

Stations of the Passion According to John

There are 14 traditional stations of the Cross. What follows are 14 stations in the Passion account of John. You are invited to take some time on Good Friday or anytime during Holy Week and read this account with accompanying thoughts and prayers. You may do this walking or sitting, outside or inside. You may start, put it down and resume later. This is merely an invitation to go deeper into this sacred story that leads to our redemption.

Hymn: Were You There?

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?



Station 1: John 18:1-12 Jesus is arrested

- *After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.*
- The night that will bring Jesus' arrest begins in a garden. Consider: In Genesis, the man and woman betrayed God by taking the fruit, Judas will betray Jesus by taking a bribe.
- Jesus asks a question – twice – "Whom are you looking for?" The question has been with Jesus throughout his ministry. What were people looking for in Jesus? What are we looking for?

Prayer: Gracious God, from the beginning you have intended good things for us. You have been present with us and for us, but we turn away and look elsewhere. Help us to look for you and your goodness. Amen.



Station 2: John 18:13-14 The trials begin ...

First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had

advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

- Caiaphas is the highest religious authority. Did he realize that he was right in saying, “It was better to have one person die for the people.”? This was God’s plan all along, and they were going to be part of it. God finds ways to work the divine will.

Prayer: Gracious God, you determined that your Son would die for us. Help us to live with this incredible divine mystery and guide us in the ways of your plan. Amen.

Station 3: John 18:15 -18 Peter’s trial begins

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was there with them and warming himself.



- Peter had been warned by Jesus that he would deny him, yet he still dares to follow Jesus. In his first denial, he not only denies Jesus, he denies his discipleship. How do we deny our discipleship?

Prayer: Gracious God, we can see ourselves in Peter, so wanting to be true to you, to be a disciple of Jesus, help us meet the challenges and questions that life brings us that can lead us astray. Amen.

Station 4: John 18:19-24 Jesus’ answer becomes a question



Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

- Jesus will not answer the high priest. He says ask the people who heard him. What might they say about Jesus’ ministry?
- Jesus is struck on the face. This is the first time he will be physically abused in his journey to the Cross.

Prayer: Gracious God, Jesus spoke openly of your coming kingdom and we have heard his words, give us the courage to speak for Jesus – openly – and give witness to your kingdom. Amen.

Station 5: John 18:27 -18 Peter's trial, part 2

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

- Peter completes his act of denial. We might not deny Jesus directly, but are there other ways that we deny Jesus with our words and actions?

Prayer: Gracious God, how warm and comfortable we can be. Embolden and encourage us to stand firm in our faith, even when it takes us out of our comfort zone. Amen.



Station 6: John 18:28-32 The trial moves to Pilate



Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." (This was to fulfill what Jesus had

said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

- Pilate must negotiate his relationship with the Jewish authorities. A good relationship will make his job of governing easier. He acknowledges their restrictions about coming into a Gentile area (headquarters). He has no interest in their "Jesus problem".
- The religious authorities want the power of the state (death penalty) to solve their 'problem'. What are the dangers of having the government 'solve' our religious issues?

Prayer: Gracious God, we are appalled that religious leaders could so misunderstand Jesus and his mission. Give us patience and insight so that our religious practices and traditions do not prevent us from doing your mission. Amen.

Station 7: John 18:33-40 Pilate and truth

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my



kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

- Pilate has heard some things about Jesus. Does he use the term 'King of the Jews' as a term of respect?
- Jesus has always spoken of a different kind of kingship. Would Pilate ever understand this? How do we understand his kingship?
- Pilate's question, "What is truth?", goes unanswered. Keep this question in mind as you continue to read this passion account. Where/when do you see truth?
- The man who will get released is Barabbas. In Hebrew, his name means 'son of the father' – ('bar' = son, 'abba' = father).

Prayer: Gracious God, your Son calls us to listen to him so we may know the truth. Help us see the truths of our world through him – his words, his life, death and resurrection. Amen.

Station 8: John 19:1-11 Pilate and Jesus – power struggle

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God." Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."



- Jesus is now mocked because of the title, 'King of the Jews' – the degradation of Jesus continues.
- Pilate says, 'Here is the man' – Jesus, the man, is the Word of God made flesh. Now he suffers in the flesh.
- Pilate asks, "Where are you from?" Why doesn't Jesus answer? Is it because he not only knows from whom he comes but also knows where he is going?

Prayer: Gracious God, Jesus came in the flesh and taught us about humanity. As we behold the inhumane treatment he received, inspire us to consider how we treat one another, how we use our power over others. Amen.

Station 9: John 19:12 -16



Pilate hands Jesus over

From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked

them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

- Pilate mocks the one who is called 'king', yet he makes a mockery of his power by yielding to the crowd. Are there times when we have power and we are afraid to use it?
- The shouts of 'crucify' are chilling. This is a most brutal form of capital punishment. Where does the anger come that demands a brutal death for another?

Prayer: Gracious God, Pilate has power but the emperor has power over Pilate, when we feel the power of the world and the power of others urging us in ways that are not your ways, give us strength to resist. Amen.

Station 10: John 19:17-22 Jesus takes up his Cross

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."



- In John's Gospel, Jesus carries his cross to the 'Place of the Skull' John's Gospel emphasizes how much Jesus is in control as he goes to his crucifixion.
- Pilate asked about truth. The sign on the Cross speaks the truth. Did Pilate believe this?

Prayer: Gracious God, the sign tells us who Jesus is, the Cross tells us how Jesus loves. May we see the Cross as a sign of your inscrutable love and let that love carry us as Jesus carried his cross. Amen.

Station 11: John 19:23-25 Scripture is fulfilled – unexpectedly



When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

"They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." And that is what the soldiers did.

→ Soldiers attending the brutal death of Jesus show more concern and respect for his clothing and thereby make a truth of the Psalmist's lament. (Psalm 22:18)

Prayer: Gracious God, the soldiers gamble while the Savior dies, ignoring his suffering, open our eyes and hearts to the suffering in our world that we easily overlook. Amen.

Station 12: John 19:26-30 Jesus humanity shown again

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.



Take a moment of silence at reading of John 19:30 – 'gave up his spirit.'

- The women appear at the Cross, as they have appeared throughout Jesus' ministry.
- The dying Jesus shows his love for his mother and her future care.
- The thirsty Jesus, who once offered the living water, now has a physical thirst – his cry of thirst prompts an act of kindness. The soldiers offer their wine.“
- It is finished” – perhaps better rendered – “it is completed.”

Prayer: Gracious God, your dying son shows us the best of humanity, reaching out in love to his mother and friend; he shows us the frailty of humanity, in expressing the reality of his thirst. May we be moved to meet the needs of our fellow human beings. Amen.

Station 13: John 19:31-37 Jesus is pierced



Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers

pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

- On a cross, you die by suffocation, your arm muscles give up and the pressure on the chest cuts off your breathing. Your legs can provide some lift until they weaken. Breaking the legs would eliminate this. Jesus is already dead. A cruel death.
- Then Jesus is pierced and Scripture is fulfilled. More cruelty!

Prayer: Gracious God, as they pierced the chest of Jesus, your only-begotten Son, they pierced your heart. May we never cease pondering your amazing grace shown to us on the Cross. Amen.

Station 14: John 19:38-42 Jesus is buried

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.



- A secret disciple goes public, risks going to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. How many secret disciples of Jesus were there? are there?
- Nicodemus who came to Jesus in secret in night is also there for this night time burial.
- The passion account concludes in a garden. Jesus is lovingly brought to a resting place in a garden ... Jesus has died, but there is a certain calm in this closing scene.

Prayer: Gracious God, the pierced and crucified body has been gently and lovingly placed in the tomb, bringing peace after the tortuous hours on the Cross; may we quietly place our thoughts and meditations on this passion in your hands as we wait for the next Chapter. Amen.

Closing Hymn *Go to Dark Gethsemane*

1. Go to dark Gethsemane, ye that feel the tempter's power
Your Redeemer's conflict see, watch with Him one bitter hour
Turn not from His griefs away; learn of Jesus Christ to pray
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray
2. See Him at the judgment hall, beaten, bound, reviled, arraigned
O the wormwood and the gall! O the pangs His soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss; learn of Christ to bear the cross
Learn of Christ to bear the cross
3. Calvary's mournful mountain climb; there, adoring at His feet
Mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete

"It is finished!" hear Him cry; learn of Jesus Christ to die
Learn of Jesus Christ to die.