



The praetorium as it was known. Must have been deafening. The soldiers seemed to be aware of who Jesus was.

[ 9 : 36 ] At least the reputation he'd got. Because they mocked him as some kind of king. Maybe they'd heard about the crowds hailing Jesus as king on his donkey riding entry into Jerusalem just a few days before.

And so here, they put a robe on his shoulders. A crown of thorns on his head. A staff in his hand. Hail, they shouted sarcastically.

Hail, king of the Jews. Jesus, before spitting on him and beating him with the same staff that they'd previously given him to hold. We're told, Jesus, that they struck you on the head repeatedly.

You'd already endured the flogging, the whipping that pilot ordered. And that was bad enough.

But then to have that compounded with a relentless beating from these soldiers. Well, we can only imagine the pain this unleashed as they hit you.

[ 10 : 44 ] Each blow pressing the thorns deeper into your scalp. Each blow jarring your head. As the ringing in your ears got louder and louder.

Intense physical pain, no doubt. Psychological pain, too, though being taunted and mocked. Jeered at, leered at.

Ridiculed by these soldiers. All, no doubt. While their commanding officer, their centurion, looked on with relish.

I wonder, Jesus, if at that moment, your mind flashed back to another centurion who you'd once met. Up north in your hometown of Capernaum in Galilee.

In altogether quieter, calmer, we hope happier days. That Galilean centurion. Well, he'd come to you asking for help.

[ 11 : 48 ] Asking for you to heal his servant. And he'd been so humble. So reverent to you. Telling you that he didn't deserve to have you come to his house.

But if you just said the word. Then he knew his servant would be healed. No wonder you are so impressed by his faith. Amazed is the word Luke's gospel uses about you.

Amazed at this centurion's vulnerability. His humility. But most of all, his faith. He simply, profoundly believed in you.

Believed in who you were. Who you are. And you made a point of telling your friends how amazed you were. Exclaiming to them.

Truly I tell you. I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. What a contrast, therefore.

[ 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.  
Streets full of the noise and commotion of those who'd come for the Passover festival. People  
jostled past each other on their way up to the temple.  
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.  
Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. quequequequequequequ  
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uequequeque Thank you.  
[ 20 : 50 ] Thank you.

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.  
And yet so many people, much to the distress of Jesus' friends and supporters, seemed utterly  
oblivious to the fact that the Lord of the Sabbath, the Holy One of God, was literally passing them  
by, going against the flow as always.  
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.  
[ 22 : 43 ] Jesus had been so badly beaten already and was losing so much blood, both internally  
and externally, that his strength was already fading.

So the soldiers forced a passerby, a man called Simon, who had just arrived from North Africa to  
carry Jesus' cross.  
In what must be one of the most bittersweet privileges of all time, Simon, knowingly or not, obeys  
Jesus' earlier command to take up your cross and follow me.  
In doing so, again, whether he realized it or not, Simon becomes an example for us all.  
Simon dragged the cross behind a stumbling Jesus. Behind Simon, leading the large number  
following, were a group of women who were told mourned and wailed for Jesus.  
[ 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.





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 last voy forbade voy forbade voy forbade  
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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.

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 Thank you.  
 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.