

Station #1: Struggle

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26:36-39)

And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke 22:44)

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered. (Hebrews 5:7-8)

The Garden of Gethsemane is a critical juncture between the Passover meal and the excruciating journey called Via Dolorosa (the way of suffering) to the cross. The triumph of redemption hinges on Jesus' unwavering struggle to submit to the Father's will.

Prayer to God, our Father:

I recall the Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, tears streaming down His face, praying in deep sorrow. To express His ultimate love for His disciples, Jesus washed the feet of each one, serving them with love, and shared a meal with them; yet He had to face betrayal from those He trusted and loved. He also had to accept Peter, denying their relationship three times. The followers of the Lord Jesus only sought high positions, but were not willing to stay awake in the garden. Oh Lord, how deeply wounded Your heart must have been! Facing the darkness of humanity, how heartbreaking it must have been!

We must admit that when faced with various challenges, we also ask for the bitter cup to be taken away! When faced with different difficulties, the flesh is often weak. However, the struggle of the Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane reveals to us, that in this world we will inevitably face suffering, yet we can express our hearts to the Lord: May the Lord keep us from falling into confusion, and even more so from falling into temptation; may we pray like the Lord Jesus: Not my will, but Yours be done. Amen!

Meditation

1. Add to the above prayer your feelings when facing life struggles as your heartfelt prayers to the Lord.
2. Just as the Lord Jesus openly confessed His inner turmoil to the Father while on earth, His anxiety was unmistakably revealed in the scriptures. When you are faced with difficulties and struggles, how can you pray to the Father?

Prayer of Dedication

O God! Sometimes, it is so difficult to submit. I love to obey my flesh, but for the sake of the sacrifices Jesus made in bearing my debts of sin, I am willing to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to make praying my life priority. Amen.

Station #2: Suffering

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally, two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.' " ... But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." "You have said so," ... Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him... (Matt 26:57-67)

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." (John 18:36)

Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here." On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. (Luke 23:4-11)

With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?" They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising. (John 18:38b-40)

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. (Mark 15:15)

Jesus was arrested, put on trials in front of Jewish leaders, who accused Him of blasphemy (i.e. being the Son of God), and He was interrogated by Pilate as well as Herod. Yet, both of them did not find any guilt. The Jewish leaders used tactics of accusing Jesus of claiming to be the King (against the Roman Emperor Caesar). The Jewish leaders and the crowd demanded Jesus be crucified. He is mocked, spit on and beaten.

Meditation

1. What did Jesus do to deserve the judgment, suffering, and mocking?
2. If Jesus appeared to you with all his bruises, what would you say to Him?
3. The leaders and the crowd wanted Jesus dead because He had challenged their comfort/traditional beliefs/authority and even cut into their profits. Would you join them in despising Jesus if He (or His teaching) challenges your comfort/traditional beliefs/self today?

Prayer of Dedication

Lord Jesus, it is me who should suffer because of my own sin. I am not worthy for you to suffer and die for me. Yet, because of your love, you suffered in my place to fulfill the Father's wrath against sin.

Please help me to avoid temptation and sin, accept your love and focus on you rather than on my own self. Amen.

Station #3: Carry the cross

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. (Mark 15:21)

Imagined Confession of Simon of Cyrene

My name is Simon, and I am from Cyrene. I came up from my hometown to Jerusalem for the Passover. I saw a group of Roman soldiers in the distance leading three condemned prisoners. I walked over and took a look. I saw the prisoners carrying their crosses and walking up the hill. I saw one of the condemned prisoners covered in deep wounds with bloody flesh. He was staggering and struggling to move forward, and even his cross fell to the ground. Suddenly, a Roman soldier came forward and recruited me to help him carry the cross. This cross is a sign of humiliation for the prisoners on death row, and it is they who have reaped the consequences. I reluctantly took up his cross and walked his way with him. His name is Jesus.

Imagined Dialogue with Jesus Christ

I have chosen you, and you must carry your own cross to follow me;

But you are not alone, for I am with you, do not be afraid.

For the punishment I bore brings you peace, and the stripes I endured bring you healing.

Meditation

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

If you see a brother or sister in need of help, will you walk with them, just like the Lord walks with you, and experience the Lord's abundant grace together?

Prayer of Dedication

Lord Jesus, in these stormy days, I thank you for always being by my side; when I thought I was alone and helpless, you have been watching me silently; you know that my heart is heavy and sad, even when I almost can't bear it anymore. At this time, you hugged me with your own hands, so that I was no longer alone. Please give me a compassionate heart to see the brothers and sisters in need of help, and to walk with them on the way of the cross. Amen.

Station #4: Forsaken

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? (Psalm 22:1)

About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). (Matthew 27:46)

Imagined Prayer of Jesus on the cross

My father, I see my disciples, brothers and sisters, those whom I have healed, those who have listened to my teachings, watching me from afar, as I tread this path of no return. I understand their hearts are stirred but filled with fear, unable to acknowledge me, as I anticipated. Just as the scriptures foretold, soldiers will divide my outer garments, and cast lots for my inner garments, causing me to tread this path of Golgotha with doubled shame.

However, the cross in my heart right now is heavier than the cross on my body. I came to this world in obedience to Your will, to fulfill Your purpose. I have never regretted it, even though these 33 years have not been comfortable days, but You have always worked alongside me. I am not alone, for You are always with me: whether turning water into wine, driving out demons, raising the dead, walking on water amid storms, or feeding multitudes with five loaves and two fish... Even when facing persecution from powerful authorities, I have never been afraid. But at this moment, I am already hanging on the wood, with long nails piercing my hands and feet. I do not intend to complain; the greatest agony of the cross is not the physical torment, nor the pain of the flesh; the cross is heavy, humiliating. But You have never turned Your face away from me, nor have You ever forsaken me. Yet my disciples have left me, fear causing them to forsake their Lord, self-preservation causing them to deny me, and the power and pride of this present life causing leaders to nail me to the cross. The power of sin, the darkness of humanity, drives people away from God and pits them against each other.

Meditation:

1. Have we ever experienced abandonment in our lives? If we have cried out in despair, imagine how Jesus might have reacted to this.
2. Have we ever been mocked or ridiculed because of our identity as Christians? Or have we been afraid of not being accepted and therefore not openly identified ourselves as Christians?
3. Jesus endured temporary shame to achieve eternal glory. Can we see earthly matters as temporary and the things of God's kingdom as eternal?

Prayer of Dedication

Lord, You silently drank the cup of bitterness, obeying the will of God the Father; Your love empowers us to face shame. May the Triune God help me to understand the heart of the Lord, to dwell in Your love; because of Your love, we learn to set aside ourselves, to think of the things entrusted to us by Heavenly Father, and not to linger in our own comfort zones. Amen!

Station #5: It is Finished

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:28-30)

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split. (Matthew 27:51)

Jesus, in Gethsemane, revealed His struggle, fully obedient to the will of the Heavenly Father, silently walking the path of suffering to various places, and ultimately nailed to the cross, opening the door to the Heavenly Father. "It is finished" is the cry of victory, the most hopeful message in human history.

Meditation

1. On the cross Jesus yearned for a drop of water to quench his thirst. But his battered body becomes an ever-flowing fountain of life. Whoever accepts Him as personal saviour will drink from this fountain. Have you experienced this mystery?
2. Jesus Christ obeyed the will of the Heavenly Father, endured suffering, fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. Bringing us into His kingdom. Please write down your response to this precious salvation.

Prayer of Dedication

Heavenly Father, thank you for pouring out the life of your beloved Son Jesus, allowing us to receive precious salvation. In this hopeless age, we find the most precious hope. May God teach me to love Him every day, just as He loves me. Amen.

Station #6: Burial

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:38-42)

Jesus was on the cross for about six hours and the Sabbath was about to begin. When the soldiers verified that Jesus was dead, the burial should begin without delay. But who would take the body and bury it? Otherwise, someone would abandon it in a mass grave. Unexpectedly, two respectable men who hid their identities as disciples took it from Pilate. They wrapped the body in linen cloth and with spices according to Jewish custom and placed it in a "new" tomb. Imagine this, Jesus was born of a virgin, entered Jerusalem on a colt that no one had ridden, his body was placed in a new tomb that had never been used, and His death began a new and living path to God the Father. In short, Jesus made many things new.

Meditation

"New" has layers of special meanings with Jesus. In addition to the above, what other aspects can you think of? (Hint: Revelation 21:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:23-24)

Prayer of Dedication

Lord Jesus! You love me and give yourself for me. Your death and resurrection give me a new life and new strength to nail my sins to the cross. You are my Lord and my God, I belong to you. Amen.