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# Preparing for Easter

## A Week with Jesus

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“Christmas itself has now far outstripped Easter in popular culture as the real celebratory centre of the Christian year – a move that completely reverses the New Testament's emphasis. We sometimes try, in hymns, prayers and sermons, to build a whole theology on Christmas, but it can't in fact sustain such a thing.

We then keep Lent, Holy Week and Good Friday so thoroughly that we have hardly any energy left for Easter except for the first night and day. Easter, however, should be the centre. Take that away and there is, almost literally, nothing left.” – NT Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, p23.

“Take away the stories of Jesus's birth, and you lose only two chapters of Matthew and two of Luke. Take away the resurrection, and you lose the entire New Testament and most of the second-century fathers as well” – N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, p43.

Please note: This message introduces a 4-day devotional that will be available today in hard copy and online, designed to do around the family table in your house.

### Everyday Items

We have mundane things around every day, but God can use these things to talk to us, and become anchor points for preparing our hearts.

## **Stone**

The Triumphal Entry: Luke 19:28-40

See 1 Kings 1:22; 2 Kings 9; Zechariah 9:9-10.

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” - Psalm 118

This week, as we walk out our front door and see the rocks in the garden – do we recognise God as the rightful king?

## **Fig**

On the way to Jerusalem: Matthew 21:18-22.

In this week – when we take a bite from a piece of fruit – what is the fruit of your life? Do we need Jesus to help us?

## **Coin**

The Temple Debates: Mark 12:13-17

See examples in Daniel, 1 Peter, Romans.

Do we recognise what is God's, and give it to Him?

Do we give this world what God says we must?

## **Water**

The Last Supper: John 13:1-10

It stops being about us, and becomes all about Him.

Jesus asks, "Will you let me wash you clean?"

Unless you let Him come and wash you clean, you can have no part in Him.

## **Response**

Will we let Easter just sneak up on us this week, a brief pause in the busy calendar of our lives?

Or will we prepare ourselves, so that when we come to our family table, the table of God, we are ready?

Will we prepare:

- + Our praises - pointed to the One who deserves it?
- + Our lives - examined for their fruit?
- + Our priorities and desires - given to the one who deserves them?

To let Him wash us clean?

## Discussion

Please get a copy of the 4-day devotion for Monday to Thursday of the Easter week.

You can also get access to an electronic version on our website.

If you would like to hear more about the depth and power of Jesus' saving work at Easter, subscribe to the Riverlife 'Going Deeper' Podcast (in your favourite podcast app) for our Easter Special.