

Good Friday Meditation – 10/04/20

PRAISE: 380 There is a green hill

Prayer

PRAISE: 378 Praise to the holiest in the height

READING: Luke 22:47-62

Address

PRAISE: 399 My song is love unknown

READING: Luke 23:13-15

Address

Prayer of Intercession

PRAISE: 403 Were you there when they crucified

READING: Luke 23:26, 32-38, 44-49

Address

PRAISE: 382 O Sacred Head! Sore wounded

Prayer

PRAISE: 405 We sing the praise of him who died

Benediction. Go in peace,
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and Fellowship in the Holy Spirit, be with us all **3-fold AMEN**

CH4 786 May the God of peace go with us
as we travel from this place;
may the love of Jesus keep us
firm in hope and full of grace. Tune: Ae fond kiss

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CH4 380

1 There is a green hill far away,
outside a city wall,
where the dear Lord was crucified
who died to save us all.

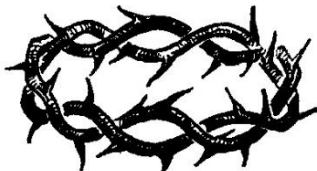
2 We may not know, we cannot tell,
what pains he had to bear,
but we believe it was for us
he hung and suffered there.

3 He died that we might be forgiven,
he died to make us good,
that we might go at last to heaven,
saved by his precious blood.

4 There was no other good enough
to pay the price of sin,
he only could unlock the gate
of heaven, and let us in.

5 Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved,
and we must love him too,
and trust in his redeeming blood,
and try his works to do.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)



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Almighty God, we give thanks and praise and worship, with your Church in every place and throughout the ages, for the grace that has come to us once for all in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is with shame and sorrow, as we think of him, that we confess our failures to be his true disciples; we have not followed him in his concern for the poor, the despised and the lost ones; we shrink from being wholly committed to his way of meekness; we long for the prizes that this world can give, and are too easily turned aside from his way of faith and hope and love.

In your forgiving love, most merciful Father, accept our sorrow for our sins, and strengthen us in the resolve to be his disciples indeed, by his Spirit in us all the days of our life. We ask it in Jesus' name as we pray together in his words:

Our Father,
Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,
For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
For ever AMEN

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Luke 22: 47-62

The Arrest of Jesus

⁴⁷ Jesus was still speaking when a crowd arrived, led by Judas, one of the twelve disciples. He came up to Jesus to kiss him. ⁴⁸ But Jesus said, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you betray the Son of Man?"

⁴⁹ When the disciples who were with Jesus saw what was going to happen, they asked, "Shall we use our swords, Lord?" ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the High Priest's slave and cut off his right ear.

⁵¹ But Jesus said, "Enough of this!" He touched the man's ear and healed him.

⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and the elders who had come there to get him, "Did you have to come with swords and clubs, as though I were an outlaw? ⁵³ I was with you in the Temple every day, and you did not try to arrest me. But this is your hour to act, when the power of darkness rules."

Peter Denies Jesus

⁵⁴ They arrested Jesus and took him away into the house of the High Priest; and Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵ A fire had been lit in the centre of the courtyard, and Peter joined those who were sitting round it. ⁵⁶ When one of the servant women saw him sitting there at the fire, she looked straight at him and said, "This man too was with Jesus!"

⁵⁷ But Peter denied it, "Woman, I don't even know him!"

⁵⁸ After a little while a man noticed Peter and said, "You are one of them, too!"

But Peter answered, "Man, I am not!"

⁵⁹ And about an hour later another man insisted strongly, "There isn't any doubt that this man was with Jesus, because he also is a Galilean!"

⁶⁰ But Peter answered, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!"

At once, while he was still speaking, a cock crowed. ⁶¹ The Lord turned round and looked straight at Peter, and Peter remembered that the Lord had said to him, "Before the cock crows tonight, you will say three times that you do not know me." ⁶² Peter went out and wept bitterly.

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We can talk about the Cross as a stage in God's plan of Salvation – we can talk about the Love of God being shown from the Cross. We also have to take note of the human agency by which it came about. That involves the frailty and weakness of human nature. In general, we can think of the major change from the adulation and cheering of Palm Sunday to the situation of Good Friday. I've chosen to highlight two of these in the first reading.

Judas Iscariot was one of the Disciples – committed to Jesus as Messiah; and probably with a fervent Nationalistic slant to his thinking. This would have given him a martial and heroic picture for the Messiah. Imagine his horror when it looked to him as if Jesus was going to submit, weakly, to what was facing him at Jerusalem – his death. There is a possibility that his "betrayal" of Jesus was meant to force Jesus, and God, to act to save him by intervening with God's full power – as it were to "save Jesus from himself". In reality, it gave the Jewish leaders the opportunity they were looking for. If it hadn't been Judas, there would have had to be some other trigger. In his despair Judas killed himself – he could not live with what he had brought about – and he was blind to any future for himself.

Peter, on the other hand, tried to live up to his promise and commitment of support for Jesus. He followed after all the others had fled, but, when he felt he was compromised and threatened, he found himself denying Jesus. Whether the fact that Jesus had predicted it helped or not I don't know, but though Peter "went out and wept bitterly", he continued with his life, albeit carrying this huge burden of guilt.

We may not find ourselves like Judas, but we have Peter's weaknesses – thus we have a share in putting Jesus on the Cross.

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CH4 399

1 My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh, and die?

2 He came from his blest throne
salvation to bestow,
but people scorned, and none the longed-for Christ would know.
But O my Friend, my Friend indeed,
who at my need his life did spend.

3 Sometimes they strew his way,
and his strong 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:
but 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.

Samuel Crossman (c. 1624-1683)

Luke 23:13-15

Jesus is Sentenced to Death

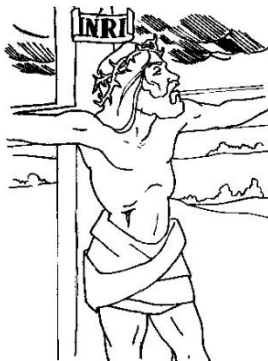
¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought this man to me and said that he was misleading the people. Now, I have examined him here in your presence, and I have not found him guilty of any of the crimes you accuse him of. ¹⁵ Nor did Herod find him guilty, for he sent him back to us. There is nothing this man has done to deserve death.



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We now come to the next stage of getting Jesus on to the Cross. The Chief Priests were determined to have Jesus killed – but they didn't have the power themselves – they had to convince Pilate that Jesus was a danger to the State – not just to their position. While they did not convince Pilate, they were able to manipulate him by threatening him with the kind of reports to Rome which would damage his career – and he was already in a vulnerable position and could not afford any trouble. He tried to dodge the issue by offering them Jesus as part of a Passover amnesty. However, the Chief Priests were ready for that and had agitators scattered through the crowd to shout for the release of Barabbas. Pilate set aside his stated assertion of "not guilty" and gave way under the political pressure that was put on him.

The crowd, many of whom had probably cheered Jesus on Palm Sunday, now allowed themselves to be swayed by the agitators. They allowed their feelings and ideas of justice to be overwhelmed by the loud voices of agitators.



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Almighty God, you have given us a vision, in the word made flesh, of the freedom and fulfilment you have purposed for our human race. May that vision never fade from our minds and wills. May your Spirit be strong to sustain its power against the darkness and evil in our human hearts, and in the world around us.

We pray for men and women unjustly accused; for prisoners of conscience; for children born to poverty; for those rejected because of their race or colour; for innocent victims of violence and war.

Lord, we remember before you all who are in any way affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. We remember those who are ill – at home, in hospital or intensive care; we remember those who are confined to their own homes for their safety – and cut off from normal communication from friends. We remember with thanks all the NHS staff, carers and emergency workers who are doing such a wonderful job – sometimes in dangerous situations.

We pray for the Government, all MPs, Council leaders and staff who are planning and working on our behalf in the crisis. We pray especially for the PM, Boris Johnson, in his time of need.

May they all be aware of your love and care around them.

Lord Jesus Christ despised and rejected, Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief; be present with your brothers and sisters who bear the pain of the world. Strengthen them in spirit. Send them present help and uplift them with the hope of your Kingdom. Lord hear their prayer. AMEN

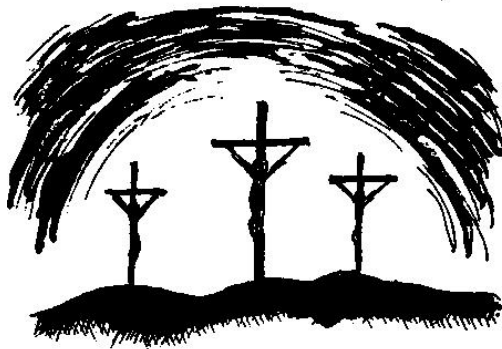
CH4 403

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?

4 Were you there when God raised him from the dead?
Were you there when God raised him from the dead?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when God raised him from the dead?



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Luke 23:26 - - 49

Jesus is Crucified

²⁶ The soldiers led Jesus away, and as they were going, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon who was coming into the city from the country. They seized him, put the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

³² Two other men, both of them criminals, were also led out to be put to death with Jesus. ³³ When they came to the place called "The Skull", they crucified Jesus there, and the two criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, "Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing."

They divided his clothes among themselves by throwing dice. ³⁵ The people stood there watching while the Jewish leaders jeered at him: "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah whom God has chosen!"

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him: they came up to him and offered him cheap wine, ³⁷ and said, "Save yourself if you are the king of the Jews!"

³⁸ Above him were written these words: "This is the King of the Jews."

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁴⁻⁴⁵ It was about twelve o'clock when the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole country until three o'clock; and the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father! In your hands I place my spirit!" He said this and died.

⁴⁷ The army officer saw what had happened, and he praised God, saying, "Certainly he was a good man!"

⁴⁸ When the people who had gathered there to watch the spectacle saw what happened, they all went back home, beating their breasts in sorrow. ⁴⁹ All those who knew Jesus personally, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance to watch.

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We have snippets of information about different people involved in the Crucifixion. We have the traveller, Simon of Cyrene, who was compelled by the soldiers to help carry Jesus' cross. We have the two criminals crucified with him. We have the soldiers, some of whom mocked him. We have the army officer who was greatly moved by Jesus, "*Certainly he was a good man!*" There were some of his friends and followers who had dared to come but were probably bewildered and despairing.

In the midst of this we have two happenings which are special. In spite of all that was done to bring him to the Cross Jesus is able to say, "*Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing*". That is spoken out of the Love of Jesus – out of the Love of God himself. He knew all that had gone through people's minds as they made their decisions – he knew that it had brought him pain and anguish – both physical and mental. But he also knew that this had been God's way of achieving His purpose – of proclaiming His love. Jesus also knew that God's forgiveness was a part of his love. Its purpose was to make it possible for people to go on living, to be recovered from their mistakes – because the burden of their guilt could be taken away and replaced with a new commitment based on Love – a new relationship depending on God's initiative rather than on our human frailty. The reference to the "*Curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two*" is a symbol of this new, direct approach. Previously only the priests could go beyond the curtain with the offerings and requests of the worshipper. NOW God has done away with intermediaries and each person can approach Him directly.

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CH4 382

1 O Sacred Head! sore wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down!
O Kingly Head, surrounded
with thorns, thine only crown!
How pale art thou with anguish,
with sore abuse and scorn!
How does that face now languish,
which once was bright as morn!

2 O Lord of life and glory,
what bliss till now was thine!
I read the wondrous story;
I joy to call thee mine.
Thy grief and bitter Passion
were all for sinners' gain;
mine, mine was the transgression,
but thine the deadly pain.

3 What language shall I borrow
to praise thee, heavenly Friend,
for this thy dying sorrow,
thy pity without end?
O make me thine for ever,
and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love for thee.

4 Be near me, Lord, when dying;
O show thy cross to me;
and, my last need supplying,
come, Lord, and set me free;
these eyes, new faith receiving,
from thee shall never move;
for they who die believing
die safely through thy love.

Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676)

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Almighty Father, we are filled with wonder, and awe and reverent worship, as we wait before the Cross that atones for our sins and proclaims your measureless love for weak and erring men and women. Thanks be to God for his gift beyond words, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Holy Spirit of God, come to us and move our hard hearts, that we may sorrow with Christ for our torn humanity, and for all homeless souls, and become his body in the world today.

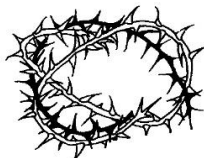
We remember Paul's words, *I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

As the Lord Jesus said, "*It is finished*", so we accept in faith, and in great thankfulness and gladness, his holy life and sacrificial death for us and for our world.

As the Lord Jesus committed himself in dying into the Father's hand, so let us commit ourselves, with all that concerns us, to his infinite power and goodness.

Father, into your hands we commit ourselves and all dear to us, and the world for which we pray.

AMEN.



Good Friday Meditation – 10/04/20

CH4 405

We sing the praise of him who died,
of him who died upon the cross;
the sinner's hope let men deride,
for this we count the world but loss.

Inscribed upon the cross we see,
in shining letters, 'God is love';
he bears our sins upon the tree;
he brings us mercy from above.

The cross! it takes our guilt away;
it holds the fainting spirit up;
it cheers with hope the gloomy day,
and sweetens every bitter cup;

It makes the coward spirit brave,
and nerves the feeble arm for fight;
it takes its terror from the grave,
and gilds the bed of death with light;

The balm of life, the cure of woe,
the measure and the pledge of love,
the sinner's refuge here below,
the angels' theme in heaven above.

Thomas Kelly (1769-1855)

Benediction. Go in peace,
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and Fellowship in the Holy Spirit, be with us all **AMEN**

CH4 786 May the God of peace go with us
 as we travel from this place;
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