

Good Friday 18th April 2025

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Date: 18 April 2025

Preacher: Matt Wallace

[0 : 00] Good afternoon everyone and a warm welcome to our Good Friday service.! It's called An Hour at the Cross this afternoon because we're going to be spending the next 60 minutes reflecting and meditating on all that Jesus went through, all that Jesus won, all that Jesus has done for us by his death on the cross.

It's going to be by nature, as you can probably tell already, quite a quiet, reflective service by nature. There will be times of silence, times where I'll lead us in some reflections, and times when we'll listen to some music which seemed appropriate for today.

We're not going to sing any songs together, although two or three worship songs will make an appearance. So we're going to base our time together around some sections from each of the gospel accounts of Jesus' crucifixion, and in particular reflect on what that day might have sounded like.

So alongside some passages from the Bible, silence and spoken reflections from me, there's also going to be some sounds and background noises related to Jesus' experience and the experience perhaps of those around him.

Sometimes, briefly at points, perhaps becoming quite loud background noises. But with the idea being that those sounds, those noises might help us in our mind's eye to enter into and imagine the setting and the soundtrack in which Jesus' journey to the cross happened.

[1 : 41] So it may be that it'll be helpful for us as we go through to close our eyes, perhaps when our reflections begin, but I'll leave that up to you. Before we begin those reflections, though, let's pray.

Let's commit our time and ourselves this afternoon into God's hands. Dear God, thank you for Jesus and for all that this day means.

Thank you for the opportunity we have today to think about, to consider, to in some way enter into the suffering and the passion of Jesus as he was crucified.

Lead us, we pray, that we may appreciate in a deeper way all that his death meant then and means now for us and for our world today.

May we know, please, your loving presence with us now. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

[2 : 49] Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[5 : 10] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

- [12 : 53] To this band of soldiers. Beating you. Mocking you. Now. All enabled. Ordered even. By their own centurion.
- This commanding officer. In front of you now. And yet I wonder if it was in this moment. That the realization came upon you.
- That these men. Well they didn't know. They can't have known what they were doing. Perhaps it was for these same soldiers. That you would later pray.
- Forgive them father. For they know not what they do. A stunning display of your compassion. And mercy. When faced with such brutal.
- Dehumanizing. Demonizing. Treatment. Thank you Jesus. That in your time of greatest pain. You maintained.
- [13 : 56] You remained. Love. Thank you for your forgiving nature. Thank you that you lived out. And put into practice.
- The principles. By which you call us to live. Loving your enemies. Praying for those. Who persecuted you. We're sorry.
- Jesus. So sorry for the way you were treated. By these soldiers. Treatment that. Even pilot. In all of his.
- Compromising confusion. Would surely. Have been troubled by. And yet we're also. Sorry. Jesus. When we fail to stand up for you.
- And your ways. When they are mocked. Or ridiculed. Today. Forgive us. We pray. And in your mercy.
- [14 : 55] Give us. Please. Just an ounce. Of your courage. An ounce. Of your fortitude. An ounce. Of your compassion. Seeds of faith.
- So that our witness for you. May be true. And the way. In which we bear your name. May be flavoured. By grace. And integrity.
- And love. My song is love unknown.
- My savior's love to me. Love to the loveless. Showed that they might lovely be.
- Oh, who am I. That for my sake. My Lord should take for a flesh. And die.
- [16 : 05] He came from his blessed throne.
- salvation to bestow. But men made strange. And none that longed for Christ. Would know.
- But oh, my friend. My friend indeed. Who at my need. His life did spend.
- Sometimes they strew his way.
- And his sweet praises sing. Resounding all the day. Hosanna's to their king.
- [17 : 17] And crucified is all their bread. And for his death they thirst and cry.
- Here might I stay and sing.
- No story so divine. Never was left dear king. never was green like thorn.
- This is my friend in whose sweet praise I all my days could gladly stay.
- After a while the soldiers took Jesus out of the praetorium and led him away to be crucified.
- [18 : 38] As they were going out they seized a man called 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.
- They weaved their way through the narrow streets. Streets full of people, full of traders, full of craftsmen and stonemasons.

Some leading the lambs they'd brought to be sacrificed. Some trying to bargain with traders for a cheaper price. Behind Jesus, a large number of people followed him through the cities heaving narrow streets, including women who mourned and wailed for him.

[20 : 50] Thank you.

So many competing voices, competing sounds. Everyone seeming to be carrying on with business as usual, rushing to get everything sorted by sunset and the start of this most holy of Sabbaths, the Passover Sabbath.

Indeed, as the Roman soldiers pushed their way through this chaos, they tried to clear the way for Jesus to make his journey to the cross.

So the soldiers forced a passerby, a man called Simon, who had just arrived from North Africa to carry Jesus' cross.

In doing so, again, whether he realized it or not, Simon becomes an example for us all.

[23 : 53] These women included Jesus' mother, Mary, one of his closest friends, Mary Magdalene, another Mary, the wife of Clopas, there was Salome, other friends and disciples, probably including Susanna and Joanna, and maybe, tradition suggests, a woman called Veronica.

A woman who then became a follower of Jesus and who had now followed him down to Jerusalem. Over recent days, she might have been able to worship in the temple for perhaps the first time in her life, no longer ceremonially unclean, but free from the burden of bleeding.

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I wonder, Jesus, as you perhaps looked at Veronica, whether you felt the irony of her now trying to stop your bleeding, the healed becoming the healer, the cared for becoming the carer.

[25 : 37] I hope it gave you comfort to know that she had stayed the course with you and was now putting your ways into practice. But I wonder, too, Jesus, if you remembered what it felt like for your power to go out of you when she touched your cloak.

Miraculous power. The healing power of God. And yet now, your power, your strength was draining in an altogether different way as you trudged your way towards your crucifixion.

Despite your fatigue, Luke's gospel tells us that at one point on this journey, you turned to these mourning, wailing women following you and said to them, daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me.

Weep for yourselves and for your children. It's a statement that reveals your concern, Jesus, for what would come to pass for the troubles and persecutions that the Romans will bring upon future generations.

Again, even on your darkest day, you're still being mindful, still being careful, still being full of care for others.

[27 : 06] We're grateful, Jesus, grateful beyond words for their compassion which defines who you are.

Not only did you find the energy to offer consolation to these women who were following you on your journey, but later on the cross, you make a point of entrusting your mother, Mary, into the care of your young disciple, John, and John into the care of your mother, Mary.

Unfailingly, unceasingly kind, compassionate, and caring. Caring, even when carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders.

And so we're sorry, Jesus. We're sorry when through tiredness, through frustration, through negligence, through belligerence, we fail to treat others as we would like to be treated or indeed as you would treat them.

Please forgive us. And in having forgiven us, inspire us, we pray. Breathe into us, we pray, your spirit, your ability to love with such tender compassion that those we live alongside would see you in us.

[28 : 47] Amen. singing, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 25] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[34 : 25] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

But a psalm which you quote ends with triumph, concluding with these words, future generations will be told about the Lord.

They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn, he has done it. He has done it indeed.

[41 : 38] A sense of faithful fulfillment that's reflected in the way you entrusted your spirit into your father's hands and breathed at your last.

It is finished. I've done it, in other words. Persevered to the end. Run the race. Taken the sins of the world with you to the grave, knowing that they would be left dead and buried.

Even when you would rise again. Thank you, Jesus, for your grace under pressure, your faithfulness under fire, your perseverance in the midst of such profound trauma.

Thank you for the hope that never left you. The certain hope of a resurrection life to come. Thank you for being willing to die so that we might live.

So that we might live that resurrection life with you forever, starting from today. May the reality of your life, death, and resurrection shape our faith and be the soundtrack of our lives, both now and always.

[43 : 17] be still, my soul.

the Lord is on your side. Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.

Leave to your God to order and provide. in every change he faithful will remain.

Be still, my soul, your Savior and your friend will lead you safe until a joyful end.

be still, my soul, your God will undertake to guide the future as he has the past.

[44 : 54] your hope, your confidence let nothing shake all now, mysterious shall be bright at last.

be still, my soul, the wind and waves will know his voice who ruled while he was here
below be still, my soul, the hour is hastening on when we shall be forever with the Lord
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone sorrow for God love's purest joys restored
be still, my soul, when change and tears are past all safe and blessed we shall meet at
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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. Jesus called out with a loud voice, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, surely this was a righteous man.

[47 : 37] When all the people had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place. They beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these things.

Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action.

He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body.

Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock. One in which no one had yet been laid.

It was preparation day and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it.

[48 : 58] And they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

[illegible]

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[51 : 39] Thank you for being here this afternoon. You're welcome to stay and sit in the quiet as long as you like. But when you leave here, may you go with God's blessing.

And may you rest well tomorrow. Looking forward to all that Sunday will bring. Amen.