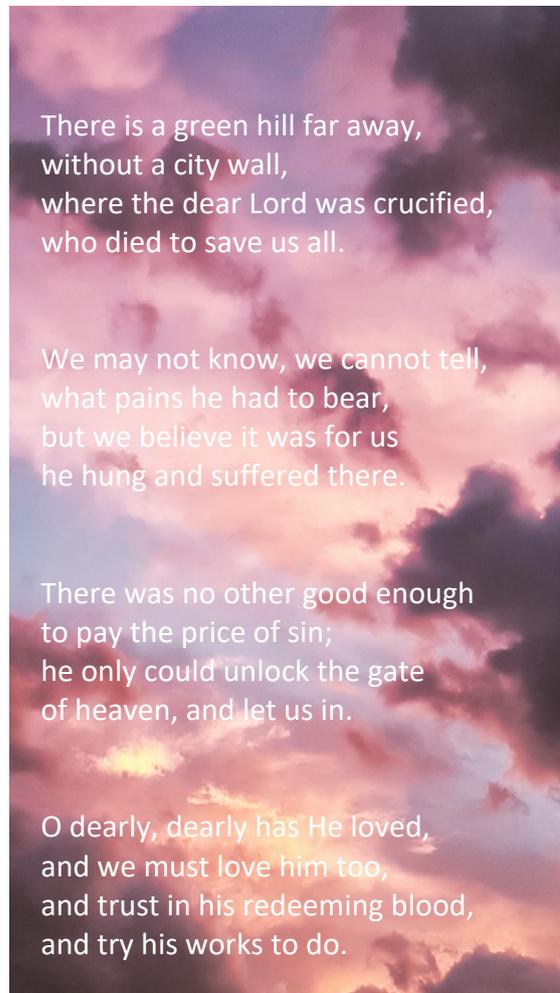


Good Friday

Quiet Hour at the Cross

10am 2nd April 2021



Words: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-95) Music: W. Horsley (1774-1858)

We listen to God's Word: Matthew 26 v47 - 56 Rob Addis

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." ⁴⁹ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

⁵⁰ Jesus replied, "Do what you came for, friend." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

⁵¹ With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁵² "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

⁵⁵ In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

We spend time in quiet reflection until 10:15am

During the time of quiet you may like to ...

1) *Reflect on Jesus' words in v52-54:*

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

Jesus could have used God's power to sidestep the suffering, but knowingly chose to go through with it, to bring you peace. Spend time praising and thanking Him for this.

2) *Alternatively, you might want to think about how Jesus must have felt to be betrayed by one who was so close to Him; someone He loved and had spent the last three years investing in.*

3) *Or you may want to imagine you were one of the disciples with Jesus – for example ...*

- *Would you have been able to see the faces of the people who came to arrest Jesus?*
- *What expression would you have seen in Judas' face?*
- *What particular sights and sounds might you have experienced?*
- *How would you have felt as Judas, someone you had shared 3 years of your life with, betrayed your rabbi?*
- *How would you have felt about the high priest's servant's ear being cut off?*
- *What emotions would you have felt?*

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?

He came from his blest throne, _
salvation to bestow;
but men made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know.
But O, my friend,
my friend indeed,
Who at my need
his life did spend!

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.

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.

Samuel Crossman (1624 – 1683)

We listen to God's Word: Matthew 26 v57 - 75 Pat Jackson

⁵⁷ Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled.

⁵⁸ But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. ⁵⁹ The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death.

⁶⁰ But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward ⁶¹ and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

⁶² Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

⁶⁴ "You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?"

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

⁷¹ Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

⁷² He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

⁷³ After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."

⁷⁴ Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

We spend time in quiet reflection until 10:30am

During the time of quiet you may like to ...

1) Meditate on v74:

"Then [Peter] began to call down curses on himself and he swore at them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a cock crowed."

You may want to spend some time asking God's forgiveness for times when you have denied Jesus or disowned Him – not speaking up for Him, etc.

2) Alternatively, you might want to think how Jesus must have felt as they spat in His face (v67) and treated Him so unjustly.

3) *Or you may want to imagine you were there, at the High Priest's house – for example ...*

- *What expression do you see on Jesus' face?*
- *What questions do you hear being asked about Jesus disciples and His teaching?*
- *How did you feel when Jesus was spat at and hit?*

Or perhaps you were in the courtyard ...

- *What did Peter's face look like? Was he scared? Was he angry? Was he ashen?*
- *What was the tone in Peter's voice as he denied Jesus? Did it change with each denial?*
- *How did those questioning Peter react when he denied Jesus?*
- *What would have been going through Peter's mind as he heard the cock crowing?*
- *What would you have done if you had been 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?

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?

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?

Trad. Spiritual arr. Francis Westbrook (1903-75)

We listen to God's Word: Matthew 27 v1 – 26 Hubert Ashton

Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. ² So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

³ When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴ "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood."

"What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."

⁵ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

⁶ The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law

to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.”⁷ So they decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners.⁸ That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day.⁹ Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel,¹⁰ and they used them to buy the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

¹¹ Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

¹² When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer.¹³ Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?”¹⁴ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

¹⁵ Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd.¹⁶ At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas.¹⁷ So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release

to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?”¹⁸ For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

¹⁹ While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.”

²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

²¹ “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor. “Barabbas,” they answered.

²² “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked.

They all answered, “Crucify him!”

²³ “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

²⁵ All the people answered, “His blood is on us and on our children!”

²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

We spend time in quiet reflection until 10:45am

During the time of quiet you may like to ...

1) *Meditate on v22-23:*

“What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"
"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.
But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

You may want to spend time asking God's forgiveness for times when you have sided with the crowd and failed to acknowledge Jesus the Messiah; when he has not been your King.

- 2) *Alternatively, reflect on the way the crowds a few days before turned out to welcome Jesus as their King, but how they are now demanding his execution.*
- 3) *Or you may want to imagine you were there when Pilate met with Jesus – for example ...*
 - *How did Pilate react when Jesus refused to say where he came from? Frustrated, intrigued or something else?*
 - *What must it have felt like for Jesus to stand there and say nothing?*
 - *For a long time Pilate had wanted to see Jesus. How might Pilate have felt when he finally met Him?*
 - *How did Pilate's wife feel about her husband's decision?*
 - *How do you feel about Barabbas going free instead of Jesus? Would you have shouted for Barabbas?*
 - *Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but finally hands Him over to be crucified. Could Pilate have acted differently? Was he really "Innocent of this man's blood"?*

How deep the Father's love for us

How vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss –
The Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders;
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life –
I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything,
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer;
But this I know with all my heart –
His wounds have paid my ransom.

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We listen to God's Word: Matthew 27 v26 – 44 Penny Durie

²⁷ Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand.

Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰ They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹ After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

³² As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). ³⁴ There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵ When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

³⁸ Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God.

Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

We spend time in quiet reflection until 11am

During the time of quiet you may like to ...

1) Meditate on v31:

"Then they led Jesus away to crucify him"

You may want to spend the time asking God's forgiveness for your sins that took Him to the cross.

- 2) *Alternatively, you might want to reflect on how Jesus must have felt abandoned by His friends; insulted by those who passed by; mocked by the chief priests and the teachers of the law and forsaken by His Father.*
- 3) *Or you may want to imagine you were there – perhaps one of the women near the cross – for example ...*
 - *How would you have felt? Angry at the Romans? Incensed at Pilate's weakness? Pity for his mother Mary?*
 - *What was the look on Simon of Cyrene's face? Did he stay at the crucifixion or leave as soon as he could?*
 - *What was the reaction of the many Jews who read the notice 'This is Jesus, The King of the Jews'?*
 - *What would you have wanted to do or say, but didn't dare do in case the Romans crucified you?*
 - *What would it have smelled like?*
 - *How would you have felt about the soldiers dividing up Jesus cloths by casting lots?*

We listen to God's Word: Matthew 27 v45 – 54 John Stansfeld

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"* (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split ⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

We depart the church in silence

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