

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE Disciples and Christ's Last Week

The people who make a difference in our lives are not the ones with the credentials, but the ones with the concern. Think for a moment about the impact of Jesus Christ upon your life. My life will never be the same because of Him—and neither will yours.

The journey began with Palm Sunday—so named because the people waved palm branches in honor of the triumphant Messiah and then laid them down to cushion the ride as the Christ rode into Jerusalem. Today begins the most premeditated, calculated week in the life of Christ. The gospels are not biographies. They share a few words about His birth; one sentence from age 18 to 30; concentrate two-thirds of their content on a short 3½ years; then, fully the final 1/3 of every gospel deals with one final week in the life of Christ.

First, I want us to journey through the last week in Jesus' life. I have listed below the major activities of each day and I hope you will take time this week to read the scriptures to know what He was doing on each day. Secondly, I want to explore the relationship Christ had with His disciple-friends—to learn some lessons about their hearts and about ours as well.

The gospels end with the disciples in a rather bad light. It was a hard last week for them. We should not be surprised; they did not seem to do all that well during the first 3½ years either. They seemed to disappoint Him most of the time.

See their actions with the demon-possessed boy who fell into fire in Matthew 17.
Study their actions during the feeding of the 5000 in all four gospels.
Notice how Peter spoils one of Christ's greatest moments just after the Great Confession in Matthew 16.
Have we ever disappointed Jesus? Of course, we all have.

Let me outline Jesus' final week with a sensitive eye on His relationship with his closest friends.

Sunday

Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly on Palm Sunday afternoon (Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19). The disciples did not understand. Christ was going through this experience alone (John 12:16).
He made His way over the Mount of Olives each evening during the week to spend the night in the home of friends in Bethany (Mark 11:11; Luke 19:37).

Monday

Jesus cursed the out of season fig tree for having no figs (Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14).

Jesus cleansed the Temple (Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48).

Tuesday

Jesus spent all day in Jerusalem sparring with religious leaders, teaching parables and healing (Matthew 21:23-39; Mark 11:20-12:44; Luke 20:1-21:4; John 12:20-50).

Jesus spent the evening teaching the eschatological Olivet Discourse on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21:5-38).

Wednesday

In the evening Jesus was anointed by Mary in Bethany (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8). Judas (and all the other disciples) spoiled it all (Matthew 26:8).

That night, Judas arranged to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16).

With friends like these, who needs enemies?

Thursday

Jesus and His disciples observed the Passover and Lord's Supper in Upper Room (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-30; John 13:1-30). Jesus washed the disciples feet—why, because (remember that Jesus sent them ahead to prepare the room) when Jesus arrived, the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest.

Jesus gave His final, farewell discourse (Matthew 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-38; John 13:31-16:33). Philip spreads doubt all over the room.

Jesus prayed His intercessory prayer (John 17).

Jesus took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane. While He prayed in deep agony of soul, they fell asleep and left Him all alone (Matthew 26:30, 36-46; Mark 14:26, 32-42; Luke 22:39-46).

Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested (Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:1-11).

Friday

While Jesus was tried before the Jewish Sanhedrin, Peter denied His Lord (Matthew 26:57-27:10; Mark 14:53-72; Luke 22:54-71; John 18:12-27).

Filled with deep remorse, Judas hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-11; Acts 1:18).

Jesus was tried before Pilate and Herod (Matthew 27:2, 11-31; Mark 15:1-20; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:18-19:16).

Jesus was crucified and buried (Matthew 27:32-61; Mark 15:21-47; Luke 23:26-56;

John 19:17-47). The disciples all forsook Him and fled. With friends like these, who needs enemies?

John 15:13: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

Let me now share two Observations:

1. Jesus knew that good and bad is mixed thoroughly into every human heart—and He died for all of it.
2. Jesus saw people not as they were, but as what they might become.

The disciples did not start all too well—but they ended strong. Such is the impact and concern of the person of Jesus Christ.

1. Have you ever been afraid to stand up for your faith? Why or why not?
2. What can you learn from the disciples? List each disciple and his response.
3. List those responses you have had during tough times and what you can learn from their doubts and restoration.
4. Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for Christ’s acceptance, forgiveness and love for you.