

in the big love living liturgies

Holy Week: Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Devotional Readings

• Liturgical Year C • Luke 22:14-23:56

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Focus Scripture Texts

Luke 22:14-23:56 “Christ’s Last Supper and Passion with Questions”

Spiritual Practice: Praying Holy Week Texts

What follows is an adaptation and reformatting of the Last Supper and the Passion Story as it appears in the gospel of St. Luke, New Revised Standard Version. (Note: Passages whose originality to this gospel has been questioned have been omitted. Proper nouns and titles have been added for clarity. The text has been formatted for easy, prayerful reading.) These texts may be read anytime between the celebrations of Palm Sunday and Easter morning, though have been designed as two sets of reading for Thursday and Friday of Holy Week.

Foremost this is a story - a narrative of Jesus’ last days on earth. It is also the story of those around him and their reactions to him and this challenging message which two thousand years later still has far-reaching implications. With our Lenten focus upon questions, our reading places emphasis upon the actual questions in the text, as well as the obviously implied questions. Please sit with these questions and pay attention to your response. As you prayerfully read these passages, open your heart and mind to any questions that arise. Please engage these texts as you wish stopping to pray, mediate, color, sing or perform a ritual at any point.

Preparation

Set aside time and space for uninterrupted reading, prayer, and contemplation. You may engage this practice alone or with a few others. Before beginning, assemble items: a “Christ Candle” (can be any type of candle), matches, cup with juice, loaf of bread, covering cloth, fresh flowers or herbs, a cross and or images of Jesus, along with any reading or music documents, including this script. If you’d like to practice a “communion of souls” you may include images of loved ones in heaven or items which bring their memory close. Be sure to turn off all devices, shut the door, and claim a sacred space for intentional connection with God.

Introduction

This script is an adapted reading of the Lord’s Supper and Christ’s Passion as recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke. Luke’s version of Holy Communion and Christ’s last days might vary slightly from what you are used to observing. This is good! A few prayers have been inserted using the plural for the community at prayer. Whenever we pray, alone or with other persons, we are also joined by other souls. However, if praying “I” deepens your experience, please make that adjustment. Chanted songs may be included at any point, especially after or during any rituals. Repeating the same words maintains a contemplative mood. A list of recommending music appears below.

*May we gently welcome questions and curiosities as they arise
and may God bless each question asked.*

Suggested Hymns/Chants/Songs

"Lo, I Am with You" (Iona, John Bell)
 "What Wondrous Love is This"
 "I Walk Jesus to Walk with Me"
 "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child"
 "Just a Closer Walk with Thee"
 "Come Thou Font of Every Mercy"
 "Where You There?"
 "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

Maundy Thursday**Prayer of Invocation**

O Holy God, we call upon Your friends - saints and angels, beloved souls in heaven, and all the benign ones who wish to assemble here - as we intentional observe Holy Week. Eternal Author, we enter Your Holy Story asking questions, listening for replies. Guide us to awaken more fully to Your ways, align us more directly with Your love, and manifest among us more clearly Your dream for humanity. As we light this candle - a symbol of the Eternal Christ made real to us through the Galilean man, Jesus - we invoke the presence of Jesus Christ our friend, teacher and savior. Amen.

*Light the Christ Candle***Luke 22:14-23 "Which One of Us?"**

When the hour of sunset arrived in Jerusalem, as Jews began their annual observance of God's Passover in Jerusalem, Jesus took his place at the table, and the apostles with him.

Jesus said to them,
 'I have eagerly desired
 to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;
 for I tell you, I will not eat it
 until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'

Then Jesus took a cup,
 and after giving thanks,
(offer a prayer of thanks to God for the cup)

Jesus said,
 'Take this and divide it among yourselves;
 for I tell you that from now on
 I will not drink of the fruit of the vine
 until the kingdom of God comes.'
(drink from the cup)

Then Jesus took a loaf of bread,
 and when he had given thanks,
(offer a prayer of thanks to God for the loaf)

and Jesus broke it and gave it to them, saying,
 'This is my body, which is given for you.
 Do this in remembrance of me.'
(eat from the loaf)

And Jesus did the same with the cup after supper, saying,
 ‘This cup that is poured out for you
 is the new covenant in my blood.
 But see, the one who betrays me is with me,
 and his hand is on the table.
 For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined,
 but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!’
(drink from the cup again)

Then they began to ask one another:
 “Which one of us could be who would do this?”

*Pause to ponder the disciples’ question:
 “Which one of us could betray Jesus?”*

Luke 22:24-34 “Who’s the Greatest?”

A dispute also arose among Jesus’ disciples
 as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest.

Jesus said to them,
 ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them;
 and those in authority over them are called benefactors.
 But not so with you;
 rather the greatest among you
 must become like the youngest,
 and the leader like one who serves.
 For who is greater,
 the one who is at the table
 or the one who serves?
 Is it not the one at the table?
 I am among you as one who serves.

Jesus continued, saying,
 ‘You are those who have stood by me in my trials;
 and I confer on you,
 just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom,
 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom,
 and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

*Pause to ponder Jesus’ questions:
 “For who is greater, the one who is at the table
 or the one who serves?”*

Luke 22:31-34 “Who will deny Jesus?”

Jesus spoke, saying:
 ‘Simon, Simon, listen!
 Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat,
 but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail;
 and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.’

And Simon said to Jesus,
 ‘Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!’

Jesus said,
 ‘I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day,
 until you have denied three times that you know me.’

Ponder Jesus’ implied question to Peter:
“Will you deny knowing me?”

Luke 22:35-38 “Did You Lack for Anything?”

Jesus said to them,
 ‘When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals,
 did you lack anything?’
 They said, ‘No, not a thing.’

Jesus said to his disciples,
 ‘But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag.
 And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one.
 For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me,
 “And he was counted among the lawless”;
 and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled.’

The disciples said,
 ‘Lord, look, here are two swords.’

Jesus replied,
 ‘It is enough.’

Ponder Jesus’ question:
“Did you lack for anything?”

Luke 22:39-46 “Why Are You Sleeping?”

Jesus left the meal and went, as was his custom,
 to the Mount of Olives;
 and the disciples followed him.

When Jesus reached the place, he said to them,
 ‘Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.’

Then Jesus withdrew from them about a stone’s throw,
 knelt down, and prayed,

‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me;
 yet, not my will but Yours be done.’

When Jesus got up from prayer,
 he came to the disciples
 and found them sleeping because of grief,
 and Jesus said to them,

‘Why are you sleeping?
 Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.’

*Ponder Jesus's question:
"Why are you sleeping?"*

Luke 22:47-53 "Betraying Kiss? Striking Sword? Bandit?"

While Jesus was still speaking,
suddenly a crowd came,
and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them.

Judas approached Jesus to kiss him;
but Jesus said to him,
 'Judas, is it with a kiss
 that you are betraying the Son of Man?'

When those who were around Jesus saw what was coming,
they asked,
 'Lord, should we strike with the sword?'

Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest Caiaphas
and cut off his right ear.
Jesus said,
 'No more of this!'
And Jesus touched the slave's ear and healed him.

Then Jesus said to the chief priests,
the officers of the temple police,
and the elders who had come for him,
 'Have you come out with swords and clubs
 as if I were a bandit?
 When I was with you day after day in the temple,
 you did not lay hands on me.
 But this is your hour,
 and the power of darkness!'

*Ponder these questions:
"Is it with a kiss that you are betraying me?"
"Should we strike with the sword?"
"Why behave as if I were a bandit?"*

Luke 22:54-62 "Aren't You with Jesus?"

Then they seized Jesus and led him away,
bringing him into the high priest Caiaphas' house.
But Peter was following at a distance.
When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard
and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight,
stared at Peter and said,
 'This man also was with him.'
But Peter denied it, saying,
 'Woman, I do not know him.'

A little later someone else, on seeing Peter, said,
 'You also are one of them.'
 But Peter said,
 'Man, I am not!'

Then about an hour later yet another kept insisting,
 'Surely this man also was with him;
 for he is a Galilean.'
 But Peter said,
 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about!'

At that moment, while Peter was still speaking,
 the cock crowed.

The Lord turned and looked at Peter.
 Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord,
 how Jesus had said to him,
 'Before the cock crows today,
 you will deny me three times.'
 And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

*Ponder this implied question:
 "Aren't you with Jesus?"*

Good Friday

Luke 22:63-71 "Who Stuck You? The Son of God? Further Testimony?"

Now the men who were holding Jesus
 began to mock him and beat him;
 they also blindfolded him and kept asking him,
 'Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?'
 They kept heaping many other insults on Jesus.

When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people,
 both chief priests and scribes, gathered together,
 and they brought Jesus to their national religious council.

They said,
 'If you are the Messiah, tell us.'
 Jesus replied,
 'If I tell you, you will not believe;
 and if I question you, you will not answer.
 But from now on the Son of Man will be seated
 at the right hand of the power of God.'

All of them asked,
 'Are you, then, the Son of God?'

Jesus said to them,
 'You say that I am.'

Then they said,
 'What further testimony do we need?
 We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!'

Ask Jesus these questions:

“Who is it that struck you?”

“Are you the Son of God?”

“What further testimony do we need?”

Luke 23:1-5 “Are You the King of the Jews?”

Then the assembly rose as a body
and brought Jesus before Pontius Pilate,
the Prefect of the Roman Providence of Judea.

The assembly began to accuse Jesus, saying,
‘We found this man perverting our nation,
forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor,
and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.’

Then Pilate asked Jesus,
‘Are you the king of the Jews?’
Jesus answered,
‘You say so.’

Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds,
‘I find no basis for an accusation against this man.’

But the chief priests were insistent and said,
‘He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea,
from Galilee where he began even to this place.’

Ask Jesus this question:

“Are you the king of the Jews?”

Luke 23:6-12 “Are You Galilean?”

When Pilate heard this,
he asked whether Jesus was a Galilean.
And when Pilate learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction,
Pilate sent him off to Herod Antipas,
Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea.
Herod, himself, was in Jerusalem at that time.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad,
for he had been wanting to see him for a long time,
because Herod had heard about him
and was hoping to see Jesus perform some sign.
Herod questioned him at some length,
but Jesus gave him no answer.

The chief priests and the scribes stood by,
vehemently accusing Jesus.
Even Herod with his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt and mocked him;
then Herod put an elegant robe on Jesus,
and sent him back to Pilate.

That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other;
before this they had been enemies.

Ask Jesus this question:
“Are you a Galilean?”

Luke 23:13-25 “What Evil Has He Done?”

Pilate then called together
the Hebrew chief priests, the leaders, and the people,
and said to them,

‘You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people;
and here I have examined him in your presence
and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him.
Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us.
Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death.
I will therefore have him flogged and release him.’

Then the chief priests, the leaders, and the people shouted out together,
‘Away with this fellow!
Release Barabbas for us!’
(This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection
that had taken place in the city, and for murder.)

Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed the crowd again;
but they kept shouting,
‘Crucify, crucify him!’

A third time Pilate said to the chief priests, the leaders, and the people,
‘Why, what evil has he done?
I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death;
I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.’

But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts
that Jesus should be crucified;
and their voices prevailed.

So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted.
Pilate released the man they asked for,
the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder,
and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

Ponder Pilate's question:
“Why crucify him; what evil has he done?”

Luke 23:26-31 “If They Do This to When the Wood is Green...?”

As they led Jesus away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene,
who was coming from the country,
and they laid the cross on him,
and made him carry it behind Jesus.

A great number of the people followed Jesus,
and among them were women who were beating their breasts
and wailing for Jesus.

But Jesus turned to them and said,
‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me,
but weep for yourselves and for your children.
For the days are surely coming when they will say,
“Blessed are the barren,
and the wombs that never bore,
and the breasts that never nursed.”
Then they will begin to say to the mountains,
“Fall on us”; and to the hills, “Cover us.”
For if they do this when the wood is green,
what will happen when it is dry?’

*Ponder Jesus’ Question to the Daughters of Jerusalem:
“For if they do this when the wood is green,
what will happen when it is dry?”*

Luke 23:32-43 “Are You Not the Messiah? Do You Not Fear God?”

Two others also, who were criminals,
were led away to be put to death with Jesus.

When they came to the place that is called The Skull,
they crucified Jesus there with the criminals,
one on his right and one on his left.
And they cast lots to divide his clothing.

And the people stood by, watching;
but the leaders scoffed at Jesus, saying,
‘He saved others; let him save himself
if he is the Messiah of God, God’s chosen one!’

The soldiers also mocked him,
coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying,
‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’
There was also an inscription over him,
‘This is the King of the Jews.’

One of the criminals who were hanged there,
kept deriding Jesus saying,
‘Are you not the Messiah?
Save yourself and us!’

But the other rebuked his fellow criminal, saying,
‘Do you not fear God,
since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?
And we indeed have been condemned justly,
for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds,
but this man has done nothing wrong.’

Then the rebuking criminal said,
 ‘Jesus, remember me
 when you come into your kingdom.’

Jesus replied,
 ‘Truly I tell you,
 today you will be with me in Paradise.’

Ponder the criminals’ questions:

“Are you not the Messiah?”

“Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?”

Luke 23:44-49 “...?”

It was now about noon,
 and darkness came over the whole land
 until three in the afternoon,
 while the sun’s light failed;
 and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said,
 ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’
 Having said this, Jesus breathed his last.

Extinguish the Christ Candle

When the centurion saw what had taken place,
 he praised God and said,
 ‘Certainly this man was innocent.’

And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle
 saw what had taken place,
 they returned home, beating their breasts.
 But all Jesus’ acquaintances,
 including the women who had followed him from Galilee,
 stood at a distance, watching these things.

(long pause for reflection)

Luke 23:50-56 “May I Have Jesus’ Body?”

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph,
 who, though a member of the council,
 had not agreed to their plan and action.
 Joseph came from the Jewish town of Arimathea,
 and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God.

This man Joseph of Arimathea,
 went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.
 Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth,
 and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb
 where no one had ever been laid.

*Cover the cup and loaf from the Last Supper
and extinguished Christ Candle with cloth.*

It was the day of Preparation, Friday,
and the sabbath was beginning,
sunset was nearing.

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed,
and they saw the tomb
and how Jesus' body was laid.
Then they returned,
and prepared spices and ointments.

*Sprinkle flower petals or herb leafs
over the covered, symbolic body of Jesus.*

On the Sabbath, sundown Friday to sundown Saturday,
they rested according to the commandment.

*Ponder Joseph's implied question:
"May I have the body of Jesus?"*

May say a closing prayer. Amen. † (kms)

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