

Stations of the Cross

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A reading from the Gospel of Luke

The Trial, Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

The Jewish High Council took Jesus to Pilate and began to bring up charges against him. They said, “We found this man undermining our law and order, forbidding taxes to be paid to Caesar, setting himself up as Messiah-King.”

Pilate asked him, “Is this true that you’re “King of the Jews’?”

“Those are your words, not mine,” Jesus replied.

Pilate told the high priests and the accompanying crowd, “I find nothing wrong here. He seems harmless enough to me.”

But they were vehement. “He’s stirring up unrest among the people with his teaching, disturbing the peace everywhere, starting in Galilee and now all through Judea. He’s a dangerous man, endangering the peace.”

When Pilate heard that, he asked, “So, he’s a Galilean?” Realizing that he properly came under Herod’s jurisdiction, he passed the buck to Herod, who just happened to be in Jerusalem for a few days.

Herod was delighted when Jesus showed up. He had wanted for a long time to see him, he’d heard so much about him. He hoped to see him do something spectacular. He peppered him with questions. Jesus didn’t answer—not one word. But the high priests and religion scholars were right there, saying their piece, strident and shrill in their accusations.

Mightily offended, Herod turned on Jesus. His soldiers joined in, taunting and jeering. Then they dressed him up in an elaborate king costume and sent him back to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became thick as thieves. Always before they had kept their distance.

Then Pilate called in the high priests, rulers, and the others and said, “You brought this man to me as a disturber of the peace. I examined him in front of all of you and found there was nothing to your charge. And neither did Herod, for he has sent him back here with a clean bill of health. It’s clear that he’s done nothing wrong, let alone anything deserving death. I’m going to warn him to watch his step and let him go.”

At that, the crowd went wild: “Kill him! Give us Barabbas!” (Barabbas had been thrown in prison for starting a riot in the city and for murder.) Pilate still wanted to let Jesus go, and so spoke out again.

But they kept shouting back, “Crucify! Crucify him!”

He tried a third time. “But for what crime? I’ve found nothing in him deserving death. I’m going to warn him to watch his

step and let him go.”

But they kept at it, a shouting mob, demanding that he be crucified. And finally they shouted him down. Pilate caved in and gave them what they wanted. He released the man thrown in prison for rioting and murder, and gave them Jesus to do whatever they wanted.

As they led him off, they made Simon, a man from Cyrene who happened to be coming in from the countryside, carry the cross behind Jesus. A huge crowd of people followed, along with women weeping and carrying on. At one point Jesus turned to the women and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, don’t cry for me. Cry for yourselves and for your children. The time is coming when they’ll say, ‘Lucky the women who never conceived! Lucky the wombs that never gave birth! Lucky the breasts that never gave milk!’ Then they’ll start calling to the mountains, ‘Fall down on us!’ calling to the hills, ‘Cover us up!’ If people do these things to a live, green tree, can you imagine what they’ll do with dead-wood?”

Two others, both criminals, were taken along with him for execution.

When they got to the place called Skull Hill, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left.

Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them; they don’t know what they’re doing.”

Dividing up his clothes, they threw dice for them. The people stood there staring at Jesus, and the ringleaders made faces, taunting, “He saved others. Let’s see him save himself! The Messiah of God—ha! The Chosen—ha!”

The soldiers also came up and poked fun at him, making a game of it. They toasted him with sour wine: “So you’re King of the Jews! Save yourself!”

Printed over him was a sign: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

One of the criminals hanging alongside cursed him: “Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!”

But the other one made him shut up: “Have you no fear of God? You’re getting the same as him. We deserve this, but not him—he did nothing to deserve this.”

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you enter your kingdom.”

He said, “Don’t worry, I will. Today you will join me in paradise.”

By now it was noon. The whole earth became dark, the darkness lasting three hours—a total blackout. The Temple curtain split right down the middle. Jesus called loudly, “Father, I place my life in your hands!” Then he breathed his last.

When the captain there saw what happened, he honored God: “This man was innocent! A good man, and innocent!”

All who had come around as spectators to watch the show, when they saw what actually happened, were overcome with grief and headed home. Those who knew Jesus well, along with the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a respectful distance and kept vigil.

There was a man by the name of Joseph, a member of the

Jewish High Council, a man of good heart and good character. He had not gone along with the plans and actions of the council. His hometown was the Jewish village of Arimathea. He lived in alert expectation of the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Taking him down, he wrapped him in a linen shroud and placed him in a tomb chiseled into the rock, a tomb never yet used. It was the day before Sabbath, the Sabbath just about to begin.

The women who had been companions of Jesus from Galilee followed along. They saw the tomb where Jesus' body was placed. Then they went back to prepare burial spices and perfumes. They rested quietly on the Sabbath, as commanded.

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by Eugene H. Peterson

Opening Prayer

Leader: We will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

All: ***In whom is our salvation, our life and resurrection.***

Leader continues:

Let us pray:

All: ***Lord Jesus Christ, take me along that holy way you once took to your death. Take my mind, my memory, above all my reluctant heart, and let me see what once you did for love of me and all the world. Amen.***

First Station:

Jesus is Condemned to Death

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

Jesus is brought to stand in front of Pontius Pilate, the judge. He is innocent but Pontius Pilate condemns him anyway and sentences Him to death.



Let us pray:

Dear Jesus, it is really our bad thoughts, mean words, and angry actions that you are being punished for. We are praying the Stations of the Cross to tell You that we are sorry for all our sins. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Second Station:

Jesus Takes His Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

Jesus has been beaten by the soldiers. He has been laughed at and spat upon. Now he must pick up the heavy cross and carry it while the crowd yells. He is so tired and sad, but no one cares.



Let us pray:

Dear Jesus, we care that you are tired. We are sorry that you are sad. We would like to help You carry Your cross with our prayers. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Third Station:

Jesus Falls the First Time

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

The cross is too heavy. It is so heavy that Jesus falls down under its weight. The blood from the crown of thorns is running into His eyes and His back aches from being whipped. People are still screaming and throwing things at Him. His heart must be as heavy as the cross He carries.



Let us pray:

Dear Jesus, it is our sins that make your cross so heavy. We are sorry. We love you and we try to be good for You with our prayers and with our lives. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Fourth Station:

Jesus Meets His Blessed Mother

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

Suddenly, Jesus sees His Mother. She is standing at the side of the road surrounded by the crowd. Her eyes fill with tears when she sees Jesus. She wants to help Him but she can not. Both their hearts ache at the other's pain.



Let us pray:

Jesus, our hearts ache with you and your blessed mother with the pain of the Stations of the Cross. We promise to pray to you often, for help in our lives. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Fifth Station:

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

The soldiers are in a hurry. They grab Simon of Cyrene out of the crowd to carry the cross and make Jesus go faster. Jesus was grateful to Simon for his help.



Let us pray:

Dear Jesus, Simon did not know he was blessed when he was carrying Your cross—he only felt how heavy it was. Praying the Stations of the Cross will help us to remember that carrying our crosses helps You too. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Sixth Station:

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

Jesus' face is covered with sweat, blood and dust. It is itchy and uncomfortable. In pity, Veronica runs out to the road to wipe the dirt from Jesus' face. This small act of kindness is all she can do to help Him.



Let us pray:

Jesus, we want to see and touch Your face, shining in glory in Heaven. We know that our small acts of kindness and our prayers help us grow closer to You and Your Father in Heaven. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Seventh Station:

Jesus Falls the Second Time

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

The road is so long and the cross is so heavy. Exhausted, Jesus falls down again. The soldiers yell at Him and whip Him to make him get up. Don't they know that they are hurting Him more? Jesus knows that He is suffering for the sins of the world. He gets up and keeps walking.



Let us pray:

Jesus, sometimes we get tired, discouraged and impatient with the world. When we fail and fall into sin, it hurts You more. We are sorry and we ask You to help us be as patient and brave as You. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Eighth Station:

Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

Next, Jesus meets some of the women he taught. They are crying. They are crying for Jesus, and for their own loss — what will they do without Jesus? Jesus tells them not to weep for Him, but for all the sinners of the world.



Let us pray:

Jesus, you told the women of Jerusalem to weep for us children. Even in your pain, You remembered us. Thank you. We will pray for sinners too. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Ninth Station:

Jesus Falls the Third Time

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

Jesus reaches the last hill before Calvary. He looks up to see how far he has to go. When he sees the hill where He knows he is going to die, His strength leaves Him and He falls to the ground. There is still more pain, still more sorrow to endure. But Jesus loves us, so He keeps going.



Let us pray:

Jesus, You kept going even though you were tired, scared and sad. You loved us then, and You love us now. We offer our prayers to tell you that we love you, and want to comfort you in Your great sacrifice. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Tenth Station:

Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

The crowd followed Jesus and the soldiers to the top of Calvary hill. Now they laugh as the guards pull off his clothes - His robe has stuck to the blood on His back. The guards push and shove Jesus. They do not care who He is, they only see that He is an object of scorn.



Let us pray:

Jesus, even wounded, bleeding, roughly treated by the guards and mocked by the crowds, You were and are still our King. We ask you to remember us in Your Kingdom.

Amen.

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Eleventh Station:

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

Is this the worst? The feet that carried the message of God's Love and the hands that healed are pierced with nails as Jesus is nailed to the cross. More wounds, more pain and more humiliation for Jesus.



Let us pray:

Jesus, they tried to stop your hands and feet from doing Your Father's work by nailing you to a cross. You endured the pain of it for us, as you gave your whole life for us. We thank you and we love you. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Twelfth Station:

Jesus Dies upon the Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

The sword that Simeon prophesied has pierced Mary's heart. The hopes of the Apostles are crushed. The veil of the Temple, symbol of the old covenant of God's Love, is torn in two as Jesus' death opens a New Covenant with God.



Let us pray:

Jesus, you spoke lovingly to everyone gathered at the foot of Your cross. You knew the new life that Your death made possible. Speak lovingly to us when we come before You and make us worthy of that new life in You. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Thirteenth Station:

Jesus is Taken from the Cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

Now, all that is left is to take Jesus' body down from the cross. All the gentleness, reverence and love denied through this terrible day is possible now. Mary and the Apostles wonder, Is it too late? Is it over?



Let us pray:

Jesus, with our prayers, we join in taking your body down from the cross. We touch You; take the nails out, wash your wounds, take off the crown of thorns, with love and sorrow. We grieve with Mary, and want to comfort her. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Fourteenth Station:

Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

All: ***Because by your holy cross, you have saved the world.***

Leader continues:

Even in this time of sorrow, there is help. Joseph of Arimathea arranges for Jesus to be buried in a nearby tomb. His body is wrapped in clothes and sealed away. Everyone walks away, weeping. Finally, all is quiet.



Let us pray:

Jesus, we sometimes think that You are gone, that it is all over, that we will never be happy or good again. Your death and resurrection shows us that You will never leave us. We should always try to follow You with our lives and our prayers. ***Amen.***

All: ***Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.***

Closing prayers:

Leader: As Jesus taught us, we now pray:

All say the Lord's Prayer:

***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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.***

***And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.***

***For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.***

Leader: Dear God. Thank you for sending Your Son to die for our sins. Help us to follow Jesus in all ways, all of our days. In Jesus' name. ***Amen.***

The following song may be sung:

WERE YOU THERE WHEN THEY CRUCIFIED MY LORD

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

O - o - 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 pierced him in the side?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

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