



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER GUIDE



INTRODUCTION:

Going to the stations of the cross is a moment to remember what Jesus experienced for us. The pain that he endured so that we may be washed clean. As you embark in this practice may each station help stir your affection for what God has done for you. In the same way that music spurs our affections and allows us to engage with His presence may these stations encourage a deep connection to Jesus' story. Although we do not pray to the icons in these displays, we agree that symbolism can help us contemplate all that has been done for us.

As you approach each station, read through the scripture and prayerfully contemplate the questions below.

Station 1 - Jesus is Condemned to Death

"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"

"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!"

Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified. - Matthew 27: 22-26

We may be quick to judge the people who condemned Jesus, but if you were there, would you have been part of the crowd? Why or Why not?

A majority belief or understanding can be right or wrong. How do you navigate this? Why do you make the decisions you make?

Station 2 - Jesus Takes up the Cross

Finally, Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

So, the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). John 19:16-17

Jesus not only carried his own cross but did this to carry ours. What burdens are you carrying that have been placed on you? How are you allowing God and community in to ease the load?

What burdens are you carrying because you have chosen to? What burdens of neighbor and friend are you helping with?

Station 3 – Jesus Falls the First Time

*Surely, he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:4-5*

Where have you fallen in life? How have you recognized your own humanity?

How is Jesus' humanity highlighted here? How does this make you feel?

Station 4 – Jesus Meets His Mother

*Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause
the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that
the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."
Luke 2:34-35*

When Jesus and his mother see each other, they know that their love for each other does not change that he is going to die. There may be things in your life that despite your love for someone, you cannot fix the situation.

This can often feel helpless. How does this interaction of Jesus and his mother challenge or encourage you?

Station 5 Simon Of Cyrene Helps 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*

Simon was told to help carry Jesus' cross up the hill.

When hardship is experienced by those around you, how do you respond? Are you eager to help or do you wait till someone asks?

Contemplate how this moment felt for Simon. How do you react when you are asked to help others?

Station 6 - Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

*He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.
Isaiah 53:2-3*

Most of the crowd despised Jesus in this moment. But tradition speaks of a woman Veronica, wiping Jesus' face. This simple kind gesture should make us contemplate what it means to serve others

Do you feel the need for serving others to look grand or do you do small things that go unnoticed. Think about why you help others in the manner that you do.

The sixth station is inspired by a story that has been passed down through tradition. While it is not found in Scripture, it has been preserved because it offers a powerful example of love and compassion that can inspire us today.

Station 7 - Jesus Falls the Second Time

*I am the man who has seen affliction
by the rod of the Lord's wrath.
He has driven me away and made me walk
in darkness rather than light;
He has barred my way with blocks of stone;
he has made my paths crooked.
He has broken my teeth with gravel;
he has trampled me in the dust.
Lamentations 3:1-2, 9, 16*

As you imagine Jesus in this moment—beaten, disoriented, pressed into the dust—what emotion rises in you? Do you feel drawn to stay present, or an urge to turn away? Why?

Station 8 Jesus Meets the Women

A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then "they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"
For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"
Luke 23:27-31

When have you been moved by suffering but unsure what to do with it?

How do you typically respond when you see suffering on the news? How do you respond when a friend or family member suffers? Is your response similar or different?

Station 9 - Jesus Falls the Third Time

*We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*
Isaiah 53:6-7

Falling a third time reminds us of how often life can feel defeating, yet Jesus continues forward.

Where in your life have you continued forward without clarity or relief?

Contemplate this moment. Think about the love God feels towards us to continue on this journey.

Station 10 - Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

“Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,

*“They divided my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.”*

So this is what the soldiers did.

John 19:23-24

What is taken from Jesus here beyond clothing?

How do you feel imagining this moment?

Station 11 - Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Luke 23:33-34

What does forgiveness look like when pain is still present?

Where do you struggle to release frustrations, even when you desire peace?

Station 12 - Jesus Dies on the Cross

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Luke 23:44-46

What do you imagine this moment felt like for those who loved Jesus?

As you sit with their grief, what stirs in you?

Station 13 – Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

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.

John 19:38-40

Who shows up when the public moment is over?

What does faith look like in quiet acts of care, after loss?

Station 14 – Jesus is laid in the tomb

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 19:41-42

The stations of the cross end without finishing the story. When Jesus was laid in the tomb the people did not know what would happen. Our stories often feel unfinished in this way. What parts of your life feel unresolved or unfinished?

Where are you being asked to trust God in silence and uncertainty?