

The Hour of Darkness

Day One – Final Moments

Today's reading: Page 367 through break on page 371

This reading covers: Matthew 26; John 14-17

Summary: Jesus models service and comforts his followers in their final time together.

Consider this:

Preparation. Service. Submission. This was the pattern Jesus followed during his last hours.

Preparation:

Jesus chose the place, the time and the guests. What preparations do you make when you read God's word? Where is the place? What is the time? How do you prepare yourself to welcome the Holy Spirit who teaches all things?

Service:

Jesus washed his disciples' feet. How do you wash the feet of others? You can "wash other people's feet" through words of encouragement, by shopping for them, taking care of their children, by feeding them.

Submission:

Jesus asked the Father to remove the cup, but then added, "Not my will but thine be done." How have you submitted to the Father's will?

For further reading: Philippians 2:1-11

Prayer:

Thank you for showing me clearly the way you intend for me to live. Jesus, you perfectly modeled a life pleasing to God right up to the very end. Help me now to live like you. In your name I pray, Amen.

Day Two – Not My Will

Today's reading: Break on 371 through break on page 377

This reading covers: Matthew 26-27; Luke 22; John 18

Summary: From a peaceful garden to a noisy palace, Jesus follows God's plan.

Consider this:

Surrounding Jesus during this dark time were the faithful and the unfaithful. Judas proved himself an enemy rather than a trusted friend. Peter vowed to never fail Jesus, but he denied him three times. The apostles fell asleep when they were supposed to be praying and watching. Then, fearing for their own lives, they all ran away.

When would you have been an enemy of Jesus? How were you released from that state to become his friend?

For further reading: Romans 5:1-11

Prayer:

It makes me sad to know that I was counted among your enemies. But I am so thankful that you made it possible for us to be friends. Thank you Jesus for following God's plan all the way to the cross. I pray in your name, Amen.

Day Three – The End?

Today's reading: Break on page 378 through end of chapter

This reading covers: Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19

Summary: As the crucifixion takes place, it seems all hope is lost.

Consider this:

Spend time reviewing the suffering of Christ. If you had been in the crowd, what role would you have played?

Imagine yourself as a Roman soldier. Would you have been the one who drove the nails, or the one who said, "Surely this was the son of God"?

Imagine yourself as one of those who passed by. Would you have hurled insults at him, or would you have wept hopelessly?

Imagine yourself as one of the thieves crucified on either side of Christ. Would you have been the one who cursed, or the one who asked for mercy?

Imagine yourself among the family and friends. Would you have stood far off, or remained at the foot of the cross?

For further reading: Isaiah 53

Prayer:

It is hard to imagine the scene at the cross. But as I look back over what happened, I respond with great sadness and great joy. Jesus, Thank you for dying for me. I pray in your name. Amen.