

# Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 3/17/19

**Monday** – Read Matthew 26:31-35, Mark 14:26-31, and John 13:36-38. **Abandoned.** Jesus knew that not a single one of his disciples would stand by him when his hour arrived, but Jesus never gave up on his disciples. Matthew wants us to know that this too would fulfill what was written in Zechariah 13:7 which states, *Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.* Peter wanted to believe that he would stand by Jesus in his time of trial, and he promised Jesus, *“Though all become deserters of you, I will never desert you.”* Jesus knew better. *“Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.”* Spend some time thinking about times when you have not stood up for your faith in Jesus. Confess those times to God and ask God to forgive you of your sins. Then, ask the Holy Spirit to help you repent of your sins and to grow in faithfulness to Jesus.

**Tuesday** – Read Luke 22:31-34. **Jesus prays for you.** This is Luke’s version of the story we read yesterday. Jesus knew that his disciples would be under spiritual attack as the night progressed, so he told Peter, *“But I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail.”* How does it make you feel to think about how Jesus prays for you when you are going through trials and tribulations? Knowing that Peter would deny him, Jesus still encouraged Peter to be a spiritual leader for the disciples and told him, *“When once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”* Who has encouraged you in your faith? Pray for God to use you to encourage the people you know to grow closer to Jesus.

**Wednesday** – Read John 18:1, Matthew 26:36-38, Mark 14:32-34, and Luke 22:39-40. **Ministry of Presence.** Jesus came to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray for the strength to endure the suffering he would encounter in the next sixteen hours. Jesus asked his three closest friends, Peter, James, and John, to stay awake and pray with him. He told them, *“I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.”* Sometimes the most and the least we can do for people we love is to pray for them and be present to them in their time of trial. Spend some time praying for the people in your family. Pray for the people in your Small Group or Sunday School Class. Find a time to tell the people for whom you have prayed that you have prayed for them.

**Thursday** – Read Matthew 26:39-46, Mark 14:35-42., and Luke 22:41-46. **“Not my will, but thy will be done.”** In the most difficult time in his life, Jesus went to his Heavenly Father in prayer. Jesus did not want to die or to suffer on the cross, but he still prayed, *“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.”* Jesus’ prayer life sustained him and gave him the strength to continue his journey to the cross. His three closest friends could not stay awake with him, and they failed to spend this time in prayer. Their failure to pray would leave them without the strength to stand by Jesus through his time of trial. How has your prayer life sustained you through difficult times? Ask God to help you to continue to grow in your discipline of daily prayer.

**Friday** – Read Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52, and Luke 22:47-54a. **Betrayed with a Kiss.** Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Jesus understands what it feels like when someone you love betrays you. When the large crowd laid hands on Jesus and arrested him, one of his disciples drew his sword and struck the high priest’s slave and cut off his ear, but Jesus did not believe in violence. He said, *“No more of this!”* And he touched his ear and healed him. Jesus was willing to endure great suffering and death on a cross to accomplish his mission to offer salvation to a sinful world. As he said, *“But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?”* Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. Each one of us has turned our back on Jesus at some point, but the Good News is that Jesus endured the cross for us to offer us forgiveness of all our sins. Thank God for the grace, forgiveness, and salvation God offers us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

**Saturday** – Read John 18:1-12 and Philippians 2:5-11. **Every Knee Shall Bow.** The hymn, *He is Lord*, in which we sing, *“Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,”* was inspired by Philippians 2:10-11. In John’s Gospel, even the Roman soldiers who came to arrest Jesus bowed before his majesty and power. John wants us to see that although Jesus did not want to die he was willing to drink this cup of suffering because Jesus trusted that God would work to redeem his pain and agony. As you pray, thank Jesus for being willing to suffer greatly to offer grace, forgiveness, and salvation to you. Ask Jesus to redeem any of the painful things you have experienced.

**Lectionary Readings:** Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35.

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