to come to you, pick up that phone and call someone! Our phones *have* become one of our best friends!