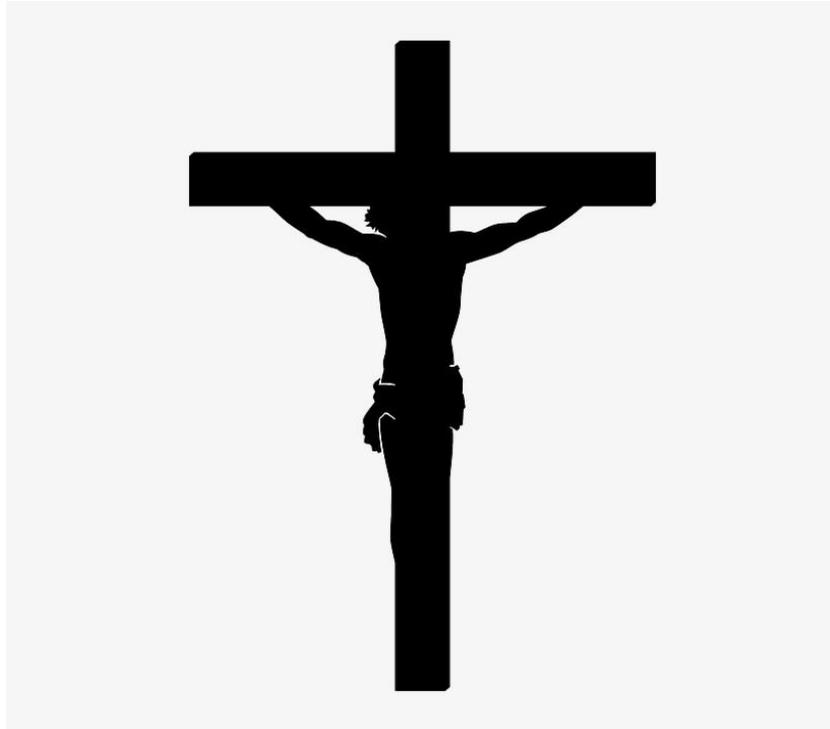


STATIONS OF THE CROSS  
Devotional



CAMBRIDGE FIVE  
Grace, St. Luke's, St. Paul's, Waugh Chapel and Zion United Methodist Churches  
2021

## STATION 1

### JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

Luke 22:39-46

*And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."*

Already, it is written that our Lord is in agony. He is not yet being physically beaten or scourged, but he suffers deeply in both body and soul, for he is carrying the weight of the world.

Gethsemane means "olive press" where olive oil was pressed out. Jesus experiences here the greatest of pressing and pressure, as even the blood is pressed out of his body with his sweat that falls to the ground. He knows the suffering that lies before him. Above all, Jesus does not wish to be cut off from his Father whom he loves with perfect love. That the Father would turn his back on him at the cross was an unbearable thought. But this Jesus does for you. He submits himself to the Father's will out of love for you that you may share in his love with the Father. Remember Jesus' agony when you are in mental or emotional anguish, when the weight of the world seems to be pressing down on you, when you are pressed or depressed, and there seems to be no way of escape. Remember Jesus, who did not escape, who will not let you be tempted or tested beyond what you can bear. He is your escape. He is your rest and your refuge. He drank the cup of judgment so that now there is no condemnation for you who are in Christ Jesus. You are given to drink the cup of salvation. The cup of God's mercy overflows to you in Jesus.

## STATION 2

### JESUS IS BETRAYED

Mark 14:43-50

*And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard." And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" And he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." And they all left him and fled.*

Swords and clubs are instruments of power and force and coercion. They are what the chief priests and scribes and elders wield to lay hold of Jesus. They are what Peter tries to use to defend Jesus. But for both Peter and the priests, it is in vain. God's kingdom cannot be established by the use of force and worldly power. Neither can it be stopped or undone by them. For his kingship is exercised not through coercing his subjects but through the giving of himself for his subjects. In love he rules the hearts of his people through faith. We dare never put our trust in the powers of this world to establish or save the church. We dare never behave as Peter did and think the success of the gospel is dependent on our wisdom and strength. The gospel thrives precisely in apparent weakness and defeat.

Even in the midst of the physical roughness here, the most hurtful thing that is done is Judas' betrayal. This cuts to the heart, even for Jesus who knew in advance what would be done. As a true man, Jesus feels the human hurt of having a friend and follower stab him in the back, all with a smile and a kiss, all while his companions flee for cover.

Remember this when people deceive and betray and use you for their own ends — when they bring you to tears. Jesus has been there for you, and he is with you in your hurt to deliver you, to vindicate all who take refuge in him.

### STATION 3

#### JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY THE SANHEDRIN

Mark 14:55-65

*Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" But he remained silent and made no answer. Again, the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." And the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And they all condemned him as deserving death. And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!" And the guards received him with blows.*

"Like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth." For Jesus had not come to defend himself against false accusations but to defend us against the true accusations that the enemy would lay against us. He allows himself to be condemned in our stead.

Put under oath, Jesus does speak the truth of who he is, the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, who will come again on the last day for judgment. But here in his first coming, he allows himself to be placed under judgment, that there might be deliverance from the final judgment for all who take shelter under his wings.

Jesus had used his spittle to heal, to give sight. Now he is spit upon by those who are blind to who he is — that he is the true temple, where God's presence dwells in bodily form. He will be destroyed in death and then raised up in glory on the third day, that the people of God might have an eternal dwelling in him.

## STATION 4

### JESUS IS DENIED BY PETER

Luke 22:54-62

*Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.*

Peter has three chances to confess that he knows Christ. Three times Peter fails. He would have to live for a while with the awful emptiness of his disloyalty and failure. We know that weakness of the flesh, too, when we deny Jesus with our words or behavior, seeking to avoid negative consequences to our reputation or our income or our life. Apart from Christ, Peter can do nothing, despite his good intentions.

Jesus had told Peter this would happen. When it occurs, as the rooster crows, as Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin, he turns and looks at Peter there in the courtyard. Jesus did this not to cut brash Peter down to size, but to teach Peter that his love would remain despite Peter's sin. This was not a look of anger, but of sorrowful compassion. Peter would call Jesus' words to mind and weep. But he would also realize that Jesus didn't reject him even though he knew this about him ahead of time. So also with you — Jesus knows you and how you will stumble and falter. And yet he doesn't reject you; he sticks with you despite yourself. The rooster's crow is not only a call to repentance but also a call to faith in Jesus, who looks on you with constant love.

## STATION 5

### JESUS IS JUDGED BY PILATE

Mark 15:2-15

*And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." And the chief priests accused him of many things. And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.*

*Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. And he answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" And they cried out again, "Crucify him." And Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him." So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.*

The name Barabbas means "son of the Father." But this Barabbas did not act like a child of God, but of the evil one. He was a murderer in the rebellion. And so Barabbas represents us. For all sin ultimately is rebellion against God. It is the attempted murder of God, to get him out of your way so that you can run things the way you want without any interference or consequences. This is what the chief priests were doing. They handed Jesus over because of envy — because he was a threat to their plans and their power. They were a more pious version of Barabbas, rebelling against God in the name of religion and good order, very literally seeking to murder God.

The Father allows them to succeed, and their success is their undoing. Evil is overcome by getting its way. The wicked fall into their own trap. Sin and death and the enemy are overcome by the crucifixion of Jesus. Justice is satisfied by this injustice. Christ takes our place in death so that we may be real Barabbases, real sons of the Father through him. The Savior is made to be sin so that we are made to be true children of God in Christ.

## STATION 6

### JESUS CARRIES THE CROSS

John 19:14-17

*Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.*

*So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called 'The Place of a Skull', which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.*

Golgotha, "place of a skull." What happens with the skull, with the head, is a key theme of salvation and deliverance in Scripture. The very first explicit promise of the gospel in Scripture is that the Redeemer would crush the serpent's head. When God gave victory over the enemies of his people, there were many times when the taking of the enemy's head was a sign of triumph. Goliath was decapitated. Jael pounded the tent peg through the temple of Sisera's head.

Now, our final and ultimate deliverer carries his weapon, his cross to the "place of a skull." There he drives his cross into the skull like a sword, to defeat the power of death, to destroy the work of the enemy. Though Jesus' feet are pierced, those same feet crush Satan's head and pulverize the power of the grave.

This is why Jesus bears his cross. This is why he allows himself to be delivered over to be crucified, to deliver you from the powers of darkness and bring you as his own into his kingdom of light, where you will serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness.

## STATION 7

### JESUS IS HELPED BY SIMON OF CYRENE

Mark 15:21

*And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.*

Jesus is so weak from the beatings and the flogging he has endured that he can only carry the cross for a short distance. The lack of sleep, the loss of blood, the weight of the world's sin causes him to fall beneath the burden of the cross.

And so a man named Simon of Cyrene is compelled to carry Jesus' cross. Simon was in the city for the Passover feast and was probably pulled out of the crowd randomly by the Roman soldiers to do this duty. And yet it wasn't entirely by chance that this happened. For God chose Simon to perform this special task which would give a vivid picture of Jesus' own words, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." So it is for you. In your redemption, you are chosen by God to bear the cross. You received the sign of the holy cross on your forehead and on your heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified. You are given to carry that cross daily, bearing the burdens of the callings into which God has placed you, sometimes suffering because of faithfulness to the truth of Christ.

But notice the fundamental distinction between you and Christ. Though you take up the cross, yet you do not bear the judgment against sin. That's all on Jesus. He bears the real burden. He bids you to follow after him beneath the cross that you may receive all the benefits of his suffering. That's how it is that Jesus can say, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Freed by Jesus' cross from the crushing weight of sin's curse, we find it to be a light load that brings rest and peace to our souls.

## STATION 8

### JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

Luke 23:33-34

*And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.*

Jesus is numbered with the transgressors, treated as a common criminal and worse, as one of three men receiving the death penalty. There he is — not above it all, distant or keeping his hands clean — but right in the middle of it all, being dirtied with our sin, that we might be cleansed forever.

Our Lord Jesus is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, even for the very ones who crucified him. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Sin makes us ignorant. We don't know what we're doing. Even when we do know we're doing something wrong, we don't grasp how deeply we are hurting others and ourselves. We don't know how we are slapping God in the face. But Jesus prays for us anyway, "Father, forgive them." Here is the ultimate picture of God's love for us: that he dies for sinners, even for his enemies, his persecutors. Before we could ever ask him for help or seek his forgiveness, he was already there to save and redeem us. He doesn't require us to change before he'll love us. His forgiving love is the very power that changes us.

Jesus' prayer to his Father is surely heard, and so you are surely forgiven. He has borne the nakedness of your shame so that you may be covered with his garments of mercy.

## STATION 9

### JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Luke 23:44-46

*It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.*

Darkness covers the land at midday, in token of the darkness of judgment that Jesus was enduring. It's as if the sun itself could not bear to look at the death of the Son of God and hid its face.

Jesus's final words, though, are confident words of faith and trust in his Father. They are from Psalm 31. "In you, O Lord, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me! For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me; you take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God. I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul, and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place."

After Jesus' other anguished words on the cross, here he expresses assurance in his Father's love and faithfulness. He breathes his last, certain that the Father will deliver him and raise him up again.

At this moment of his death he entrusts his spirit to his Father. He dies like a child falling asleep in the arms of his Father. Remember these words of Jesus when the time comes for you to breathe your last breath. Remember that by entrusting himself to the Father, Jesus has entrusted you to the Father. Your spirit even now is held safely in his hands. As the redeemed you live in Christ, and he is in the Father. When you are experiencing affliction in your last days and last moments, you also are given to pray these words with peaceful trust and to breathe your last knowing that God will deliver you, too, and raise you up again, "Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God."

## STATION 10

### JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB

Mark 15:42-47

*And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid.*

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin, the very group that had condemned Jesus to death. Perhaps he had spoken up but was greatly outnumbered at Jesus' trial. Perhaps he had not spoken up at all. But here he takes courage, and goes to Pilate the governor. He asks for the body of Jesus, that Jesus might be given an honorable burial and not be left for the vultures.

It may be that you identify with Joseph, feeling outnumbered in your life when it comes to the things of Jesus, sometimes remaining silent for lack of courage. Let us then stand with Joseph now and take courage. In the light of Jesus' death, we see that nothing else is so important as our Lord and his holy cross, even in the face of untrustworthy civil authorities. Let us ask for the body of Jesus, seeking the holy sacrament of his body and blood every week, that we may honor his Word and be honored by the gifts that he gives to us in his Last Supper.

Jesus is buried in a new tomb hewn out of rock. For he has come to be Rock of our salvation by conquering the grave, bringing new life out of death. By being laid in the tomb, he has truly made your grave a place of Sabbath rest, of peace, from which you will awaken in the resurrection to everlasting life. And so we say with the Psalmist, "On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God."

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