

*Hope and  
Triumph*  
*Easter Devotional*



Dallas Block

**ROCKSOLID**  
REFUGE



Dallas is the Executive Director of Rock Solid Refuge, a ministry 95 km south west of Swift Current Saskatchewan committed to Bringing God's transforming love to adolescents with life-controlling issues, that they may know freedom, restoration, and hope. Dallas has 29 years' experience working with teens and families including roles as Youth Worker / Pastor, Associate Pastor to youth and families, and now Executive Director. As one of

the founding board members of Rock Solid Refuge in 2005, Dallas was impassioned to see a segment of Canada's youth (addicts) and their families be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to see hope restored where it had been lost. Dallas, his wife Marla of 30 years, and family live at Rock Solid Refuge and are no strangers to the sacrifices necessary to ministering in the most desperate situations.

If you find this devotional helpful or encouraging, consider sharing it or making a donation at [www.RockSolidRefuge.com](http://www.RockSolidRefuge.com)

Thank you for your support, and have a blessed Easter!



*He is not here,  
He is risen...*

# Offer our Best, Offer our Very Selves

## Introduction

It is argued that all of scripture either points forward to or back to Christ death, burial, resurrection, and the implications of Christ's sacrifice. There is no event more important in human history. From the time of man's first sin in Genesis, a prediction was made that there would be a Saviour to come. In Revelation, it is said that we will forever praise the Lamb that was Slain from the foundation of the world. So, is there any preparation that we should do leading up to this annual celebration?

In my daily devotional readings, I just finished the book of John. I never cease to be amazed and in awe of the vision of Jesus as God in the flesh, Messiah, and Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world that John so powerfully emphasizes. Also, none of the other gospels spend as much time on the last days leading up to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Approximately half of John is the last week of Jesus life.

In John 12, Jesus attends a dinner party put on for him six days before His crucifixion. Martha serves, Lazarus is there, and Mary took expensive ointment, nard, and anoints Jesus. The value of the nard is stated to be about a year's wages. After anointing Jesus' feet, Mary then takes her hair down and wipes His feet with her hair. To do such a thing in Jesus' time was to take on the role of the lowest servant as only the lowest slave and servants attended to people's feet. Her actions were of the utmost humility and devotion toward Jesus. She offered the very best she had, including herself to her Lord. Also, whether Mary fully understood or realized it, she was acting in preparation for Jesus' burial. At this time, Jesus' followers did not yet know all that needed to happen and all the implications of it, but God orchestrated this to demonstrate the resolve God the Father and God the Son had for Jesus to follow through the cross event.

Jesus gave His all for us quite literally and for the joy set before Him endured the cross (Heb 12). Is there anything that we cannot give with joy in honour and worship for Him? He has purchased our eternal life and life to the full.

So as we come into this time of year that Christ's death, burial, and resurrection is celebrated, let us come happily offering up our very best to Him because He is worthy.

# Triumphal Entry

Palm Sunday

What do you think of when you think of the word ‘triumph’? Maybe you remember when your favourite sports team has won the championship, or you might think of finishing a major project that had lots of challenges and setbacks. Throughout human history, ‘triumph’ was most prominently connected to military victories, such as soldiers defending their homeland or taking back lost territory.

In Jesus’ day, the Jews were under Roman occupation and oppression. Granted, they had a certain amount of religious freedom, but still knew themselves to be under Roman rule and not ‘free’ as in previous times. Through the prophecies of the Old Testament, the Jews knew there would be a Messiah that would come. They thought the Messiah would lead militarily to overthrow the Romans and restore them to previous times of national glory and power. They didn’t understand the prophecies that foretold the paradox of Jesus’ conquering by dying and offering himself as a sacrifice.

*“All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* Isaiah 53:6

When Jesus told his disciples to go get him a donkey’s colt to ride on, He fulfilled the prophesy from Zechariah 9:9 *“Behold your King is coming to you, righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”* You see, Jesus was not confused about His identity. He knew he was the Messiah, the Saviour, the Chosen One from God. He would conquer a much worse enemy than Rome – sin and death. But in order to do so, He had to die. In this paradox, His ultimate identity as King of kings and Lord of lords should never be missed. He came humbly, and the crowds rightly worshiped and sang praises to Him. The same crowds that only five days later would shout, “Crucify Him, crucify Him.”

Jesus’ triumphal entry also points us forward to a future triumphal entry that He will someday make, this time in the fullness of His glory, to judge the world in righteousness and make all things right. Jesus calls true worshipers to Himself through faith and repentance, those who will worship Him in spirit and truth. He is the way, the truth, and the life, and He authenticated everything

He claimed, including His ability to forgive our sins by dying and rising from the dead. We serve a truly triumphant King. As we move towards another year of Easter remembrances and celebrations, may it be with great rejoicing! Through His triumph, are free from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and free to new life in Christ!

## *Hosanna in the highest!*



# It is Finished!

Good Friday

*“After this, Jesus knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst.’ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished.’ And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”*

*John 19:28-30*

I find this declaration to be a bit puzzling. “It is finished.” What is finished? We can read further and see that there is more to come, in fact, what would seem to be actually most important is yet to come. So, what is finished?

I don’t know about you, but it feels good to me to accomplish something. To have a plan, and embark on the necessary steps to see something accomplished, and see it done. I live by lists. If something is going to get done, it has likely been on a list of some sort and when it is accomplished, I get to strike it off the list.

I think back to some of the first conversations about starting Rock Solid Refuge. There needs to be a place youth can come to for an extended time away from the trappings and temptations to get a new start. We believed it should be somewhere in the country, a rural setting that simply feels peaceful. Animals should be there. Dogs, cats, and horses. We should have a garden for the experience of eating what their hands produced. We need staff that love Jesus and love young people. And, oh, we need a building. A centre where the students can live, eat, sleep, go to school, and build relationships through fun interactions. I remember the many people and groups that came to spend time and money building our centre.

Mennonite Disaster Service and Bergen Missionary church were two primary groups. The Bergen group took on the task of building the foundation. In April of 2010, they brought 21 people with a generous donation to complete that part of the project. They looked at the historical weather patterns and picked a week that was least likely to have rain and when they drove away at the end of the week the rain started to fall. But when they drove away at the end of the week, they also said, “It is finished”. They had laid the foundation. The ability to build a high-quality large building on this site was now here because a high-quality, firm foundation had been laid.

In Acts 2:22-23 Peter preaches “... *Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know – this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.*”

And lest we think we are innocent of Christ's blood, as Martin Luther was known to say, “We all carry in our pockets the nails that put Christ on the cross.” It was our sin that He was crucified for.

The cross was not an afterthought. God's redemptive plan was planned out before the foundation of the world. Before He had even created one molecule. He took care of our most basic and foundational need – our alienation and condemnation from God because of sin. He laid the foundation for our forgiveness and eternal life, and it had to be the way it was because of what was written in Isaiah 53.

On this Good Friday, I encourage you to read the words of Isaiah 53 slowly, allowing the realities of the price paid for your sin to sink in. If this is new to you, I implore you to put your faith in the only one who could pay your sin debt and give you eternal life. If you have read this a hundred times, read it again. This was written 700 years before it happened, yet it was written almost as if the writer is standing beneath the cross.

*“He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with His wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – everyone – to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all....”*

It is finished. All who believe have been redeemed. Purchased. Ransomed. Bought back and brought from death to life. All through the finished work of Christ on the cross. His sacrifice was accepted by God. The payment is sufficient.

May we rejoice in the knowledge of what He has done for us. May we be ever hopeful and thankful and live with gratitude to our great Saviour.

# Hope? In What? Is Your Faith Futile?

Easter Sunday

*“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.” 1 Cor 15:17, 19*

Every day we wake up we have hope for something. Maybe that today it won't snow, and spring will finally be here. Maybe we hope we will have adequate moisture for the crops this year. Maybe we hope for a change in government. Maybe we hope a loved one will get well, or a child or grandchild will get out of an addiction.

The world seems like a pretty crazy place right now and it can be easy to despair instead of hope. So many of our student applications here at Rock Solid are so sad it's hard to imagine. “I was rescued as a baby when I had been left in a box in a garage and taken to an orphanage”, one student's story goes. Another one is “I was unplanned, and my parents considered abortion”. When your story starts with that kind of rejection, where do you find hope that makes life worth living?

The apostle Paul is clear that in no uncertain terms, Christ's death, burial, and resurrection gives us hope for a new life now, but not just now but for all of eternity.

*“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”*

1 Cor 3:3-5

I remember as a child being raised in a Christian home and all these Christian events like Christmas and Easter being celebrated but really what I wanted was nice things like my friends, or fun vacations like others seemed to have. Eternity, and thoughts of life after death just seemed not real, and so out there in the future it didn't make sense to spend a lot of brain power on it. (Except I certainly didn't want to go to hell so I probably should say sorry for my sins so that didn't happen.) Then my mom died in a car accident, and all of a sudden hope for something more than this world became an immediate need. Coming face to face with the intense pain of loss changes a person. You can't look at life through the same lens ever again. There has to be more than this!

Even as I think about the work that we do at Rock Solid Refuge, many of our students (and staff from similar backgrounds) have experienced the loss of loved ones to the drug lifestyle while being here. One student having lost several friends said, if he wasn't here, he would have been in that fatal accident and likely dead with the others. So often we find ourselves working through the pain of past events with our students. On one hand we sit with them, listen, sympathize, comfort, and support. And at the same time, we point to an eternal hope. The hope that says every tear will be wiped away, and death will be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

So here is the two fold promise of hope we have because of Jesus' resurrection: First, Eph 1:19-20 tells us that the power of God that raised Christ from the dead is toward us who are in Christ Jesus. There is no doubt we will experience pain, suffering and loss in this life. But we are not alone in that. God is actually present, walking through it with us and empowering us to have hope and confidence in the midst of it. And secondly, as Romans 8:15 says, all the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the glory that is to be revealed.

We don't just have a temporary hope of something better here and now. We have an eternal hope beyond our wildest imaginations.

All this is because He is Risen!

A photograph of an empty tomb. A large, smooth, light-colored stone is rolled away from the entrance of a dark, rectangular opening in a rough, rocky wall. The stone is positioned to the right of the opening. The surrounding rock is uneven and textured, with some green moss or lichen visible on the right side. The lighting is natural, highlighting the texture of the stone and the surrounding rock.

*He is Risen indeed!*

We hope that the *Hope and Triumph: Easter Devotional* has been an encouragement to you. This is such an important time of year for believers all around the world, and we hope that this small piece has been a blessing.

If you found the content of this to be helpful or encouraged you in your walk with Christ, we would ask you to share this booklet with a friend or making a donation to support this work.

Our supporters ensure that the young men with life controlling issues have a chance to turn their lives around. It's because of the generosity of people partnering financially that the Good News of Christ is being poured into the lives of some of Canada's toughest teen. Some of the young men who come to Rock Solid Refuge have never heard the gospel before, your support ensures that they encounter Christ and have the opportunity for redemption through His sacrifice.

Thank you for your support.

Visit [www.RockSolidRefuge.com](http://www.RockSolidRefuge.com) for more information or to donate. Have a blessed Easter!