
Crossings Community Church

GOOD FRIDAY

EXPERIENCE



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.

CLEANSING

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.

REFLECTION

As you enter, pause and listen. The Hebrew people referred to flowing water as living water. Unlike stagnant water, it has the capacity to cleanse and to quench the thirst of weary travelers. Living water flows and disappears, just like the weight of negative emotions and past mistakes. As you begin today's journey to the cross, ask Jesus to wash these burdens away.

The Apostle Paul affirms our purification; "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).

Before you move on, read it 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."

one

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

Good Friday Experience

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.

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.

two

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

Good Friday Experience

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

Judas betrayed Jesus for the paltry sum of 30 pieces of silver. 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.

three

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

Good Friday Experience

The word Gethsemane means “oil press,” alluding to large stone slabs that were lowered onto a bed of crushed olives until the weight squeezed the oil through hollow spouts into clay jars. This is an accurate image of Jesus’ turmoil in Gethsemane, bearing the weight of the sins of the world. Luke tells us that “his sweat became like great drops of blood” (Luke 22:44).

REFLECTION

Walk through the garden, or take some time to pause and ponder. Consider the temptation Jesus faced to “take the easy way out.” What did he feel when he found his disciples sleeping while he surrendered to the weight of their sins? Consider his demeanor as he turned to face his final hours.

Jesus paid a unique price, but as we follow him, we will also grapple with the enemy. Satan often disguises himself as “my will”—the simple desire to do whatever I want to do, rejecting “Thy will” in the process. In the garden, Jesus was triumphant. What might it look like for you to make the choice he made in the garden: “Not my will, Abba, but yours be done”?

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.

four

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

Good Friday Experience

As you pass by these images, ask God to help you sense the historical moment they portray. The physical pain Jesus endured was immense. Use your imagination to place yourself in Jerusalem that day. As an observer, you would have been helpless to do anything to comfort Jesus and forced to watch as he was brutalized and humiliated.

How must his mother, Mary, have felt to witness this horror? Maybe she remembered the old man, Simeon, who had rejoiced to see Jesus at the temple when he was six weeks old. As he handed the baby back to her, his face grew serious. He had looked her in the eye and said, “This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul” (Luke 2:34-35).

REFLECTION

Bring this moment in history into the present moment in your imagination. What do you hear? What do you see? 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.

five

HIS CROSS



“But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One, and he himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for our sins but also for the whole world.”

1 John 2:1-2

Good Friday Experience

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 his cross and carry it through the filthy streets of Jerusalem, out of the city gates and up the hill of Golgotha.

REFLECTION

As you approach this display, you will catch your own reflection in the mirror, as though you were in the crowd gathered at the foot of the cross.

Write your name on the mirror, then step back and take in the whole image. Allow the reality to settle in. While it is true that Jesus died for all humanity, it is also true that he died for **YOU** personally. Allow this exercise, though it may be uncomfortable, to bring his sacrifice close to home. In some unfathomable way, he knew your name.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I don't pretend to understand how your love encompasses humanity, but I will choose to believe that it includes me. Thank you for the opportunity to know the joy of your salvation. Help me to live it out.

six

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

Good Friday Experience

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—spikenard, hyssop and myrrh—are ones that played a significant role in the events of Passion Week.

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.

seven

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

Good Friday Experience

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 pass by 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.

eight

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

Good Friday Experience

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 the burdens represented by a sin that has a hold on you. It may be 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. You may be holding on to something that is blocking your way, preventing you from fully receiving the grace of God’s presence. Surrender these things to Jesus.

We invite you to name it, today. Write it down on the piece of paper provided, and place it in the water at the foot of the cross.

1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Through Jesus’ sacrifice, the burden is no longer yours to carry. As you watch the water take away your written words, remember God’s grace takes away your sins, leaving no trace behind.

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.

If you are able, take some time before you leave to reflect on the Good Friday Experience. You will find kneelers in the exit hallways if you would like to take this posture in prayer. If you would like to speak with a pastor, volunteers are available to connect you.

No doubt you are leaving with a sense of gravity and even sorrow. That is purposeful. On Good Friday, we leave Jesus in the tomb. May this somber reflection heighten the joy you feel on Sunday morning.



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