



stations:

walking the way of Jesus



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Good Friday

Welcome to Stations

Pilgrimage is a lost spiritual discipline in the life of modern Christians. In the Middle Ages, every authentic Christ follower was encouraged to travel to Jerusalem and walk in Christ's footsteps. The earliest surviving narrative of this practice appears in the early 4th century account by the anonymous "Pilgrim of Bordeaux." Over the centuries, a winding route emerged in Jerusalem, leading from the ruins of the Antonia Fortress to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. But not all aspiring pilgrims could manage this arduous and costly trip, therefore pictures or sculptures representing the stages of Christ's journey to the cross were erected in or near local churches or other public venues.

As a spiritual exercise, the stations of the cross developed organically from the devotional lives of medieval Christ followers. The sixteenth century Dutch geographer and priest, Christian van Adrichem, reminded his readers that they could follow this way of the cross "within the temple or chamber of the spirit," without leaving home.

Stations is a self-directed, reflective time intended to focus on the cross of Jesus and our own journey with him. There are 9 of the Stations of the Cross in this booklet, and the intent is that you drive to the stated locations around town and engage in the reflection for that station in the booklet.

This year's experience of Stations will walk us through the story of Jesus' betrayal, trial, and execution as recounted in the Gospel of Mark, Chapters 14-15.

For each of the stations, this booklet contains:

- a scripture reading
- a reflection
- instructions for what to do or focus on at each station
- a prayer

Take all the time you need as you go through the stations. After all, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages would have lasted over two months. Slow down and allow God to speak to you as you spend this time with him. Feel free to do this as an individual or a family.

As you prepare to walk beside Christ on the Way of the Cross, take a moment to breathe and then quiet yourself before Jesus and ask him to meet you as you go through this experience today.

And now your journey begins...

STATION 1

The Last Supper

At Lakewood
Alliance Church
4001 - 5th Avenue

Mark 14.12-26

12 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. 14 Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?"

20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. 21 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

23 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. 25 "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Reflection

The Festival of Unleavened Bread, as part of the Passover celebration, is a remembrance of God's deliverance of his people from slavery in Egypt.

As Jesus shared this meal with his disciples, one of whom would betray him, he took a loaf of bread and declared that the bread represented his body. Just as the Passover Lamb was offered as a sacrifice at the festival, his body that would soon be offered as a sacrifice.

In eating this meal with his disciples, his friends, Jesus was re-interpreting what this meal represented for them by substituting himself in place of the Passover Lamb, a sacrifice that would set them free from sin and death and give them eternal life.

If you were sitting at the table with Jesus, what would you have thought when he said one sitting there would betray him? Would you think there is no way that could be you? Or would you see the brokenness in yourself and wonder if he was talking about you?

Know that this journey Jesus walked to the cross, he walked with full knowledge of your whole being - the good and the bad - and he walked it in love for you, so that you too could be set free from slavery and for life.

At the Station

At this first station, you will receive a small loaf of bread that you will carry with you throughout your pilgrimage today.

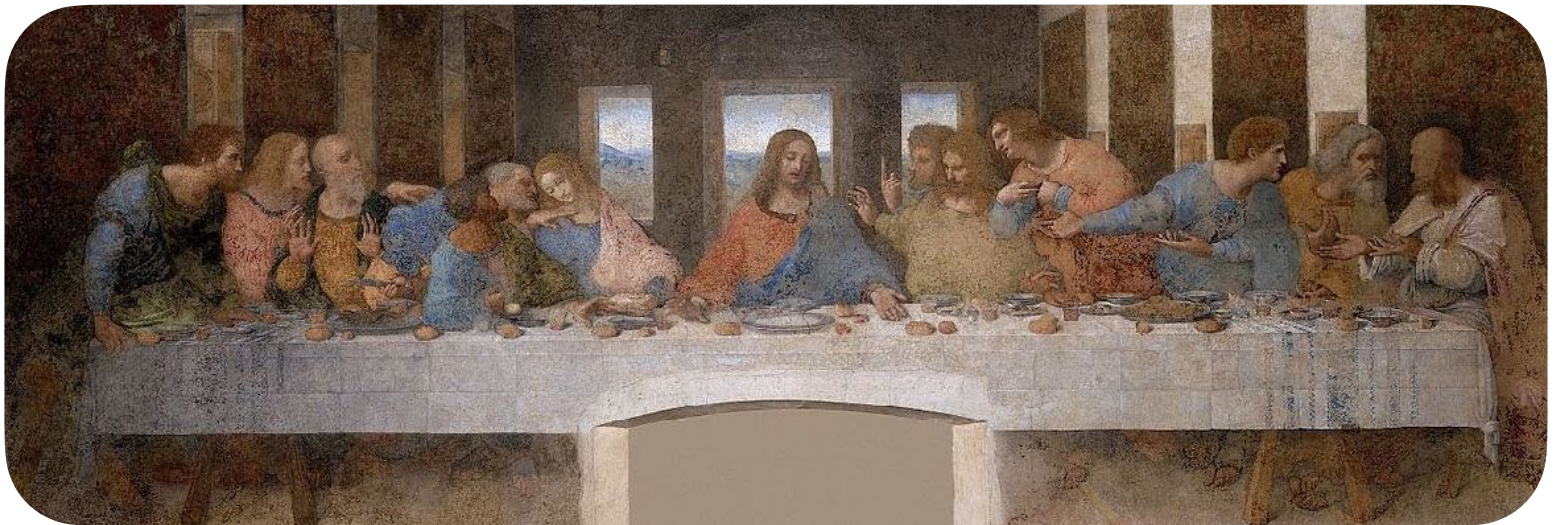
As you take the bread, take a moment to reflect on the gift that Jesus has given you. A gift offered to you and me even when Jesus can see our whole being, every thought, every action, every desire. A gift given even though Jesus knows the ways we may fail him.

Receive the bread as a gift given with the fullness of God's love for you. Bring the bread with you and hold it as you take time to read and reflect at each of the stations.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, as I begin this journey with you through the stations of the cross, I ask that you would show me what is true of you - your character, your love, your faithfulness; and also show me what is true of me.

Jesus, open my eyes to the significance of your suffering on my behalf and the beauty of the gift you offer me.



For Station 2, head across Ospika Blvd. to Rainbow Park

STATION 2

**At Rainbow Park
Along Ospika Blvd.**
(pause by the unplanted gardens)

In the Garden

Mark 14.32-42

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.

34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Reflection

Through history, some of the artistic depictions of Jesus in the garden have focused on the serenity and strength of Jesus in the garden, with his halo of light reflecting God's light shining on him.

But as we read the biblical accounts of Jesus praying in the garden, we see Jesus in anguish, struggling in prayer. In Jesus words, he is "deeply grieved, even to death."

Here we sense the agony of Jesus as he struggles with his Father's will. A struggling Jesus? A Jesus who at first wants something other than his Father's will? A Jesus who wishes to pass on the cup of suffering?

If you're a Christian who believes that Jesus was not just a human being, but also the unique Son of God, the Word of God in flesh, then the scene in Gethsemane is shocking. It stretches our understanding and boggles our simplistic explanations of who Jesus really is. In Gethsemane, perhaps more than in any other scene of the Gospels, we see the fully human Jesus, the One who "in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

This means, among other things, that Jesus understands when we are tested, when we are weak, when we aren't sure we want God's will for our lives. In Jesus, we have, not a god who is watching us from a distance, but One who knows our every weakness, and who is there to help us in our time of trial. Indeed, Scripture teaches that Christ himself intercedes for us (Romans 8:34).

Whatever picture of Gethsemane you keep in your mind, may you let the text of Scripture fill out its meaning. May you be encouraged to come before God with complete honesty, holding nothing back. May you pour out your heart to the Lord. May you wrestle with God's will for you. As you do, know that Jesus understands, and is there to help you.

At the Station

As you take a moment to reflect on Jesus' humanity and identification with you, consider your own humanity. Think about the challenges you face and struggles that are very real in your life.

Look at the garden beds that are yet unplanted. Consider that what currently looks somewhat barren and empty will soon be teeming with life and beauty. Give God thanks for the ways he will bring beauty out of the places of struggle and barrenness you are experiencing.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, as I reflect upon your experience in Gethsemane, I am once again astounded by your utter humanness. You are not God-in-flesh-well-sort-of, but truly God in human flesh. You are Emmanuel, God with us. Thus you are also God with me. You understand me. You stand with me in hard times. You encourage me when I wrestle with the Father's will. And you intercede for me. How I thank you, dear Lord, for who you are, for what you have done, and for what you are doing in my life today. Amen.



For Station 3, walk to the Gazebo (take a roundabout route)

STATION 3

**At the Rainbow
Park Gazebo**
(walk the paths a bit to get there)

Jesus is Arrested

Mark 14.43-51

43 Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

44 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 The men seized Jesus and arrested him. 47 Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

48 "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." 50 Then everyone deserted him and fled.

51 A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, 52 he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

Reflection

Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. In the culture of the time, a kiss was a sign of love and loyalty. A disciple might indeed kiss his master to signify the specialness of their relationship. There was nothing sexual about the kiss. It was the sort of kiss that a son might give a father. I wonder why Judas chose to identify Jesus, indeed, to betray him, with a kiss. After all, he could have simply pointed to Jesus, or called out his name, or said to the soldiers: "He's the one over there." Yet Judas chose a kiss. Why? Of course we can only speculate. I wonder if Judas was saying to Jesus: "I'm doing this because I committed to the coming of the kingdom. I'm forcing your hand, Jesus, so that you'll reveal your true messianic ministry and call up legions of angels to defeat the Romans." Or perhaps Judas' kiss meant: "I once believed in you, Jesus. I loved you. But you betrayed me. You held out the promise of the coming kingdom and I bought it completely. But then you started talking about your death, like a defeated man. And everything started to unravel, including my hopes for you. So I still love you, Jesus, but I can no longer support you because you betrayed me and our cause." From our perspective, it's easy to condemn Judas. Few people in history have been more despised, and for good reason. Yet by heaping still more disdain on Judas, we miss the chance to confront the Judas in ourselves. What about our own mixed responses to Jesus?

How many times have we betrayed Jesus, not in the obvious and literal way of Judas, but in our hearts and actions? How many times have we confessed Jesus as Lord, only to enthrone ourselves as the true lord of our lives?

How many times have we worshiped Jesus with our lips, not with a kiss, but with words, songs, and prayers, only to reject him in our hearts and actions?

When I stand back from myself and reflect, I want to be completely devoted to Jesus. But in the day-to-day challenges of faith, the Judas lurking within me sometimes reveals himself. I too can betray my Lord.

At the Station

At this Gazebo, many weddings have taken place with husbands and wives giving vows to one another and then sharing together in a kiss that is meant to be a special gift both from the giver and the receiver. A moment shared between two people. But like all actions, the heart can be in a very different place than the action is supposed to convey.

As you stand by the Gazebo, think of the ways that your actions have said something different than where your heart has been when it comes to your walk with Jesus. Maybe you have helped someone while begrudging that you had to in your heart. Maybe you have pretended to worship when you know there is sin that you want to keep doing.

Take a moment to confess your betrayal and ask Jesus for his forgiveness.

Prayer

O Lord, as much as I hate to admit it, to myself and to you, there is a bit of Judas in me. Forgive me for the times I have pledged my love for you, only to reject you in the way I live. Help me to see where my commitment to you is mixed, where my heart is divided against itself. Set me free to be wholly devoted to you, even when I don't understand you, even when I'm afraid that following you is too risky. Amen.



For Station 4, drive to UNBC

STATION 4

UNBC Overlook
2nd parking lot in the corner
- walk out

Jesus before the Sanhedrin

Mark 14.53-65

53 They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. 54 Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. 56 Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

57 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.'" 59 Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

63 The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked.

64 "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

They all condemned him as worthy of death.

65 Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

Reflection

Have you ever wondered why Jesus wasn't clearer about who he was and what he had come to do? I certainly have.

It seems like it would have been so much easier for everyone if he had only said, "Yes, I am the Messiah, but not in the sense you expect. I have been anointed by God to bring the kingdom, but not in a military-political way. The kingdom is coming through transformed hearts, communities, and cultures. Most of all, the kingdom is coming through my death, as I bear the sin of Israel and the world."

Yet Jesus didn't say this. It's something we have to piece together from his words and deeds. And we, like the people of his day, even his disciples, often get things confused. We may get caught up in the notion of Jesus as a military-political Messiah. Or perhaps we limit his saving work to a ticket to heaven for individual believers, rather than transformation of the whole cosmos, beginning with our world today. We don't make the connection between Jesus as the Messiah and the prayer he taught us: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

When we confess Jesus as Christ or Messiah, we're not only acknowledging him as our personal Saviour, but also recognizing that he came to inaugurate the kingdom of God. Though this kingdom won't fully come until Jesus himself brings it, we get to share in the blessings and responsibilities of the kingdom even now. Our calling as followers of Jesus is to do the works of the kingdom, so that the reign of God might invade this world. At the same time, we look forward to the day when all will be fulfilled. Then, in the classic words of Revelation 11:15, put to such wonderful music in Handel's Messiah, we'll celebrate the fact that:

The kingdom of this world is become, The kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, And He shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah!

At the Station

Take some time looking out at the city and ask God to open your eyes:

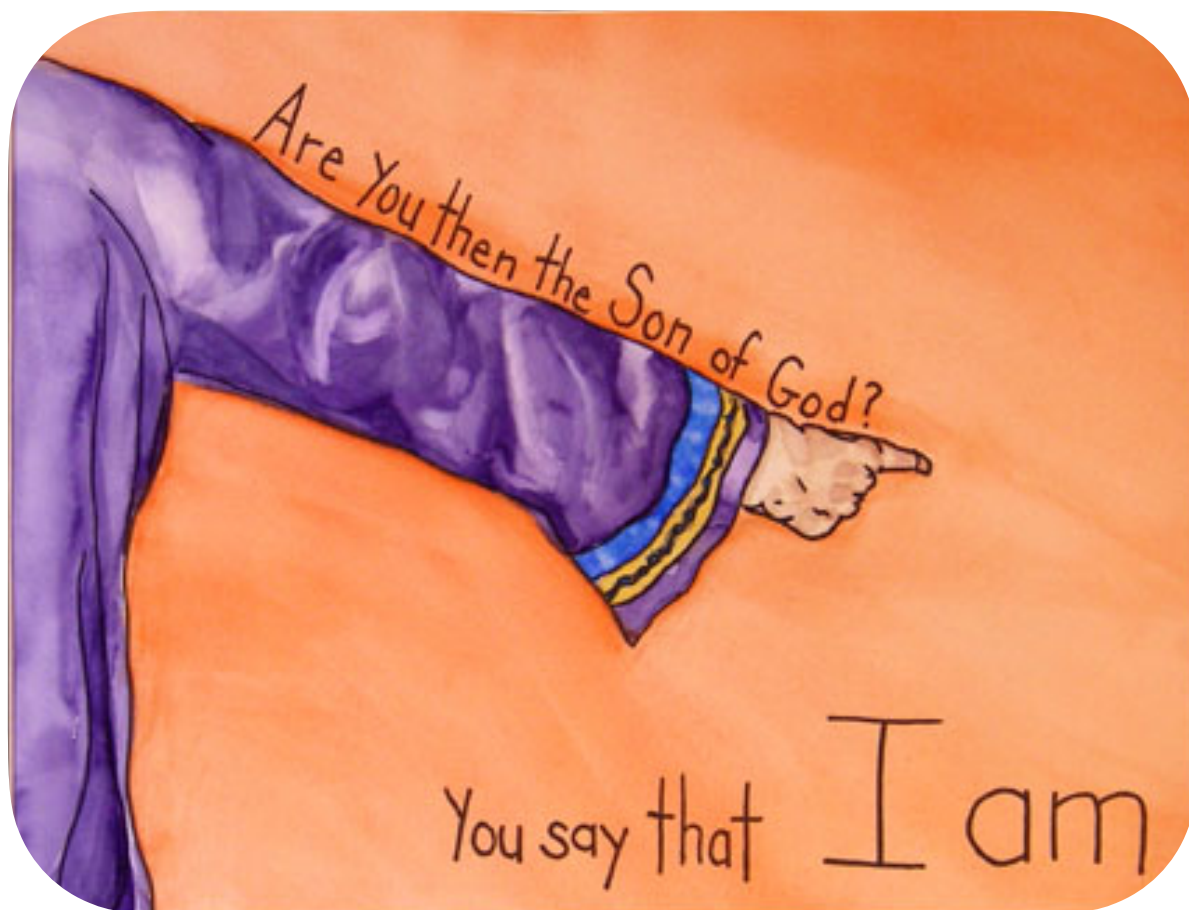
- to show you more of who He is: his character and what he is doing in the world.
- to show you what he wants you to see in the city around you. To open your eyes to see your neighbourhood and the people you encounter each day the way God sees them.

Take a moment and consider what God shares with you or helps you to see.

This week, walk around your neighbourhood asking God to open your eyes to what he's up, and praying that his kingdom would come in your neighbourhood.

Prayer

O Lord, the Jewish officials didn't understand what it meant for you to be Messiah, and they condemned you as a criminal worthy of death. Your own followers didn't understand what it meant for you to be Messiah, so they scattered and hid in your hour of crisis. Help me not to be like these! Help me to understand what it means when I confess you to be the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed of God. And may this confession lead me to a life of true discipleship. Let your kingdom come, Lord, and your will be done, on earth as in heaven. And let this happen in my life, even today! Amen.



For Station 5, drive to Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park.

STATION 5

Lheidli T'enneh
Memorial Park on 17th Ave
(On the river bank)

Abandoned by a Friend

Mark 14.27-31

27 “You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written:

“I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.”

28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

29 Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”

30 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.”

31 But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same.

Mark 14.66-72

66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by.

67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said.

68 But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.

69 When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” 70 Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

71 He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

72 Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

Reflection

Why did Peter deny Jesus? He was one of the first to follow Jesus, leaving so much behind to walk the uncertain road of discipleship. He had seen mighty wonders as his Master healed the sick, cast out demons, and even raised the dead. Peter had witnessed the miracle of the transfiguration. And he had even walked on water for a few brief moments. So why did Peter, of all people, deny Jesus?

Because he was afraid. Fear cripples our souls and binds our hearts. Fear leads us to do what we would otherwise never do, and it keeps us from doing that which we know to be right. In fearful moments, all we think of is how to protect ourselves, perhaps at any cost.

Peter was afraid, understandably so. All that he had hoped seemed to be crumbling before him. The one he believed to be the Messiah, the Savior of Israel, was now arrested. Jesus’ death seemed certain, and with his death the end of Peter’s reason for living. Moreover, seeing his powerful Master so helpless must have confused Peter. Why did the one with the power to still the storm not use that power now? And if Jesus was helpless to defend himself, what did that mean for Peter?

In confusion, Peter did what only hours before he swore he would never do, denying his Master. The one who promised to go to prison and even to die with Jesus was now scurrying to protect himself. So he denied his Lord, not once, but three times, just as Jesus had promised. Fear had overtaken Peter’s consciousness and conscience.

Though you and I might never deny Jesus in such a blatant way as Peter did, I would suggest that we might indeed deny him in less obvious ways, also because of fear. Have you ever sensed that the Lord was urging you to do something for his sake, but then you chickened out because you were afraid? Have you known what it’s like to downplay the significance of your faith because you were afraid of what people might think of you?

At the Station

Fear is a natural response to dangerous situations. Fear can keep us safe, but can also deny the power of God to keep us safe and deny that Jesus has our life in his hands and He is in control. Fear causes us to choose the “safe” thing despite the fact that God may be calling us to do the opposite. Are we willing to surrender and believe that what he calls us to do is for our good? Or will we deny that we even know him?

Many people have a fear of heights, and for good reason! As you stand on the edge of the river and perhaps feel some anxiety from where you are, consider where and when you have denied Jesus. Confess how fear was a part of that decision and ask Jesus to show you how to trust him in that place next time.

Prayer

Forgive me, dear Lord, when I let fear get in the way of my relationship with you. Forgive me for all the times I've fallen short in my discipleship because I've been afraid. Forgive me for failing to trust you when you've proven yourself to be so utterly worthy of trust. Help me, when hard times come, to trust you more. When my adrenaline starts to pound, help me to receive your peace. When I'm tempted to deny you, either in words or deeds, or by failing to speak or act, help me to trust and obey. May I live my whole life in honor of you! Amen.



For Station 6, walk to the bandshell

STATION 6

At the Bandshell
at Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park

Jesus Before Pilate

Mark 15.1-15

1 Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

2 "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate.

"You have said so," Jesus replied.

3 The chief priests accused him of many things. 4 So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."

5 But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

6 Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. 7 A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. 8 The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

9 "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, 10 knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

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

13 "Crucify him!" they shouted.

14 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" 15 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Reflection

There has been a tendency in the Christian telling of the Passion story to exonerate Pilate, or at least to make him an unwilling pawn of the Jewish leaders and crowds. Pilate, it is claimed, was a truth-seeking man who was caught between a rock and a hard place. But Pilate must not be excused for his central role in the death of Jesus. He alone had the authority in Jerusalem to sentence Jesus to death by crucifixion, and he must bear this guilt.

As we look at Pilate, we can see the poster child for the person who fails to take responsibility for their actions. Perhaps Pilate really believed he was innocent of Jesus' death. Perhaps he was playacting for his own political benefit. Either way, Pilate sent Jesus to the cross. Yet he did so in such a way as to appear innocent of Jesus' blood. He did not take responsibility for what he had done.

How often do we do this sort of thing ourselves? How often do we rationalize our sins, blaming them upon others? How often do we fail to take responsibility for what we have done wrong, preferring to blame our parents for raising us wrong, our society for mistreating us, our boss for abusing us, our spouse for misunderstanding us?

Why is this wrong? Well, for one thing it's dishonest. Yet, beyond this, when we fail to accept responsibility for our sins, we lose the opportunity to experience forgiveness for them. If I'm blaming others when I do wrong, then surely I won't confess what I've done as sin. And this, in turn, will keep me from experiencing the grace of God with respect to this particular sin. (I'm not saying this will disqualify me from eternal life, but rather that I will fail to enjoy the fullness of God's forgiveness in this life.)

When we're tempted to be like Pilate, we'd do well to remember the words of John:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10)

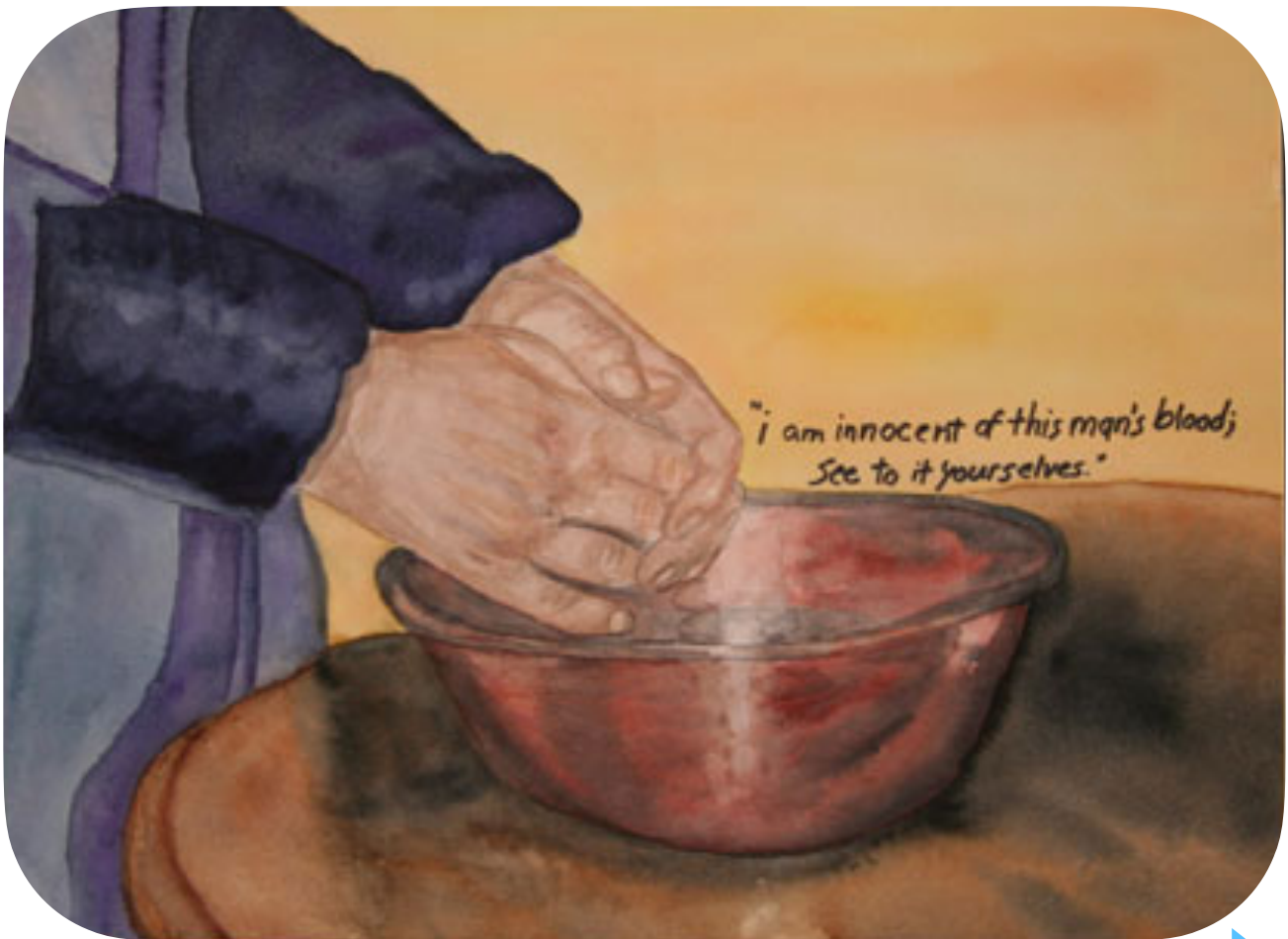
At the Station

Consider: Who or what have I blamed instead of taking responsibility for my own sin? Parents? Spouse? Friends? Siblings? Circumstances? Brokenness? Past hurts?

Take a moment to write down on one of the slips of paper a sin that you have blamed on someone else to acknowledge your own responsibility. Then nail it to the cross and receive Jesus' forgiveness.

Prayer

Dear Lord, You know how easy it is for me to be like Pilate. I don't like to take responsibility for my failures. I can fool myself into thinking I haven't really done wrong. So forgive me, Lord, when I follow the way of Pilate. Help me to acknowledge my sins, both to myself and to You, rather than wallowing in my pointless excuses and defences. By Your Spirit, guide me to see clearly where I have missed Your mark, so that I might confess truly and fully. Help me to experience the forgiveness You offer in Christ, and to live in the freedom of the cleansing You alone provide. Amen.



For Station 7, drive to 2nd Ave near St. Vincent's

STATION 7

On 2nd Ave by St.
Vincent's

Jesus is Mocked and Crucified

Mark 15.16-32

16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. 17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" 19 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. 20 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.

21 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. 22 They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). 23 Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

25 It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. 26 The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the jews.

27 They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. [28] 29 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, 30 come down from the cross and save yourself!" 31 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! 32 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.

Reflection

What cruel irony! Jesus finally received the words he deserved: "Hail, King of the Jews!" For once he wore a crown upon his head. Yet it was not the golden crown of sovereignty or the olive crown of victory, but the thorny crown of suffering. Scholars have shown that the thorns from which Jesus' crown was composed were long and terribly sharp. No doubt they dug deep into the head of the suffering king. We can't really imagine the physical pain, not to mention the emotional and spiritual anguish endured by the King of kings.

What incomprehensible irony! Jesus, the true king of Israel, endured the pain and mockery of the crown of thorns as part of his humiliation for us and our salvation. What was the result of his torture, beyond the transient agony? Paul puts it this way in Philippians 2:5-11:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Did you catch that? Because Jesus humbled himself, because he endured the humiliation of the cross, including the crown of thorns, therefore God exalted him to the highest place. For Jesus, the path to glory as King of kings included the path of disgrace. Because he wore the crown of thorns, Jesus would receive the crown of universal worship.

At the Station

Take a moment to sit in your car downtown thinking about Jesus feeling the agony of the crown of thorns, the weight of the sin of the world on his shoulders. Consider the one through whom all things were created now being tormented and humiliated at the hands of his creation.

Choosing to walk in the way of Jesus means choosing to walk with humility and surrender and deep love toward others. How have you had opportunity to show love to others with humility? How have you, like Jesus, faced suffering in choosing to obey God's call?

As you look out and think about the broken and hurting people in our city, choose to pray a blessing over them.

Prayer

Gracious, merciful Lord, how hard it is to read of the abuse you suffered even prior to your crucifixion. I can't even begin to imagine what you felt, not only physically, but especially in your soul. What can I say in response but "Thank you" for walking the path of suffering and shame for my sake. You took the abuse that I deserved, and gave me your glory in return. Help me, dear Lord, to honour you as my King in all that I do. May my words and deeds reflect your sovereignty and celebrate your glory. Amen.



For Station 8, drive to the cemetery parking lot

STATION 8

Parking lot of Prince
George Cemetery
(3300 Memorial Park Lane)

Jesus Dies on the Cross

Mark 15.33-41

33 At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34 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?").

35 When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

36 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.

37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

39 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!"

40 Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. 41 In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

Reflection

As Jesus breathed his last breath on the cross, there were a variety of responses to the scene that was unfolding. Some thought that Jesus was calling Elijah to come and help him, others thought he was thirsty and so offered Jesus something to drink to ease his pain. But it was the Roman Centurion who truly caught the significance of this moment and the identity of the one who hung on the cross.

But not only was Jesus finally recognized as the Son of God (first time in Mark's Gospel that someone actually understands that Jesus is the Son of God), something happens in the spiritual realm as well. The dividing wall between God and humanity, the wall that has been put up by our sin, the wall represented by the curtain in the temple that separated the holy of holies, where God's presence would come, from the rest of the temple complex where people would come to bring their offerings. When Jesus died, the curtain was torn, and the barrier of sin between people and God was done away with because Jesus had provided the perfect and final payment for sin.

As the writer of Hebrews said:

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10.19-22)

As your journey of Stations gets closer to the end, consider how God has opened up a way for you to draw near to him - not because of your goodness, but because of Jesus' sacrifice to pay the debt of your sin. God invites you, welcomes you, to draw near to him and to know him better. And you don't need to hide in the shame of your past because of what Jesus has done for you!

At the Station

Choose to receive God's invitation to come near to him and meet him at the table he set for you.

Take the bread you've been carrying throughout Stations - the bread representing Jesus' body that has been journeying with you - break it, and eat it as you remember his substitutionary death for your sins.

Then receive the juice from one of our team that represents the new covenant God made with us - the new way to enter relationship with him through Jesus blood.

As you receive these gifts, give thanks to God!

Prayer

Merciful Lord, thank you for being The Righteous One. Thank you for your perfect life and your sacrificial death. Thank you for taking my sin upon yourself, and giving me your righteousness in return. Like the centurion, I look upon your cross today with wonder at you, the Son of God, humbly giving your life as a sacrifice. For me. For my brokenness and willful sin. I'm astounded by your willingness to suffer and die for me, the Righteous One for the unrighteous. All praise be to you, glorious, gracious, giving Lord!



For Station 9, walk into the cemetery and find a quiet place

STATION 9

At Prince George Cemetery

Jesus is Buried

Mark 15.42-47

42 It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 44 Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. 45 When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.



At the Station

As you come to the close of Stations, we stop here, at the point of Jesus burial, a seemingly final proclamation of his death, recognizing that this is not the end of the story.

Take a moment to reflect on how your story is still being written and how you are being brought back into right relationship with God. That is a story that may be near the beginning, or maybe many steps in. Maybe that story has had some significant plot twists, or maybe it has been fairly straightforward.

How has your experience with God at Stations today been a part of that story? Have you gained a greater sense of clarity about the significance of Jesus' death? Have you been challenged in some way? Take a moment to think of a word that expresses how God has worked in you today and reflect on that throughout this Easter weekend!

Holy Saturday Reflection

Luke 23.56

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

Lamentations 3:1-9; 19-24

- 1 I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the Lord's wrath.
- 2 He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light;
- 3 indeed, he has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long.
- 4 He has made my skin and my flesh grow old and has broken my bones.
- 5 He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship.
- 6 He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead.
- 7 He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he has weighed me down with chains.
- 8 Even when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer.
- 9 He has barred my way with blocks of stone; he has made my paths crooked.

- 19 I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.
- 20 I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.
- 21 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:
- 22 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.
- 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
- 24 I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

Reflection

Today is a day to wait.

After Jesus death, his body was taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb. But because it was so late in the day as Sabbath approached, those that wanted to care of his body were forced to stop their preparations and wait until Sunday.

As you read through Lamentations, spend some time considering the emotional weight of death as his friends and followers would have that Saturday. Their Lord, teacher and friend had died a horrific death. And they are forced to stop for 24 hours. Unable to keep busy, allowing the shock, hurt and grief to torment their hearts.

Today spend some time feeling the weight of that grief in brief moments through out the day.

And be thankful that we know that Sunday is coming!

