

GOOD FRIDAY 2020 – FOOTSCRAY BAPTIST



Call To Worship

This is the day when life is raw, quivering, terrifying.
The day of numb emotions
The day of blunt nails and splintered wood
Of bruised flesh and red blood.
The day we loathe, when all is made meaningless.
The day we long for, when pretences fall away.
Because the worst that we can do cannot kill you love. (P. 332 Be Our Freedom Lord)

Remembering the Story

Voices of Limited Vision (Matthew 26: 57-68) ⁵⁷ Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. ⁵⁸ But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. ⁵⁹ Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰ but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹ and said, “This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.” ⁶² The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” ⁶³ But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your verdict?” They answered, “He deserves death.” ⁶⁷ Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, ⁶⁸ saying, “Prophecy to us, you Messiah!^[g] Who is it that struck you?”

Prayer

God of mercy,
We too have traded truth for an easy way out. We too falsely accuse others rather than look within. We too want people to prove themselves to us.
Forgive us we pray.



Voice of Denial (Matt 26: 69-75) ⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” ⁷¹ When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.”^[h] ⁷² Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” ⁷⁴ Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

Prayer

God of mercy,
Like Peter we have expressed our love and concern for others and then turned our backs on them in their moment of need. Forgive us we pray.



Voice of Repentance (Matthew 27:3-10) ³ When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus^[a] was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴ He said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent^[b] blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” ⁵ Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. ⁶ But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.” ⁷ After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter’s field as a place to bury foreigners. ⁸ For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, “And they took^[c] the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, ¹⁰ and they gave^[d] them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

Prayer

God of mercy,
Like Judas we are attracted to money and profit, unaware of the effects of our greed on others, until it is too late. Forgive us we pray.

Voice of Expediency (Matthew 27:1-2, 11-26) When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. ²They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. ¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” ¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” ¹⁴But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. ¹⁵Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus^[a] Barabbas. ¹⁷So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus^[a] Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?”^[a] ¹⁸For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. ¹⁹While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.” ²⁰Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” ²²Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?”^[a] All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” ²³Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!” ²⁴So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood;^[a] see to it yourselves.” ²⁵Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” ²⁶So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Prayer

God of mercy,

Like the false witnesses we too have twisted the truth in order to get our own way.

Like the scribes and elders, we have been hell bent on a cause oblivious to the feelings of others.

Like Pilate we want to shirk our responsibility and are swayed by the opinions of others.

Like Barrabas, we have another take the fall and escaped with our reputations intact.

Like the crowds we are fickle, praise one moment, mockery the next and finally a desire to eliminate those who disagree with us.

Forgive us we pray.



Voice of Mockery (Matthew 27:27-44) ²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters,^[a] and they gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. ³² As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots;^[a] ³⁶ then they sat down there and kept watch over him. ³⁷ Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." ³⁸ Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹ Those who passed by derided^[a] him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself.^[a] He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" ⁴⁴ The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

Prayer

God of mercy,

Like those watching on we too have derided others. Made others a laughing stock to impress our friends. Forgive us we pray.



Voice of Dying (Matthew 27:45-53) ⁴⁵ From noon on, darkness came over the whole land^[a] until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶ And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." ⁴⁸ At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."^[a] ⁵⁰ Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.^[a] ⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³ After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.

Reflection – Were You There?

Prayer

God of the world,

We pray for those who are

- Sick and dying in body, mind or spirit
 - Left with pain after another goes free
 - Derided or scapegoated by others
 - Having their lives or feelings being gambled by others
 - Falsely imprisoned or detained
 - Crying out for peace in their land or their lives
- Grieving or mourning the loss of loved ones, the loss of innocence, the loss of opportunity
- Healing and caring for those with COVID19

Jesus, you know and share their suffering and pain.

Comfort them in their distress.

Show us how to share their burdens, to give generously of what we have, to be courageous enough to stand beside them.

God of mercy, hear our prayer and the cries of the people. Amen.

Voices of Faith and Conviction (Matthew 27:54-61) ⁵⁴ Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!" ⁵⁵ Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. ⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. ⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Prayer

Like Simon of Cyrene, show us how to share another's pain, to walk the road with them, to lighten their load.

Like Joseph of Arimathea, show us how to share generously that which we have, to be courageous and risk ridicule and to give people dignity.

Like the women standing at a distance looking, watching, waiting, show us how to be compassionate and to care. Grant us courage we pray.



Voice of Fear (Matthew 27:62-66) ⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, “Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ ⁶⁴ Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead,’ and the last deception would be worse than the first.” ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, “You have a guard^[t] of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.”^[u] ⁶⁶ So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

Sending Out

We proclaim Christ nailed to the cross.

An offence to some and foolishness to others.

To those who are called, no matter what their status, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

So, we declare - In Life, In Death, in Life beyond Death, Jesus Christ is Lord.

(p.172 Stages on the Way)

(All prayers unless otherwise stated by Cheryl Williams, 2020)