

Daily Discipleship

Luke 22:14-23:56

Prayers of Discipleship: *To Experience the Depth of God's Love*

Focus Question: *What does the death of Jesus mean to my life?*

word of life

“Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’ Having said this, he breathed his last.” Luke 23:46-47 (NRSV)

Read Luke 22:14-23:56

On Palm Sunday it has become the tradition in many congregations to read the entire passion narrative of Jesus. As part of your Daily Discipleship reflection, take time to read the passion narrative from Luke. If you have time, start your reading at the beginning of Luke 22. If you are in a group, divide up the roles so the scripture can be read as a play. Take time to ponder the words. Listen for new phrases and renewed meaning.

1. *What phrases catch your attention?*
2. *What questions do you have as you read the passion narrative?*

These chapters are full of emotion and human complexity. Chapter 22 begins with the plot to kill Jesus. This scheme does not occur overnight but is premeditated and includes the inner circle of Jesus. Despite it all, Jesus invites all of his disciples, including the one who would betray him, to join him in the traditional Passover meal. The meal is given new meaning as he introduces the Sacrament of Holy Communion. (Luke 22:14-23)

3. *Why didn't Jesus at his last supper exclude the person who would betray him?*
4. *What do the words “Do this in remembrance of me” mean?*

Jesus knows one of the disciples will betray him (Luke 22:21-22), hears his disciples squabble about being the greatest (Luke 22:24-30), and predicts Peter will deny him (Luke 22:31-34). He clearly knows the weaknesses of his disciples, yet chooses his path of sacrificial love despite the limited capacity of the disciples to follow him.

5. *What keeps Jesus from giving up?*
6. *What can we learn from the response of Jesus?*

Throughout the Gospel of Luke, Jesus takes time to pray at significant times. Thus, it is no surprise Jesus will go to a quiet place for prayer. He encourages his disciples by saying, “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” (Luke 22:40 NRSV) Indeed, Jesus knows his disciples, but he also knows the power of prayer for their lives. Jesus also prays for God's will in his own life.

7. *What trials might the disciples face?*
8. *Why would Jesus need to pray for God's will?*
9. *Would God's will not be automatic? Explain.*

The betrayal, arrest, denial, mocking, and beating are all part of the sacrifice of Jesus. When given the opportunity to release a prisoner, his own people would call for the release of Barabbas rather than him. Although innocent, Jesus is sentenced to death. He experiences the worst of humanity and then, he forgives them. Jesus prays, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34 NRSV) It is about noon when Jesus gives up his spirit. His body is taken down and put in a tomb. All seems over.

10. *What does the death of Jesus mean to you?*
11. *Why spend time on the death of Jesus if that is not the end of the story?*

word among us

The camp staff was leading their weekly Passion Walk at summer camp. They were dressed like those who lived in the first century Israel. Despite the crowd, it was easy to spot Jesus with his long hair and white robe. Mary walked beside him, dressed in blue.

It was a beautiful evening for the campers to walk along their counselors. Slowly they walked, singing along the way and stopping at stations to watch key scenes from the life of Jesus depicted. Many of the scenes were familiar: the feeding of the 5000, the last supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the arrest.

As the sun was setting, the crowd was led to a hill for the crucifixion. Dusk fell upon the group. On that particular night, the counselor who portrayed Jesus was placed on the wooden cross. His arms draped across the beam. All of a sudden, Jesus let out a pain-filled screech as he gave up his spirit. Quickly, the counselors gathered around him, knowing something was wrong. That screech contained too much pain. Sure enough, the actor's shoulder has slid out of joint. He could barely stay on the cross. The children and youth were quickly ushered from that hillside.

On that still night, all who witnessed that crucifixion at the camp were brought closer to the reality of the sacrifice of Jesus.

1. *When did you first learn about the love of Jesus Christ?*
2. *When did the sacrifice of Jesus become real for you?*
3. *How do you (or others you know) set aside Holy Week?*
4. *What is unclear to you about the last week of the life of Jesus?*

Sometimes it is difficult to express in words the depth of God's love as witnessed in the final week of the life of Jesus. If you have access to a hymnal, take a few minutes to browse through the book. Look first at the Lenten section. Seek hymns which depict the sacrifice of Jesus. Sometimes a poem has been put to music. For some musicians, it is the music which comes first. For centuries, artists and musicians have used the arts to describe the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ.

5. *What hymns tell the story of Jesus Christ for you?*
6. *What art have you seen which captures the love of Jesus Christ?*
7. *What symbols of the church represent the death of Jesus?*

Some people like to skip from the joy of Palm Sunday to the victory of Easter. For them, Good Friday is too depressing and too sad.

8. *How would you respond to someone who can't bear the sadness of the death of Jesus?*
9. *What can we learn from the way Jesus approached death?*
10. *What is the heart of the message of the passion narrative?*

Prayer

Most loving God, open our spirits and hearts this week as we hear of your love through Jesus Christ. Allow our hurting lives to be healed through your forgiving and healing touch. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Philippians 2:5-11

last word

Each day,
ponder the sacrifice of Jesus.



Daily Discipleship

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