

Meditation on the Passion of Jesus

865 Jesus Christ, I think about Your sacrifice (Once Again)

READ Mark 14 ¹²⁻³¹

12 On the first of the Days of Unleavened Bread, the day they prepare the Passover sacrifice, his disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations so you can eat the Passover meal?"

13-15 He directed two of his disciples, "Go into the city. A man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him. Ask the owner of whichever house he enters, 'The Teacher wants to know, Where is my guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' He will show you a spacious second-story room, swept and ready. Prepare for us there."

16 The disciples left, came to the city, found everything just as he had told them, and prepared the Passover meal.

17-18 After sunset he came with the Twelve. As they were at the supper table eating, Jesus said, "I have something hard but important to say to you: One of you is going to hand me over to the conspirators, one who at this moment is eating with me."

19 Stunned, they started asking, one after another, "It isn't me, is it?"

20-21 He said, "It's one of the Twelve, one who eats with me out of the same bowl. In one sense, it turns out that the Son of Man is entering into a way of treachery well-marked by the Scriptures—no surprises here. In another sense, the man who turns him in, turns traitor to the Son of Man—better never to have been born than do this!"

22 In the course of their meal, having taken and blessed the bread, he broke it and gave it to them. Then he said, "Take, this is my body".

23-25 Taking the chalice, he gave it to them, thanking God, and they all drank from it. He said, "This is my blood, God's new covenant, Poured out for many people. I'll not be drinking wine again until the new day when I drink it in the kingdom of God."

26 They sang a hymn and then went directly to Mount Olives.

27-28 Jesus told them, "You're all going to feel that your world is falling apart and that it's my fault. There's a Scripture that says, 'I will strike the shepherd; The sheep will go helter-skelter.' But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you, leading the way to Galilee."

29 Peter blurted out, "Even if everyone else is ashamed of you when things fall to pieces, I won't be."

30 Jesus said, "Don't be so sure. Today, this very night in fact, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times."

31 He blustered in protest, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you." All the others said the same thing.

1346 In Christ Alone

READ Mark 14 ³²⁻⁵²

32-34 They came to an area called Gethsemane. Jesus told his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John with him. He plunged into a sinkhole of dreadful agony. He told them, "I feel bad enough right now to die. Stay here and keep vigil with me."

35-36 Going a little ahead, he fell to the ground and prayed for a way out: "Papa, Father, you can—can't you?—get me out of this. Take this cup away from me. But please, not what I want—what do you want?"

37-38 He came back and found them sound asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, you went to sleep on me? Can't you stick it out with me a single hour? Stay alert, be in prayer, so you don't enter the danger zone without even knowing it. Don't be naive. Part of you is eager, ready for anything in God; but another part is as lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire."

39-40 He then went back and prayed the same prayer. Returning, he again found them sound asleep. They simply couldn't keep their eyes open, and they didn't have a plausible excuse.

41-42 He came back a third time and said, "Are you going to sleep all night? No—you've slept long enough. Time's up. The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up. Let's get going. My betrayer has arrived."

43-47 No sooner were the words out of his mouth when Judas, the one out of the Twelve, showed up, and with him a gang of ruffians, sent by the high priests, religion scholars, and leaders, brandishing swords and clubs. The betrayer had worked out a signal with them: "The one I kiss, that's the one—seize him. Make sure he doesn't get away." He went straight to Jesus and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. The others then grabbed him and roughed him up. One of the men standing there unsheathed his sword, swung, and came down on the Chief Priest's servant, lopping off the man's ear.

48-50 Jesus said to them, "What is this, coming after me with swords and clubs as if I were a dangerous criminal? Day after day I've been sitting in the Temple teaching, and you never so much as lifted a hand against me. What you in fact have done is confirm the prophetic writings." All the disciples cut and ran.

51-52 A young man was following along. All he had on was a bedsheet. Some of the men grabbed him but he got away, running off naked, leaving them holding the sheet.

897 Lord I lift Your Name on High

READ Mark 14 ^{53 – 72}

53-54 They led Jesus to the Chief Priest, where the high priests, religious leaders, and scholars had gathered together. Peter followed at a safe distance until they got to the Chief Priest's courtyard, where he mingled with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.

55-59 The high priests conspiring with the Jewish Council looked high and low for evidence against Jesus by which they could sentence him to death. They found nothing. Plenty of people were willing to bring in false charges, but nothing added up, and they ended up cancelling each other out. Then a few of them stood up and lied: "We heard him say, 'I am going to tear down this Temple, built by hard labour, and in three days build another without lifting a hand.'" But even they couldn't agree exactly. 60-61 In the middle of this, the Chief Priest stood up and asked Jesus, "What do you have to say to the accusation?" Jesus was silent. He said nothing.

The Chief Priest tried again, this time asking, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?"

62 Jesus said, "Yes, I am, and you'll see it yourself: The Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Mighty One, arriving on the clouds of heaven."

63-64 The Chief Priest lost his temper. Ripping his clothes, he yelled, "Did you hear that? After that do we need witnesses? You heard the blasphemy. Are you going to stand for it?"

They condemned him, one and all. The sentence: death.

65 Some of them started spitting at him. They blindfolded his eyes, then hit him, saying, "Who hit you? Prophecy!" The guards, punching and slapping, took him away.

66-67 While all this was going on, Peter was down in the courtyard. One of the Chief Priest's servant girls came in and, seeing Peter warming himself there, looked hard at him and said, "You were with the Nazarene, Jesus."

68 He denied it: "I don't know what you're talking about." He went out on the porch. A rooster crowed.

69-70 The girl spotted him and began telling the people standing around, "He's one of them." He denied it again.

After a little while, the bystanders brought it up again. "You've got to be one of them. You've got 'Galilean' written all over you."

71-72 Now Peter got really nervous and swore, "I never laid eyes on this man you're talking about." Just then the rooster crowed a second time. Peter remembered how Jesus had said, "Before a rooster crows twice, you'll deny me three times." He collapsed in tears.

Stop and Think

READ Mark 15 ^{1 – 20}

1 At dawn's first light, the high priests, with the religious leaders and scholars, arranged a conference with the entire Jewish Council. After tying Jesus securely, they took him out and presented him to Pilate.

2-3 Pilate asked him, "Are you the 'King of the Jews'?"

He answered, "If you say so." The high priests let loose a barrage of accusations.

4-5 Pilate asked again, "Aren't you going to answer anything? That's quite a list of accusations." Still, he said nothing. Pilate was impressed, really impressed.

6-10 It was a custom at the Feast to release a prisoner, anyone the people asked for. There was one prisoner called Barabbas, locked up with the insurrectionists who had committed murder during the uprising against Rome. As the crowd came up and began to present its petition for him to release a prisoner, Pilate anticipated them: "Do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you?" Pilate knew by this time that it was through sheer spite that the high priests had turned Jesus over to him.

11-12 But the high priests by then had worked up the crowd to ask for the release of Barabbas. Pilate came back, "So what do I do with this man you call King of the Jews?"

13 They yelled, "Nail him to a cross!"

14 Pilate objected, "But for what crime?"

But they yelled all the louder, "Nail him to a cross!"

15 Pilate gave the crowd what it wanted, set Barabbas free and turned Jesus over for whipping and crucifixion.

16-20 The soldiers took Jesus into the palace (called Praetorium) and called together the entire brigade. They dressed him up in purple and put a crown plaited from a thornbush on his head. Then they began their mockery: "Bravo, King of the Jews!" They banged on his head with a club, spit on him, and knelt down in mock worship. After they had had their fun, they took off the purple cape and put his own clothes back on him. Then they marched out to nail him to the cross..

Break the Bread

(Jesus took my place, bore my punishment and died my death)

READ Mark 15 ^{21 – 39}

21 There was a man walking by, coming from work, Simon from Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. They made him carry Jesus' cross.

22-24 The soldiers brought Jesus to Golgotha, meaning "Skull Hill." They offered him a mild painkiller (wine mixed with myrrh), but he wouldn't take it. And they nailed him to the cross. They divided up his clothes and threw dice to see who would get them.

25-30 They nailed him up at nine o'clock in the morning. The charge against him—the king of the Jews—was printed on a poster. Along with him, they crucified two criminals, one to his right, the other to his left. People passing along the road jeered, shaking their heads in mock lament: “You bragged that you could tear down the Temple and then rebuild it in three days—so show us your stuff! Save yourself! If you’re really God’s Son, come down from that cross!”

31-32 The high priests, along with the religion scholars, were right there mixing it up with the rest of them, having a great time poking fun at him: “He saved others—but he can’t save himself! Messiah, is he? King of Israel? Then let him climb down from that cross. We’ll all become believers then!” Even the men crucified alongside him joined in the mockery.

33-34 At noon the sky became extremely dark. The darkness lasted three hours. At three o'clock, Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

35-36 Some of the bystanders who heard him said, “Listen, he’s calling for Elijah.” Someone ran off, soaked a sponge in sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down.”

37-39 But Jesus, with a loud cry, gave his last breath. At that moment the Temple curtain ripped right down the middle. When the Roman captain standing guard in front of him saw that he had quit breathing, he said, “This has to be the Son of God!”

Take the Wine

780 How Deep the Father’s Love for Us

168 Here is Love

Prayers of Thanks

1015 Thank You for Saving Me