

**EASTER WEEK**

AT GENESIS CHURCH

**DAILY  
ACTS OF  
DEVOTION**

**APRIL 3-6  
2023**

# EASTER WEEK

AT GENESIS CHURCH

## ***Greetings Genesis Church!***

*We wish you and your family a very Happy Easter, and we invite you to celebrate the week leading up to it by participating in these church-wide daily acts of devotion. We have organized activities for each day that will allow us, as a united church, to love God and love others together.*

**MONDAY, APRIL 3**

**Prayer & Fasting**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 4**

**Group Bible Study**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5**

**Open Activity**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 6**

**Service Project**

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**Good Friday Service ♦ 7-8PM**

*Worship & Communion*

**FRIDAY, APRIL 7**

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**Sunrise Service ♦ 7-8AM**

*(Please bring chairs)*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 9**

**FREE Breakfast ♦ 8-9:30AM**

*(Please register at [genesisyork.com/events](https://genesisyork.com/events))*

**Easter Service ♦ 9:30AM**

As we look forward to this Easter season, I pray it is not just another “holiday” in our nation, but rather a reverent remembrance of the body and blood of Jesus that was broken and poured out for the salvation of our souls. It is also a time for joyful, exuberant celebration in the power of Christ’s resurrection! He has overcome death, hell, and the grave giving us new life **IN HIM** that lasts forever. That news should create praise within our heart and bones! Let us rejoice with singing and gladness, for our God is good and His love is endless. May this be a season where we see the purity and power of the gospel at work in our midst like never before.

To help prepare your heart for this week and the work God desires to do in you and in our community, we are encouraging the church to seek the Lord in prayer and fasting. Set aside time today to tend the soil of your soul in the secret place of prayer with your Heavenly Father. Be intentional to pour out your heart to him, intercede on behalf of others, and turn your hunger to heaven.

What did Jesus do leading up to His betrayal and final hour...? He Prayed! He gathered a group of his closest friends and went to a specific place to earnestly pray. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, Jesus poured out His heart to the father in agonizing prayer. He asked his disciples to come with him, stay awake, watch, and pray that they may not fall into temptation. Jesus is calling us to do this today.

Take a moment to read Matthew 26:36-46 and look at how Jesus prayed before being betrayed by one of his very own disciples. How did he pray? What did he tell his disciples to do? Meditate on this passage of God’s word and consider how it might influence your posture of prayer.

**Matthew 26:36-46** <sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” <sup>37</sup> And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” <sup>39</sup> And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” <sup>40</sup> And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? <sup>41</sup> Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” <sup>42</sup> Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” <sup>43</sup> And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup> So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. <sup>45</sup> Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup> Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.

Set time aside to sit with Jesus, wait on the Holy Spirit, and pray to your Father in heaven. Ask him to reveal the intentions of your heart and awaken you to his kingdom’s work. Go boldly to the throne of grace and intercede for the souls of family and friends. As you boldly and earnestly pray, release the outcomes of your prayers to the Father’s will and rest in the satisfaction of His presence with you.

**Matthew 5:6** says “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

## Ideas for focused prayer...

- ♦ Revival in the hearts of God's people
- ♦ Love, humility, and unity within the global Church, Body of Christ
- ♦ Boldness to proclaim the gospel of Jesus and His kingdom
- ♦ Repentance of Sin
- ♦ Alertness to the needs of the hour
- ♦ Laborers to be sent forth into the Harvest
- ♦ A renewal of your heart and mind
- ♦ Eyes to see the kingdom of God at work
- ♦ Opportunity to share the gospel with a neighbor
- ♦ Restored relationships
- ♦ Healing

## Ideas for fasting...

- ♦ Only eat fruits & vegetables
- ♦ Skip a meal
- ♦ Do a liquid fast
- ♦ No desserts or treats

*Be sure to consider your personal dietary needs and ask the Holy Spirit what he wants you to fast from. Be intentional to replace the time you would spend eating food with time in God's word and prayer.*

If you have a family, consider how to incorporate your children into this. Read Matthew 26:36-46 and be intentional to pray together for your neighbors, friends, and family. Model to your children the power and importance of earnest prayer.

## Scriptures for further reading:

- ♦ Mark 14:32-42
- ♦ Luke 22:39-46
- ♦ John 18:1-2
- ♦ John 17
- ♦ Matthew 6:1
- On Fasting...*
- ♦ Matthew 6:16-18
- ♦ Matthew 4:4
- ♦ Deuteronomy 8:1-10
- ♦ Matthew 9:14-17

Regardless of what you believe about Jesus, there's no doubt that He has impacted humanity more than any other person. No other person has been written about, discussed, or debated more than Jesus. His image is the most sculpted and painted image of all time. In fact, His crucifixion is the single most depicted image in history. But the crucifixion is not the end of Jesus' story! Around the world, Easter Sunday, often referred to as Resurrection Sunday, celebrates the belief that you and I can pass from death to life. The basis of this hope is in the resurrection of Jesus.

Our discussion today is centered around these questions; Why is Jesus' death so remarkable? And, if Jesus rose from the grave, what does that mean for us?

Maybe someone doesn't understand the need for the crucifixion. Here is a brief summation.

- ♦ God required blood sacrifice for sin, but all of man's blood is tainted and no sacrifice could be worthy.
- ♦ Jesus came to do what only God can do. Jesus is God who become a man like us, but lived a perfect sinless life.
- ♦ No greater sacrifice can be made beyond death. It's the greatest expression at the greatest cost.
- ♦ Jesus chose to bear the sin of mankind, dying in our place, to reconcile us to God.

Dying in the place of someone else is a wide-spread theme in literature, even dating back to ancient Greek mythology.

An example is Alcestis (Al-sest-is), wife of King Admetus (Ad-me-tus); a queen willing to die in the place of her husband so he could continue to reign. She is held up as an example of nobility, love, and courage. In the Bible, the Apostle Paul may have had this literary reference in mind when he writes in Romans 5:7, “For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.” While one may possibly consider dying in the place of a loved one, nobody would ever die in the place of their enemy. But this is exactly what Jesus did for us! Paul continues in verse eight by saying, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” The cross means I’m loved by God.

Read together Isaiah 53:5 and John 19:4-5. Jesus was one of many who died on a cross. Yet, his crucifixion stands out.

### **Discussion Point #1 – Why is Jesus’ death so remarkable?**

The cross means I’m loved. The empty tomb means I have hope. Read together Matthew 28:1-10.

One might ask, “What’s so significant about the resurrection of Jesus? After all, hadn’t others been brought back to life besides Jesus?” Yes, Jesus wasn’t the first to be brought back to life. However, others who were raised by Elijah, Elisha, Peter, Paul, even those Jesus had raised, all came back to life, only to die a natural death a second time. Here are a few other examples why Jesus’ resurrection is so unique. First, Jesus said He would die and rise again, nobody has ever claimed that and done so (Matthew 16:21-23). Secondly, at His resurrection, His body was transformed. No other person raised from the dead experienced this; Jesus could eat/drink like us, but could come/go at will, pass through walls, etc. (Luke 24:30-31, John 20:19-20). Third, beside Jesus’ resurrection, all other resurrections occurred through a human agent; one working for God to bring the

dead back to life. Jesus' resurrection however was not at the behest of a human agent. This led eyewitnesses to conclude that God had raised Jesus from the dead. The Apostle Peter expresses this truth in Acts 3:15, "but (you, men of Israel) put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses."

Consider the following claims of Jesus:

**John 11:25**, *"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies."*

**John 14:6**, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."*

### **Discussion Point #2 – If Jesus rose from the grave, what does that mean for us?**

The resurrection makes the crucifixion a good and glorious act. The crucifixion without the resurrection is by itself, nothing! Consider this analogy, if a man runs into a burning building and saves all twenty people inside, only to himself perish in the flames at the end, we'd say of him, "Hero! Noble!" But if he ran into an empty building, knowing it was empty, only to die from the flames, we'd say, "What was the point? A wasted life!"

After Jesus' resurrection, He provided forty days of infallible proofs. He appeared to many individually and appeared to crowds as many as 500 at a time. In fact, the Apostle Paul writes to the church in Corinth, saying that some of these 500 are still alive today if you want to go and talk to them yourselves (1 Corinthians 15:6). Additionally, Jesus' disciples recognized Him, they walked and talked with Him, and Jesus ate with them to demonstrate that He wasn't just appearing as a spirit but was raised bodily. They also touched



Jesus' wounds. Today, some remain skeptical, providing arguments against the resurrection. Here are some common claims against the resurrection of Jesus, along with reasons they are debunked.

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**Claim #1** – *“Jesus never died, but only passed out, so His apparent resurrection was merely his body revived from unconsciousness.”*

**DEBUNKED** – Could a man be whipped 39 times, beaten, hung by nails, pierced by a spear, wrapped in shroud, and laid in a tomb, suddenly come to, and then have the strength to tear away his wrappings, roll away an enormous stone, fight off Roman soldiers and walk the streets while somehow not appearing a bloody mess?

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**Claim #2** – *“Jesus died, but the Roman’s stole the body.”*

**DEBUNKED** – The last things Rome wanted was the appearance of a risen Jesus who many claimed to be the new King of the Jews. This theory would not only make a Roman death sentence appear to be weak and ineffectual, but a resurrected Jewish King could give birth to an uprising against Rome.

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**Claim #3** – *“Jesus died, but the Jewish leaders stole the body.”*

**DEBUNKED** – The last thing the Jews wanted was an empty tomb and the appearance of a risen Jesus. Their whole aim was to squelch Jesus and His followers. Had the Jews stolen the body, once rumors of Jesus’ resurrection begun to circulate, the Jews simply would have produced the corpse and shamed Jesus’ followers as liars.

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**Claim #4** – *“Jesus died, but His disciples stole the body.”*

**DEBUNKED** – First of all, Jesus’ body was laid in a tomb sealed with a huge stone and guarded by armed soldiers of Rome. Stealing it would have required an enormous mob. More importantly, many of the disciples were tortured and

killed for their testimony of Jesus' resurrection. Had the resurrection story been a false conspiracy of the disciples, surely one or many of them would have given up the lie upon being tortured and at the brink of death. Who would die for what they knew to be a lie?

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**Claim #5** – *“Jesus died, but what the disciples experienced days later wasn’t the risen Jesus, but a hallucination.”*

**DEBUNKED** – Thousands of people had experienced personal encounters with Jesus after the resurrection. What could have caused such a large community to experience hallucination? And, more importantly, hallucinations are not shared experiences, but are unique to an individual. This theory is wholly unsubstantiated.

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The Christian faith is based on the resurrection. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:17, *“and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless”*. Consider the impact the resurrection had on the Jesus' disciples. After Jesus' death they were in hiding; fearful they'd be killed next. But upon experiencing the resurrection of Jesus, they were revived, exhilarated, and empowered, and spent their lives heralding the living Jesus, even at the expense of their own lives! The resurrection changed everything!

**Discussion Point #3** – **How will you respond to the evidence of Jesus' resurrection?**

Jesus conquered death and sin, and because He alone has done this, He alone can offer forgiveness of sin and eternal life. If you'd like to entrust yourself to Jesus, you can accept His invitation to forgive your sins and trust Him to be your Savior. You can pray a simple prayer to express your decision, “God, I’m a sinner and I’m sorry. I accept Jesus’ offer to forgive my sins. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and that He rose from the grave because He is the living God.”

Today is an open activity, which means you get to choose your own act of devotion. Remember that the goal is for our church to be united together as we express love for God and love for others. We encourage you to think about how you might be able to prioritize that goal today in your normal routine, or better yet, plan ahead and make time for an activity that you wouldn't normally fit into your schedule. View this time as a gift from God, and use this opportunity to worship and honor Him with gratitude.

**Here are some ideas to get you started:**

- ♦ Volunteer at a local non-profit that serves people.
- ♦ Prayerfully select a ministry in which to serve at Genesis and sign up at [genesisyork.com/serve](https://genesisyork.com/serve).
- ♦ Worship God through creative gifts (music, art, dance, etc.)
- ♦ Start reading a book that will help you grow spiritually.
- ♦ Listen to a podcast of a sermon or a discussion aimed at learning more about God and the Bible.
- ♦ Prayerfully & generously donate money, food or items.
- ♦ Gather together for a meal with the person(s) who God might be calling you to love.
- ♦ Decide in your heart to forgive someone who has hurt you, and if it's wise & safe, let that person know they are forgiven.
- ♦ Reflect on what God has been doing in your life over the last year and write down whatever comes to mind.
- ♦ Take a nap. Seriously! See what God might do when you accept the gift of rest.
- ♦ Avoid casual screen time for the entire day, and instead, choose to pray and read the Bible with the extra time.
- ♦ Do something active (outdoors if possible) and take time to appreciate and immerse yourself in God's creation.

Today is all about loving and serving others in the name of Jesus. In John 13, Jesus gives us an example to follow through the symbolic act of washing the disciples' feet.

**John 13:12-17** <sup>12</sup> *When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?"* <sup>13</sup> *You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.* <sup>14</sup> *If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.* <sup>15</sup> *For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.* <sup>16</sup> *Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.* <sup>17</sup> *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*

Prayerfully consider what this might look like for you today. Who are the people God has been calling you to serve? How can you show God's love through an act of service today? If you're not sure, start by considering the needs of the various people that God has put in your life. There's a good chance that you know an elderly neighbor, a widow, a single Mom, a needy child or someone dealing with health issues who would be blessed by your help.

### **Here are a few simple ideas to get you thinking:**

- ♦ Help a neighbor with their yard work or maintenance.
- ♦ Make dinner for someone so they don't have to cook.
- ♦ Offer childcare to a parent(s) who could use a break.
- ♦ Help someone with their grocery shopping.
- ♦ Clean up someone's house or a public park.
- ♦ Collect toys, clothes and items to donate.
- ♦ Provide transportation to someone who needs it.



# GOOD FRIDAY

GENESIS  
CHURCH

**Good Friday Service ♦ 7-8PM**  
*Worship & Communion*

**FRIDAY, APRIL 7**



# EASTER SUNDAY

GENESIS  
CHURCH

**Sunrise Service ♦ 7-8AM**  
*(Please bring chairs)*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 9**

**FREE Breakfast ♦ 8-9:30AM**  
*(Please register at [genesisyork.com/events](http://genesisyork.com/events))*

**Easter Service ♦ 9:30AM**

**1 Peter 1:3-5**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

*Happy  
Easter!*

FROM  
GENESIS CHURCH

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