

THE WAY OF THE CROSS



This is **LOVE**





Jesus' mission was clear. His purpose, plain. And yet it was not evident to those around Him.

Unwavering in His quest, He walked the steps that would culminate in the unfathomable sacrifice that **changed everything forever.**

Jesus made it personal! He paid the price we owed – you owed – and offers us the **gift of life.** He rescues us from the mess we've made and restores us to Himself.

Why not carve out time this Easter, to make it personal too?

Follow the steps of Jesus from His last supper to the resurrection. Steps He walked as one of us – **for each of us.**

Because He loved us.

The idea is to place yourself in the Easter story.

Visit the Way of the Cross stations set out on our church property (10 to 16 April) to experience the journey to the fullest.

Start at the Prayer Chapel.

Join an early-morning group journey with one of our pastors, Monday to Saturday at 06:30, starting with communion in the Prayer Chapel.

Engage with the content in any way that will make the Passover experience personal for you:

Meditate on a portion each day, for a week.

Use the passages provided as starting point and **dig deeper** into scripture as the Holy Spirit highlights certain portions to you.

Reflect on the points provided or ponder on the passages yourself.

Whichever way you choose to make this journey, we encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to show you new insight and fresh revelation this year as you remember the most important event on our Christian calendar.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the NIVUK.



The Last Supper



When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the kingdom of God.'

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'

Luke 22:14-20

Pause and ponder

The Passover meal: A time of family, fellowship, remembrance! A reflection on being rescued from Egypt and a looking forward to a final rescue and fulfilment of His promise for all nations. **An annual feast.**

Put yourself in the shoes of the disciples – you’re looking forward to this annual gathering, not realising this would be the night everything changes. A night that would end in chaos and agony.

His words may have rung a little strange: ‘This is my blood ...’ Jesus had never said that during a Passover meal before. And the master washing their feet. Could this have pointed, too, to something about this meal being different?

Dig a little deeper into the Lord’s Supper. Read the entire portion of scripture, and in more than one translation. What other signs can you see that indicate Jesus pointing to the hour being near?

My personal takeaway

02

STATION 2

The Garden of Gethsemane



Jesus, fully human

Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, 'Pray that you will not fall into temptation.' He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' 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.

When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.

Luke 22:39-44

Disciples, asleep

When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

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. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!'

Matthew 26:43-46

Betrayed and arrested

While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?'

When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, 'Lord, should we strike with our swords?' And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

But Jesus answered, 'No more of this!' And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, 'Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour – when darkness reigns.'

Luke 22:47-53

Pause and ponder

A lot takes place in the Garden of Gethsemane:

Jesus was no ordinary man; but **He was fully human**; and fought a fierce psychological and spiritual battle.

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The disciples did not grasp the **weight of the moment** and the events that were about to unfold.

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Judas betrays Jesus with the **kiss** of a friend.

»»»»————««««

The disciples are **ready to fight** for Jesus as the physical king of Israel.

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Jesus **reprimands** the violence, and **heals** the ear slashed off by Peter.

»»»»————««««

Jesus makes **no effort to resist** or flee.

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Jesus knows **the time has come**.

Which of these speak most to you? Why? Spend some time reflecting on what the Holy Spirit is showing you.

My personal takeaway

03

Judged. Condemned. Sentenced.



Condemned by the Sanhedrin

At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. ‘If you are the Messiah,’ they said, ‘tell us.’

Jesus answered, ‘If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.’

They all asked, ‘Are you then the Son of God?’

He replied, 'You say that I am.'

Then they said, 'Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.'

Luke 22:66-71

Jesus before Pilate

Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. A man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder in the uprising. The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

'Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?' asked Pilate, knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to get Pilate to release Barabbas instead.

'What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?' Pilate asked them.

'Crucify him!' they shouted.

'Why? What crime has he committed?' asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!'

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15:6-15

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify! Crucify!' ... 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 19:6,15-16

Pause and ponder

Just a week prior, a crowd marked Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem with shouts of 'Hosannah!', welcoming Him as King, and now a crowd jeers, 'Crucify him!' One moment celebrated, the next condemned.

Pilate too, despite three attempts to release Jesus, also finally gives in to the crowd's demands.

Are we this fickle? Are we this easily swayed? Are we this easily influenced by the crowds? Are you?

My personal takeaway

04

STATION 4

Scourged and Mocked



His body, broken

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. 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 spat 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 15:16-20

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

Pause and ponder

Mocked. Ridiculed. Beaten. Broken.

Blow after blow. Lash after Lash. Jeer after jeer.

Jesus bore it all.

Intentionally.

Willingly.

Without resisting.

Take a moment to let that sink in.

Amazing love.

My personal takeaway

Bearing the Cross



So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha).

John 19:16-17

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means ‘the place of the skull’).

Mark 15:21

Pause and ponder

Simon, being from Cyrene, would have travelled some distance to celebrate the Passover. Here, he unexpectedly finds himself pulled into Jesus' suffering by being forced to carry His cross.

What do you think may have gone through Simon's mind in that moment?
What would be the impact on you, if you were in his position?

And Jesus – with his broken body – what do you think kept Him going in this moment?

My personal takeaway

06

STATION 6

Jesus is Crucified



It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, 'So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!' In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he can't save himself! Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.' Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’).

When some of those standing near heard this, they said, ‘Listen, he’s calling Elijah.’

Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ‘Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,’ he said.

With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, ‘Surely this man was the Son of God!’

Mark 15:25-39

Seven final sayings of Jesus

‘Father, **forgive them**, for they do not know what they are doing.’ **Luke 23:34**

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‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in **paradise**.’ **Luke 23:43**

»»»»————««««

‘Woman, here is your **son**,’ and to the disciple,
‘Here is your **mother**.’ **John 19:26 – 27**

»»»»————««««

‘My God, my God, why have you **forsaken** me?’ **Matthew 27:46**

»»»»————««««

‘I am **thirsty**.’ **John 19:28**

»»»»————««««

‘It is **finished**.’ **John 19:30**

»»»»————««««

‘Father, into your hands I commit my **spirit**.’ **Luke 23:46**

Pause and ponder

Jesus suffered on the cross for six hours. Despite His state of utter agony, His last words embody the love and mercy He modelled and taught; and His death displayed a mystery impossible to comprehend:

'God forsaken by God. Who can understand it?' MARTIN LUTHER

Consider each of Jesus' last statements. Read the surrounding scriptures and reflect on the remarkable backdrop within which each was said.

My personal takeaway



Jesus in a Tomb



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. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

Luke 23:50-56

Pause and ponder

His death seemed like a personal victory for those who opposed Jesus. His death seemed like a personal tragedy for those who followed Jesus. His death seemed like the deal clincher for satan: death has (seemingly) had the final say.

But all was not as it seemed.

Imagine what you might have felt like, following the chaos and mayhem of the hours before. Imagine the sort of things you might be reflecting on as you contemplate what just happened.

My personal takeaway

08

STATION 8

The Risen Lord!



On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: “The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.”’ Then they remembered his words.

Luke 24:1-7

Pause and ponder

This event is what sets Christianity apart from all other religions:

He is risen!

The grave is **empty!**
Death has been **defeated.**

Because of His great gift and **selfless sacrifice**, everything changed.

Forever.



**Write a thank offering
to Jesus, our Risen Lord.**





Lead me to Calvary

King of my life, I crown Thee now,
Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.

Lest I forget Gethsemane,
Lest I forget Thine agony;
Lest I forget Thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary.

Show me the tomb where Thou wast laid,
Tenderly mourned and wept;
Angels in robes of light arrayed
Guarded Thee whilst Thou slept.

Let me like Mary, through the gloom,
Come with a gift to Thee;
Show to me now the empty tomb,
Lead me to Calvary.

May I be willing, Lord, to bear
Daily my cross for Thee;
Even Thy cup of grief to share,
Thou hast borne all for me.

JENNIE E HUSSEY, 1921



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