

Easter

CHANGES EVERYTHING



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Reading Plan • Family Activity Guide • Service Information

Easter Reading Guide



WAYSIDECHAPEL

"And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:8-11

Easter is all about the gospel proclaimed to us through the message of Jesus Christ and his disciples. In the rhythms and routines of life, it can be easy for us to miss out on its true meaning and its true cost. As we approach Easter Sunday this year, let these next few weeks be a reminder that the resurrection was born out of great love from our Father, and it came at the great cost of his beloved Son Jesus Christ, who was crucified on the cross for our sins.

Each week, we have a suggested fast that accompanies the Scripture reading. Fasting gives us an opportunity to pursue greater closeness and communion with Jesus. It can be a means by which we intentionally enter into a period of discomfort, so that we might better reflect on and appreciate the sorrow and pain Jesus entered into for our sake.

Overwhelming Love

WEEK ONE | MARCH 20 - 25

DAY ONE

LUKE 7:36-50

DAY TWO

ROMANS 6:1-14

DAY THREE

ROMANS 12:1-2

DAY FOUR

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

DAY FIVE

GALATIANS 5:16-24

DAY SIX

REFLECTION

FASTING: SOCIAL NETWORKING

We begin this season of preparation for Easter by reflecting on the forgiveness offered to us through Jesus Christ and by reflecting on the appropriate response to his love. As you read each of these passages, sincerely reflect on the debt incurred by your sins, and the gracious work of God to forgive you fully.

This week, we suggest you fast from social media. We chose this particular fast because of the way social media can take up so much of our time unbeknownst to us. Left unchecked, it can become a numbing agent or a replacement for communion with God. When you feel the urge to open up a social media app or website this week, take the opportunity to create room to meet with God instead.

LUKE 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

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- Why was this "woman of the city" so deeply devoted to Jesus?
 - How truly do you believe that your sins have been fully forgiven?
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ROMANS 6:1-14

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

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- As you think about the grace you've been given through Christ, how should that change the way you think about your sin struggles?
 - Romans 6 declares for we who believe in Christ, that as Christ died for our sins, in some way we too also died. What in us died when Christ died?
 - How should we live in light of the overwhelming love that God has for us?
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ROMANS 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

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- How much time do you spend daily on social media?
 - How much time do you spend daily in God's Word?
 - How would spending less time on social media in order to spend more time in God's Word, better enable you to be transformed by the renewing of your mind?
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2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

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- How does the love of God influence your life choices?
 - How does knowing that Christ died for you impact the way you serve others?
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GALATIANS 5:16-24

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

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- In what ways can social media tempt you to gratify the desires of the flesh listed in verses 19-21?
 - How can fasting from social media help you walk by the Spirit and exhibit the fruit of the Spirit listed in verses 22-23?
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DAY 6 | MARCH 24

We invite you to take time today to reflect on what God has shown you this week as we considered the theme of "Overwhelming Love" and fasted from social media.

Check out our [Family Activity Guide](#) online for this week's activity!

Essential Sacrifice

WEEK TWO | MARCH 27 - APRIL 1

DAY ONE

LUKE 9:18-27

DAY TWO

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-16

DAY THREE

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

DAY FOUR

1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27

DAY FIVE

HEBREWS 12:1-2

DAY SIX

REFLECTION

FASTING: CAFFEINE & SWEETS

The debt of sin that we owe is too great for us to pay. Jesus took the burden upon himself to make the payment on our behalf by giving his life on the cross. This week, reflect on the price paid by Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness, and the sacrifices we must make to follow him faithfully.

We suggest that you fast from caffeine and sweets this week. This particular fast gives us an opportunity to intentionally lay down a simple pleasure and by it remember the one who laid down his life for us. Let this act of self-denial represent a willingness to deny yourself for Jesus' sake.

LUKE 9:18-27

Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

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- How would you answer the question that Jesus asked his disciples?
 - What can you lay down or take up to more faithfully follow Jesus?
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PHILIPPIANS 3:7-16

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

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- In what areas do you need to let go of your "gain" because it has distracted you from "the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus"?
 - How does viewing life as a race that has an end and a goal change how you view trials you are facing?
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COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

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- What's the difference between the questions "Who do others say that Jesus is?" and "Who do you say that Jesus is..."? Why is sacrifice essential to the salvation Christ provides according to Jesus in Luke 9?
 - What does it mean that "you have died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God"?
 - How does the reality of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection impact how the Christian lives day-to-day?
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1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

- The value of the gospel compelled Paul to preach with all of his strength. This was his spiritual race, to do everything with excellence for the sake of the gospel and its proclamation. Think about preparing for your spiritual race in advance with the mindset to win! What do you need to do or stop doing now in order to prepare yourself to win?
 - What spiritual disciplines do you need to incorporate into your life in order to gain the self-control needed to train effectively?
 - How does knowing that God's reward is eternal change the way you view the race? How you train?
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HEBREWS 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

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- What are some obstacles that keep you from running the race God has put before you?
 - What sin struggles has God made you aware of that are hindering you?
 - How can we be better at accepting the Lord's discipline knowing that it is leading us toward holiness?
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DAY 6 | APRIL 1

We invite you to take time today to reflect on what God has shown you this week as we considered the theme of "Essential Sacrifice" and fasted from caffeine & sweets.

Check out our [Family Activity Guide](#) online for this week's activity!

Recognizing Messiah

WEEK THREE | APRIL 3 - 8

DAY ONE

LUKE 19:28-44

DAY TWO

LUKE 22:7-23

DAY THREE

LUKE 22:39-46

DAY FOUR

LUKE 23

DAY FIVE

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES

DAY SIX

REFLECTION

FASTING: TV & MOVIES

As we begin Holy Week, immerse yourself in the greatest story ever told. The Son of God took on flesh, and for our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day, he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures, ultimately rescuing us from sin and its consequences.

This final week, we suggest that you fast from TV and movies. We chose this particular fast to complete our preparation for Easter Sunday because the stories we watch so often represent the craving we have for redemption, for rescue, for love to win over hate, and for good to triumph over evil. As you unplug and turn away from your screens, pursue a deeper understanding and appreciation for what God has done in Jesus Christ.

LUKE 19:28-44

And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it." And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

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- What do you most appreciate about Jesus' words and actions in this story?
 - How would you describe Jesus' mindset as he began to enter the last week of his life?
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LUKE 22:7-23

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

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- How did Jesus make space for his disciples to be present during a difficult moment in his life?
 - How might fasting from TV and movies help you to be more present in your relationships with others?
 - In what ways might fasting from TV and movies help you to deepen your relationship with God and remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us?
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Check out our [Family Activity Guide](#) online for this week's activity!

LUKE 22:39-46

And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

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- What does Jesus' example of petition and response to trials teach you about how you can communicate with God during trials?
 - In what ways can you change how you pray to imitate Jesus' example rather than that of the disciples?
 - How has fasting each week helped you place your focus on Jesus more fully?
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LUKE 23

Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king." And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." But they were urgent, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place."

When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. I will therefore punish and release him."

But they all cried out together, "Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas"— a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder. Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus, but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!" A third time he said to them, "Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him." But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

DAY 4 | CONT.

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- Herod and the soldiers mocked Jesus and treated him with contempt. But how did the thief on the cross, the centurion, and Joseph of Arimathea respond to Jesus, the Messiah?
 - What are the final words of Christ from the cross as recorded in verses 34, 43, and 46? What stands out to you about his words?
 - The women remained with Jesus until the end while his disciples scattered. We read in verse 55 that the women saw where his tomb was and then returned home in order to prepare spices with the intent to return and anoint Christ's body after the Sabbath. As we remember Christ's sacrifice for us on Good Friday, what are ways we could fast from entertainment in order to prepare our hearts for resurrection Sunday?
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The background of the entire page is a dark, moody photograph of heavy, grey clouds. The clouds are layered, with some appearing closer and more detailed, while others are further away, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The lighting is soft but dramatic, highlighting the textures of the cloud formations.

REFLECTION & WORSHIP

We invite you to take time these next two days to reflect on what God has shown you this week as we considered the theme of "Recognizing the Messiah" and fasted from TV & movies.

Be sure to join us for our Good Friday services at both campuses at 7 pm on Friday, April 7. Learn more about the services online.



We hope this reading plan and weekly devotionals have helped you take time to fully consider the gift of Christ's sacrifice and the gift of salvation given to each of us.

We invite you to join us for our Easter Weekend services!

Visit us at waysidechapel.org/easter to see service times