



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

BAYSIDE CHURCH

PREPARE YOUR HEART

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

JOHN 16:33

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

ISAIAH 40:31

“Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.’”

JOHN 6:35

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

JOHN 10:10

“You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

PSALM 16:11

GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK

- 1 Use this book as a part of your walk-through experience.
- 2 Prefer audio? Put on some headphones and scan the QR code here to listen as you walk through.
- 3 This book makes a great two-week daily devotional, anytime of the year!



INTRODUCTION

Jesus is aware of the noise, chaos, and distractions the world puts in front of us, and instead of hoping for it to just disappear, He offers an opportunity to bring it to Him, lay it at the cross, and walk away with a lighter burden. As you enter this Stations of the Cross journey, begin to actively exchange your negative or distracting thoughts with the promises God offers.

WHY DO STATIONS OF THE CROSS?

As the King of the Jews, the Messiah, our Savior, Jesus Christ made His way into Jerusalem and journeyed to the cross, there were many pivotal moments that influence our life and faith today. These moments in time remind us of who Jesus is, what He did for us, and how we can live in freedom because of His life and love. We take this journey every year as we remember, recognize, and receive the sacred story of God's overwhelming, all-encompassing, never-ending love. You may not know many details, and that's okay – this is a safe place to discover, dive in, and see the truth of God's love, grace, and sacrifice. You may know the story well – this is your invitation to dive deeper and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal something fresh for your faith today.

You may wonder, "What's in it for me?" – this is the time to step back to see the picture a little more clearly and to find freedom, hope, and new life, only found in Jesus Christ.

Welcome, friend, to an experiential journey with Jesus to the Cross – a journey of trials, deep grief, loneliness, surrender, pain, and ultimately, a hope and life unlike any other. Welcome, to a moment that will shed magnificent light on who Jesus was 2,000 years ago, and who He is for you today and forevermore. Welcome, to a time and place where you can unplug from the chaotic weight of the world in order to be seen, known, and transformed by the story of the greatest act of love the world has ever witnessed.

Welcome to Stations of the Cross.

STATION 1: THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

MATTHEW 21:1-11

¹As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." ⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵ "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" ⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" ¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" ¹¹ The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

FOR FURTHER READING:

Zechariah 9:9

REMEMBER

For centuries, the people of God awaited their King. They knew what to look for - a righteous and victorious King riding on a lowly donkey. Here was Jesus, a Jewish rabbi, simple and humble, entering through the gates of Jerusalem on a colt, and the people laid down palm leaves and cloaks to honor Him.

As Jesus approached Jerusalem, crowds of people welcomed Him, joyfully shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The street was explosive with hope. Waving palm branches, the people shouted, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

And still, there was a violent whisper among those who were skeptical. Could this really be who we've been waiting for? Why would our almighty King come to us in this manner? They started questioning "Who is this?" What everyone could agree on was this, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

This triumphal entry marks the beginning of Holy Week, a week celebrating the awe and wonder, trial and triumph, pain and rejoicing of Jesus' journey to the cross. Let this mark the beginning of a time with Jesus where you might find greater understanding, hope, and redemption as you reflect on the goodness and glory of our Savior.

RECOGNIZE

The entire town erupted in celebration as Jesus arrived, anticipating the freedom their King would bring! This term, "Hosanna" was often used specifically in reference to those delivered from oppression. A deep wave of relief filled those who believed the moment they saw Jesus riding in on that donkey - a lowly, humble, peaceful King who would change everything.

Do you remember the first time you experienced the love and freedom of Jesus? Take time to recall the moment, and praise Him for His promises fulfilled.

When the people encountered Jesus, their hearts were stirred and some wondered, "Who is this?"

This is one of the most important questions we will ever answer. Who is Jesus to you? Do you know Him as your personal Lord and Savior, Redeemer, and Friend? Who is He to you today, right now?

RECEIVE

As you encounter Jesus on this journey, ask Him to stir your heart and see the reality of who He really is to you daily. Not sure where to start praying? Start with something simple like the prayer below, but feel free to let your conversation with God wander in honest connection.

Jesus, stir up my heart and remind me of who You are. I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God! Thank You for meeting us where we are, choosing the simple and humble path to meet us so we could know You and be with You. Guide me in Your presence today.

NOTES:



STATION 2: JESUS WEEPS

LUKE 19:41-44

⁴¹ As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

REMEMBER

When Jesus saw all that was happening in Jerusalem, His heart was burdened greatly. The pain and suffering was all around, and most importantly, the way people were deciding to live in tragic and harmful ways. He looked at how people were seeking joy, love, and specifically peace in all the wrong ways. He called out in tears, saying “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace...” If they had only known that the Prince of Peace rode in on a donkey just moments before, a type of peace they could have never known was possible or accessible, but here it was, the Son of God Himself.

Jesus wept for the pain that Jerusalem would endure in the years to come – He wept over their blindness to the light that He was offering, that they didn’t recognize He was the Messiah, the one they had been waiting for. He was burdened for the lost, the brokenhearted, the abused, the poor and lonely. His people needed the redemption that only He could give. He came to them, yet they did not receive Him.

RECOGNIZE

Think about the pain we endure in our lives when we are blind to our own faults, our need for God, and we reject Jesus and the truth He offers. What are some of the things you see in the world today that Jesus weeps for?

RECEIVE

Ask God to break your heart for what breaks His. Ask Him to see people the way He does. Ask God to burden your heart for people to receive the light Jesus offers in our darkest of situations.

Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the ways I have been blinded by sin, grief and the pursuit of power, position or fame. Forgive me for living in my own strength. Your heart is for salvation. Your heart is for restoration and

reconciliation. Show me how to love this world the way You love it. Align my desires with Your desires. Teach me to see things through Your eyes. I lift up our community to You, Father. Heal the sick, overcome evil, establish Your Kingdom! In Jesus’ name, Amen.

NOTES:



STATION 3: CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

LUKE 19:45-48

⁴⁵ When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling. ⁴⁶ “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be a house of prayer’; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’” ⁴⁷ Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. ⁴⁸ Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

FOR FURTHER READING

1 Corinthians 3:16 | John 2:13-16 | Matthew 21:12-17

REMEMBER

Visualize the chaos of the temple; salesmen bargaining, coins clinking, doves cooing, the bleating of sheep. Breathe in the familiar barnyard odors. This chaos was never in God's plan. When Solomon first built this beautiful temple, not even the sound of a hammer was heard during its construction (1 Kings 6:7), yet somehow, the demands of life and greed had overtaken the purpose of prayer in the temple.

The things Jesus wept over were present in the most sacred place, the Temple. He witnessed people who had turned the Lord's House into a marketplace to sell goods. It had become a place of selfish gains, something for man to indulge in and benefit from rather than turning our focus on God like it was designed for. Jesus could not, in all His perfection, let this go without taking a stance against the debauchery.

The power of His action lies in the conviction of His spirit that revealed the chaos needed to be shut down, and that His words were so filled with truth and love that people couldn't help but be amazed. The leaders were trying to kill Him, but they were so astounded by His words, actions, and teachings that they could find no motivation to do so. As it says, "people hung on His words."

RECOGNIZE

On the other side of history, we now can recognize that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to live within all believers, so we have access to God daily. We, the people of God, are now the Temple where Jesus dwells (1 Corinthians 3:16). Consider that as you reflect on what you're filling your mind, body, and soul with throughout your life.

Where have the demands of life overtaken God's sacred space in your heart?

What tables does Jesus need to overturn in your life?

What screams the loudest for your attention? What's crowding the Temple of your mind and soul and does it deserve your focus?

RECEIVE

Take some time to thank Jesus for His boldness in calling out the truth that needed to be heard in order for transformation to take place. Ask Him to reveal where you have lost your way so you can come to Him with a cleansed mind and spirit.

Jesus, I confess that I have allowed the busyness and chaos of life to take priority over intimacy with You. I need You to be with me. Silence the hammers pounding and the money clinking. I need You to calm the chaos of my life. Bring me to a place of peace and surrender. Show me how delightful it is to be close to You!

NOTES:



STATION 4: WASHING OF THE DISCIPLES' FEET

JOHN 13:1-5

¹ It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

FOR FURTHER READING:

John 13:6-17

REMEMBER

Jesus knew the end of His time on earth was approaching. He knew and accepted the authority given to Him by God, and He knew He would soon be in Heaven with Him again, but He also recognized how much He loved His friends on earth. He took this moment during the Passover meal with His closest friends to show the kind of humble love He wanted them to be able to receive and give to others.

Imagine the dirt. Imagine the smell. These men wandered the desert, walked hours and days on end, traveling wherever Jesus went. Showers weren't always an option, and they had likely walked miles in strappy sandals. Imagine the intimacy of this moment, where their Lord, teacher, Rabbi, and friend got down on His knees and chose to serve them by washing their feet. Jesus was so confident in His Father, His calling, and His relationships that He was able to, willing to, and so desired to serve others in this way – that they would feel loved, accepted, and cared for so intimately.

Some rejected His actions, not wanting to embrace the uncomfortable situation, but Jesus insisted. This revelation of His love, humility, and sacrifice for those closest to Him (even the ones who would betray and deny Him), reveals an example of how we ought to

turn and love those around us. He says it clearly – “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13:15)

RECOGNIZE

Consider what it was like to wash the feet of the disciples. Is it possible that Jesus is asking you to wash the feet of those that failed, betrayed and abandoned you?

What is the blessing that we receive when we follow His example in this? What are the areas you need to be cleansed in?

RECEIVE

Jesus, forgive me for the ways I have doubted, abandoned or betrayed You. I need You to wash me and make me clean! Thank You for Your patience. Teach me to serve others. Give me the power to overcome selfishness, fear and offense. Give me the desire to choose the life of love. Help me to choose to offer forgiveness and grace. Freely I have received these things and freely I will give them. Amen.

NOTES:



STATION 5: THE PASSOVER

MATTHEW 26:17-30

¹⁷ On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹⁸ He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. ²⁰ When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." ²² They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?" ²³ Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." ²⁵ Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said so." ²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." ³⁰ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

FOR FURTHER READING:

John 13:17 | Luke 22:7-38 | Exodus 12:1-28

REMEMBER

Many years before this moment, the people of God in Israel had been enslaved to Egypt for far too long – 400 years to be exact. When Pharaoh didn't release the Israelites, God warned him that He would send the Angel of Death to strike the households of Egypt. As a way to protect the Israelites, God instructed the head of each family to select a one-year-old male lamb without defect and slaughter it at twilight, making sure none of its bones were broken. Then they were to apply some of the blood on the sides and top of the door frame so that the destroyer would “pass over” that home.

As the disciples settled into the evening with their teacher, rabbi, and friend, they may have expected this to be a celebration of the Passover like any other year, but this evening was nothing like they had ever experienced before. As they heard Jesus share a new version of Passover with them, He was revealing that HE is the Passover Lamb. He wanted the disciples to understand that this was God's plan – to exchange the life of His perfect, blameless, unblemished Son, the Lamb, for our freedom from slavery and death. Imagine the weight in the room when the disciples finally began to see what Jesus had said would happen all along start to unfold.

RECOGNIZE

The Israelites were enslaved for a long time before experiencing freedom. Thinking of the parallel of their story and ours, what is something you have been enslaved to in your life? Where is God asking you to release control so He can carry the weight for you and give you a life of freedom, peace, and joy? Take some time to confess where you're not trusting God and ask Him to give you a new heart and new beginning.

While the Passover may seem like the beginning of the end of the story for Jesus, there was hope on the horizon as He shared with them that He would rise again – a hope they hadn't yet fully comprehended or received.

RECEIVE

Jesus, thank You. Your willingness to stand in the gap for us is so hard to understand, but I thank You anyway. Just as you set the Israelites free, I want to be free from the weight of the sins in my life. I am trusting You to release me as I lean into Your joy and hope today, for the rest of my life.

NOTES:



COMMUNION: A SEAT AT THE TABLE

“So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.”

1 CORINTHIANS 11:27-28

You're invited to have a seat at the table.

Jesus took this time before his arrest to sit with His friends, confide in them, and offer a moment to remember and reminisce on the new form of Passover. Jesus was about to become the sacrifice for sin forevermore, and His blood covers us so death would pass over us, so we can enjoy eternity with Him. Here, we invite you to sit, reflect, take a moment to think about how you might have felt as a disciple at that table.

Take a moment to practice Communion if you feel led.

- 1 Recognize the tremendous cost of your sins and what it meant for God to make such a sacrifice. Reflect on thoughts and actions that do not reflect the heart of God, and surrender those to Him while committing yourself to His plans.
- 2 Drink the juice, as a symbol of the blood that was shed on the cross to bring you freedom from death's grip. Think of the sacrifice, offered willingly through the greatest form of love we can ever know.
- 3 Take the cracker/bread and remember how His body was broken for you on the cross. Jesus says He is the “bread of life”, meaning you can be satisfied and completely whole by accepting His grace that covers you.

REFLECTION

TAKE THE TIME TO REFLECT ON THIS VERSE AND WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS:

“He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose Him for this purpose long before the world began, but now in these final days, He was sent to the earth for all to see. And He did this for you.”

1 PETER 1:19-20

NOTES:



JESUS IS...

When you really begin to accept who Jesus was, is, and is to come, the power of His name brings a new light to your life that can't be extinguished by the lies of the enemy. As you transition to the next part of Jesus' story and journey to the cross, consider who He said He is and what that means for your life today.

WHO IS JESUS TO YOU?



I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

JOHN 6:30-40

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

JOHN 8:7-12

I AM THE GATE FOR THE SHEEP

JOHN 10:1-9

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

JOHN 10:11-16

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

JOHN 14:1-11

I AM THE TRUE VINE

JOHN 15: 1-5

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

JOHN 11:23-27

STATION 6: THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANES

MATTHEW 26:36-46

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” ³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” ⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. ⁴¹ “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” ⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. ⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

FOR FURTHER READING:

Luke 22:39-36 | John 17 | Matthew 26:47-5 | Jesus’ Arrest: John 18:4-14

REMEMBER

As they left the Passover celebration, Jesus had a heavy heart. With three of His closest companions, He went into the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. This was the site where olives were pressed to create olive oil, and it is a great parallel as we see how Jesus was pressed here, preparing to be poured out for our sins. This is how He refines all of us, being pressed so the most fruitful parts of our lives can be seen and experienced by all, to show the life and light of Jesus through our actions.

After begging His friends to stay awake with Him and pray during this trying time, He confesses the weight of His soul being overwhelmed – a very human reaction to what He knew was about to take place. We see a moment of transparency in Jesus' prayer with the Father as He begs to have the cup taken from Him, knowing the calling on His life was far too great a burden. Instead of giving up, He commits His will to the Father's, saying, "yet not as I will, but as you will."

He shows a moment of honest, raw confession to God and in the same breath, Jesus surrenders the weight He was carrying so that He may be obedient to fulfill what God has asked of Him. The entire time He was overwhelmed with this moment, He kept thinking of His friends who were in the garden with Him. He encouraged them to stay awake and aware, praying continuously to the Spirit because He knew they would need to be strengthened by God for what they would soon experience. John 17 reveals what Jesus prayed that night – for His life, His friends, and for all believers (meaning you).

Even as Jesus was preparing for His own death, He was thinking of others. He trusted the will of His Father, and He committed time to prayer, confession and release, moments before the soldiers entered the garden to arrest him.

RECOGNIZE

Pause and imagine what it must have been like for Jesus, hours before the crucifixion, as He agonized over what was to come. His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow. The only place He could find solace was in the presence of His Father.

If you are able, take some time to kneel before God and consider the suffering of Christ.

What is a part of the calling on your life that feels too heavy a burden to carry; something that you may have asked God to take from you? Are you willing to surrender that to God, professing "if not my will, your will be done"?

When the soldiers came for Jesus, Peter lunged at one of them with his sword, slicing a soldier's ear off. His response to confrontation and danger was to attack. Jesus' response was to surrender to the will and plan of the Father. What would happen if your response to adversity was to lean into the will of God?

RECEIVE

God, I seek you in moments of grief, loneliness and pain. I'm laying my desires at Your feet; surround me with Your presence. Carry me through the challenges life throws my way, so I am able to fulfill the call You have given me.

You are my hope alone.

NOTES:



STATION 7: PETER'S DENIAL

MATTHEW 26:69-75

⁶⁹Now 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.

FOR FURTHER READING:

Matthew 26:30-35

REMEMBER

Peter was sold out for Jesus up until this very moment. He was horrified when Jesus prophesied this would happen, that Peter would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed, but in his humanity, his courage failed him. What's so powerful about this moment is realizing that Jesus' prophecy came true, Peter's reaction when he realized what he had done, and the fact that Jesus didn't give up on him.

After Jesus rose from the dead, one of the first things He did was seek Peter out, forgive him and remind him of his purpose. Peter lived the rest of his life passionately abandoned to Christ. Consider your "Peter moment", when you have failed to honor Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to release you from any shame or lies you are carrying because of your sin. Begin to shift your mindset and ask God to show you how He truly sees you.

RECOGNIZE

Peter pledged his undying commitment, but when Jesus was arrested, his courage failed him. Why do you think he wept bitterly?

Maybe you can relate to the shame Peter felt when he realized his own failures and shortcomings. But Jesus didn't give up on Peter, and He won't give up on you!

As Peter felt the weight of his responses, we also feel the burden of rejecting Jesus at times. What negative thoughts has failure produced in you?

RECEIVE

Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to free you from shame and believing lies. Ask Him to tell you how He sees you.

Heavenly Father, thank You for searching me out, forgiving me and reminding me of my purpose. I want to live my life passionately abandoned to You! Amen.

NOTES:



STATION 8: CRUCIFY HIM!

MATTHEW 27:15-25

¹⁵ Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. ¹⁶ And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called [a] Barabbas. ¹⁷ Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸ For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. ¹⁹ While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him." ²⁰ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!" ²² Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!" ²³ Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!" ²⁴ When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." ²⁵ And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

FOR FURTHER READING:

Luke 23:1-25

REMEMBER

The shouting. The clamoring. The anger. The fear. The hate. It filled the air like a dense smoke, choking the life out of the hope-filled joy Jesus had brought to so many. During this time of the feast, Pilate would release a prisoner back into civilization at the request of the crowd. There stood Jesus Barabbas, a terrible criminal, guilty of murder among other rebellious acts. On the other side, there stood Jesus Christ, guilty only of claims of being the Son of God while healing people and helping everyone He came in contact with. The choice was up to the crowd.

With the freedom to choose whatever they felt best for society, they shouted for Barabbas – the man who would be more harmful to society. Given the choice again of what to do with Jesus Christ, the people demanded crucifixion. Because of the fear of the unknown of who Jesus really was and what He might do, they chose to subject themselves and their families to a greater state of danger. They willingly accepted the death of their safety for the horrific fate of our Savior. Luckily, God had other plans.

Pilate wanted nothing to do with this act (though in reality, he has everything to do with it), and the people were willing to take the blame for the innocent bloodshed of Jesus. As it tends to go with Jesus, what they thought they were doing was just the fulfillment of something much greater. The same words that condemned Jesus are the prophetic words that bring salvation. He was condemned to die, and His blood covered us, giving us access to salvation and eternal life.

RECOGNIZE

When have you chosen something easier over following Jesus? Where did that lead you?

Just as their condemning words led to the fulfillment of God's prophecy that Jesus would die and then rise again, He offers an opportunity for you to see new life out of the neglect of your relationship with Jesus. What do you need to confess in your life right now that is pushing Jesus out of the way, something you need Him to flip the outcome of so you can experience new life?

RECEIVE

Jesus, I am not innocent. No matter how I look at it, I can't wash my hands of Your death, but I can be made clean because of it! Here I am, Lord, refresh my spirit and make me new. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NOTES:



STATION 9: CONDEMNED TO DEATH

MATTHEW 27:26-31

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

FOR FURTHER READING:

John 19:1-16

REMEMBER

This kind of mockery was above and beyond – the kind of death Jesus was heading toward was the worst of the worst. Not only were the religious leaders ruling in favor of this torture and death openly, they were raising the importance of it because they believed it elevated themselves. Their actions, along with Pilate's stemmed ultimately from fear and selfishness, and Jesus humbly let it happen to fulfill His ultimate calling.

Jesus didn't deserve any of this, but we do. Jesus did no wrong, and even Pilate recognized that (see John's account). He was perfect – fully man and fully God. He lived a life of no sin, and His life was riddled with going out of His way to serve, love, and heal others. Yet, because God is fully just – a price needed to be paid for our sinful nature. Jesus, being fully God and completely sinless, was willing and capable to bear our penalty for us so we wouldn't have to.

The penalty for our sin was severe. Jesus fully bore the painful consequence that each of us has earned. The entire measure of God's wrath against sin was poured out on Jesus that day as He was tortured and executed. It's hard to read, but understanding just how intense it was allows for us to grieve and accept this gift that much more.

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. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:5-6

RECOGNIZE

Consider the pain and punishment that Jesus endured. Why would Jesus willingly die in our place?

What does it mean to you that Jesus was so willing to bear the burdens of your sin so you wouldn't have to? How would your life look different if you lived in light of this truth daily?

RECEIVE

Dear Lord Jesus, YOU are my king. I am choosing to worship You above everything else. You bore my sin in Your body on the cross. By Your stripes I am healed and forgiven. You loved me so deeply that You gave Your very life for me. Your kindness has won my heart! I am forever thankful. Amen.

NOTES:





STATION 10: CARRYING THE CROSS

LUKE 23:26-27

²⁶ As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus ²⁷ A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him.

FOR FURTHER READING:

John 19:17 | Matthew 27:32 | Mark 15:21

REMEMBER

Jesus was broken, bruised, battered, and completely worn down. Imagine the weariness He must have felt, losing so much blood, feeling the sting of the thorns and the lashes from the whip. He had nothing left to give. They laid the crossbeam across His shoulders for Him to carry up the hill to the place of the crucifixion, but He was too weak to carry it Himself. As Jesus stumbled under its weight, they searched the crowd for a strong man to carry the cross for Him.

A man named Simon had traveled 900 miles from Cyrene into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He probably wasn't prepared for the procession he encountered on his way through town. A soldier saw him in the crowd and commanded him to carry Jesus' cross.

Simon knew the law. Carrying the cross would make him ceremonially unclean and unfit to partake of the Passover. Everything in him may have resisted, but he knew what would happen if he refused. So he picked up the cross and carried it for Jesus. That walk he took in carrying the cross transformed him; he believed. This is a beautiful picture of true discipleship.

RECOGNIZE

The religious leaders were dedicated to the law, but they didn't understand God's heart for people. Obeying the law cannot make us right with God; only a relationship with Jesus can heal what sin has destroyed.

Imagine what it would feel like to lift the weight of the cross, which probably weighed about 100 lbs – add that on top of the bloody, bruised, broken body that we live in. Visualize the burdens of religion, stress and sin that you have carried.

How have you stumbled under the weight? Are you willing to give up the struggle and trust Jesus' sacrifice to be enough for you?

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-29

RECEIVE

Dear Jesus, release me from the religious spirit that controls and condemns. I've tried to be good and failed. You fulfilled the law so that I could receive the way of grace. I have been carrying heavy burdens. I want to learn from You and find rest for my soul. Amen.

NOTES:



STATION 11: THE CRUCIFIXION

LUKE 23:32-43

³² Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.” ³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷ and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.” ³⁸ There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the Jews. ³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

FOR FURTHER READING:

Matthew 27: 32-56

REMEMBER

The procession stopped at the top of the hill, and Simon lowered the cross to the ground. The soldiers pressed Jesus' hands and feet to the cross. Metal nails hammered into His flesh. They cast lots for His clothing and hung Him up to die: a spectacle on display, a mockery, an example. His back, shredded from whipping, grated against the cross as He struggled to breathe. He didn't hurl curses or spew venom, but simply said "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

As they hoisted Jesus up on the cross, we see the scene with two other men, both criminals, hanging on crosses on either side of Jesus. The people around stood there watching, mocking Him. One of the criminals did the same, but the other rebuked him saying, "we are punished justly... this man has done nothing wrong." In this moment, the one criminal recognized his sin, turned to Jesus, and asked for forgiveness – to be remembered in Heaven. An entire lifetime of sin was redeemed in one moment of belief and surrender. There was nothing that he could have done to save himself. He didn't have time to clean up his act or pay restitution.

With the weight of the world's sins on His shoulders, Jesus hung on that cross to fulfill the promise He vowed to fulfill so we could be free and live forever with Him in eternity – a life free of pain, suffering, and anxiety. He felt the sting, He heard the pain, He saw the injustice, He tasted the blood, sweat, and tears.

When Jesus was broken, He poured out grace. He faced evil and injustice and it cost Him His life. We live in a corrupt world where our wounds often come from the people that we love and trust. The truth is that when we are broken by betrayal, rejection, or abuse we will pour out whatever fragrance we are filled with. The pain of our wounds threatens to blind us, but we can trust Jesus to walk through our brokenness with us because He faced the same darkness.

RECOGNIZE

What pain or loss do you need to forgive?

Who do you need to forgive?

Jesus took the sins we fall into every day with Him on the cross so we would no longer have to face the consequences of death. When we see our mistakes, repent of them, lay them at the cross, and walk in the forgiveness offered by Jesus Christ, that is the beautiful fragrance we offer this world.

What sin do you need to lay down at the cross today?

Like the criminal on the cross did, have you had an encounter with Jesus that has changed your eternal destiny?

We have all sinned and earned the penalty of death, but it is not too late to receive the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ! If you are new to your faith or have yet to accept Jesus into your life as your Lord and Savior, you can take a moment right now to do so!

- ***Confess your sins to God***
- ***Ask Him to save you and forgive you***
- ***Confess your belief in Jesus as the Son of God who has come to take away your sin and give you eternal life with Him in Heaven***
- ***Receive the Holy Spirit and surrender your life to God***

Welcome to the family! If you prayed that prayer for the first time, and you're looking for resources on what to do next, you can text NEXT to 56316 to get connected. Angels are celebrating you right now!



RECEIVE

As believers, we fall short of God's glory every day. Sin is in our nature, but we can look to God for guidance and restoration. No matter where you're at in your faith journey, take some time right now to confess your sins, turn from your ways, and receive God's overwhelming grace.

Heavenly Father, I have sinned against You and earned the penalty of death and separation. Please forgive me and make me clean. I surrender my life to Jesus Christ, Your Son. Give me the Holy Spirit and empower me to live my life for Your kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NOTES:





STATION 12: IT IS FINISHED!

JOHN 19:28-30

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

FOR FURTHER READING:

Matthew 27:42-56 | Luke 23:44-49

REMEMBER

Darkness. Pain. Watching in horror. Can you imagine? Jesus finally cried out as He sensed His final moments approaching, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?!” – “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?!” This was the moment we see the ultimate humanity of Jesus, falling into the grasps of death. When He received a drink from the sponge, He took His last breath, saying, “It is finished.”

At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. 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!” They finally believed.

The torn veil is something we can't look past. Once a year, the High Priest would enter through the veil into the Presence of God to offer the Sacrifice of Atonement and ask God for forgiveness for the

people. It was set up as a way to limit access because the presence of God was too holy for everyone to experience. It required sacrifice, penance for the sin we carry. In this moment, the penance for all was paid so that all are welcomed into God's presence.

RECOGNIZE

When Jesus said “It is finished”, He declared that the debt for sin had been completely paid. The veil was torn and access to the Father was given to any who would accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. What do these three words mean to you?

Take a moment to write out what things are finished in your life because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

RECEIVE

Heavenly Father, thank You for removing all of the barriers that my sin has caused and welcoming me into Your family. My sin separated us, but You overcame my sin and have offered to love me unconditionally! Not only that, but You have given me authority over sin and by your blood I can declare, “It is finished!”

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STATION 13: BURIED IN THE TOMB

MATTHEW 28:1-7

¹After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

² There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

FOR FURTHER READING:

Matthew 27:57-66 | Luke 23:50-56

REMEMBER

Upon Jesus' death, a man requested to bury Him in his own personal tomb, so He could have a proper burial. He secured Jesus' body in the tomb and rolled a stone in front to ensure a peaceful rest. The chief priests became concerned that the disciples would steal the body and make an "act" as if Jesus had risen from the dead, so they sent guards and sealed the tomb. This made the truth of Jesus' resurrection that much more powerful.

After the Sabbath, the women went to look at the tomb, to pay their respects and remember their friend, Jesus. They felt the earth quake and heard a booming voice say, "Do not be afraid... He is not here; He is risen, just as He said." The beautiful part of the story is not only that Jesus defeated death, but that He didn't just wait for His friends to find Him. He left death behind and went out to meet His friends and disciples where they were. Just as death could not hold Jesus, it cannot hold back the promises and power of God, and it will not stop Him from chasing after you.

RECOGNIZE

Most importantly, Jesus wants you to know He has conquered death so you don't have to. Yes, our life on earth will come to an end, but it's not really the end. He rose, just like He said He would, and He raises us up too. Your old life can be left behind, here at the tomb. Your new life in Christ can now be full of a joy and peace and the hope of life eternal.

Consider the things you have felt defeated by.

Take time to lay down your burial clothes of discouragement; leave what is dead behind. What are you leaving at the tomb today?

Jesus has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you! What are words of encouragement God is giving you today for new life?

RECEIVE

Jesus, death could not hold You. Hell could not keep You. Pain could not deter You! You gave up Your life for me, and You have invited me to surrender my life to You. Resurrect my hope! Return my joy! Awaken my faith. Give me power to overcome, in Jesus' name, Amen!

NOTES:



STATION 14: THE GREAT COMMISSION

MATTHEW 28:16-20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

FOR FURTHER READING:

Matthew 28:8-15

REMEMBER

After hearing the truth from the angel. The women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell the disciples. Suddenly, Jesus met them. His command was to go and share the news with the others and to meet Jesus in Galilee. So they did as instructed, and the disciples met Jesus on the mountain.

Here, Jesus declared their greatest calling in life – to go and make disciples of all nations. This is our purpose – to reach the lost who need the hope of Jesus to use our lives as a witness for the love of God. Jesus didn't die to make bad people into good people. He came so that dead people could LIVE. You have a powerful story, and this is the moment for Him to awaken a new boldness in you to share that story of the Good News of the Gospel.

RECOGNIZE

As you think of your testimony and the call to share the truth of the Gospel, who are you feeling called to invite to join in the celebration of Easter this year? Name them, and call or text them today! Take an invite card to share with your neighbors, friends, family, coworkers, and anyone you feel called to invited.

RECEIVE

Heavenly Father, You have so much love for this world that You created. You long for the people of every nation, tribe and tongue to hear the good news that they can be reconciled to You. Give me the courage to declare the truth boldly and fearlessly. Open my eyes to the deeper needs of the world around me. Do not let me be lulled to sleep or become complacent. Awaken my heart and empower me to proclaim how I have been delivered and set free! Amen!

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THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY

“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

ACTS 2:46-47



After 40 days of spending time teaching and encouraging His disciples, Jesus ascended into Heaven to be seated once again at the right hand of the Father. He intentionally didn't leave them without help though. In His place, He sent the amazing gift of the Holy Spirit to live in and help all believers.

When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were radically changed. They had received the supernatural power and authority of Christ.

They lived differently, radically proclaiming Jesus, boldly preaching, healing diseases, casting out demons... nothing was ever the same after that encounter.

This encounter is what spurs us on to the life of love, joy, and community that Jesus offers. The best part is that you don't have to do this journey alone!

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