



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Characters along the Way

INTRODUCTION

- ◇ During your journey through the 14 Stations of the Cross this year, we will focus on the characters who participate in each event.
- ◇ During your time of meditation, imagine yourself in each event: try to immerse yourself in the story - experience their feelings, hear the sounds, smell the smells, taste the flavours and become aware of their physical responses.
- ◇ And then, learn from them. Let their experience inform your own.
- ◇ For each station there will be a reading and a meditation. There is no time limit. Set your own pace.
- ◇ You will need to have your Bible with you for the readings at each Station.
- ◇ May this time be a profound moment as we approach Easter.

STATION 1: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:36-41



MEDITATION: The Disciples

All the disciples declared that they would die before disowning Jesus.

A few hours later, however, they all scattered.

Talk is cheap.

It is easy to say we are devoted to Christ, but our claims are meaningful only when they are tested in the crucible of persecution.

How strong is your faith?

Is it strong enough to withstand intense trial?

(Life Application Bible)

STATION 2: Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested

Mark 14:43-50



MEDITATION: Judas

It is easy to overlook that fact that Jesus chose Judas to be his disciple. We may also forget that while Judas betrayed Jesus, *all* the disciples abandoned him.

With the other disciples, Judas shared a persistent misunderstanding of Jesus' mission.

Judas' story can be helpful if it makes us think a second time about our commitment to God and the presence of God's Spirit within us.

Are we true disciples and followers, or uncommitted pretenders?

We can choose despair and death, or we can choose repentance, forgiveness, hope and eternal life. Will we accept Jesus' free gift, or, like, Judas, betray him?

(Life Application Bible)

STATION 3: Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin

Matthew 26:57-68



MEDITATION: Caiaphas and the Chief Priests

Caiaphas was the leader of the religious group called the Sadducees.

Educated and wealthy,

they were politically influential in the nation.

As the elite group, they were on fairly good terms with Rome.

They hated Jesus because he endangered their secure life-styles and taught a message they could not accept.

A kingdom in which leaders *served* had no appeal to them.

Caiaphas represents those people who will not believe because they think it will cost them too much to accept Jesus as Lord.

They choose the fleeting power, prestige and pleasures of this life instead of the eternal life God offers those who

receive his Son.

What is your choice?

(Life Application Bible)

STATION 4: Jesus is denied by Peter

Matthew 26:69-75



MEDITATION: Peter

Jesus' first words to Simon Peter were "Come, follow me" (*Mark 1:17*). His last words to him were "You must follow me" (*John 21:22*).

Every step of the way between these two challenges, Peter never failed to follow – even though he often stumbled. We may wonder what Jesus sees in us when he calls us to follow him. But we know Jesus accepted Peter, and, in spite of his failures, Peter went on to do great things for God. Are you willing to keep following Jesus, even when you fail? (*Life Application Bible*)

STATION 5: Jesus is judged by Pontius Pilate

John 19:4-16



MEDITATION: Pontius Pilate

In Jesus' day, any death sentence had to be approved by the Roman official in charge of the administrative district. Pontius Pilate was governor of the province of Judea, where Jerusalem was located.

The Jewish leaders needed Pilate's permission to kill Jesus.

For Pilate, there was never a doubt about Jesus' innocence.

Three separate times he declared him not guilty. However, Pilate went against what he knew was right as a result of political pressure.

We share a common humanity with Pilate. At times we know the right and choose the wrong.

What have we done with our opportunities and responsibilities? What judgment have we passed on Jesus?

(Life Application Bible)

STATION 6: Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

Mark 15:15-20



MEDITATION: The Soldiers

Flogging could have killed Jesus. The usual procedure was to bare the upper half of the victim's body and tie their hands to a pillar before whipping them with a three-pronged whip. The soldiers went beyond their orders to whip Jesus – they also mocked his claim to royalty by placing a crown on his head and a royal robe on his shoulders. We attack others (mock) in order to feel good, or at least belittle someone as a way of making ourselves look better; finding fault or putting them down makes us feel superior. Have you ever put someone down in order to feel better? Instead, can you take joy in someone else's success?
(Life Application Bible)

STATION 7: Jesus Bears the Cross

John 19: 6, 15-17



MEDITATION: The Crowd

During the Passion Week, the crowd in Jerusalem seems to have had a major swing in opinion.

Jesus entered the city to praise and adoration but, by the end of the week, faced a crowd shouting for His crucifixion.

Can such a change really happen so quickly?

Supporting someone is much easier when there's a reduced chance of being imprisoned for it.

And perhaps some of those wrapped up in the enthusiasm for Jesus were just as quickly wrapped up in the fervour against Him.

Where do we find ourselves on the continuum of supporter and/or denier of the teachings and values of Jesus?

Are we strong supporters when it's comfortable to be so?

What happens to our fervour when Jesus asks us to support the poor, the alien and the outsider?

(Jesus.org)

STATION 8: Jesus is helped by Simon the Cyrenian

Mark 15:21



MEDITATION: Simon of Cyrene

Colonies of Jews existed outside Judea. Simon had made a Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem all the way from Cyrene in North Africa. His sons, Alexander and Rufus, are mentioned here probably because they became well known later in the early Christian church (Romans 16:13). Have you ever felt 'forced' to do something, that later turned out to be a positive life-changing moment for yourself or someone else? In retrospect, have you ever refused to do something that was too challenging at the time, and then realized afterwards what you missed?
(Life Application Bible)

STATION 9: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Luke 23:27-31



MEDITATION: The Women of Jerusalem

We don't know who these women are whom Luke references.

Perhaps they are some of the women who brought him children to be healed, or ate of the bread he shared when he fed the multitudes, or witnessed him curing friends and relatives.

What we can guess with confidence, however, is that whoever they were they were most likely not expecting Jesus' response.

He does not want their pity. He does not want their grief.

He goes where he knows he must.

Do not weep for me, Jesus says to these women and to us, even as he weeps for, takes on, and ultimately defeats all that would rob us of abundant life in this world and the one to come.

What is causing you to weep?

What can you give up to Jesus, knowing that he will turn our mourning into dancing?

(In the meantime)

STATION 10: Jesus is crucified

Luke 23:33-34



MEDITATION: Alone

Spend time in quiet contemplation of how alone Jesus felt, hanging on the cross.

And yet, his last thoughts were for others.
How do you get through your 'alone' moments?
Do you go to Jesus?

STATION 11: Jesus promises his kingdom to the good thief

Luke 23:39-43



MEDITATION: The Two Thieves

As this man was about to die,
he turned to Christ for forgiveness,
and Christ accepted him.

This shows that our deeds don't save us –
our faith in Christ does.

It is never too late to turn to God.

The dying criminal had more faith than
the rest of Jesus' followers put together.
How awe-inspiring is the faith of this man
who alone saw beyond
the present shame to the coming glory?

How does this man's faith story,
enable you to persevere praying
for your loved ones who do not yet believe?

(Life Application Bible)

STATION 12: Jesus speaks to his family

John 19:25-27



MEDITATION: Jesus and his family

Even while dying on the cross, Jesus was concerned about his family.

He instructed John to care for Mary, Jesus' mother.

Our families are precious gifts from God, and we should value and care for them under all circumstances.

Neither Christian work nor key responsibilities in any job or position excuse us from caring for our families.

What can you do today to show your love to your family?

(Life Application Bible)

STATION 13: Jesus dies on the cross

Mark 15:33-39



MEDITATION: Jesus

Breath prayer is an ancient Christian prayer practice dating back to at least the sixth century. Known as the “Jesus Prayer” or “Prayer of the Heart,” early practitioners would repeat to the rhythm of their breath the phrase, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.”

In time, the prayer was shortened to, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy” or simply, “Jesus, mercy.”

It is intended to be a very short prayer of praise or petition, just six to eight syllables.

The words of the prayer can be easily adjusted to your heart’s desire.

The breath prayer is usually said silently - within.

But some people sing it; others chant it.

It’s your prayer; use it your way.

Sample Breath Prayers

Jesus, let me feel your love;

O Lord Show me your way;

Holy one, heal me. (*Gravity*)

STATION 14: Jesus is placed in the tomb

Matthew 27:57-61



MEDITATION: Joseph of Arimathea

Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple of Jesus.

He was a religious leader, an honoured member of the Sanhedrin.

In the past, Joseph had been afraid to speak against the religious leaders

who opposed Jesus;

now he was bold, courageously asking to take Jesus' body from the cross to bury it.

Can this man's courage embolden you to express your faith with courage and conviction?

(Life Application Bible)

THE END

- ◆ We trust that you have found this time of online meditation to be as impactful as if you had been moving through the Stations yourself
- ◆ You can send this to others who would find this online journey meaningful



REFERENCES

Meditations:

- ◇ Life Application Bible, NIV, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, Wheaton Illinois and Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan
- ◇ <http://www.jesus.org/death-and-resurrection/holy-week-and-passion/why-did-the-crowd-turn-against-jesus-so-quickly.html>
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Illustrations: Ghislaine Howard

- ◇ <http://www.ghislainehoward.com/documentation.htm>

