

MIDWEEK MISSIVE 4/18/19

Tonight we will memorialize Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples and the beginning of the horror that came to fruition on Good Friday some 2000 years ago. I hope you can join us at Candleberry Chapel at 7:00 this evening as we celebrate a traditional Tenebrae Maundy Thursday service. It is one of the most meaningful and important services of worship of the Christian year.

As Jesus' passover meal with his disciples ends, we begin the agonizing movement to Golgotha and Jesus' crucifixion. One way to walk with Jesus through the next few days is through "The Stations of the Cross". The "Stations of the Cross" is a meditation practice walking through the moments of Jesus' last day leading to the cross and resurrection. It invites us into the story of the cross. It encourages us to wander in our imagination with all the sights and sounds and smells, to truly be with Jesus in these scenes. The stations of the cross are a useful practice especially in the final days of Lent just before Easter, but also any season we find ourselves in a "messy middle." Take some time in the coming days to walk with Jesus through the use of the "Stations of the Cross". These are the meditative moments of the Stations.

Station 1: Jesus is tempted.

All the good stories start in a garden. Jesus prays in a garden. The disciples fall asleep while Jesus sweats blood. Panic and faith. Panic and faith. Take this away. Thy will be done.

Station 2: Jesus is betrayed.

Hear the sound of marching soldiers. A betrayer's kiss. The most awkward sword swing and a bloodied ear. "Am I a dangerous revolutionary?" An unjust arrest.

Station 3: Jesus is condemned.

Jesus stands alone before Pilate. He stands alone before Herod. No one stands up for Jesus. No one helps defend him. Abandoned by the friends whose feet he'd washed just hours before.

Station 4: Jesus is mocked.

No one understands. And so Jesus becomes the joke. "Hail! King of the Jews!" The cruel laughter. Bullied and beaten. Bruised and bloodied and broken.

Station 5: Jesus is given his cross.

The heavy beams. Such a cruel instrument of torture and death. The consequence of rabble rousers who dare disturb the peace of Rome.

Station 6: Jesus falls.

Can you feel the weight? Exhausted and weak from blood loss and shock. His knees buckle. The soldiers give a kick. They just want to go home. This is just another day's work.

Station 7: Simon carries Jesus' cross.

"Take up your cross and follow me," he had said on a better day. Does he whisper through cracked and bleeding lips, "Help me"? It's too much. It's too heavy. Will you help?

Station 8: Jesus is stripped.

His cloak ripped from his tender back. Naked. Exposed to a jeering crowd. How vulnerable. How shameful.

Station 9: Jesus is nailed to the cross.

Hear the hammer strike. Hear the anguished cry with every blow. As each new pain sears through every nerve.

Station 10: Jesus dies.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” With his dying breath, Jesus prays a psalm. A prayer of abandonment. When God first breathed, the dirt became a human being. And now the very breath of God is extinguished.

Station 11: Jesus is buried.

Can you imagine being one of those who took Jesus from the cross? To wash his body? Wrap it? Carry the body of God to a cavernous tomb? And leave all of God’s goodness sealed behind a rock?

Station 12: Jesus rises.

And death starts to work backwards. Everything sad can now come untrue. God’s good creation of the world starts again. As Jesus says, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

I hope you can join us tonight at 7:00 p.m., and at one of our three Easter services: Saturday Evening at 5:00 p.m., Sunday Sunrise at 6:30 a.m. and our regular Sunday Morning service at 9:30 a.m.

**Be peaceful,
Rev. Brad—**

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