

Follow Jesus Through Holy Week

Discover what true love is all about

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

Do you want to really understand what true love is and what it looks like? Then follow Jesus through Holy Week and see Him purposely allow His life to be given for you and for me.

Most people miss the incredible story of the final week of Jesus’ earthly life. This is your chance to realize just what Jesus went through for you.

Each day of Holy Week we follow Jesus according to the records in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We will combine the different accounts and provide you with the most probable way Jesus experienced Holy Week. In the end, some events in Holy Week may have occurred in a different order, but the overall message of each day and Jesus’ display of love are what we should understand and be in awe of!

Each day offers the timeline of events surrounding Jesus as well as a focus on one related passage that challenges us to say “yes” to what God’s love is truly all about.

As we follow what Jesus went through each day, we can discover what His love really looks like and how we can let it fill our lives once again.

***“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”***

“And this is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us”

“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners Christ died for us.”

1 John 3:1, 16 & Romans 5:8



Easter is April 4!

Get ready, invite a friend!
Indoor & Online: 8:45 & 10:15 |
Tent: 11:15

Follow Jesus: Before the Week Began

Love has a plan!

John 12:1-8 (NIV84)

Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³ Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

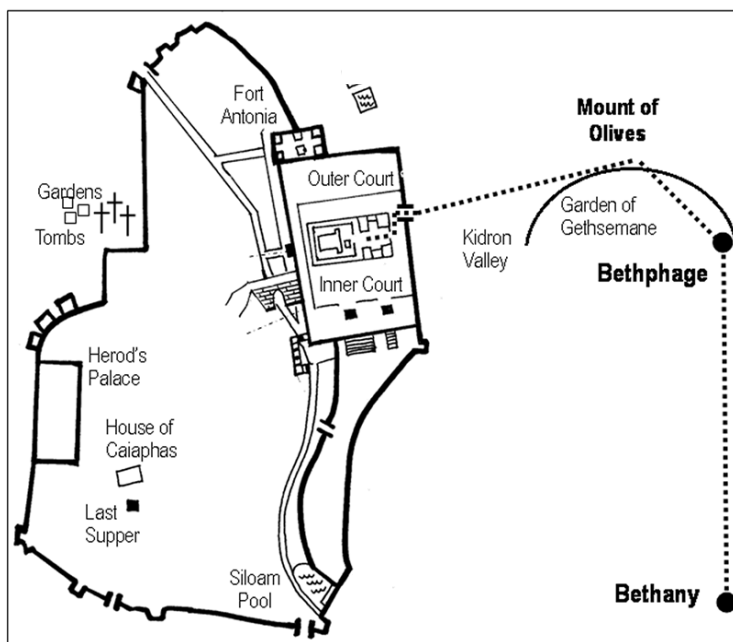
⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵ "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? . . . ⁷ "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

Holy Week happened in a real place. Jerusalem was the city and you might say Bethany was the suburbs. Few people realize Jesus never stayed in Jerusalem until his capture and crucifixion. That was because Jesus was never really welcomed to live there. It could never be Jesus' home because that city said it lived for God, but they really lived for themselves. Jesus would always be an outsider to Jerusalem because that city had no place for God's own Son. But before Holy Week ever began, love had a plan: A plan of sacrifice to bring peace to people who didn't know any.

Jerusalem was on the top of Mount Zion. Bethpage and Bethany connected to the mountain the Mount of Olives across from Jerusalem. For the first days of Holy Week, daily Jesus would begin the walk across the mountain road of the Mount of Olives and then descend the Mount of Olives to the Kidron Valley

only to walk back up to enter into Jerusalem. Bethany, not far from Bethlehem where Jesus was born, meant "The House of Welcome." It would be the only town in this rich biblical region surrounding Jerusalem where Jesus would ever be welcomed. But none of that stopped Jesus from fulfilling the plan God's love always had for you and for me.

Do you know that God's love has a plan to be everything you need in the midst of all the unwelcome and hostile places you experience?



Follow Jesus: Palm Sunday

Love comes to offer God's peace, God's way.

Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John	Location
Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem	21:1-11	11:1-10	19:29-44	12:12-19	Mt of Olives
Jesus looks around the temple		11:11			Jerusalem
Jesus returns to Bethany		11:11			Bethany

John 12:12-19

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³ 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!" ¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, ¹⁵ "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."

¹⁶ At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him. ¹⁷ Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. ¹⁸ Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

In Jewish Scripture and history, Jerusalem is the "city of the great king" (Matthew 5:34-35), the place where the Messiah would one day come and establish His eternal rule and reign on God's behalf. When Jesus, God's true Messiah, comes on this Palm Sunday, He has the right to come back with judgement and condemnation against Jerusalem for all its sins and hypocrisy. After all, its religious leaders who rule over the temple and the religious life of Jerusalem have turned the home and worship of God into a place of their own control and power. In those days, this would have been symbolized by the King coming on a war horse to the city.

Yet Jesus doesn't come in condemnation. He comes humbly offering peace, riding on a donkey. The One who saves (Hosanna) and the one who can raise people from the dead (v17) is here. He comes on a donkey to the city symbolizing that he comes in peace to give peace. Jesus does not demand that everyone make him King. He comes offering to be received as the rightful king and for a while "the whole world" seems to say "yes." For a few moments the crowds say, "We need you, we want you. You are the only one who can save us (Hosanna)." But that doesn't last because people think they can also choose how they want Jesus to create the peace they so desperately need. They want someone to save them but not to rule over them. Although people say they want him to be king, they don't want him to change or judge what they are doing. They only want a king who does what they want and brings peace without actually requiring anything of them. They want God's peace and solutions without letting Him be God in their lives.

Where do you need God's peace in your life?

- Are you willing to surrender to His leadership and let Him change whatever He wants in your life?
- Is He allowed to change your schedule, how you live, or how you find peace?

Follow Jesus: Monday

Love is honest about what needs to change and when

Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John	Location
Jesus curses the barren fig tree	21:18-19	11:18			Mt of Olives
Jesus weeps over Jerusalem			19:41-44		Mt of Olives
Jesus cleanses the temple	21:12-13	11:15-18	19:45-48		Jerusalem
Certain Greeks ask to see Jesus				12:20-36	Jerusalem
Jesus rebukes unbelief				12:37-50	Jerusalem
Jesus returns to Bethany		11:19			Bethany

Luke 19:41–46 (NIV84)

⁴¹ As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.” Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. ⁴⁶ “It is written,” he said to them, “ ‘My house will be a house of prayer’; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

Although biblical scholars differ on exactly what time Jesus weeps over Jerusalem, the main point is clear: we don’t get to choose when Jesus makes changes in our lives. We tend to live in “magic tomorrows” when we will finally let Jesus rule over our lives. The truth is most of us keep telling Jesus “it’s not a good time.”

On what I like to call “Messy Monday,” Jesus says, “This is it. There is no other day coming for you to let me in and let me take control. Now is the time and you need to say ‘yes.’ I see what is coming and if you don’t say ‘yes’ now, you won’t be able to handle what is coming next. It will unravel your life and ‘dash to the ground’ all you’ve trusted and wanted in life.” Everything Jesus said eventually came true for Jerusalem.

Jesus knows this is the time, but after the crowds say they want Him, He goes to the temple, the place where people are supposed to worship and reverence God, and He finds nothing close to what it should be. He starts “cleaning house” whether anyone is ready for Him or not. He knows this is when things need to get right. He not only cleans house physically, He starts teaching what is spiritually right. But instead of recognizing Jesus and that He is from God, people challenge His right to mess up their lives, their habits and their religion.

How about you? Are you telling God, ‘not now’?

- Who is really in charge of your life? What do you need to repent of and let Jesus mess up?
- If it’s not today, will it ever happen? Do you know what God knows about tomorrow?

Follow Jesus: Tuesday

Love trusts and treasures God's Word

Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John	Location
Disciples see withered fig tree	21:19-22	11:20-26	21:37-38		Mt. Of Olives
Jesus' authority is questioned	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8		Jerusalem
Parable of two sons	21:28-32				Jerusalem
Parable of the vinedressers	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19		Jerusalem
Parable of the wedding feast	22:1-14				Jerusalem
Pharisees ask about paying taxes	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26		Jerusalem
Pharisees ask about the resurrection	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40		Jerusalem
The greatest commandment	22:35-40	12:28-34			Jerusalem
Jesus asks about David's Lord	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44		Jerusalem
Woe to the scribes and Pharisees	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47		Jerusalem
Poor widow's mite		12:41-44	21:1-4		Jerusalem
Prophecy of the Lord's coming	24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-36		Mt. Of Olives
Parable of the talents	25:14-30				Mt. Of Olives
Parable of the sheep and goats	25:31-46				Mt. Of Olives
Final return to Bethany?					Mt. Of Olives

Mark 12: 24-27

Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.²⁶ Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

On this day, Jesus teaches in the temple, faces every challenge and exposes every lie of the religious authorities. Every type of religious leader tries to prove He is false or doesn't know what He is talking about. And every time, Jesus shows what the Word of God says and how to truly live it out.

We live in a day when people don't trust or believe Jesus or His Word. They challenge His Word and His ways. We live a world that says what people think and feel is more true and right than what God says. But Jesus is always right, and there is no such thing as disagreeing with Jesus and being right.

➔ Do you trust God's Word?

- Will you follow what Jesus says even if it takes away your title, position or power?

Follow Jesus: Spy Wednesday

Love chooses to be faithful to you when you are not

Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John	Location
Sanhedrin plots to kill Jesus	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2		Jerusalem
Judas agrees to betray Jesus	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6		Jerusalem
Jesus could have left!!!					Bethany

Matthew 26:14–16 (NIV84)

¹⁴ Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. ¹⁶ From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

On this day, we are told nothing of what Jesus does. We are only told of what evil does. During this time the Sanhedrin plots to kill Jesus and Judas agrees to betray Him. Church tradition calls it “Spy Wednesday” because it is the day they believe Judas met with the Jewish leaders to plan Jesus’ betrayal. But why don’t we hear about Jesus doing anything on Wednesday? The reason is that He is giving Jerusalem a chance to recognize what has happened over the last few days and repent. He is staying in Bethany (only a few miles away from Jerusalem), giving people a chance to realize they need to surrender to His ways when He comes to Jerusalem the next and final time.

It’s important to remember that Jesus knows this is His last day of freedom on earth before the Cross. If He looks from the top of the Mount of Olives, He can see Jerusalem and He knows what awaits Him the next time He enters it. This is His last day of freedom and His final chance to escape if He wants. It wouldn’t be hard to turn His back on Jerusalem and run into the desert. He can be safe if He wants to be, but Jesus the king chooses to stay and sacrifice Himself even while Judas is choosing to betray Him. Jesus is choosing to be faithful when Judas is not.

Most Bible teachers will point out that the “straw that breaks the camel’s back” for Judas is seeing a woman spend money in worship of Jesus instead of giving it for the poor. Judas often steals money designated for the poor (Matthew 26:6-13, John 12:6). **Judas is willing to betray Jesus for a price while Jesus is willing to pay the ultimate price for Judas.** Jesus is showing the love we all want but we aren’t willing to give.

What’s your price?

- How much has to be offered for you to betray Jesus and live for yourself?
- Are you willing to humble yourself and praise God for His faithfulness even when you are not?

Follow Jesus: Maundy Thursday

Love is willing to do whatever it takes

Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John	Location
Preparation for Passover	26:17-19	14:12-16	22:7-13		Jerusalem
Passover Feast begins (6pm)	26:20	14:17	22:14-16	13:1	Upper Room
Disciples argue who is the greatest			22:24-30		
Jesus washes the disciples' feet				13:2-17	
Jesus identifies his betrayer	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:18-30	
Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:15-20		
Jesus' new commandment of love				13:31-35	
Jesus predicts Peter's denial	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:36-38	
Jesus' discourse in the upper room				14:1-30	
Sing a hymn and depart	26:30	14:26		14:1-31	

John 13:2–5, 15-17 (NIV84)

² The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. . . . ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Here is King Jesus ready to die for us, and ready to live to serve us. He chooses to do the task only the lowliest servant in a household did — wash feet. Even Jewish slaves were exempt from this task and the job was kept for Gentiles. Yet Jesus is willing to do this for the disciples because **when you love someone, you are willing to serve however the one you love needs**. And after He does this, He tells the disciples, “What I have done for you, do for each other . . . A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (John 13:34). Church tradition calls this day “*Maundy Thursday*” because in Latin, the verse begins with *Mandatum novum do vobis*. The word “maundy” is a corruption of “mandatum” meaning “commandment.” The emphasis is on fact that loving through serving is a command, not an option.

Love is willing to serve however is needed. Are you?

- Are you willing to follow Jesus' command, or do you treat it like a suggestion?
- Who does Jesus want you to serve and love His way?
- Have you focused on how people should serve you instead of serving like Jesus?

Follow Jesus: Good Friday

Love takes our place and saves us from our enemies

Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John	Time
Jesus' discourse to Gethsemane				15:1-16:33	12AM
Jesus prays for His disciples				17:1-26	
Jesus prays in Gethsemane	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:39-46	18:1	
Jesus is betrayed and arrested	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12	
Jesus appears before Annas				18:13-14	
Jesus appears before Caiaphas				18:24	3AM
The Sanhedrin accuses/abuses Jesus	26:57-68	14:32-42	22:39-46		
Peter denies Jesus three times	26:69-75	14:66-72	22:54-62	18:15-18,25-27	
Sanhedrin condemns Jesus	27:1	15:1	22:66-71		
Judas commits suicide	27:3-10				
Jesus appears before Pilate	27:11-14	15:1-5	23:1-7	18:28-38	6AM
Jesus appears before Herod			28:8-12		
Jesus appears before Pilate again	27:15-23	15:6-14	23:13-22	18:39-40	
The crowd chooses Barabbas	27:16-23				
Soldiers scourge and mock Jesus	27:27-31	15:16-19		19:1-3	
Pilate consents to Jesus' death	27:22-26	15:12-15	23:20-25	19:4-16	9AM
Jesus is led away to be crucified	27:31-34	15:20-23	23:26-32	19:16-17	
Jesus on the cross, first three hours	27:35-44	15:24-32	23:33-43	19:18-24	
The final three hours	27:45-50	15:33-37	23:44,46	19:25-30	12PM
Miracles accompany his death	27:51-56	15:38-41	23:47-49		
Joseph buries Jesus' body	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-55	19:31-42	3PM
Jewish leaders secure the tomb	27:62-66				

Good Friday is a day to stop and think of Jesus and His love for you, hour by hour. Try to fathom the exhaustion, pain, betrayal and violence Jesus continually experiences each moment that leads to the cross! It is beyond our abilities.

Did you realize that **Jesus endured six unjust trials in a few hours?**

Did you realize that these trials represent the enemies of God's love in your heart?

There is Annas (John 18:12).

He represents the traditions of the past. He was the former high priest and still had much influence and control over the religious powers of the day. This enemy says: ***“Jesus, you are not what has been. We reject you.”***

There is Sanhedrin at night (Mt 26:63).

This represents shallow religion with all its power and control. It was threatened by Jesus and wanted to protect its power and position. This enemy says: ***“Jesus, you are not what we want God to be. We reject you.”***

The Sanhedrin at dawn (Mt. 27:1).

There is formal condemnation of Jesus. **This represents darkness.** This enemy says: ***“Jesus, your light must die if we will be free to hide our sin and evil. We reject you.”***

Pilate’s first meeting with Jesus (Luke 23:1-3).

Pilate was the Roman authority and military power that oppressed Israel. **He represents the world’s power.** This enemy says: ***“Jesus, in our world you are insignificant and powerless. We reject you.”***

Herod’s trial of Jesus (Luke 23:7-8).

Herod was the Jewish political authority and official ruler over Galilee where Jesus was from. Jesus, being from Nazareth was considered inferior and worthless. **He represents ethnic pride and prejudice.** This enemy says: ***“Jesus, you are not like us. We reject you.”***

Pilate’s final trial of Jesus (John 18:38-40).

Here the same crowd that welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem on Sunday demands Jesus’ crucifixion and asks for a rebel like themselves, Barabbas, to be freed. **They represent the power of the crowd.** This enemy says: ***“Jesus, the rebel must live and you must die. We reject you.”***

Every one of these enemies contributes to putting Jesus on the cross and every one of these enemies lives in our hearts. Jesus doesn’t keep our traditions or rules. He is not the god we want because in the end we want to be god ourselves. He exposes our sin with His light and seems insignificant compared to man’s power in this world. He will not put ethnicity above God’s law for all people and He will not give the crowd what it wants. And because of that, He goes to the cross; the very place every one of these enemies eventually sends you and me.

That’s right! Jesus on the cross is the picture of what happens to every life that falls into the power of these enemies. Enemies that our world follows today. Whether it’s our marriage, family, career, mental health, or nation, when we follow these enemies instead of Christ, the cross and its destruction are our future.

And that’s why Jesus, the love of God, took our place. He died in our place so we can live in His freedom and healing.

Which one of these six enemies is ruling over your heart today?

Follow Jesus: Silent Saturday

Love waits and trusts

Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John	Location
The women observe the Sabbath			23:56		Bethany?

Luke 23:55–56 (NIV84)

⁵⁵ The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. ⁵⁶ Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

Silent Saturday is a day of waiting, waiting for a promise while you are hurting and afraid. People often ask, “Why did Jesus have to wait until Sunday to resurrect?” While there many thoughts on this, one of the powerful truths is that the Sabbath represented everything being finished. In Genesis 1, God rested on the Sabbath because the work of creating a new world was finished. In the same way, the work that creates new beginnings and a new life in the kingdom of God for us was finished on Silent Saturday.

Beyond the connection to the Sabbath, there is another reason why Jesus didn’t resurrect on Saturday as well: **in this life we must have faith during bad days**. This world isn’t heaven. Bad things happen and tragedies and injustice will continue until the day Jesus returns at the end of time.

Even though Jesus had won and was now victorious, the world would have to wait to see the results. You and I often have to do the same. Every promise Jesus made to the disciples was about to come true, but first there would be a day when evil seemed to win. You and I live in those days, too. And yet as preachers have declared throughout the years, **“Sunday is coming.”**

There is a day coming when the power and resurrection of Jesus overcomes every enemy of our hearts. A day love finally wins!

Whatever painful “Good Friday” you have had in your life, know that Sunday is coming!

Whatever confusing and devastating “Silent Saturday” you are in, know that Sunday is coming!

And whatever tragedy has told you that this world wins, just remember that Sunday is coming!

Are you in a Silent Saturday right now?

- What promise of God seems to have died and been defeated in your life?
- Trust again today that God’s delay is not His denial. Sunday is coming!

Follow Jesus: Resurrection Sunday

Love provides what has always been missing

Event	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John	Location
The women find an empty tomb!	28:1-8	16:1-9	24:1-8	20:1	Garden Tomb

Matthew 28:1-10

Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.

² Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. ³ His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow.

⁴ The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

⁵ Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. ⁷ And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you."

⁸ The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. ⁹ And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."

On what the world calls Easter Sunday, Jesus walks out of the tomb that was meant for you and me!

The rightful king of heaven overpowers and eternally defeats all of the powers of hell, after hell has given Jesus its best shot! Jesus condemns sin and Satan forever while saving us the sinners. And just like the women and disciples on the first Resurrection Sunday, we can begin again. Those first women finally found the one thing they thought they would never have: Jesus, alive and well and providing power over death for the rest of their earthly lives. That day those women found the answers to their questions about whether God cared for people like them who experienced tragedy like that.

We live in a world where everyone knows something is missing, but no one can seem to find the right answer or be able to trust any leader. On that day, everything that was missing for new life, hope and healing was found. You can find the same.

Verse 8 says these women started a new life "very frightened but filled with great joy." Was what they had seen as good as it seemed? Could they really trust it after all they had been through?

The answer was "yes." They would never be missing peace and power again. They would never have to be afraid again. Life wouldn't be perfect, but Jesus the prince of peace would always be with them.

Will you trust Jesus with all of your heart from this day forward?