

Crossings Community Church 2023

Good Friday

EXPERIENCE

Copyright © 2022 by Deidre Franklin

Published March 2023
by Crossings Community Church
14600 N Portland Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73134
405-755-2227

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®. Copyright©, 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” an “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark office by Biblica, Inc.™

All rights reserved. Written permission must be secured from the publisher to use or reproduce any part of this book.

INTRODUCTION

We are glad you're here for our Good Friday Experience, an opportunity to fully center our hearts on Jesus through a multi-sensory, interactive exploration of Jesus' journey to the cross. As we prepare to celebrate Easter together this weekend, our prayer is that this somber, reverential experience will lead you to a fresh encounter with Jesus and help you have the most impactful Easter possible.

Christian believers have long observed the "Stations of the Cross" as a devotional exercise to commemorate the betrayal, suffering, and death of Jesus Christ. From the earliest days, Jesus' followers made pilgrimages to Jerusalem to visit the significant sites of his final hours. Over centuries, a distinct pathway formed, and it was named the "Via Dolorosa" or "the way of suffering." Eventually, Christians who were unable to make the long pilgrimage began to build symbolic pathways in their local places of worship with guided stops, or stations, along the way. Each station was crafted to recreate an event leading up to the crucifixion.

Here you will find a series of displays to help you engage in some of the historical events, and thereby draw near to Jesus, who made this sacrifice on our behalf. This is not a traditional rendering of the Stations of the Cross, but a fresh perspective on an ancient practice to help us prepare ourselves to more fully remember and embrace the passion story. We have created eight stations displaying items associated with the events surrounding the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus. Feel free to proceed from one to another, using this booklet as you pause at each station to read a selection from God's Word, a reflection on the significance of the item featured, and a prayer to help you apply it to your life.

Please silence your cell phone, and proceed in a reverent attitude, being mindful of others along the way. You are welcome to pause, have a seat, and pray for a while, or just continue on through each station.

Hand
Washing



HAND WASHING

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Hebrews 9:14

The biblical world was brimming with ceremony. Priests and leaders underwent ritual purification before entering the sacred space of the temple by washing their hands, and sometimes their feet, or by full immersion. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, however, the temple and all of its rituals have become obsolete. All who put their faith in Christ are fully consecrated and cleansed. As Christians, we express this reality through baptism, a one-time immersion to portray our own death to self, burial under the water, and resurrection to a new way of life, following Jesus. The Apostle Paul affirms our purification in his letter to the Corinthians, "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

REFLECTION

As you enter this experience, take a moment to acknowledge your own sin. Talk with God about it in a silent prayer of repentance.

We invite you to participate in a symbolic "washing of the hands" as a way to spiritually prepare your heart.

Before you move on, read 1 Corinthians 6:11 again, this time inserting your own name.

"_____ was washed, _____ was sanctified, _____ was justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."



1

THE LAST SUPPER



On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him ... He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

Mark 14:12-15

Each course of the Passover meal was directed by the host and accompanied by Scripture as a reminder of God's salvation for the people of Israel. They ate unleavened bread to commemorate their hasty departure from Egypt. A lamb bone signified the Passover lamb that was slain, and bitter herbs reminded them of the bitterness of slavery from which God had rescued them. Throughout the meal, they drank red wine, a reminder of the blood spilled from the sacrificial lamb which paid for their forgiveness.

Not until after the awful events of the next day did the disciples fully understand Jesus' use of the bread and the wine to illustrate the sacrifice he was about to make. It was probably many years before his followers realized the whole story of the Exodus—the epic drama of Israel's redemption—was a mere illustration of the ultimate act of redemption Jesus would accomplish. Within hours of this meal, Jesus became the Sacrificial Lamb, the ultimate and final sacrifice not only for the family of Israel, but for all the families of the world.

REFLECTION

Allow the elements of the meal to remind you of how God brought these events to pass in your own life.

LAMB BONE: Imagine holding that lamb as it was sacrificed to atone for your sins. How does it feel to know a death was necessary to pay for your sins?

BITTER HERBS: Imagine the bitter taste, and let it remind you of your own slavery to sin. From what, specifically, did God set you free? Thank him for the sweetness of his grace.

BREAD: When Jesus broke the bread—a symbol of God's faithful provision—he said, "This is my body, broken for you."

WINE: As he passed the cup—symbolic of the sacrificial lamb's blood—Jesus said, "This is my blood, spilled for you."

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for your extravagant provision. Teach me to live in the freedom that was purchased for me by the blood of the lamb, Jesus, my redeemer.

As you proceed to the next station, you will have an opportunity to partake in communion. Do so in remembrance and thanksgiving of Jesus' sacrifice.



2

PIECES OF SILVER



Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Matthew 26:14-16

This sum of money, thirty pieces of silver, would have caught the attention of the first century Jews who inhabited the story of Jesus. It was designated in the Mosaic Law as the amount to be paid upon the accidental death of a slave. And here, hundreds of years later, it was the small price Judas Iscariot received for betraying the Lord, Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

Pick up the silver; feel the weight of the coins in your hand; feel the weight of the betrayal in your heart.

Ponder the value of your personal friendship with Christ. Have you sacrificed any part of your faith for other things you value? Have you sacrificed time with God for other activities or priorities you love?

Now turn the question around. Spend a little time considering the “cost of discipleship.” What are you willing to set aside for a richer, deeper relationship with Christ? What would it take to create space and time for Jesus? Is he worth it?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you taught us that life with you is like finding a hidden treasure, worth more than all of our worldly possessions combined. Teach me the value of your company. Cultivate my desire to know you, and help me to make the choices that will bring me to life in your kingdom.



3

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Mark 14:32-36



In this scene, we find Jesus in one of his favorite places. This garden, like any other, was a quiet place, serene and beautiful. After the last supper, he and his disciples were just taking a walk, or so they thought. When they arrived at the garden, Jesus told them to wait for him while he went on to pray alone. This was not unusual. Jesus routinely excused himself to be alone in prayer. Little did they know that in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus confronted the ultimate evil. In fact, they fell asleep while he was just a few steps away, doing battle with the enemy of ages past. Satan often disguises himself as “my will:” the simple desire to do whatever I want to do and to reject “Thy will” in the process. In the garden, Jesus was triumphant. The physical trial he would endure in the coming hours was the price he paid for the choice he made in the garden: “Not my will, Abba Father, but yours be done.”

REFLECTION

Walk on the path through the garden, or feel free to sit and ponder. Imagine the emotion and torment Jesus felt as he grappled with God’s will and what it would entail. Consider the temptation he faced to “take the easy way out.” What did he feel when he saw his disciples sleeping while he struggled to accept the weight of their sins? Envision his face as “his sweat became like great drops of blood” (Luke 22:44) while he agonized in prayer? Consider his demeanor once he had fully surrendered his will and resolutely turned to face his final hours.

PRAYER

Dearest Jesus, teach me to pray this simple prayer, “Thy will be done,” and to mean it with my body, as well as my heart. Teach me to live it out in my daily life.



4

INSTRUMENTS OF SUFFERING



*But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*

Isaiah 53:5

REFLECTION

It is difficult to imagine the physical pain Jesus endured on the day of his crucifixion. As you consider the items in this display, imagine yourself present at the scene, an observer in the crowd as these items were used to brutalize Jesus. Don't allow yourself to turn away, but watch the blood flow in rivulets down his neck as the jeering soldiers crushed the thorns into his scalp. Open your eyes, don't squeeze them shut, to see two hands, one holding an iron spike, and one swinging a hammer to meet it. Bring this moment in history into the present moment in your imagination. What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you feel?

PRAYER

Dearest Jesus, you received in your body the agony of my rebellion. Help me to honor the price you paid by living out the freedom of my redemption.



5

HIS CROSS

“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

1 Peter 2:24



Trees play a crucial role in the story of the Bible. According to Genesis, human life began in a garden containing the Tree of Life, and the same tree is central to the scene of the new heaven and the new earth described in the final book, Revelation. But here, in the middle of the storyline, stands the tree of death. Maybe it is appropriate that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord was made at the intersection of two trees, crudely cut and fashioned into a cross.

REFLECTION

As you pause here, try to imagine the weight of the wood. Run your hand over it; feel it against your skin.

Consider the choice Jesus made in accepting the cross. As the Roman soldiers mocked him and beat him, he could have called angels from heaven to rescue him, putting an end to the pain and torture. Instead, he chose to pick up this cross and carry it through the filthy streets of Jerusalem, out of the city gates and up the hill of Golgotha. After Jesus was nailed to the cross, it was set upright into the rock, as he himself predicted: “Now is the time for judgment on this world ... And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:31-32).

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for choosing to carry the cross.



6

OIL & SPICES



Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

John 19:39-40 NAS

Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped Jesus' body with linens and spices, and placed him in a tomb. The amount of spices Nicodemus brought was generous and abundant—on par with royal burials; it was a lavish display of affection and respect. Like the gold given to Jesus shortly after his birth by the three wise men, this extravagance points toward Jesus' role as our King.

The spices gathered here are ones that played a significant role in the events of Passion Week.

Spikenard, a rare and costly perfume, was used by Mary of Bethany to anoint the head and feet of the Messiah (John 12:1-3). Jesus referred to it as being saved for “the day of my burial.”

Hyssop is a low growing evergreen, cultivated for its flower tops, from which the fragrance is extracted. It was used to paint the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the doorposts in Egypt to save the Israelites from God's judgment. It symbolizes spiritual cleansing: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7 NAS).

Myrrh, an exotic biblical spice, was used in the formula for the Holy Anointing Oil and in burial spices. Bitter to the taste but sweet to the smell, myrrh in the spiritual sense speaks of dying to self to become a "sweet smelling savor" to the Lord.

In temple days, sweet incense containing frankincense was burned by priests, morning and evening, on the Inner Altar of the Tabernacle. It points to Christ as our High Priest. Frankincense, like myrrh, was also one of the gifts given by the wise men, foreshadowing the fact that he was born to die—on our behalf.

REFLECTION

As you take in the sights and smells of these oils and spices, let them remind you of the extravagant price Jesus paid on your behalf. Shouldn't we lavishly love the One who first loved us so generously? In fact, of all the gifts you can give to God, one that he holds most precious is your heart, your personal devotion. Take some time now to surrender your heart anew.

PRAYER

Jesus, I want to be like those who lavished you with expensive gifts. I want to give the gift that means the most to you—my heart, soul, mind, and strength. Help me hold nothing back because you deserve my total dedication. Let this prayer be a fragrant offering to you as I, to the best of my ability, surrender everything to you with praise and thanksgiving in response to your extravagant love for me.

7

イ
ト
キ
ノ
キ
タ
リ
ノ
キ
タ
リ
ノ
キ
タ
リ

Torn
Curtain



7

TORN CURTAIN

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:19-22



The most sacred space in the Jerusalem temple was called the “Holy of Holies,” and it was protected by a thick, heavy curtain, or “the veil” of the temple. In the earliest days, this would have been the holding place for the ark of the covenant, believed to be the precise location of God’s own presence. The veil was a strong barrier between God and his people. In fact, only the high priest was allowed to enter behind the veil, and only one time each year, to perform the offering of atonement. Because God’s overwhelming presence was said to dwell behind the curtain, if anyone other than the high priest entered, that person would die.

However, God’s timeless wish and will was to be present with his people, so Jesus died to pay the price only he could pay. He paid the price, he died the death no one else could have. On the day Jesus’ physical body died, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom, from Heaven to earth. God’s shining presence and absolute power are now available to everyone. This was the ultimate effect of Jesus’ sacrificial death. It means that we, regular people with no credentials or credit to our name, have unrestricted access to God’s presence.

REFLECTION

As you walk through the curtain, celebrate your direct communion with God, and remember the curtain was torn open through the obedience, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

Oh Sovereign God, thank you for healing not only my pain and my shame, but also for opening the way for me to be with you, in the holiness of your presence. Thank you for the way of the cross.



8

OUR CROSS



I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Galatians 2:20-21

Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it" (Luke 9:23-24). By this he meant that when we surrender to Jesus as Lord of our life, we yield our own plans, and we commit ourselves fully to his purpose, to his kingdom. That is how real life is truly lived.

REFLECTION

Take a moment to consider an area of your life you are holding back from God. Maybe you have given him your marriage, but you are still hanging on to your finances. Maybe you are clinging to your free time or to a relationship you know is not good for you. Maybe you have given this thing to God in the past, but you keep taking it back. You may be holding on to some kind of sin, something that is blocking your way, preventing you from fully receiving the grace of God's presence.

Name it, write it down on a piece of paper provided, and leave it here at the cross. You may want to take a moment to nail it in the wood ... or simply lay it down and walk away.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, my redeemer, as I leave this place today, I'm traveling lightly, unburdened by the brokenness I carried into this place. Thank you for bearing the weight of it. Teach me to walk in the light of your presence. Amen.

Please feel free to take some time in this area to pause, reflect, and pray until you are ready to exit the Good Friday Experience. If you would like to speak with a pastor, volunteers are available to connect you.

Over the next few days leading up to Easter, consider all Jesus experienced in the last days on his journey to the cross. Imagine how the disciples and the followers of Jesus must have felt with him in the tomb, not understanding, yet, the resurrection that would come. Think about the hope and promise we have because of Jesus' death ... and get ready to celebrate his triumphant resurrection.