

ORDER OF SERVICE – Worship at Home 02/04/21 – Good Friday

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Opening Sentence ¹

God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, take us along that holy way you once took to your death. Take our minds, our memories, above all our reluctant hearts, and let us see and understand more of what once you did for love of us and all the world. Blessed are you O Christ, mocked and broken for us: through your cross you give us hope and healing. **Amen**

Reading Mark 15: 1-20 ¹

¹Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

²'Are you the king of the Jews?' asked Pilate. 'You have said so,' Jesus replied.

³The chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴So again Pilate asked him, 'Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of.' ⁵But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed. ⁶Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. ⁷A man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder in the uprising. ⁸The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. ⁹'Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?' asked Pilate, ¹⁰knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to get Pilate to release Barabbas instead.

¹²'What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?' Pilate asked them.

¹³'Crucify him!' they shouted. ¹⁴'Why? What crime has he committed?' asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!' ¹⁵Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

¹⁶The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. ¹⁷They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. ¹⁸And they began to call out to him, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' ¹⁹Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spat on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. ²⁰And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Reflection

Jesus is God the Son – he deserves our praise and reverence - yet he is abused and ill-treated. He is tried on trumped up charges by an illegal court and the ruler who could have released him bows to the wishes of a mob stirred up against him. Through all this humiliation and injustice Jesus maintains his serenity, secure in his Father's love and purpose.

How different with us. How often we become angry and defensive when someone attacks or criticises us in any way. How often we fail to stand up for what we know to be right – swayed by those around us.

STF 280 - Paul Gerhardt (1607-76) translated by James Waddell Alexander (1804-1859)

O sacred head, now wounded,	What language shall I borrow
With grief and shame weighed down,	To thank thee, dearest friend,
Now scornfully surrounded	For this, thy dying sorrow,
With thorns, thine only crown;	Thy pity without end?
How art thou pale with anguish,	O make me thine forever,
With sore abuse and scorn;	And should I fainting be,
How does that visage languish,	Lord, let me never, never
Which once was bright as morn!	Outlive my love to thee.

Confession & Responses

Lord Jesus Christ, we confess we have failed you as did your first disciples.

We ask you for your mercy and your help.

We fail to keep alert, to watch and pray: Lord, forgive: **Christ have mercy.**

We run away from those who abuse you: Lord, forgive: **Christ have mercy.**

We are afraid of being known to belong to you: Lord, forgive: **Christ have mercy.**

We fail to forgive as you forgave: Lord, forgive: **Christ have mercy.**

We do not endure as you endure to the end: Lord, forgive: **Christ have mercy.**

May God enrich us with his grace, and nourish us with his blessing;

may God defend us in trouble and keep us from evil; and forgive our selfishness and sin,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **Amen.**

Reading Mark 15: 21-32 ¹

²¹ A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. ²² They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means 'the place of the skull'). ²³ Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. ²⁴ And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. ²⁵ It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶ The written notice of the charge against him read: the King of the Jews. ²⁷ They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, 'So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰ come down from the cross and save yourself!' ³¹ In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he can't save himself! ³² Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.' Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Reflection

Those in charge of Jesus' crucifixion compelled Simon of Cyrene to help carry the cross. He did not volunteer or willingly accept the task, but that is no surprise. Simon was only passing by and presumably knew little about Christ. We, on the other hand, do know Jesus. And we have heard his words about the need to take up our own crosses each day and to walk in his footsteps. What is our response?

So they drove nails through his hands and feet. Then they raised him on the cross, where he hung in excruciating pain in the heat of the sun - a demonstration of the depth of his love for us - for surely it was his love of others that truly kept him there. For Christians the cross is the supreme symbol of our faith because it was here that Jesus died and brought God's forgiveness to us all. God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

Hymn STF 287 – Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

1. When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through his blood.
3. See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
4. Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Reading Mark 15: 33-41 ¹

³³ At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴ And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?').

³⁵ When some of those standing near heard this, they said, 'Listen, he's calling Elijah.'

³⁶ Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 'Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down,' he said.

³⁷ With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. ³⁸ The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'

⁴⁰ Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. ⁴¹ In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

Reflection

Even the very elements seem to recognise this darkest of moments. They respect what others do not notice, this battle of light and dark, good and evil. Christ, the sinless righteous One, defeats the powers of darkness and evil and the way to full relationship with God, so long barred by our sin, is opened again. The temple curtain is torn apart - for nothing can separate us now from the love of God in Christ.

The task is done and it is left to a hardened Roman centurion, expert in effective execution, veteran instigator of tortured death to recognise the significance of who Jesus is.

Hymn ²

1. Let us kneel at Calvary, wonder at this mystery.
With the words 'Father forgive',
Jesus dies that we might live.
He was stripped so that we might dress
In his robe of righteousness,
Bore the burden of our sin as the nails pierced his skin.
We will kneel in adoration at our King's sacrifice.
See the scandal and the glory
As his death brings us life.
All our hope and our salvation are in his sacrifice, at
the cross.
2. At the hill they called the skull,
He was crushed;
We are made whole,
Jesus drank our bitter cup,
Pouring out his precious blood.
God forsaken, all alone,
Jesus made our shame his own.
Suffered hell on earth to save
Those who drove him to the grave.
We will kneel in adoration at our
King's sacrifice.

3. He cried out, then breathed no more,
As the temple curtain tore,
Made the new and living way
Back to God for us that day.
Why seek Christ among the dead?
He is living as he said.
He was raised at God's command,
In the life of Christ we stand.
We will stand in celebration for our King is alive.
See the joy and restoration as we share his new life.
We are free no condemnation for our King is alive.
Yes he lives.

Verses from Psalm 22 ¹

My God, my God, why? Why have you forsaken me? Why?
Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?
My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.
Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises.
In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them.
To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.
All who see me mock me: they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
"He trusts in the Lord," they say, "let the Lord rescue him."
"Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."
They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.
But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

Prayers

We bring our prayers to our heavenly Father for people everywhere according to their needs. We pray for the witness of the Church to the death and resurrection of Christ, that together we may serve God in holiness and truth to the glory of his Name.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Most gracious God and Father, turn our hearts and the hearts of all to you, that by the power of Holy Spirit, peace which is founded on justice may be established throughout the world. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Merciful God, creator of all the people of the earth, have compassion on all who do not yet know you; by the preaching of the Good News with grace and power, bring them into the light of truth and salvation. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Almighty and everlasting God, comforter of the sad, the strength of those who suffer, hear the prayers of all who cry out of any trouble and to all in need grant mercy, hope, relief, and refreshment. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for the communities where we live, for all who live and work there, are educated there – open the eyes blinded to the truth and the ears deaf to your word.

Pray for your friends and neighbours now.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Hymn STF 277 – Samuel Crossman (1624-1683)

1. My song is love unknown,
My Saviour's love to me,
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
O who am I, that for my sake
My Lord should take frail flesh, and die?
2. He came from his blessed throne,
Salvation to bestow;
But men made strange, and none
The longed-for Christ would know.
But Oh, my Friend, my Friend indeed,
Who at my need his life did spend.
3. Sometimes they strew his way,
And his sweet praises sing;
Resounding all the day
Hosannas to their King:
Then 'Crucify!' is all their breath,
And for his death they thirst and cry.
4. Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
He gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries! Yet they at these
Themselves displease, and 'gainst him rise.
5. They rise and needs will have
My dear Lord made away;
A murderer they save,
The Prince of Life they slay,
Yet cheerful he to suffering goes,
That he his foes from thence might free.
6. In life no house, no home
My Lord on earth might have;
In death no friendly tomb,
But what a stranger gave.
What may I say? Heaven was his home;
And mine the tomb wherein he lay.
7. Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King,
Never was grief like Thine!
This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.

Reading Mark 15: 42-47 ¹

⁴² It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. ⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. ⁴⁵ When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. ⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

Reflection

It took great courage to do this one last act of kindness for Jesus, to obtain Jesus's body and hastily bury it before nightfall. To be associated with a recently executed prisoner was to make you a marked person. Will we be willing to be identified as a follower of Jesus? In life Jesus had nowhere to lay his head and in death nowhere to be laid except for the kindness of a friend who allowed him to borrow a tomb. He borrowed a tomb and for him the grave was a temporary abode and because of him the grave is a temporary abode for us too.

Jesus had said that unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains alone but if it dies it bears much fruit. Jesus is buried, like a seed in the ground, in the cold and dark of the tomb. So we await the springing forth of new life by the power of resurrection.

Closing words

Lord Jesus, Lord of life, you became as nothing for us; be with those who feel worthless and as nothing in the world's eyes.

You were laid in a cold, dark tomb and hidden from sight; be with all who suffer and die in secret, hidden from the eyes of the world.

To you, Jesus, your rigid body imprisoned in a tomb, be honour and glory.

Jesus, Lord of the cross, we thank you that you went into the heart of our evil and pain, along the way that was both terrible and wonderful, as your Kingship became your brokenness and your dying became love's triumph.

We bow down before the cross in wonder and sorrow; holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal, have mercy on us. **Amen.**

Hymn STF 276 – Michael Robert Newbolt (1874-1956) + George William Kitchen (1827-1912)

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
'Till all the world adore his sacred name.*

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| 1. Follow the path on which our Captain trod,
Our King victorious, Christ, the Son of God: | 4. O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
As thou hast promised, draw men unto thee: |
| 2. Each new-born soldier of the Crucified
Bears on his brow the seal of him who died: | 5. Set up thy throne, that earth's despair may
cease
Beneath the shadow of its healing peace. |
| 3. Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
The hosts of God in conqu'ring ranks
combine. | |

Blessing

Christ crucified draw us to himself, to find in him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven; and the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Acknowledgements

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