

A time of worship and reflection for Good Friday 2020

Prayer for Good Friday

Now we know:

all is grace

all is gift.

You give us all good things:

life and love;

daily bread and water that quenches our thirst;

friends and faith.

Most of all, in your Son, Jesus,

you meet us with a love that will never let us go;

you utter words of mercy and forgiveness

that override the hurts,

and heal our brokenness;

you offer new beginnings

where we had expected only dead ends.

We give you thanks and praise

for the mystery of your suffering love

that gives us life.

We give you thanks and praise

that you know our weakness

and hear our prayers.

We give you thanks and praise

that all our dying and living

is held in your good keeping.

Now we know:

all is grace

all is gift.

We give you thanks and praise. Amen.

written by Christine Jerrett. <https://christinejerrett.wordpress.com/>

Bible Reading: Matthew 27:32-44 - The Crucifixion of Jesus

³² As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; ³⁶ then they sat down there and kept watch over him. ³⁷ Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

³⁸ Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹ Those who passed by derided ^[b] him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ^[c] He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" ⁴⁴ The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

The Reproaches of God

The Reproaches are words which are often part of liturgies for Good Friday (although you may not be familiar with them). They are presented as Christ crying out to His people (contextually, the Israelites) for the injustices they showed their God after all the wonders God had performed for them. As we reflect on the following words in the context of our worship today we might reflect on the times when we have hurt God and turned away from Christ and offer those times to God in confession, saying we are sorry.

Hear the reproaches of God,
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

I delivered you from the hand of Pharaoh,
but you delivered me up to be crucified.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

My presence was with you in the pillar of cloud,
but you could not watch with me one hour.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

I opened the sea to lead you out of slavery,
but you opened my side with a spear.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

I sustained you with manna in the wilderness,
but you shared my bread and deserted me.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

I saved you with thirst with water from the rock,
but in my thirst you gave me vinegar to drink.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

I struck down your enemies before you,
but you struck my head with a reed.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

I planted you as my fairest vine,
but you yielded only bitterness.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

I gave you a royal sceptre,
but you gave me a crown of thorns.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

I raised you to the height of majesty,
but you raised me high on the cross.

My people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you? Answer me!

Hold a moment's silence and offer your own prayer....

Holy God, holy and strong,
Holy and immortal:
Have mercy on us.

We praise and adore you, O Christ:
by your cross and precious blood,
you have redeemed us.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,
To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading Matthew 27: 45 – 66 The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵ From noon on, darkness came over the whole land ^[a] until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶ And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." ⁴⁸ At once one of ⁱthem ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." ^[b] ⁵⁰ Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. ^[c] ⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³ After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴ Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!" ^[d]

⁵⁵ Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. ⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

The Burial of Jesus

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴ Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He

has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard^[e] of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can."^[f]⁶⁶ So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

Reflection - Friday people

In the space between death and what lay beyond.

People were frightened and disconnected.

Apart yet together.

In denial, in mourning, at a loss about what to do next.

Wondering what God was doing, why things had happened like they did.

Asking how they would cope.

Laying down all their anxiety and pain, not knowing if there was more to come.

Hopes smashed.

All the time God was there and what was to come was so very unexpected.

Beyond belief and infinitely glorious.

In this space between what was our daily pattern and what lies beyond
we sit.

Troubled and burdened by the vast problems the world faces.

Grieving for missed opportunities and life's rhythm.

Wondering what God is doing and why things are like they are.

Asking big questions.

Laying down all our pain and loss, our inability to predict the future about what happens next.

Fears real.

All the time God is here.

Faith enables us to glimpse that what's to come might be so astounding and new.

Nowhere near the same.

Very likely unexpected.

Beyond belief but infinitely glorious.

And know that God is with us.

(written by Jane Bingham)

Blessing

The cross is our symbol - a symbol of love.

The cross is our symbol - a symbol of hope.

Let us carry that cross into a grieving world

as a sign of the love and hope

that God offers to all his children. Amen.
