

LOVE IS PASSIONATE

MARCH 24, 2024

WORSHIP

Hosanna (Praise is Rising),
Prepare the Way of the Lord,
Here I Am to Worship, Lead
Me to the Cross, The Lord is
My Salvation

WELCOME

What do you usually do during
the Holy Week or Passion
Week?

WORD

JOHN 15:12-17

¹² “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. ¹⁷ This I command you, that you love one another.

The Holy Week in the Philippines would be filled with rituals, plans, vacations, etc. However, it is not what we can do in this week that matters. It is what God has done for us. The Holy Week has also been called “Passion Week”. The world calls passion as something that’s emotional and driven by sensual desire or attraction but the real core of passion is “suffering, enduring, and fulfilling calling”. We see this passionate love in the life of Jesus:

I. JESUS PURSUES US (John 12:12-15, 27-33,41-43; John 15:15-16)

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was narrated by all four gospel writers. He was determined, purposeful, and intentional to go to this city even though people receive Him with mixed reactions. **John 12:12-15** (cf. **Psalm 118**) show us that they welcomed Him. They expected Jesus to be the Messiah. Some of them were thinking He would be the one to set them free from the Roman empire—a political Messiah. However, Jesus comes into Jerusalem not on a mighty horse, stallion, or chariot. He comes in humbly on a donkey, a lowly beast and unfitting for a king. Jesus comes into our lives in order to invite us into a relationship with Him. Jesus has set His eyes on you and He passionately pursues you no matter how far you’ve run away or how unworthy you feel. In fact, Jesus weeps entering Jerusalem because He knows how the rest of the people will respond to Him. Some of the people who shouted “Hosanna!” will be shouting “Crucify him!” in a few days.

Jesus pursues and longs for us. He wants to be in a relationship with us. He has come and offered friendship with us (**John 15:15-16**). God has set His eye on you, selected you, and pursued you relentlessly. God has chosen you. In **John 12:27-28**, Jesus is burdened and heavily laden. He prays to His Father to spare Him but Jesus knows His mission, what He is about to endure, and what it takes to fulfill His very purpose. In that moment, God the Father beholds and affirms the Son. Even though God already spoke from heaven, people were still unwilling to consider what they just heard (**vv.29-33**). Do we respond willingly, reject, or become fearful when we realize that Jesus pursues us? It is more important what God says of us rather than what people say of us (**John 12:41-43**). Not only are we chosen and pursued by God despite of us, we are invited into a loving friendship with Him! He wants to make you His friend, close companion, and trusted one that He will journey with.

II. JESUS PROCLAIMS TRUTH (Luke 19:45-48; John 15:14-15; John 14:16-17,25-27)

When Jesus enters Jerusalem, His first stop is the temple. He sees that there are many people selling various animals for the pilgrimage. In those days, people would travel from distant lands and they needed animals to sacrifice once they get to the temple. They buy from these sellers in the temple at triple or quadruple the price. The temple where God would meet His people and where people would come in and

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encounter God had been made into a place of business and money-making. Jesus drives out those who were selling. He cleanses out the temple and proclaims the truth (**Luke 19:45-46**). Jesus upholds the truth of God in our lives over other pursuits and things that we place our satisfaction in or we find ourselves busy with. Some were jealous of Jesus because they knew that their hold on power was now swayed, but some were hanging on Jesus' words (**vv.47-48**).

Whatever truth the Father revealed to Jesus, He makes known to us (**John 15:14-15**). That is how we know that we are passionately loved by Jesus. When we passionately heed God's word, it turns our lives around and changes us forever! Rediscover your passion for the Word of God. Cultivate a lifestyle of prayer and reading His Word, letting it transform us. Not only do we have the truth of God's Word, we also have the Holy Spirit (**John 14:16-17**). We need the power of the Holy Spirit (**John 14:25-27**). The Holy Spirit renews our mind and heart.

III. JESUS PERSONIFIES LOVE (**John 13:1,4-5,12-15,17; John 15:16-17; Luke 22:41-42; Luke 23:33-34,39-43; Mark 15:33-34; Luke 23:46**)

Before Jesus is betrayed, abandoned, denied, and left behind, He loved His disciples to the end (**John 13:1,4-5**). He washed His disciples' feet. This act or job is usually reserved for the lowest of slaves. Jesus personified love (**John 13:12-15,17**). God can use anybody if you are willing and if you have discovered that love of Christ (**John 15:16-17**).

Even after that Passover meal and washing the disciples' feet, He found himself in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus while weeping knew His purpose and prayed that God's will be done (**Luke 22:41-42**).

What follows after is the worst; they crucified Jesus for our sake. They crucified Him who is the Son of God. They crucified the very Savior who was sent for us. Being crucified is a difficult, torturous position. Jesus was crucified between two criminals. As he hung on the cross, He's still praying for mercy upon the people (**Luke 23:33-34**). Christ personified love in His ultimate sacrifice on the Cross, we need only to believe in Him and He will carry us into heaven (**Luke 23:39-43**). This is the greatest news you could ever have. This is the greatest love you could ever experience. The true shape of love is the cross where God showed His love for us. The Father turned His face from the Son, and in this moment, Jesus paid for all our sins through His passion and death (**Mark 15:33-34**). This is the true example of His passionate love for us—a love that endures, suffers, and fulfills its calling and purpose (**Luke 23:46**).

The story did not end on the cross, but ultimately begins with His resurrection.

DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

What are you pursuing today? How have you responded to Jesus' pursuit of you?

2. Setting It Right.

Who can I share God's truth to this week and what steps will I take to follow through?

3. Living It Out.

How have I truly embraced Jesus' love as the basis for my life? What is hindering me from loving like Jesus??

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE
IN ACTION

Pray for people to discover the passionate love of Jesus. Be a person who exemplifies the love of Jesus to others through your words and actions. Share the gospel to someone this Holy Week.

WEEKLY
PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God's help and comfort, salvation for Israel, wisdom for their leaders in government, military and their soldiers as they defend themselves against terrorists' attacks. PRAISE GOD for the release of hostages so far! Continue to pray for the release of the remaining ones.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented, violence and lawlessness in Haiti to stop.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends..

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 15:13

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.