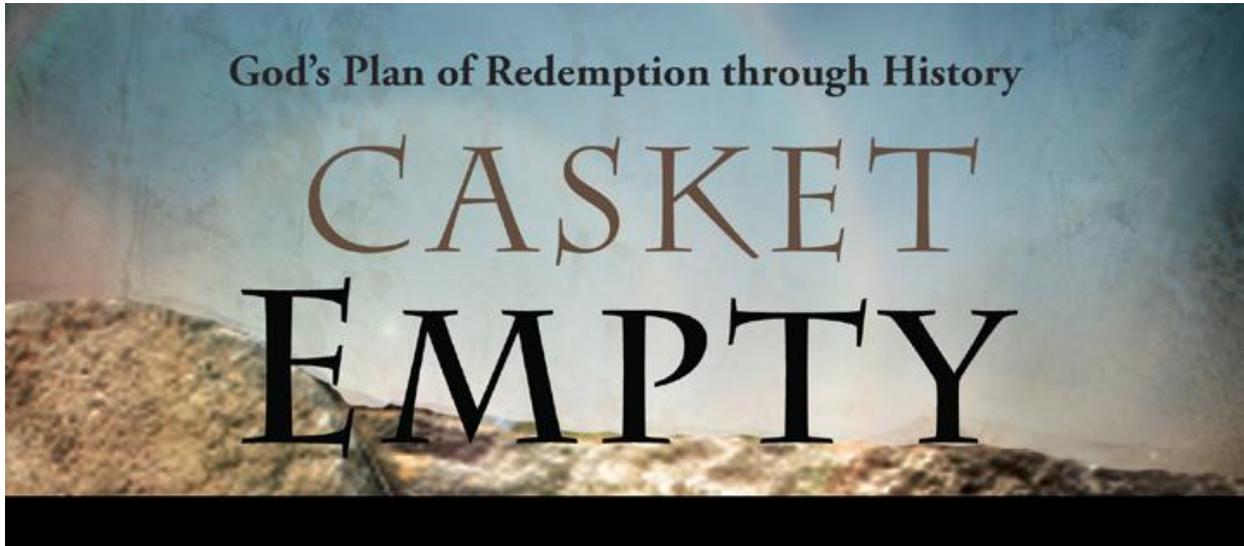


M is for Messiah
CASKET EMPTY Sermon Series
Kenwood Baptist Church
Pastor David Palmer
March 25, 2018

TEXT: Luke 19:29-48



As we turn to God's Word, I want to say thank you to our church family for praying for us. We had a very intense beginning of this week flying out to Boston to Gordon-Conwell, speaking and trying to hold the attention of 2000 college students for 25 minutes. It was a very powerful time, deeply moving, a parents' dream to have your daughter introduce you and say she had learned to follow the Lord through her parents' teaching. It was a very moving and special time. We really coveted your prayers because we felt that it was a spiritual task that the Lord had wanted to use us to accomplish. After the service on Monday, 25 students came forward for prayer, some of them committing their lives to His service. It was a very significant time. On Wednesday after the service, we had the chance to meet with some students and a couple that had just been accepted at Hebrew Union and may be moving to Cincinnati, the wife is a doctoral student, the husband with a calling for special-needs ministry. We said, "Well, hey. If you come to Cincinnati, we know a really great church you can get involved in. So, thank you for praying for us. It was a very special time, and we got out before the storm, so praise God.

We turn our attention this morning to what really matters. I don't know what you were thinking about this week. I don't know if March Madness gripped your heart affections; I don't know if school plays are top in your mind; I don't know if you're thinking about when the spring is going to come. Whatever is on our minds this morning, the great task that we have before us is to

draw our heart, draw our mind, to the beginning of Holy Week. Holy Week is our most important week of the year. It's more important than Christmas, because there is no meaning to Christmas without Holy Week, and this week, where we begin by remembering Jesus' entrance into the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, takes us through the way of the cross, the way of the empty tomb, and of course, for our study this year at Kenwood on CASKET EMPTY, these are the controlling images of our study because this is the controlling message of the Bible. We are reading the Scripture, God's redemptive story throughout history, with Jesus at the center and Jesus' death and resurrection. Paul says these are the topics of first importance. This is what we must know, what we must receive. This is the heart of the gospel through which we are saved.

This morning we look at Luke's presentation of Jesus' entrance into the city of Jerusalem. Last Sunday, we had just one week to spend on Jesus' public ministry, and we heard of His rescue of a man oppressed by demonic power. The gospel narratives tell us about Jesus' public ministry, His preaching, His teaching, His healing of people, and there is a subtle, but steadily increasing tension in the ministry of Jesus as He is opposed, as He is rejected in part. His ministry, His claims for authority, spark controversy in the city. All of the Gospels, when we look at them, give more than half of their time to Jesus' final week. I want you to see before we get to our text this morning that Luke has Jerusalem in view. Matthew, Mark, and Luke reach a pivotal point in their narrative when the disciples confess Jesus' true identity, that He is the Christ, the Messiah of God. After He is acknowledged openly, Jesus gives the first prediction of His passion. The first announcement of Holy Week is in Luke 9. He says that the Son of Man must suffer many things and He must be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. As Jesus comes down from the northern part of the country, He takes Peter, James, and John and He is transfigured before them. They see Him in His glory, the glory He had before the foundation of the world, and their hearts are moved to worship. They hear Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah on the mountain, and Luke alone tells us what they were talking about. It's amazing, and in Luke 9:30-31, we read that Jesus was speaking with Moses and Elijah who appeared in glory and they spoke with Him about, the ESV says, His *departure*. Luke actually uses a very special word here. Luke says that what they were talking about was His *exodus*. They were talking about the exodus that Jesus would accomplish. You don't accomplish a departure; you accomplish an exodus. Jesus will lead a second exodus and He will bring His people out from the bondage of sin to the freedom to worship Him. After His Transfiguration, already in Luke 9:51, Luke tells us:

"When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set his face to go to Jerusalem."

I really want to underscore this for us this morning, because Luke's gospel has 24 chapters. The gospels are not biographies of Jesus. They are not evenly distributed according to His

upbringing, His background, His childhood years, His early preaching, His later preaching. The gospel narratives have a peculiar shape, and we must see this this morning. The peculiar shape of the gospel narratives is that more than half of them are concentrated on Jesus' final week. In other words, there is more time, more literary space, given in the Bible to the final week of Jesus' life than any other event. This is Holy Week. This is the most important week that has ever happened on planet earth, and we mark its beginning this Sunday.

As Jesus is entering toward Jerusalem, He moves towards the city, and Luke's gospel, beginning in Luke 9:51, has this note of tension and suspense as Jesus moves towards the city. In Luke 18:31, He tells the 12 again:

"See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished."

In Luke 19, He finally reaches the city of Jericho and begins the final ascent to the city of Jerusalem. In the beginning of Luke 19, our chapter this morning, Jesus sees a short tax collector. I've never been a tax collector. I'm thinking about taxes lately this season like many of you, but I do resonate with shortness. One of the things I appreciate about short people is that they plan ahead. You have to. When I was in China, in my teaching partner was two meters tall, 6 foot 9 inches, he didn't have to plan ahead. All he knew was every doorway he walked through, he had to duck. It was a habit, but short people plan ahead. Zacchaeus plans ahead. He gets up in this tree to see Jesus, because he was small in stature. When Jesus saw him, Jesus says in Luke 19:5:

"Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

He came down and received Him, and yet the people grumbled. They said in Luke 19:7:

"He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."

Zacchaeus stood up in the midst of this banquet and showed the reality of his repentance and said in Luke 19:8:

"Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

Repentance is not an abstract idea; Zacchaeus makes it concrete, and Jesus announces right before our text this morning in Luke 19:9-10:

"Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Now we enter in to the narrative just read for us. As Jesus is going up finally to Jerusalem, He draws near first to the final villages that are on the Mount of Olives. Luke tells us their names,

Bethphage and Bethany. Bethphage means in Hebrew the *house of unripe figs*, and that just means a variety of figs that grow and mature, and even when they are ripe and ready to be eaten, they just don't look ripe. Have you ever had a fruit like that? This area was called this because it was planted with figs like this. Bethany is named for the house of Ananias, and the whole area is known because it is covered with olive trees, still to this day. As Jesus approaches the city, He gives two of His disciples specific instructions. He tells them in Luke 19:30-31:

“Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’”

We see in this the authority of Jesus, the command of the situation. We can see that Jesus is acting with great intentionality, such intentionality that reveals His divinity, His knowledge of the situation, that He is not owned. He not only knows what is happening, He is causing it to be. Even the skeptical scholar Julius Wellhausen was forced to acknowledge this feature of our text. Wellhausen said:

“We must not rationalize here. Jesus has not already ordered the colt, nor made an arrangement with its owners, but he knows beforehand what will happen, because God, who directs what is to happen is with him.”

Jesus has not already ordered the colt. There's no pre-order. There's no feature like at Kroger where you can pre-order your groceries. You can't pre-order a colt for Palm Sunday. You see, Jesus is acting with divine intentionality.

Well, the disciples go into the village. They obey Jesus. They go in and they find this colt on which no one has ever sat. Luke tells us that its owners did come up and say: “Hey, by the way, that's my colt.” It was a little like the time at Kenwood when Wade Prater—some of you will remember Wade—after a memorial service at Kenwood, gave me the keys to his car and he said, “Pastor David, my eyes are starting to fail. Why don't you go get my car and drive us to the to the graveside.” So I took his keys, but he didn't tell me what kind of car he had, which was okay because it had one of those automatic car remotes. So I just wandered around the Kenwood parking lot clicking the remote until some lights went on and lights went off. I came up to this car and I opened the door. Right as I opened the door, this man said, “Hey, why are you taking my car?” I said, “I'm looking for Wade's car.” He said, “That's my car!” I said, “Okay, take it. I'm just the pastor here.” So I kept wandering around the parking lot to another car whose lights went off, and that turned out to be Wade's. Praise God! But, these people, it's interesting, probably husband and wife owners of the donkey, say, “Why are you untying the colt?” and the disciples said simply and profoundly, “The Lord needs it.” I think it would be great, just as a very side-application, that whenever the Lord requests the use of anything that belongs to us, we would say: “Gladly, take it if You have need of it!” Amen!

So they took the colt. It was valuable. These colts were the Mercedes-Benz of the ancient world. They would signify the royal mount to legitimate kings. Long-ago, Zechariah had proclaimed that Zion's true King would come to her, humble, righteous, having salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey with on a colt, the foal of a donkey. God's ancient promise was about to be fulfilled. They put their cloaks on the donkey; they set Jesus on it, and now



Jesus begins to approach the city. Jesus approaches Jerusalem, and He comes down the slope of the Mount of Olives, and as He approaches the city, a great multitude of His disciples begin to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice. They worship God for the mighty works they had seen, and as Jesus approaches the city, mounted upon this donkey, they begin to shout out in praise. They praise God, and they say in Luke 19:38:

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

Each of the four gospel writers tells us about this moment, each one. They vary slightly in the details, as those relying on eyewitness testimony would do. Luke presents the acclamation of the disciples as a double quotation, and this is vital for us to see. The crowd say the disciples herald Jesus explicitly as King in Luke 19:38:

*“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”*

There can be no mistaking the meaning of Jesus' entering the city on the donkey. He is deliberately and intentionally fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy and identifying Himself publicly as our King. The disciples' praise is a quotation from Psalm 118, one of the great pilgrimage processional psalms. Like those entering the city at the time of the major festivals—and this is the time of the Passover—the people would recite Psalm 118. Psalm 118:19-26 says:

“Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank You

that You have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!

We bless You from the house of the LORD."

This is the pilgrimage psalm that they are singing, and they are praying to God that He would save. They are identifying Jesus as the instrument of this salvation. We are not to miss this first quotation.

Luke, though, gives us a second quotation. I love it every time New Testament writers quote the Old; I love it when Old Testament writers quote the Old—it's like Old in the Old. Occasionally, rarely, you have the New in the New. Here is a New in the New. What do I mean? Does the last phrase of the disciples' praise sound vaguely familiar to you? It should. The last phrase of their praise, "*Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*" Do you recognize it? Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. "Glory in the highest" takes us back to Luke's original presentation of the birth of Jesus. In Luke 2, when the angelic host bursts forth into glorious praise at the birth of Jesus, they told the shepherds in Luke 2:10:

"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy. . ."

This will be for all peoples because, Luke 2:11:

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

This great multitude of the heavenly host praises God and says in Luke 2:14:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"

This phrase, "Glory to God in the highest," occurs in the Bible only in Luke 2 and here in our text, Luke 19:38. Luke is trying to connect these two passages in our hearts and minds. The only difference is that when the angels appear, they say "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace," with the birth of Christ. Now, as Jesus comes to the city to fulfill the mission the Father has given Him, the pilgrimage crowd says "Glory in the highest," and they return the praise, "in heaven peace."

The peace of God for this world is achieved by Holy Week. There is no other way for God and humanity to be reconciled. There is no other way for humanity and humanity to be reconciled than the events of Holy Week. This *peace* which the angelic host promises to be on earth is now lifted from the earth back to heaven as Jesus approaches the city. We would expect that

everyone would be thrilled. Josephus tells us that the Passover crowds swelled to two million. We would expect that everyone would rejoice. We would expect then, and we expect now, that no one would be able to remain indifferent to these things, but the reality then and the reality now is that not only are people indifferent, not only are they unaware, but some even are actively hostile to the things that make for peace.

The surprising reaction in the narrative first comes from the Pharisees. The Pharisees and the crowd spoke to Jesus and they said” *“Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”* In other words, “Tell them to be quiet!” We are not hold the exact nature of their offense, yet. I doubt that it was because things were just too loud; it was the content of their acclamation, because they were explicitly identifying Jesus, before the eyes of everyone, as the saving King, as Zion’s true Lord and Lord of all the earth. They were returning back to heaven the praise of the angelic host. Jesus answers the religious leaders of this day and tells them in Luke 19:40:

“I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

Even the stones would cry out: “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, glory in the highest.” Even the stones cry out: “These are the greatest events ever to happen on planet earth,” and if you're indifferent to it, Jesus says even creation itself will burst into praise.

The next surprising feature to the story of Jesus' entrance into the city is not only that some are hostile, but as Jesus approaches the city, the beloved Son of God begins to weep over the city, and this must grip our hearts. Jesus draws near to the city of Jerusalem and He begins to weep. The tense that Luke uses and the word that he uses is language that describes a sobbing. It is not one tear or two, but our Lord begins to sob as He approaches the city. Zion’s true King, your Lord, your Savior is weeping. Why? He is weeping as He approaches the city and He prays in Luke 19:42:

“Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.”

Do you know the things that make for Jesus’ weeping? Jerusalem does not know. Jesus says *“now they are hidden from your eyes.”* This is just like the disciples when Jesus explains to them the necessity of His suffering and death. When Jesus explained to the disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, that He must be rejected, that He must be crucified, Luke tells us repeatedly that this thing was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what it meant. You see, if we were designing the triumphal procession, we would set it up as the Romans did. The Romans know how to have a celebration parade. You mark out the city; you build monumental archways; you bring your defeated foes in last; and as the conquering general strives to the podium and crowds are cheering and hurling flowers and garlands, the climax of the procession is to

execute the conquered generals. That sends a surge of praise through the crowd. We know how to plan a party, a celebration, but Jesus' triumphal procession has a very different ending. The things that make for peace take us from Palm Sunday to the Upper Room where Jesus has to explain again to the disciples that He would be betrayed, that He would suffer, that He would be crucified and on the third day be raised. The climax of Jesus' triumphal procession is not the deaths of His enemies. It is His willing death for you and me—the things that make for peace, Jesus says.

Jesus goes from this place into the city. He begins to teach in the city. He tells His hearers that they didn't recognize what makes for peace. Jesus says in Luke 19:43-44:

“For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you.”

They will tear down your city. Jesus enters the temple and He begins to drive out those who were selling in the sanctuary. In Luke 19:45, Jesus drives them out and says:

“It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers.”

That is better translated, a den of *thieves*, or a den of *rebels*. Just as the disciples give a double quotation, Jesus' words here are a double quotation. It is a double quotation first from Isaiah chapter 56. What's wrong? What does the nation not understand? What do the disciples not understand about what makes for peace? The disciples don't understand that we need forgiveness and Jesus' death is the only way it can be achieved. The nation has defined the kingdom of God as an exclusive, national privilege and excluded the rest of the world. Any time you merge zeal for God with religious nationalism, you will always draw the boundaries of the kingdom too small. Jesus says: *“My house shall be a house of prayer.”* The full citation from Isaiah 56:7 says:

“...for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”

The context of Isaiah 56 is of the foreigners who are joining themselves to the Lord and being received, and Jesus says: “You are excluding the nations by your worship. Not only are you excluding the nations, but you have made this place a den of robbers or rebels.” In Jeremiah 7, Jeremiah critiques the disobedience of God's people and their false trust in possession of the sanctuary. In Jeremiah 7:11, God says devastatingly:

“Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?”

He was teaching daily in the temple, contending for the heart of the nation. The chief priests and scribes and the leading men of the city were seeking to destroy Him, Luke tells us, but the

people were hanging onto His every word.

Palm Sunday starts Holy Week, and the call to action for us this morning is threefold.

Number one: I want to call all of us as a community to enter wholeheartedly into this week. This takes some effort. This is a Holy Week, and holy time means that we get out of common time. We get out of our regular routines to remember this week and to highlight its significance. It is a significant week in the life of our church. This is a significant week. Thursday, in some traditions, is the Passover Seder time. In other traditions, it is called Maundy Thursday, from the Latin *mandatum* because Jesus gives the commandment to “love one another as I have loved you.” In our family, we celebrate a Seder meal, a Passover meal, on Thursday, and it is a joy to invite people to share that time. Friday night, we will gather together. If you have never participated in a Good Friday service, I want to encourage you to be with us. We take time on Good Friday to review one of the gospels and read through the passion narrative to remember the cost of our salvation. Saturday morning is a time of joyous celebration as we reach out to the children of our community. We will gather to tell the story of Holy Week. Sunday morning, we gather on Easter Sunday to remember that everything that Jesus said is true. We have a gospel in which to believe, because all of what He said came to pass. It is not just that He was betrayed; it is not just that He suffered; it is not just that He was crucified, but, hallelujah! He was raised. So I wanted to invite you to enter wholeheartedly into Holy Week.

Number two: I want to encourage you to invite someone around you to enter in with you. Holy Week is not best celebrated alone. A very nonthreatening way to ask is this question. Just ask people that you work with or go to school with: “What are your plans for Easter?” Can you ask that? That's pretty nonthreatening, and you can get all kinds of things in response, and as you listen, maybe use that opportunity to invite them to join you in part of this week at Kenwood.

Number three: This is critical for each of us this morning. It is from Luke's presentation of the story. I want to make sure that we know the things that make for peace this morning. As Jesus entered into the city, the religious leaders hold Him to rebuke His disciples. Jesus came and approached the city walls, and He was weeping because the city didn't know what made for peace. Although we will recount this in more detail Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, I want to look for a brief moment towards the end of this Holy Week so we are absolutely clear what makes for peace. On the other side of the ending of Holy Week, there were still people who didn't understand. Luke's gospel ends with people discovering what makes for peace. Luke alone tells us about this moment, of these two disciples on the road to Emmaus, a village just seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that happened. They were discussing together, and while they were talking, Jesus, the resurrected Jesus, came up and started walking with them. Can you imagine? But they didn't recognize Him. There are so many this morning that even having Jesus in our midst still don't recognize Him. He

is walking with them, and He asks them—and isn't this amazing?—He asks them what they are talking about, not because He doesn't know. One of them, a man named Cleopas, looks at Jesus, the Jesus he does not recognize, and he says in Luke 24:18:

“Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

Can you imagine that? Jesus says, “What things? Tell Me a little more about that.” And, they said, “What things! The things about Jesus of Nazareth, a Prophet mighty in deed, how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, crucified Him, and we had hoped He was the one that was going to redeem Israel. Moreover, this is the third day since this has happened.” Jesus just listens, and they continue in Luke 24:22-24:

“Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find His body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but Him they did not see.”

Jesus said to them and to us in Luke 24:25-27:

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

We are slow to believe, aren't we? “Wasn't it necessary”—the key word. Jesus began to explain to them from the Scriptures the necessity of His death and resurrection. This is CASKET EMPTY with Jesus. They still didn't recognize Him, and so they got to the village to which they were going, and Jesus acted like He was going to continue on walking. They urged Him in Luke 24:29:

“Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.”

It's evening, going to be dark; the day is gone. So Jesus consented to stay with them. When they were at the table, Jesus reached out and took some bread, and He blessed it and He broke it, and He gave it to them. That is when they saw the scars: *“This is My body broken for you,”* and they recognized Him.

After they recognized Him, though it was late, they ran back to Jerusalem to say: “He is alive!” As they were saying what happened, Jesus Himself stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be to you.” The only way to find peace, then or now, is to recognize the scars on the Son of Man who is our true King, and as our King carried the sins of the world and was crucified, and on the third day was raised. That is why this week is the most important week that ever happen on the planet, and I am thrilled to celebrate it together. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we extol You, saving Son. Lord, we thank You that You know us so well, and that You know that we are slow to get it, Your saving purpose. Lord, I pray that if there are any here this morning that do not yet recognize the Son, that they might see You clearly now. Lord, we pray together for those in our families, those in our workplaces, those in our neighborhoods who are who are just living this week as though it's just any other week, complaining about the politics, worried about the weather. Lord, holiness is just passing them by. We pray that You would pour out the Spirit upon us to be Your ambassadors. Help us to have the courage. I pray Lord that hundreds of times this week from our lips would come forth question to others: "What your plans for Easter? Would you like to join me? It's okay if you don't know or understand everything. Neither did the disciples, neither did the scholars of Jesus' day." The best news the world has ever received is being remembered this week, so Lord, help us to enter in wholeheartedly, to invite others to join us, and to go through this week, not with anxiety or stress or fear, but in full possession of peace that You give. Lord, would You build Your kingdom here among us, we pray, and use us for Your glory? We love You, Jesus. our Messiah, saving Son of God, bringer of the kingdom.

In Your Name, Amen.