

# Editorial: We don't understand Easter like we should

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*NOTE: I encourage you to read the four articles linked below. Each tells the story of Holy Week from a unique perspective. The authors of those articles—[Pastor Joseph Parker Jr.](#), [Dr. Froswa' Booker-Drew](#), [Dr. H. Fritz Williams Jr.](#) and [Cokiesha Bailey Robinson](#)—made this editorial possible.*

We want to see a Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday Jesus—triumphant, hailed and hallelujahed. We don't want to look at who we are between the two Sundays, and what that means for Jesus.

There's nothing worth celebrating like Jesus' resurrection—his conquering of sin and death by rising from the grave. To enter that celebration fully, we must take full account of what came first. We must come to grips with how it should have gone before we can celebrate how it went.

## How it started

It was quite a week for Jesus. He entered the week at the height of celebrity—riding into Jerusalem on a [donkey's colt](#)—as the living, breathing embodiment of Zechariah's prophesied king.

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!  
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you,  
righteous and victorious,  
lowly and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey ([Zechariah 9:9](#)).

It all came crashing down so quickly.

Celebrity couldn't overcome power. In short order, [Judas](#) was colluding with the religious authorities to flip Jesus' celebrity on its head.

The plot succeeded, and soon, Jesus was on his way out of Jerusalem, his celebrity spent, himself a beast of burden.

When he couldn't carry the physical burden of the cross another step, [Simon](#) was forced into service to carry it for him. The cross must be carried, and all the way.

## How it went

Jesus could have avoided the cross. He could have given the people what they wanted. He could give us what we want still. While we shake our fist at him in disappointment, we might dare to think he always seemed to have a death wish.

Judas must have thought so. He makes sense to those who have followed Jesus long enough to become disenchanted with him, to see Jesus isn't going to do what we think he's supposed to do.

Jesus is awake to the wrong people, caring for them while not caring enough about the real problems of our day. Because of that, Jesus can carry his own cross, his critics must have thought.

It's ironic that both Judas and Jesus ended up hanging on a tree. What might the resurrection have meant to Judas if he had understood Lazarus living again?

On the way, there's Simon. As far as we know, he didn't follow Jesus a single day in his life. He wouldn't have been anything more than a face in the crowd. Yet, the cross was made his burden, too.

He was made part of the spectacle. How afraid was he? How often did the spit and the whip meant for Jesus land on him instead? They say death has a smell, and a condemned man, too. Certainly, Simon never forgot that smell and never expected to see Jesus alive again. What must the resurrection have meant to him who carried the instrument of death himself?

## **Between times**

Then there's silence. At the end of the crowd's week-beginning cheers and week-ending jeers, at the conclusion of the powers' show trials and performative violence, at the end of it all—silence.

After the last cry, Jesus' unmoving lips uttered nothing, not even the quiet sounds of breathing. The Word who became flesh was silent.

I imagine the scuffling sound of flesh against wood and sandal against dirt, the shushing sounds of wordless silence, as Jesus was taken off the cross, wrapped in burial cloths, carried and placed in the grave.

The week came crashing down so quickly.

Can we stand the silence? Can we bear it, not knowing when it will end? What does the resurrection mean for us who live in the silence?

## **How it ended**

I imagine the scuffling sound of sandal against dirt as the women walked to the grave in the silence of the morning. Not even the sun was loud in the sky.

The stone ... the grave is ... silent no more!

But first, cold chills must have gone all through the women. Their stomachs must have twisted in knots. The stone was moved! No, no, no! The stone was moved! That's not supposed to happen!

As we understand it, none of this was supposed to happen. But it did. It all happened.

And now, to cap it all off, the cap is gone, and the grave is open. *Where is Jesus?* Where is he?

We can forgive [Mary's](#) incomprehension of what she was witnessing. She wasn't a "silly girl." She was stunned like we ought to be.

Can we possibly imagine what a wondrous thing Jesus' resurrection was for her who was once filled with darkness shattered by the light of the world?

Where is our incomprehension? It *is* incredulous, that the Creator of the universe would stoop to live among us, to be born in just the same way we are born, to take up with a poor family among an oppressed people.

It is beyond understanding that the Word would have every word he uttered scrutinized, slandered and smeared, and that he would not utter a definitive word in his own defense.

As we approach another annual celebration of Jesus' resurrection—his rising again to life, conquering sin and death—we must regain a sense of incomprehension and injustice if we are to understand what resurrection means for us, if we are to know what a remarkable thing Sunday morning is. Not just Easter Sunday, but every Sunday.

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