

Friday 29 March 2024

Good Friday

(Service for the whole Church family)



The Liturgy of the Passion comprises two services: Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, usually with a vigil (or vigils) between, which explains why this service ends with a blessing but the Maundy Thursday service does not.

Sermon © Lucie Reilly.

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Prayers of intercession, litanies, and remainder of the Liturgy © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Bible readings © The publishers of the NRSV translation.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

The Welcome

Eternal God,
in the cross of Jesus we see the cost of our sin and the depth of your love:
in humble hope and fear,
may we place at his feet all that we have and all that we are,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

HYMN 1 [There is a green hill far away](#) (click on the link for the hymn)

In the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

All And also with you.

O Lord open our lips:

All and our mouth shall proclaim your praise:

Let us worship the Lord:

All all praise to his name.

**All Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever.
Amen.**

Prayers of preparation and penitence

God our Father, we come to you in sorrow for the sins that placed you on the Cross:

Your feet were nailed to the Cross. We confess those sins which occurred when we trespassed from the paths of love. Father, forgive us:

All Save us and help us

Your hands were nailed to the Cross. We confess those sins which occurred when we used our hands for self and not for your Kingdom,
Father, forgive us:

All Save us and help us

Your head was pierced with a crown of thorns. We confess those sins which occurred when we allowed our minds to turn inward on self rather than outward to our neighbours. Father, forgive us:

All Save us and help us

Your side was pierced with a lance. We confess those sins which occurred when we allowed our hearts to love the world, the flesh and the devil. Father, forgive us:

All Save us and help us

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive us our sins
and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

Praise and thanksgiving

**All Loving Lord, fill us with your life-giving,
joy-giving, peace-giving presence,
that we may praise you now with our lips
and all the day long with our lives,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

This Good Friday, we thank Christ for taking our sins,
Lord of heaven:

All We give you thanks and praise.

This Good Friday, we thank Christ for His Cross,
Lord of heaven:

All We give you thanks and praise.

This Good Friday, we thank Christ for winning our salvation,
Lord of heaven:

All We give you thanks and praise.

Because of Good Friday, we thank God that we can know Him,
Lord of heaven:

All We give you thanks and praise.

Because of Good Friday, we can be filled with the Holy Spirit,
Lord of heaven:

All We give you thanks and praise.

Because of Good Friday, the Holy Spirit can help us become Christlike,
Lord of heaven:

All We give you thanks and praise.

As Good Friday people, we thank God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—for our salvation,
Lord in heaven:

All We give you thanks and praise.

All Amen

The Ministry of the Word

The Collect

Eternal God,
in the cross of Jesus
we see the cost of sin
and the depth of your love:
in humble hope and fear
may we place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

First reading

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals—so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of

dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. *Isaiah 52:13-53:end*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

[The Holy Spirit says] 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.' He also adds, 'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.' Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. *Hebrews 10:16-25*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 [When I survey the wondrous cross](#)

[\(click here to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All Glory to you O Lord.

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, 'Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped

him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

Mark 15:1-24

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Regularly we come to today, Good Friday, and talk about what Jesus on the cross did for us. We talk of his death as having accomplished and completed something for us. Its often said in liturgy today that, 'We glory in your cross, O Lord.'

More and more, however, I struggle with that. I struggle with the idea that the violence of crucifixion somehow brings peace and reconciliation to us. I struggle with the idea that God the Father willed or wanted this for his child, for his only Son because 'God so loved the world.'

Some might say that in saying this I am being unfaithful to God and the Church. Maybe so. Others might say my faith is growing and changing. But maybe it's both. Or maybe, I'm just fed-up and worn out from seeing the pain of the world. Maybe it's grief. Maybe it's Israel, Gaza. or Ukraine. Maybe it's the hardness with which we often speak to ourselves and each other. Maybe it's the lines we draw in the sand. Maybe it's one of a thousand other things that diminish our light and steal our life.

I wonder if some of you feel like this too. Is it possible that you to may sometimes struggle with glorying in the cross of Jesus when everyday humanity, innocence, peace, and justice are being lifted high on the cross?

I've begun thinking less about what Jesus on the cross did for us and more about what Jesus on the cross asks of us.

What if we were to hear the cross more as a question than a statement? And if we were to see the cross more as a revelation than an accomplishment? What if Good Friday holds before us a choice between Jesus and Barabbas? Let's remind ourselves of the Gospel story:

Pilate said, 'According to the custom you have, I always set free a prisoner for you during the Passover. Do you want me to set free for you the king of the Jews?'

They answered him with a shout, 'No, not him! We want Barabbas!' 'Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' They shouted in reply, 'Not this man, but Barabbas.'

That's the Good 'choice' in all four of the gospels and it's not a choice that has to be made Good Friday alone. It's a choice that we as Christians, as people, have to make every day. It's a choice that shapes the world we live in and the world that we leave to behind for our children and grandchildren. That choice determines how we see ourselves and one another. It can command how we live and treat ourselves and each other.

I am of course using Jesus and Barabbas here as metaphors or lenses through which to see our lives. Both have characteristics or aspects of us ourselves. They describe our ways of being with and toward others and ourselves. We live and choose in the tension between Jesus and Barabbas.

Jesus is the one who came that we may 'have life, and have it abundantly.' He offers a peace the world does not and cannot give. He is the one who said, 'Put away your sword'; 'Turn the other cheek'; 'Love your neighbour as yourself'; 'Love your enemies'; 'Forgive seventy-seven times.' That's how he lived and how he died. It's what he embodies today on the cross.

Barabbas, however, lives by the sword. He is a rebel and a disturber of the peace. He turns things upside down. He commits murder and takes life. Conversely, Jesus lives for others but Barabbas lives for himself. Jesus is a giver and Barabbas is a taker. Jesus stretches out his arms to embrace the world. Barabbas takes up arms to have his way in the world. Jesus has beliefs and values for which he is willing to die. Barabbas has beliefs and values for which he is willing to kill.

I feel the tension of Jesus and Barabbas in my life. And I imagine some of you do too. Some days I'm guided by Jesus and other days by Barabbas. I commit to peace and then pick up the sword. I want to forgive when I've been hurt or betrayed but sometimes, I really just want to settle a score. I say there's nothing I wouldn't do to care for and protect my family. I would do anything for those I love. I would lay down my life. The Barabbas in me would also take a life. I oppose violence and then justify and excuse it depending on the circumstances, who the other is, and what he or she has done.

When have you lived as Jesus and when have you lived as Barabbas? Where do you see them in your life and world today? What's the Jesus-Barabbas tension with which you are struggling today? What would it be like to choose Jesus? What's the Jesus choice for you today?

I can't tell you what that choice is for you. But I know this: In each of our lives there are Jesus choices to be made. In every conflict or disagreement there are

Jesus choices to be made. In the issues that challenge and plague our town and country there are Jesus choices to be made.

The Good Friday cross does not once and for all make that choice for us. It continually holds that choice before us. Jesus' death on the cross did not extinguish the cruelty of the world. It continues to expose and condemn it. The cross is not a sign of God's conquering power but a sign that God stands with those conquered by power. The crucifixion did not change the ways of the world. It's calling for us to change our ways in the world.

We've got to start choosing more Jesus than Barabbas because what we're doing now isn't working.

Isn't it interesting that Jesus never asked us to glory in his cross but he did ask us to take up our cross and follow him? What's the Jesus choice for you today?

HYMN 3 In Christ alone

[\(click on the link for the hymn\)](#)

The Prayers

Jesus, though crucified, is raised from the dead and now draws alongside us as we offer prayers to God for the world, the church, and all for whom Jesus died on the cross. Today we pray for ...

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

We pray for the church of God on this Good Friday that all who are disciples of Jesus will be given the grace and strength they need to walk in the way of the cross, speaking words of love and truth in places of hatred and lies. Today we pray for ...

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

We pray for God's world on this Good Friday that the dying Jesus on the cross and the living Jesus of resurrection will draw all people to himself, the source of eternal reconciliation and salvation. Today we pray for ...

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

We pray for the communities in which we live, work and worship that bonds of love within families and between friends will be healed where they are broken and strengthened where they are weak. Today we pray for ...

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who are experiencing their own Good Friday darkness that all who suffer pain of body or mind will be held by the hands of Jesus which bear the marks of his pain and the promise of restoration and resurrection. Today we pray for ...

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, at the foot of the cross on which Jesus died we offer you these prayers in hope, trusting in your promise to hear us and in your power which raised Jesus from the dead. Let your grace, mercy, love and peace surround us and all those for whom we have prayed in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Today we pray for ...

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

We gather together all these prayers using the words that Jesus himself taught us:

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

The Peace

The Lord Jesus Christ said to his Apostles,
'My peace I leave you, my peace I give you'.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All and also with you.

Conclusion and dismissal

All **Eternal God,
giver of love and life,
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us
into all the world
to preach the gospel of the Kingdom.
Confirm us in his mission,
and help us to live the good news we proclaim,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

O Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the living God,
set your passion, cross and death
between your judgement and our souls,
now and in the hour of our death.

Grant mercy and grace to the living,
rest to the departed,
to your Church peace and concord
and to us sinners forgiveness;
and the blessing of God the Almighty,
Father Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and remain with us always.

All **Amen**

HYMN 5 **How deep the Father's love for us**

[\(click to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

All **In the name of Christ.
Amen**