

Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross is an historical tradition created to help Christians journey with Jesus toward his death and resurrection. This practice allows us to remember all that Christ has done on our behalf. As you take this pilgrimage remember that you are not alone on your journey. The promise of the gospel is that Jesus has indeed overcome the world - he has defeated sin, death and evil. And now, he invites you to pick up your cross and follow him.

Artwork by: Scott Erikson
Meditations by: Josh Kluth



Station #1 - Jesus is Tempted

*“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.
Stay here and keep watch with me.”*

Matthew 26:38



Meditation

We begin in a garden. Jesus is alone. The one who proclaimed a kingdom is weeping. He brought others joy – will he not experience it? He comforted others– will he not himself be comforted? He is in agony. In a garden. There have been two great gardens in the history of the world. The first was in Eden. Another is here, in Gethsemane. Jesus returns to the place where Adam failed to resist the temptation to follow his own will.

But listen as Jesus prays, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” The cup to which he refers is the cup of God’s wrath for sin. The temptation is for him to avoid it. But this is the reason Jesus has come. The one who taught us to pray “Lead us not into temptation” is himself tempted – in every respect, yet without sin. He will taste death for us, to the last drop. There will be evening, and morning. His last day.

Passage

*“An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.
And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly,
and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.”*

Luke 22:43

Response

Stay here with me
Remain with me
Watch and pray
Watch and pray



Station #2 - Jesus is Betrayed

“Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Matthew 26:45-46



Meditation

A crowd enters the eastern side of the garden armed with clubs and swords. They are led by one Jesus has loved. This is an hour of betrayal. Judas says to Jesus, “Shalom, Rabbi.” Treachery clothed in courtesy. And then a kiss. “Judas,” asks Jesus, “would you betray the son of man with a kiss?” Consider the years Jesus had spent with Judas. That night they had shared a meal, Jesus had washed his feet. The price of deception? Thirty pieces of silver.

Yet Jesus is not surprised. “Friend, do what you came to do.” Jesus calls him “friend.” Behold the kindness of God. Judas did not accept it. Will you? You are invited to kiss the Son, not as his betrayer, but as his beloved. The crowd takes Jesus away. The journey to the cross has begun.

Passage

*“Kiss the Son,
or he will be angry,
and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”*

Psalm 2:12

Response

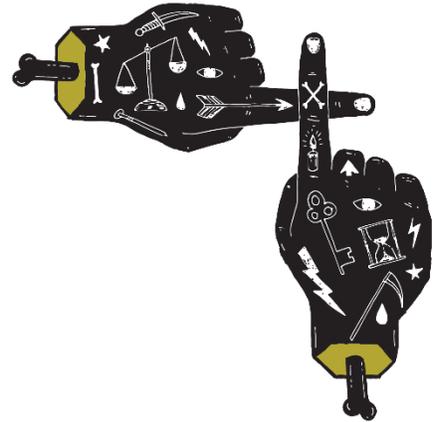
Stay here with me
Remain with me
Watch and pray
Watch and pray



Station #3 - Jesus is Condemned

“Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.”

Matthew 27:1-2



Meditation

Two trials await Jesus – one religious, the other political. But the verdicts were decided before the courts were in session. And Jesus is condemned at both. His first crime: blasphemy – “he made himself the Son of God” (John 19:7). His second crime: sedition – he “makes himself a king” (John 19:12). Religion is threatened when Jesus is God; politics is threatened when Jesus is King. Justice has been perverted.

The gavel falls and God is pronounced “guilty.” Condemned for crimes he didn’t commit. Yet Jesus offers no resistance. Why? Out of love for you and me. Jesus came in order that he might stand in our place, condemned for our sins. The verdict we deserve has fallen on him. But his condemnation will become our salvation.

Passage

*“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

Response

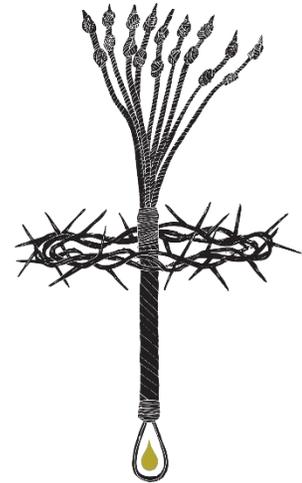
Stay here with me
Remain with me
Watch and pray
Watch and pray



Station #4 - Jesus is Mocked

“They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.”

Mark 15:17-20



Meditation

Jesus is handed over to the Roman soldiers. Prior to crucifixion, prisoners were sometimes flogged so severely that they did not live long enough to experience death on a Roman cross. This “king of the Jews” attracts their special attention. He is beaten relentlessly. A garment is placed on him. A crown of crude thorns is pressed upon his head. “Hail to the king of the Jews,” they mock and jeer.

Consider the deep irony of the robe, the crown, and their kneeling. One day, this Jesus would be seen for who he is and on that day, every knee would bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. What of these soldiers then? Yet, consider the grace he extends even now. One who heard the mockery cried out, “Do you not fear God? This man has done nothing wrong. Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” To which Jesus responds, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Passage

“All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. ‘He trusts in LORD,’ they say, ‘let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.’”

Psalm 22:7-8

Response

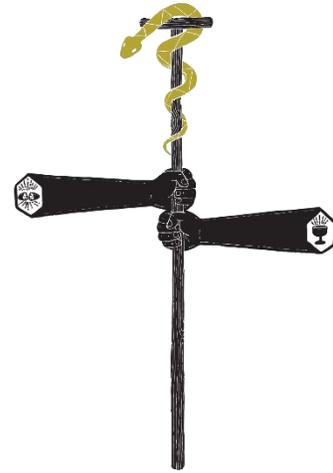
Lord, remember me
When you come into your kingdom
Remember me



Station #5 - Jesus is Given His Cross

"It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified."

John 19:14-16



Meditation

Where do we see the cross today? On earrings, necklaces. Stitched onto fabric and etched onto Bibles. Behind pulpits. On buildings. Strange for a symbol so unsanitary. The cross is not for polite company. It is meant to be vulgar. It is meant to cause one to turn their head and avert their eyes. The cruelest form of human ingenuity. A fitting place for evil to linger.

Yet Jesus takes hold of it. To be desecrated upon it. Christianity is the only major world religion that has as its central focus, the suffering of God for sinners. God making unsanitary people clean. Those who follow Jesus, therefore, are people of the cross, because to be marked by his cross is to be marked by his love.

Passage

"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Galatians 6:14

Response

Lord, remember me
When you come into your kingdom
Remember me



Station #6 - Jesus Falls

“Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

John 12:24



Meditation

Watch him as he goes. Crossbeam on his back. The weight of Roman cruelty on his shoulders. The weight of our condemnation bearing down with his every step. Stripped and scourged, the Son of Man staggers. His knees buckle. The Son of God steadies himself. Beaten and exhausted. The sting of sweat or blood or tears – three becoming one. It is too much to bear.

Trees are meant to be symbols of life. People climbed them to see Jesus. They opened roofs to come down that he might look upward in love. But this cross is a tree of death. And under its weight, Jesus collapses. Spent and scorned. What is your view from there, Jesus? Do you look up to see them point and laugh? They watch you as you fall. Jesus, how do you look upon us with such love?

Passage

*“Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors
and an object of dread to my closest friends--
those who see me on the street flee from me.
I am forgotten as though I were dead;
I have become like broken pottery.”*

Psalm 31:11-12

Response

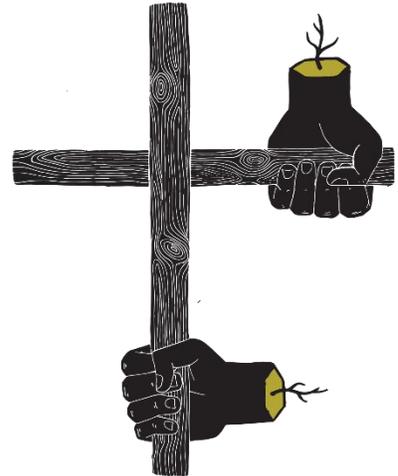
Lord, remember me
When you come into your kingdom
Remember me



Station #7 – Simon Carries Jesus' Cross

“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.”

Luke 23:26



Meditation

A man is pulled from the crowd to assist Jesus. One Simon of Cyrene, father of two, arriving late from the country. How did he get there? Did he hear the crowd and get curious? Did he catch a glimpse only to be grabbed?

We know almost nothing of this man from Africa – only that he was forced into the story. Joining Jesus in the spectacle. Himself humiliated. How long until he knew what it had meant? That while he was bearing Christ's burdens, Christ was bearing his. While he was entering Jesus' shame, Jesus was entering his. And what did Simon's children have to say? Their names were written into the story, too. And this invitation is extended to you as well. What Simon was forced to do unwillingly, the Son of God has done for you freely.

Passage

“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.”

Luke 22:43

Response

Lord, remember me
When you come into your kingdom
Remember me



Station #8 - Jesus is Stripped

“When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.”

John 19:23



Meditation

The cross is before Jesus. He is stripped of his clothes. Exhausted and exposed before the gaze of the crowd. Homeless, hopeless, penniless – with barely a rag to cover his nakedness. What could this man possibly offer to others?

What can this man offer us who are full of possessions? Today we look upon him with contempt – as though he had nothing. Yet Jesus looks upon us with compassion – we think we have everything. But one day all will be laid bare. Who will stand exposed, then? Nothing we possess can cover our shame. But then there is Jesus. He is stripped of his garments that we might be clothed.

Passage

*“I delight greatly in the LORD;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”*

Isaiah 61:10

Response

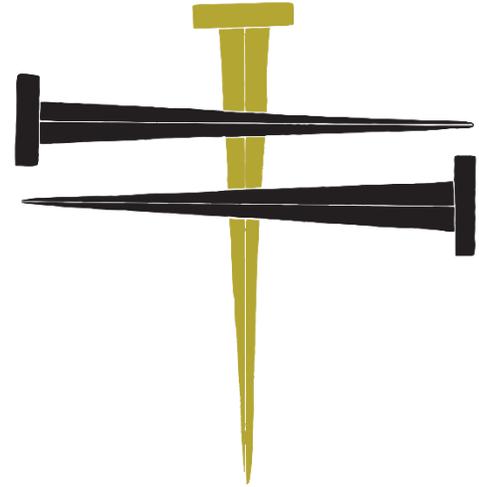
Lord, remember me
When you come into your kingdom
Remember me



Station #9 - Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

“Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 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. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Luke 2:32-34



Meditation

Observe in horror. The hammer falls. Again and again. Blow by blow. Nails into Jesus’ hands and feet. Consider those hands: hands that held children and blessed them; hands that had given sight to the blind; hands that broke bread and drank wine; hands that had formed worlds and hung the heavens. Now those hands are pierced.

His feet are next. Consider those feet: feet that climbed mountains; once anointed by perfume; walked on water. How beautiful are those feet. Now those feet are pierced to a cross. Jesus is lifted up. Spread out to the four corners of the earth. A carpenter’s son on carpenter’s wood. God’s Son, now crucified.

Passage

*“They pierce my hands and my feet.
All my bones are on display;
people stare and gloat over me.
They divide my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.”*

Psalm 22:16-18

Response

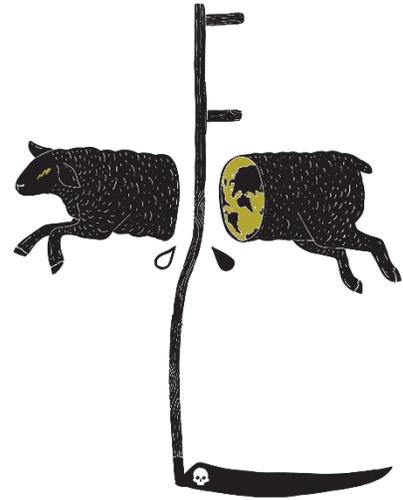
Father, forgive us
Look at what we’ve done
We’ve crucified your Son



Station #10 - Jesus Dies

“It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.”

Luke 23:44-45



Meditation

Jesus hangs on a cross. Hear his cry of dereliction. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Suspended between heaven and earth. His Father above looks upon him, but does not speak. The voice of men below jeer and taunt. The sun in the sky will soon hide its face.

Jesus writhes. He gasps. He thirsts. The bread is broken. The wine is poured out. All for the life of the world. The perfect priest, hands outstretched for his people. The perfect lamb, sacrificed for sin. The perfect temple, torn down. The earth trembles. Tombs break open. The light of creation is turned off. All goes dark. The Son of God dies on a cross.

Passage

*“Jesus called out with a loud voice,
‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’
When he had said this, he breathed his last.”*

Luke 23:46

Response

Father, forgive us
Look at what we’ve done
We’ve crucified your Son



Station #II - Jesus is Buried

“Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid.”

John 19:40-41



Meditation

The first Adam was from dust but was given the breathe of life. This second Adam was from heaven but gave his final breathe. From the womb, Jesus was wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger. In the tomb, Jesus is wrapped in linen cloths, lying in a grave.

But after both his birth and death, rich men provided him gifts. Surely, the Son of Man was the Son of God. Yet, who can fathom these things? In a tomb he was laid, and with him all the hopes of a new kingdom. What of them now? And with that, a stone seals them off. And there is silence.

Passage

“Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.”

Matthew 27:59-60

Response

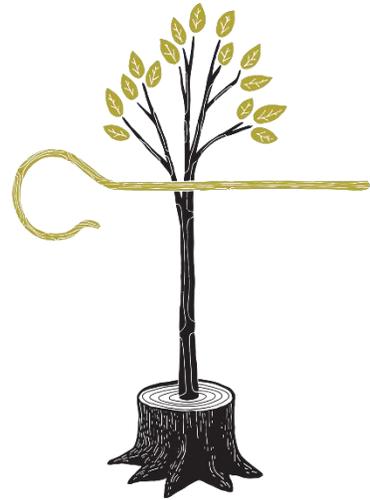
Observe in silence



Station #12 - Jesus Rises

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

Matthew 28:1-2



Meditation

On Saturday, the Son of Man lay in the heart of the earth. But on Sunday, something shifted. The future is brought forward into the present. The first day of a new week, a new world, a new creation. This is the reality of resurrection. The hope of heaven. The cross will not have the final word. That which is buried lives.

Ponder the words of the poet: Death was an executioner, but the gospel has made him just a gardener. The one we followed to the cross has walked out of the tomb. And this is a new garden. On Sunday, we celebrate. Tomorrow the preacher announces “He is risen!” and when he does, respond with full throated joy, “He is risen, indeed!” But for now, we wait. For it is still Saturday. And there will be evening, and morning. The first day.

Passage

“Early on the first day of the week, while it was dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.”

John 20:1

Response

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and
wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!

Revelation 5:12

