



Wycliffe

THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS



A LENTEN DEVOTIONAL



*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness
to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days
and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.*

— Matthew 4:1-2 (NLT)

Lent is a time of spiritual renewal and reflection that represents the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert before beginning his ministry. There is a multitude of traditions and customs associated with Lent, but many people give up a specific food or vice for 40 days as a way to practice humility and repentance before Easter.

Maybe Lent has always been a part of your Easter season, or maybe you've never observed the tradition. Whether or not you give up something for

Lent, you can still spend the 40 days before Easter preparing your heart and mind by reflecting on some of the things Jesus said in the key moments of his final hours on earth.

This devotional has six entries to represent each week of Lent. As you prepare to celebrate death's defeat and the hope of salvation this Easter, take the time to reflect on some of the final statements Jesus made and discover the powerful lessons he delivered with each word.

A black and white photograph of a glass of red wine and a piece of bread on a tablecloth. The glass is in the upper left, and the bread is in the lower right. The background is dark, and the tablecloth is light. A red brushstroke is at the top.

REFLECTION I

THE LAST SUPPER

Do this in remembrance of me.

— Luke 22:19b (NLT)

Jesus' final meal wasn't a particularly joyous one. The table was set, but there weren't any decorations. The menu wasn't elaborate. The disciples didn't chip in to buy the ultimate thank-you gift.

But the Last Supper wasn't uneventful either. Much to Peter's surprise, Jesus told the disciple that he would deny him three times that night (Luke 22:34). Jesus silenced the disciples when they started arguing about who would be the greatest among them (Luke 22:24). And in the ultimate dinner party diss, Judas left early to finalize his plans to betray the guest of honor (John 13:30).

One of the most notable events from the Last Supper is the tangible way Jesus gave the disciples, and us, to remember him. Communion allows us to prayerfully remember Jesus' sacrifice — that

his body was broken for us and that his blood was shed for us (Luke 22:19-20). As we participate, we can reflect on everything the Lord has done, knowing that we're following Jesus' instruction to "do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19b, NLT).

The disciples might have hung on Jesus' every word because they realized that nothing would ever be the same again after that night. Or maybe they didn't recognize the gravity of the evening at all. Whether or not they understood in the moment, we know what happened and how important Jesus' sacrifice is to us.

We can hang on Jesus' words at the Last Supper and honor the Lord "until the Kingdom of God has come" (Luke 22:18b, NLT) by participating in communion and remembering his sacrifice.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- » If you knew you were going to have a last supper, what would you eat, who would you invite and what would you say to your guests?
- » Do you think the disciples experienced confusion at the Last Supper? What are some things they might not have understood?
- » Why is it important for Christians to participate in communion?



REFLECTION II

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

I want your will to be done, not mine.

— Luke 22:42b (NLT)

Where do you go when you're overwhelmed and need to talk honestly to God? Is there a particular room in your house or a place in nature where you feel like you can be close to your Creator?

After the Last Supper, Jesus retreated to the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives. John's account tells us that this wasn't a one-off visit and that "Jesus had often gone there with his disciples" (John 18:2, NLT). Jesus' disciples accompanied him to the garden one final time, and Jesus gave them clear instructions to keep watch and pray. Then Jesus walked further into the garden to cry out to his Father.

He prayed: "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine" (Luke 22:42, NLT).

Jesus' soul was overwhelmed, and he was in so much agony that his sweat fell to the ground like drops of blood (Luke 22:44). But through the pain, he continuously prayed: "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine" (Matthew 26:39, NLT).

Meanwhile his disciples kept getting distracted and falling asleep in the garden, even after Jesus woke them up multiple times to issue warnings

and to urge them to pray (Luke 22:46). But by the third time he woke up his disciples, Jesus was resolute. He knew that the time had come to face the path God had laid out before him.

When we face difficulties and suffering, we might be tempted to halt our prayers. Maybe you've even experienced times in your life when you felt like praying was futile. Jesus knew exactly what would happen to him, but he still begged and pleaded with God to take away suffering. This prayer is an important reminder of how connected Jesus was to his heavenly Father, even when he was wrestling with pain. His prayer in the garden shows us that even though Jesus was fully God, he was also fully human (Colossians 2:9; Philippians 2:6-8) and struggled with suffering just like we do.

The prayer at the Garden of Gethsemane is also a reminder of how important it is to keep our eyes fixed on God in times of deep struggle. Even though Jesus' circumstances didn't change as a result of his prayer, his heart became even more attuned to God's will.

Soon after, Jesus said to his disciples: "Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!" (Mark 14:42, NLT)

It was time for God's will to be done, just as Jesus had prayed.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- » Do you have a special place where you feel close to the Lord and go to pray? If so, what about this place makes you feel close to the Lord?
- » Jesus asked his disciples to go to the garden and pray with him. Who would you ask to enter into the garden of your own temptation and suffering?
- » How do you discern God's will in your life?