LAMENT & SHALOM

Luke 19:37–42; Matthew 5:9

Jesus weeps only twice in Scripture – once for a friend who has died, and once for a city that has lost its way. As He weeps over Jerusalem just before entering on Palm Sunday, Jesus names what is missing: the way of peace, the way of *shalom*. Shalom isn't just the absence of violence; it's the fullness of life – wholeness, justice, and goodness for all.

Day 1: Read Luke 19:37-40.
Where am I tempted to stay silent to avoid conflict?

Day 2: Read Luke 19:41-42.
What in the world, or in my own life, breaks my heart right now?

Day 3: Read Psalm 13:1–6.
What grief have I been avoiding bringing with honesty and vulnerability before God?

Day 4: Read Exodus 3:7-10.
What pain, suffering, or need around me might God be calling me to notice and confront?

Day 5: Read John 11:32-37.
What does Jesus' willingness to weep teach us about compassion, empathy, and faith?

Day 6: Read Matthew 5:9.
What does it mean today to be a peacemaker?

Jesus' lament becomes the doorway to restoration. Jesus shows us how to find peace by first facing what is broken.
Lament is the first step toward shalom.

MONDAY – TEMPLE CLEANSING

Mark 11:12-21, John 2:13-22

When Jesus clears the temple, His actions are not violent retaliation but prophetic disruption. His motivation is not rage, but love. His goal is not destruction, but renewal.

Day 1: Read Mark 11:12–14.
Where is my life bearing fruit? Where is it not bearing fruit?

Day 2: Read Mark 11:15–17.
If my life is a house of prayer, what needs to be cleaned out?

Day 3: Read Jeremiah 7:1–11
What happens when worship is disconnected from how God's people treat others?

Day 4: Read John 2:13-22.
Where does the world need peacemaking courage from the church instead of polite silence?

Day 5: Read Mark 11:18–21.
What warning signs reveal the health of my inner, spiritual life?

Day 6: Read John 15:1-8.
What one practice could help my life bear more fruit in this season?

In His first day in Jerusalem, Jesus models how to confront injustice faithfully, through discernment, courage, and compassion.
Ask the question Jesus asks of every heart and system: *Does this bear fruit?*

TUESDAY – PART 1: TRAPS

Mark 12:13-17, 41-44; Matthew 22:15-22

As Jesus returns to the temple, the religious leaders try to trap Him with questions about loyalty and power. His response reframes the entire conversation: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." In other words, everything belongs to God.

Day 1: Read Mark 11:27-33.
What, or who, has authority over my life? Where do I question authority?
Do I give Jesus authority over my life readily, or hesitantly, or not at all?

Day 2: Read Mark 12:13-15.
Do I more often seek the answer I want to hear or seek the truth? What is the difference?

Day 3: Read Mark 12:16-17.
Where am I tempted to divide life into what is "God's" and what is "mine"?

Day 4: Read Mark 12:28-34.
What matters most to me, and does my life reflect it?
What does loving God with my whole self look like today?

Day 5: Read Mark 12:41-44.
What does trusting God more than personal comfort or security look like in practice?

Day 6: Read Psalm 24:1–5.
How might life feel different if I truly believed (and lived by the truth) that everything belongs to God?

The way of peace begins with recognizing who truly holds authority over our lives.
Live by this truth: Everything belongs to God.

TUESDAY – Part 2: TRUTH TELLING

Matthew 23:13-26

The seven "woes" Jesus shares with the teachers of the law and the Pharisees are not words of condemnation but of invitation, a mirror held up to God's people, calling them back to integrity. They echo His earlier Beatitudes, forming bookends for His public teaching. The question is not whether we're broken, but whether we're humble enough to hear the truth and turn toward grace.

Day 1: Read Matthew 23:1-12.
When someone challenges me, do I become curious or defensive?
What makes it hard to hear uncomfortable truth?

Day 2: Read Matthew 23:13-22.
Where can faith drift toward appearance instead of sincerity?
What helps me return to honesty with God and others?

Day 3: Read Matthew 23:23–24.
Where do I think Jesus would challenge us today for focusing on routine things while ignoring bigger issues and injustices?

Day 4: Read Matthew 23:25–28.
Where does the world apply greater pressure on us to look good than to do good?

Day 5: Read Matthew 23:29-36.
Who are the prophets and teachers God is sending to speak truth to us today?
What helps me stay open instead of resistant?

Day 6: Read Matthew 5:1-12.
What quality of a life of blessing do I sense growing in me today?

Peacemaking requires honesty, with God, with others, and with ourselves.
Let go of self-righteousness and listen for the Truth that sets you free.

WEDNESDAY – PERFUME

Mark 14:1–11

While others plot violence, a woman anoints Jesus with expensive perfume, a gesture of extravagant love. Her generosity stands in stark contrast to the fear and betrayal in the rest of the story. Jesus names her act as one to be remembered forever, a sign that true devotion is not calculated but courageous. We like to identify with the hero in the story, but crushed expectations and the lure of control to protect the status quo can be powerful.

Day 1: Read Matthew 26:1-5.
How does fear shape our reactions and our decisions?

Day 2: Read Mark 14:3–5.
What makes costly love feel uncomfortable?
What causes us to limit or withhold our generosity?

Day 3: Read Mark 14:6-9.
Where have I witnessed love offered freely and without calculation?

Day 4: Read Matthew 26:6-13.
How can I make room for expressions of love different from my own?

Day 5: Read Mark 14:10-11.
Where is resentment or fear growing in me, and how does it shape my decisions?

Day 6: Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11.
What would trusting Jesus enough to sow generously, and share cheerfully, look like in one area of my life?

Peacemakers choose generosity over control, devotion over cynicism.
When fear tempts us to hold back, love calls us to go all in.

PALM SUNDAY – HAMMERS AND DONKEYS

John 12:12-19; Luke 19:28–36

When the crowds wave palm branches as Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem, they expect a military savior in the tradition of Judas Maccabeus, literally Judas the Hammer, who will conquer with power. But Jesus rides a donkey, entering the city not with weapons but with humble presence. He doesn't avoid conflict, nor does He come to stage a violent coup. He enters Jerusalem, where he will die, to show and teach God's people the way of peace.

Day 1: Read Luke 19:28-36.
How can ordinary acts of obedience to Jesus become part of God's larger purpose?

Day 2: Read Matthew 21:1-11.
Who is Jesus? Why do people in the story struggle to agree on who Jesus is?

Day 3: Read John 12:12-15.
The crowd wants a king. What do you hope for from Jesus? For yourself? For the world?

Day 4: Read Zechariah 9:9–10.
What makes it hard to believe that winning and force aren't the way to peace?
What does Jesus teach as the way to peace?

Day 5: Read John 12:16-19.
Where have I misunderstood Jesus because of my own assumptions or expectations?

Day 6: Read Philippians 2:5-11.
What does living as a follower of Jesus with humble courage look like in the world today?

Jesus enters conflict with courage and compassion, showing us a different kind of victory.
The way of peace is bold humility, not avoidance or violence.

EASTER – PEACE BE WITH YOU

John 20:19-23, Luke 24:36-49

When the risen Jesus steps into a locked room, He doesn't offer explanations or commands; He offers peace. After betrayal, denial, and violence, Jesus breathes peace into His fearful friends and begins the new creation in and through them.

Day 1: Read John 20:19.
What fears have control in your life, or keep you from feeling Christ's peace?

Day 2: Read John 20:20-21.
What does it feel like to know the peace of Christ?

Day 3: Read John 20:22-23.
How does forgiveness lead to experiencing peace?

Day 4: Read John 20:24-29.
Where do you need Christ's reassurance in your life?
How does believing in Jesus and His resurrection bring peace?

Day 5: Read Luke 24:36-43.
How can peace and uncertainty exist side by side?
How does the gift of presence contribute to peace?

Day 6: Read Luke 24:44-49.
How am I called to be a witness to the peace of Christ?

In the gift of resurrection, peace is no longer the absence of conflict but the presence of Christ, alive, among us, forever. Peace, in Christ, walks out into the world, bringing forgiveness, hope, and new life wherever we go.
The resurrection turns peace from a wish into a living presence, Jesus alive among us.