

Experiencing All of Holy Week



I experience feelings of longing every Maundy Thursday worship service. Longing for my fellow church members who couldn't, or chose not to, attend Maundy Thursday.

Participating in just one or two of Holy Week services leaves a huge gap in the retelling the story of Jesus' passion. It steals from the depth and power and strength of Holy Week.

I have good news today. The Holy Week services are right in front of you. You can experience anew the pain and power, the gore and glory, of Jesus' terrible triumphant path to the cross.

Holy Week Services

Traditionally, there are three Holy Week services. It starts with Palm Sunday, commemorating Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem before His betrayal. It is often marked with palm branches and shouts of praise.

The next service is Maundy Thursday. The term "Maundy" is based on the Latin word for "command." It comes from John 13:34, "A new command I give you..." Maundy Thursday focuses on the institution of the Lord's Supper. Some churches also recall Jesus washing the disciples' feet in this service.

The origins of the term "Good Friday" are debated; the weight and measure of the service are not in question. Good Friday retraces Jesus' passion. It is the perfect preparation for Easter Sunday.

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Five Reasons to Attend Three Services

Experience the Entire Story

If we miss an episode of a favorite television show, we can catch up by watching it “on demand.” Not so with live worship services. To experience the entire narrative, attend all the services.

Binge Watching for the Soul

We find time for “binge watching” our favorite television dramas. Think of Holy Week as “binge watching” Jesus’ entire passion through worship services.

Sights and Sounds and Symbols

Holy Week is the most sensory driven worship of the year. Waving palm branches on Palm Sunday. Stripping the altar on Maundy Thursday. Shouts of “crucify him” on Good Friday.

It Should Have Been Me

In 2016 Brazilian journalist Ivan Carlos Agnoletto allowed fellow journalist Gelson Galliotto to take his place reporting on a soccer match. His colleague died with 76 others when the team flight crashed. Agnoletto acknowledged “it should have been me” on the flight.

We mirror Agnoletto’s experience as we follow Jesus through Holy Week services. It should have been us. Jesus literally took our place.

Clarifying Easter

Holy Week closes with Jesus’ death and burial. It is a painful way to close out the week. But, there is no more effective way to prepare for the joy of Easter Sunday.

I know attending all three is challenging. There were years when our kids had high school baseball or softball games on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday. Yet, there were ways to attend all the services. It was worth it.

I encourage you to join me in attending all the Holy Week services this year. May our Lord encourage and strengthen our faith through the services.

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