

Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday, April 05, 2020

The Collect: Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Isaiah 50:4-9a read from God's Word Bible

4 The Almighty LORD will teach me what to say,
so I will know how to encourage weary people.

Morning after morning he will wake me
to listen like a student.

5 The Almighty LORD will open my ears.
I will not rebel, nor will I turn away from him.

6 I will offer my back to those who whip me
and my cheeks to those who pluck hairs out of my beard.

I will not turn my face away from those who humiliate me
and spit on me.

7 The Almighty LORD helps me.
That is why I will not be ashamed.

I have set my face like a flint.

I know that I will not be put to shame.

8 The one who pronounces me innocent is near.

Who will bring a case against me?

Let us confront each other!

Who accuses me?

Let him confront me!

9 The Almighty LORD helps me.

Who will find me guilty?

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 31:9-16 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

⁹ Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; *
my eye is consumed with sorrow,
and also my throat and my belly.

¹⁰ For my life is wasted with grief,
and my years with sighing; *
my strength fails me because of affliction,
and my bones are consumed.

¹¹ I have become a reproach to all my enemies and
even to my neighbors,
a dismay to those of my acquaintance; *
when they see me in the street they avoid me.

¹² I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; *
I am as useless as a broken pot.

¹³ For I have heard the whispering of the crowd;
fear is all around; *
they put their heads together against me;
they plot to take my life.

¹⁴ But as for me, I have trusted in you, O Lord. *
I have said, "You are my God.

¹⁵ My times are in your hand; *
rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.

¹⁶ Make your face to shine upon your servant, *
and in your loving-kindness save me."

Epistle: Philippians 2:5-11 read from The Holman Christian Standard Bible

5 Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus,
6 who, existing in the form of God,
did not consider equality with God
as something to be used for His own advantage.

7 Instead He emptied Himself
by assuming the form of a slave,
taking on the likeness of men.

And when He had come as a man
in His external form,

8 He humbled Himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death—
even to death on a cross.

9 For this reason God highly exalted Him
and gave Him the name
that is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow—
of those who are in heaven and on earth
and under the earth—

11 and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Matthew 26:14-27:66 read from The International Children's Bible

14 Then 1 of the 12 followers went to talk to the leading priests. This was the follower named Judas Iscariot. 15 He said, "I will give Jesus to you. What will you pay me for doing this?" The priests gave Judas 30 silver coins. 16 After that, Judas waited for the best time to give Jesus to the priests.

17 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the followers came to Jesus. They said, "We will prepare everything for you to eat the Passover Feast. Where do you want to have the feast?"

18 Jesus answered, "Go into the city to a certain man. Tell him that the Teacher says, 'The chosen time is near. I will have the Passover Feast with my followers at your house.'" 19 The followers did what Jesus told them to do, and they prepared the Passover Feast.

20 In the evening Jesus was sitting at the table with his 12 followers. 21 They were all eating. Then Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. One of you 12 will turn against me."

22 This made the followers very sad. Each one said to Jesus, "Surely, Lord, I am not the one who will turn against you. Am I?"

23 Jesus answered, "The man who has dipped his hand with me into the bowl is the one who will turn against me. 24 The Son of Man will die. The Scriptures say this will happen. But how terrible it will be for the person who gives the Son of Man to be killed. It would be better for him if he had never been born."

25 Then Judas said to Jesus, "Teacher, surely I am not the one. Am I?" (Judas is the one who would give Jesus to his enemies.)

Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

26 While they were eating, Jesus took some bread. He thanked God for it and broke it. Then he gave it to his followers and said, "Take this bread and eat it. This bread is my body."

27 Then Jesus took a cup. He thanked God for it and gave it to the followers. He said, "Every one of you drink this. 28 This is my blood which begins the new agreement that God makes with his people. This blood is poured out for many to forgive their sins. 29 I tell you this: I will not drink of this fruit of the vine again until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

30 They sang a hymn. Then they went out to the Mount of Olives.

31 Jesus told the followers, "Tonight you will lose your faith because of me. It is written in the Scriptures:

'I will kill the shepherd,
and the sheep will scatter.' (***Zechariah 13:7***)

32 But after I rise from death, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

33 Peter said, "All the other followers may lose their faith because of you. But I will never lose my faith."

34 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. Tonight you will say you don't know me. You will say this three times before the rooster crows."

35 But Peter said, "I will never say that I don't know you! I will even die with you!" And all the other followers said the same thing.

36 Then Jesus went with his followers to a place called Gethsemane. He said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He told Peter and the two sons of Zebedee to come with him. Then Jesus began to be very sad and troubled. 38 He said to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, "My heart is full of sorrow and breaking with sadness. Stay here with me and watch."

39 Then Jesus walked a little farther away from them. He fell to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, do not give me this cup of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want." 40 Then Jesus went back to his followers and found them asleep. Jesus said to Peter, "You men could not stay awake with me for one hour? 41 Stay awake and pray for strength against temptation. Your spirit wants to do what is right. But your body is weak."

42 Then Jesus went away a second time. He prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this painful thing to be taken from me, and if I must do it, then I pray that what you want will be done."

43 Then Jesus went back to the followers. Again he found them asleep, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So Jesus left them and went away one more time and prayed. This third time he prayed, he said the same thing.

45 Then Jesus went back to the followers and said, "You are still sleeping and resting? The time has come for the Son of Man to be given to sinful people. 46 Get up. We must go. Here comes the man who has turned against me."

47 While Jesus was still speaking, Judas came up. Judas was 1 of the 12 followers. He had many people with him. They had been sent from the leading priests and the elders of the people. They carried swords and clubs. 48 Judas had planned to give them a signal. He had said, "The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him." 49 At once Judas went to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Teacher!" Then Judas kissed him.

50 Jesus answered, "Friend, do the thing you came to do."

Then the men came and grabbed Jesus and arrested him. 51 When that happened, one of Jesus' followers reached for his sword and pulled it out. The follower struck the servant of the high priest with the sword and cut off his ear.

52 Jesus said to the man, "Put your sword back in its place. All who use swords will be killed with swords. 53 Surely you know I could ask my Father, and he would give me more than 12 armies of angels. 54 But this thing must happen this way so that it will be as the Scriptures say."

55 Then Jesus said to the crowd, "You came to get me with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal. Every day I sat in the Temple teaching. You did not arrest me there. 56 But all these things have happened so that it will be as the prophets wrote." Then all of Jesus' followers left him and ran away.

57 Those men who arrested Jesus led him to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest. The

teachers of the law and the Jewish elders were gathered there. 58 Peter followed Jesus but did not go near him. He followed Jesus to the courtyard of the high priest's house. He sat down with the guards to see what would happen to Jesus.

59 The leading priests and the Jewish council tried to find something false against Jesus so that they could kill him. 60 Many people came and told lies about him. But the council could find no real reason to kill Jesus. Then two people came and said, 61 "This man said, 'I can destroy the Temple of God and build it again in three days.'"

62 Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Aren't you going to answer? Don't you have something to say about their charges against you?" 63 But Jesus said nothing.

Again the high priest said to Jesus, "You must swear to this. I command you by the power of the living God to tell us the truth. Tell us, are you the Christ, the Son of God?"

64 Jesus answered, "Yes, I am. But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God, the Powerful One. And you will see him coming in clouds in the sky."

65 When the high priest heard this, he was very angry. He tore his clothes and said, "This man has said things that are against God! We don't need any more witnesses. You all heard him say these things against God. 66 What do you think?"

The people answered, "He is guilty, and he must die."

67 Then the people there spit in Jesus' face and beat him with their fists. Others slapped Jesus. 68 They said, "Prove to us that you are a prophet, you Christ! Tell us who hit you!"

69 At that time, Peter was sitting in the courtyard. A servant girl came to him and said, “You were with Jesus, that man from Galilee.”

70 But Peter said that he was never with Jesus. He said this to all the people there. Peter said, “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

71 Then he left the courtyard. At the gate, another girl saw him. She said to the people there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

72 Again, Peter said that he was never with Jesus. Peter said, “I swear that I don’t know this man Jesus!”

73 A short time later, some people standing there went to Peter. They said, “We know you are one of those men who followed Jesus. We know this because of the way you talk.”

74 Then Peter began to curse. He said, “May a curse fall on me if I’m not telling the truth. I don’t know the man.” After Peter said this, a rooster crowed. 75 Then he remembered what Jesus had told him: “Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” Then Peter went outside and cried painfully.

27 Early the next morning, all the leading priests and elders of the people decided to kill Jesus. 2 They tied him, led him away, and turned him over to Pilate, the governor.

3 Judas saw that they had decided to kill Jesus. Judas was the one who gave Jesus to his enemies. When Judas saw what happened, he was very sorry for what he had done. So he took the 30 silver coins back to the priests and the leaders. 4 Judas said, “I sinned. I gave you an innocent man to be killed.”

The leaders answered, "What is that to us? That's your problem, not ours."

5 So Judas threw the money into the Temple. Then he went off and hanged himself.

6 The leading priests picked up the silver coins in the Temple. They said, "Our law does not allow us to keep this money with the Temple money. This money has paid for a man's death." 7 So they decided to use the coins to buy a field called Potter's Field. This field would be a place to bury strangers who died while visiting Jerusalem. 8 That is why that field is still called the Field of Blood. 9 So the thing came true that Jeremiah the prophet had said: "They took 30 silver coins. That is how little the Israelites thought he was worth. 10 They used those 30 silver coins to buy Potter's Field, as the Lord commanded me."

11 Jesus stood before Pilate the governor. Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Yes, I am."

12 When the leading priests and the elders accused Jesus, he said nothing.

13 So Pilate said to Jesus, "Don't you hear these people accusing you of all these things?"

14 But Jesus said nothing in answer to Pilate. Pilate was very surprised at this.

15 Every year at the time of Passover the governor would free one person from prison. This was always a person the people wanted to be set free. 16 At that time there was a man in prison who was known to be very bad. His name was Barabbas. 17 All the people gathered at Pilate's house. Pilate said, "Which man do you want me to free: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Christ?" 18 Pilate knew that they gave Jesus to him because they were jealous.

19 Pilate said these things while he was sitting on the judge's seat. While he was sitting there, his wife sent a message to him. The message said, "Don't do anything to that man. He is not guilty. Today I had a dream about him, and it troubled me very much."

20 But the leading priests and elders told the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be freed and for Jesus to be killed.

21 Pilate said, "I have Barabbas and Jesus. Which do you want me to set free for you?"

The people answered, "Barabbas!"

22 Pilate asked, "What should I do with Jesus, the one called the Christ?"

They all answered, "Kill him on a cross!"

23 Pilate asked, "Why do you want me to kill him? What wrong has he done?"

But they shouted louder, "Kill him on a cross!"

24 Pilate saw that he could do nothing about this, and a riot was starting. So he took some water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. Then he said, "I am not guilty of this man's death. You are the ones who are causing it!"

25 All the people answered, "We will be responsible. We accept for ourselves and for our children any punishment for his death."

26 Then Pilate freed Barabbas. Pilate told some of the soldiers to beat Jesus with whips.

Then he gave Jesus to the soldiers to be killed on a cross.

27 Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace. All the soldiers gathered around Jesus. 28 They took off his clothes and put a red robe on him. 29 Then the soldiers used thorny branches to make a crown. They put this crown of thorns on Jesus' head. They put a stick in his right hand. Then the soldiers bowed before Jesus and made fun of him. They said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 They spit on Jesus. Then they took his stick and hit him on the head many times. 31 After they finished making fun of Jesus, the soldiers took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led Jesus away to be killed on a cross.

32 The soldiers were going out of the city with Jesus. They forced another man to carry the cross to be used for Jesus. This man was Simon, from Cyrene. 33 They all came to the place called Golgotha. (Golgotha means the Place of the Skull.) 34 At Golgotha, the soldiers gave Jesus wine to drink. This wine was mixed with gall. He tasted the wine but refused to drink it. 35 The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. They threw lots to decide who would get his clothes. 36 The soldiers sat there and continued watching him. 37 They put a sign above Jesus' head with the charge against him written on it. The sign read: "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." 38 Two robbers were nailed to crosses beside Jesus, one on the right and the other on the left. 39 People walked by and insulted Jesus. They shook their heads, 40 saying, "You said you could destroy the Temple and build it again in three days. So save yourself! Come down from that cross, if you are really the Son of God!"

41 The leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish elders were also there. These men made fun of Jesus 42 and said, "He saved other people, but he can't save himself! People say he is the King of Israel! If he is the King, then let him come down now from the cross. Then we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God. So let God save him now, if God really wants him. He himself said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 And in the same way, the robbers who were being killed on crosses beside Jesus also insulted him.

45 At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness lasted for three hours. 46 About three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" This means, "My God, my God, why have you left me alone?"

47 Some of the people standing there heard this. They said, "He is calling Elijah."

48 Quickly one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled the sponge with vinegar and tied it to a stick. Then he used the stick to give the sponge to Jesus to drink from it. 49 But the others said, "Don't bother him. We want to see if Elijah will come to save him."

50 Again Jesus cried out in a loud voice. Then he died.

51 Then the curtain in the Temple split into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way down to the bottom. Also, the earth shook and rocks broke apart. 52 The graves opened, and many of God's people who had died were raised from death. 53 They came out of the graves after Jesus was raised from death. They went into the holy city, and many people saw them.

54 The army officer and the soldiers guarding Jesus saw this earthquake and everything else that happened. They were very frightened and said, "He really was the Son of God!"

55 Many women were standing at a distance from the cross, watching. These were women who had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for him. 56 Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of James and John were there.

57 That evening a rich man named Joseph came to Jerusalem. He was a follower of Jesus from the town of Arimathea. 58 Joseph went to Pilate and asked to have Jesus' body. Pilate gave orders for the soldiers to give it to Joseph. 59 Then Joseph took the body and wrapped

it in a clean linen cloth. 60 He put Jesus' body in a new tomb that he had cut in a wall of rock. He rolled a very large stone to block the entrance of the tomb. Then Joseph went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary were sitting near the tomb.

62 That day was the day called Preparation Day. The next day, the leading priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. 63 They said, "Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive he said, 'After three days I will rise from death.' 64 So give the order for the tomb to be guarded closely till the third day. His followers might come and steal the body. Then they could tell the people that he has risen from death. That lie would be even worse than the first one."

65 Pilate said, "Take some soldiers and go guard the tomb the best way you know." 66 So they all went to the tomb and made it safe from thieves. They did this by sealing the stone in the entrance and then putting soldiers there to guard it.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On April 10th we celebrate the life of William Law, Priest. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

"If we are to follow Christ, it must be in our common way of spending every day. If we are to live unto God at any time or in any place, we are to live unto him in all times and in all places. If we are to use anything as the gift of God, we are to use everything as his gift." So wrote William Law in 1728 in *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*.

This quiet schoolmaster of Putney, England, could hardly be considered a revolutionary, yet his book had near-revolutionary repercussions. His challenge to take Christian living very seriously received more enthusiastic response than he could ever have imagined, especially in the lives of Henry Venn, George Whitefield, and John Wesley, all of whom he strongly influenced. More than any other man, William Law laid the foundation for the religious revival of the eighteenth century, the Evangelical Movement in England, and the Great Awakening

in America.

Law came to typify the devout parson in the eyes of many. His life was characterized by simplicity, devotion, and works of charity. Because he was a Non-Juror, who refused to swear allegiance to the House of Hanover, he was deprived of the usual means of making a living as a clergyman in the Church of England. He therefore worked as a tutor to the father of Edward Gibbon, the historian, from 1727 to 1737. He organized schools and homes for the poor. He stoutly defended the Sacraments and Scriptures against attacks of the Deists. He spoke out eloquently against the warfare of his day. His richly inspired sermons and writings have gained him a permanent place in Christian literature.

Law died at Kings Cliffe on April 9th, 1761.

Let us pray: O God, by whose grace your servant William Law, kindled with the flame of your love, became a burning and shining light in your Church: Grant that we, also, may be aflame with the spirit of love and discipline and walk before you as children of light; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**