

April 12, 2020

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for preserving this extraordinary document which documents the greatest story ever told. Thank you for John's courage. Thank you for those who encouraged him to get this out before he left this earth. We pray that all of us would believe that you are who you say you are, and that we would put our trust in you and find life in your name. We pray this in the powerful and matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

John 19:16-42 New International Version (NIV)

16 Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. 17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. 19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: *jesus of nazareth, the king of the jews*. 20 Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. 21 The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." 22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." 23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. 24 "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So this is what the soldiers did. 25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, [b] here is your son," 27 and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. 28 Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. 31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. 32 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man

who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. 33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. 35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. 36 These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," 37 and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." 38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. 39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40 Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 41 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. 42 Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

John 20:1-8 New International Version (NIV)

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" 3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

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John 20:24-29 New International Version (NIV)

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with

them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

INTRODUCTION

Following Jesus' crucifixion, his followers expected what anyone expects after someone dies—that the person would remain that way. But one of Jesus' followers, John, gave an eyewitness account that summarized the main event surrounding Christianity: Jesus rose from the dead. In this seventh and final sign that John documents, he makes the case that Jesus is exactly who he claimed to be.

The invitation - based on John's account, you would believe that Jesus is who he claimed to be, and then you would trust in Him.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Growing up, what was Easter like for you?
- 2) When was the last time you were surprised by something that was completely unexpected?
- 3) The four Gospels focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. When you think of Jesus, which of those three words most comes to mind?
- 4) Read John 19:16–42.
 - What are some details about this story that would lead a reader to believe this actually happened?
 - What stands out to you about this passage?
 - What emotions must the disciples have been feeling?
- 5) Read John 20:1-8, 24-28
 - What are some details about this story that would lead a reader to believe this actually happened?
 - What stands out to you about these passages?
 - Who can you relate to most from these passages: Peter, John, or Thomas? What makes you say that?
- 6) Read John 20:29. While many eyewitnesses believed in Jesus because of what they saw firsthand, why do you think Jesus called people—such as us—who were not eyewitnesses to the resurrection "blessed"?