

Good Friday

Order of Service - April 7th, 2023

(All readings from Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 26:57-75 & 27:1-66, service prepared by Cheryl Williams)

Stations of the Cross (Matthew's Gospel)

Call to Worship

This is the day when life is raw, quivering, terrifying.

The day of numbed 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 your love

(From p. 332 Be Our Freedom Lord)

Station 1 – Condemned & Denied

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,^[1] 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! Who is it that struck you?'

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.'^[2] 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

In this collapse of hope,
When love is crushed
In the kiss of a friend,
May you drink of this cup, O Jesus,
Its twisted truth,
And bitter grace,

That we might yet believe
This way to heaven
Still holds hope.
In this final journey
Beyond what the world offers
In betrayal,
In fake news,
In weapons of war,
In fear,
May we still believe,
There is another moment to come.

Amen

(By Roddy Hamilton, found at [When love is crushed - Features - Life and Work](#))

Station 2 – Choosing & Mocking

27 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. **2** They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said, ‘You say so.’ **12** But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. **13** Then Pilate said to him, ‘Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?’ **14** But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

15 Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. **16** At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus^g Barabbas. **17** So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus^h Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ⁱ **18** For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. **19** While he was sitting on the judgement 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.’ **20** Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. **21** The governor again said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release for you?’ And they said, ‘Barabbas.’ **22** Pilate said to them, ‘Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?’^j All of them said, ‘Let him be crucified!’ **23** Then he asked, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Let him be crucified!’

24 So 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;^k see to it yourselves.’ **25** Then the people as a whole answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’ **26** So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters,^l 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.

Prayer – Confessing

God of great mercy,

Like Judas, we are attracted to money and do not care about how our greed and selfishness might affect others,

Like the High Priest and Pilate, we want to shirk our responsibilities and let others make hard decisions,

Like the false witnesses, we sometimes twist the truth,

Like Peter, we are enthusiastic for a time but then turn our backs on others when they need us most,

Like Barabbas, we allow others take the fall,

Like the crowd, we can be excited one moment, fickle the next, mocking shortly after,

Like the women, in our shock we cannot move,

Like Joseph, we summon our courage and try to bring dignity in the midst of pain and confusion.

Forgive our apathy, our fear, our wilfulness, our fickleness.

From the cross you say, 'Forgive them for they know not what they do'.

(Prayer by Cheryl Williams, April 2023)

Words of Assurance

Even in the face of betrayal and rebellion,

even in the face of death and denial,

even in the face of fear and despair,

God's grace knows no bounds.

We ARE forgiven,

we ARE called back into relationship,

we ARE set back on the path that leads to the Realm of God.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

(Prayer by Rev Gord on his blog, Worship Offerings. <http://worshipofferings.blogspot.ca>)

Station 3 – Helping

³² As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.

Simon of Cyrene Reflects

Station 4 – Crucified & Derided

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 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.

Song: Were You There (vv1-2) [Were you there when they crucified my Lord? - Lyric video \(StF 285\) - YouTube](#)

(1) *Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

(2) *Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?*

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Praying for the world

We pray now for those who:

- Cannot speak out when they are in pain or abused by others,
- Are betrayed by others, those in power and us,
- Suffer in body, mind or spirit,
- Caught up in fear generated by others,
- Live in the midst of war and conflict, especially in Iran and Myanmar
- Need your peace in their hearts and lives,
- Have been imprisoned or detained unjustly,
- Find themselves taunted, mocked or teased,
- Are vulnerable and whose lives are gambled by others,
- Wait to die,
- Are far from family and loved ones,

Comfort them in their distress.

Give us courage to bring dignity to them.

Lord. hear our prayers and the cries of all your people.

Amen.

(Prayer by Cheryl Williams, April 2023)

Station 5 – Dying & Buried

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. 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!'^[a]

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.

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 that the tomb 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 of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.' ⁶⁶ So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

Song: Were You There (vv1-3) [Were you there when they crucified my Lord? - Lyric video \(StF 285\) - YouTube](#)

*(1) Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

*(2) Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?*

*(3) Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

Departing

and so it is done
love is crushed
and the world has got away with it
the light seems paler
the air thinner
the birds quieter
the shadows longer
the wine more bitter
the bread dry

and the path doesn't seem to go anywhere now.

*(By Roddy Hamilton and posted on **Mucky Paws**. <http://www.nkchurch.org.uk/index.php/mucky-paws>)*