

# Stations of the Cross



...is a centuries-old remembrance of a journey that took Jesus to the cross as the final sacrifice for our sin. Most Christians, especially in the West, are used to thinking of the crucifixion of Jesus as an event that happened at a certain time and place. It is that. But it is also more than that.

This lonely journey reveals to us truth about God and how He works in the world with human beings. It is that truth about God revealed in Jesus and His actions that provides us with redemption and reconciliation. The cross is about the power of love, the commitment of God to His own holiness, and the faithfulness and grace of God that knows no limits. It is about a love so deep that it will risk even death itself for the sake of new life.

May your journey this Holy Week deepen your belief and strengthen your commitment to walk daily with Christ.

## Stop and pray

Use Psalm 118:19-29(NIV) as a prayer as you start your journey...

*“Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad. LORD, save us! LORD, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine on us. You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.”*

# Tips for your Journey

- Read the scriptures and consider the thoughts.
- Spend focused time in prayer. Meditate on the events in the quiet and calm of this place.
- At each Station, there are opportunities to respond in concrete ways. Let God speak to you through these actions and lead you in your obedience.
- You may stand, sit, kneel... any posture that expresses your emotion or worship.
- Spend as much time at each Station as you like. Remember, this is a journey of whatever length you believe God has for you.
- Your journey will conclude at the Cross. Please stay there for as long as you sense the Spirit of God leading you to do so.

# Setting the Scene

Jesus and His disciples eat the Passover meal the night He would be betrayed. (Read before Station 1)

Jesus gathers His disciples together for the Passover meal. While traditionally celebrating the deliverance of the Jewish people from the final plague that decimated Egypt, Jesus uses the meal as an opportunity to speak important truth about Himself, the future of the Church, and the power of the Gospel – including His imminent arrest, death, and even His resurrection.

*And when the hour came, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, “I have earnestly 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.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup>For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”*

*(Luke 22:14-20 ESV)*

Within a short time, Judas would leave the group and complete the final step in his selfish plot to kill Jesus. Jesus and His disciples would go to the garden to pray. There, the disciples would fall asleep as Jesus pleaded with His Father in anguish over the coming burden that would be placed on Him. Roman soldiers would arrest Jesus with Judas by their side. While Jesus suffered beating and other forms of torture, the disciples would run into hiding and Peter would adamantly deny three times that he even knew Jesus. Jesus would go through a night of sham trials, standing before Roman officials who continued to pass the responsibility off to the next one lower on the ladder. (Mark 15:1, Luke 23:1-2)



## Station 1

# Pilate condemns Jesus to die

*Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor. . . . When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, and sensing that 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!" . . . he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. (Matthew 27:11-14, 24, 26b NIV)*

**Consider.** Pilate sees the truth, the truth of Jesus' innocence. Earlier, his own wife had spoken to him about the true identity of Jesus as Messiah (The Christ, the Saving One). Despite this knowledge, Pilate collapses under pressure and lays the blame at the feet of others. Yet he goes ahead, in an amazing act of cowardice, and has Jesus beaten before handing him over. At the same time, Jesus stands silently, letting sinful people have their say, knowing that it is for THEM that He will die.

**Reflect.** Often, while knowing the truth of the gospel and who Jesus is, I have not stood firm in my clear convictions. I have refused because of cowardice and fear to stand for Him and His truth.

I have shifted blame to others for my own sin, all the while knowing that I should live in repentance, turning away from my selfish sin and living fully in His forgiveness. I have taken the "easy road" and washed my hands of personal responsibility.

Do I give in to pressure to take the easy path rather than the right path? Do I place blame on others, on my upbringing, or on my past for my sin now?

**Apply.** This will be hard. Experience the emptiness of your own disregard for taking responsibility for your own decisions. Place your hands in the basin of water and then dry them. As you do, confess your own tendency to shift blame to keep from taking responsibility. Yet, remember that there is no escaping this guilt!

**Pray.** Jesus, I see in Your silence the quiet strength that reveals a peace and a resolve, even as others falsely accuse You. O Lord, help me to stand firm in the truth – of who I am and more importantly, of who You are. May I take my sin seriously and take the blame for my own choice to live in disobedience. Make my desire to know and honor You in all things the deepest desire of my heart.



## Station 2

# Jesus accepts His cross

*Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and put a reed in His right hand. And kneeling before Him, they mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spit on Him and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had*

*mocked Him, they stripped Him of the robe and put His own clothes on Him and led Him away to be crucified. (Matt. 27:27-31 ESV) With the soldiers shouting at Him, Jesus carried His own cross to the "place of the skull." In Aramaic it is called Golgotha. (John 19:17)*

**Consider.** Jesus accepted the cross in the midst of mockery. He suffered humiliation and degradation beyond what we can imagine. The very thing He came to offer us as a gift – forgiveness, peace with the Father, and God's most intimate love - became a source of ridicule.

**Reflect.** I would like to think that I am ready to follow Christ in His sufferings. But am I? Am I willing to yield my ideas of what God's Kingship should look like for the role of a servant? Am I willing to give up my human preoccupation with power or control for the sake of knowing Jesus? What overtakes me and controls me instead of my love for Him?

Jesus does not speak in His own defense. Yet I am so prone to complain and whine about the most trivial things. At times, the things I face in my life are more than trivial. The troubles of life bear down on me. But I so easily fall into self-pity. My personal hurts and issues often become the focus of my life above my relationship with Christ. This causes me to become stagnant in my spiritual growth.

**Pray.** O Lord, forgive me for forgetting that in my weakness I am driven to trust You, and that in that trust my weakness becomes Your strength. Forgive my attitude of self-pity. Cause me to lay aside my hang-ups and self-focused lifestyle. When struggles come, give me the strength to bear them as one who follows Your example.

**Apply.** Consider the cross standing in front of you. The one carried by Jesus would have been far more burdensome and heavy. But Jesus bore not just its physical weight, but the weight of the sin of every human being –past, present and future— including yours. It crushed down on Him with every step. As a representation of your sin, take a rock and carry it with you throughout the rest of your journey today – let it remind you of your sin that He bore for you on that heavy cross.



### Station 3

## Simon carries Jesus' cross

*And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. (Mark 15:21 ESV)*

**Consider.** Jesus buckles under the crushing weight of pain and grief. His physical strength is failing. The God of the universe, in human flesh, falls down and allows another man to help Him with this burden. Simon is just a bystander passing

through on his way into town from the countryside, yet he bears the weight of the cross to save Jesus' strength. Consider that God has sovereignly placed this man in this place for this very purpose. Was Simon forced to do this? Or was it requested? Either way, he was thrown into the midst of the greatest drama of all time on one of the most significant days of all time. He was available.

**Reflect.** I would like to think that if I had been there I would have rushed from the crowd and volunteered to carry that cross for this suffering man. But would I have allowed fear, busyness, or even an "I don't want to get involved" attitude to have pulled me back from the act of service and sacrifice that was in front of me?

It is easy to pretend not to see the needs, the grief, and the suffering all around me. It is easy to pretend not to hear the cries for help that come from those among whom I walk every day. It is easy to convince myself that I am too busy, too tired, or have too much on my plate already to get involved in the lives of others. But isn't this what it means to be a servant? Is this man named Simon modeling for me the path of sacrifice and discipleship? Jesus could feed the hungry and clothe the naked and build homes for the homeless without me, but He does not. He wants me to join Him as He builds His Kingdom.

**Pray.** O Lord, forgive me for becoming so preoccupied with myself that I have become deaf and blind to the grief, hurt, and suffering of others. Forgive me for my indifference. Remind me that I cannot love You without also loving others. Help me remember that to be a follower of Jesus means that I must share in the burdens of others. Lord, show me one person whose burden I can help to carry.

**Apply.** Think of areas where you have acted like Pilate – participating in injustice because it's easier than fighting for what is right. Commit to "Take a Stand" – for the impoverished, or for the unborn, for the bullied, for those impacted by war and oppression, or especially for those who have never heard the Good News of the Gospel.

Take a cross to carry with you as a reminder to never shy away from standing for truth and what is right.

## Station 4



# Jesus speaks to the women

*And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are 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 these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”* (Luke 23:27-31 ESV)

**Consider.** Christ struggles along the road towards His death. A group of women are already grieving. He has heard this same wailing many times before at funerals and tragic events. But now, they mourn for Him. He is about to die and yet He speaks to them, always the teacher, still the shepherd, and now the sacrifice for their sins.

His words are strange and seem out of place. They have a prophetic ring to them. He speaks of even darker days, of far worse things to come upon the people. Jesus had spoken of repentance, calling people to turn from their wicked ways and accept the coming of the Kingdom of God.

**Reflect.** He talks of impending destruction. Maybe we are not as righteous as we had thought. Maybe we have rejected repentance. Jesus’ death will be only the beginning of things for which to weep. Our refusal to repent and change the way we live is causing even more sorrow. Our sin and our refusal to confess it really is the reason He is on this path.

**Pray.** O Lord, forgive my unwillingness to repent, to confess all that I am before You. Help me go beyond confession in my words. May I let down all the facades of who I try so hard to be before others, and recall who I really am inside. Show me the darkness of my “secret sins”, the ones that I try to hide from others and even from myself. Help me stand before You with a bare and open heart. O Lord, let me weep over my sins for the pain I bring to others, and to live the fruit of repentance.

**Apply.** Confession is important – admitting our sin before God. But repentance, that turning away from our sin and heading in another direction, is critical to our growth and relationship with Jesus. James 5:16 tells us to confess our sins to each other in order for healing to take place. Take a card and write down the sins that you are confessing to God now. You may use this card to help you go to a trusted friend, confess these sins to them and have them pray for you and keep you accountable.



## Station 5

### **Jesus is stripped of His garments**

*When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."*  
(John 19:23-24 ESV)

**Consider.** Jesus' life was a life of poverty – He gave up all earthly possessions to preach the Good News. Now, the robe He wears is violently stripped from Him. Even His undergarment, the last covering of dignity He had, is taken and used as a prize for gambling soldiers. As His garments are torn from His body the wounds on His back reopen and blood flow begins again. As if the indignity of the crucifixion were not enough, Jesus now stands naked before the crowd.

**Reflect.** I fight each day for my dignity and my privacy. I can be consumed with hiding parts of my life from others around me, fearing rejection and judgment if I am seen for who I really am – naked before them, no way to hide. Yet Jesus let Himself be displayed before thousands, knowing His own innocence. The shame He felt had nothing to do with His nakedness. It was the shame brought on Him from bearing the sins of all mankind, including mine.

**Pray.** O Lord, You withstood the mocking and hatred heaped upon You, and You faced Your fate with dignity. May I, too, stand with courage when all is stripped from me. Help me to willingly allow others to know me for who I am -- all my struggles, all my sin, all my issues. Give me freedom from my hiding.

**Apply.** Consider for a moment your level of vulnerability with other believers. Is there at least one other person who knows you deeply and challenges you spiritually? Do you have a spiritual partnership with a trusted friend? What fear keeps you from building this kind of relationship?

As He reveals this, write that fear on the piece of material (symbolizing the one that was stripped from Jesus). Give Him this fear. Consider a person with whom you could build this type of relationship. Write their name here:

*Contact them this week and ask if you could meet with them. Share with them your desire to form a spiritual partnership. Try it for 3 months and then reevaluate. If you already have a spiritual partner, call them today and thank them for their impact on your life.*





## Station 6

# Jesus is nailed to the cross

*And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and*

*saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!” So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. (Mark 15:23-32 ESV)*

**Consider.** Huge, sharp spikes are hammered through Jesus’ wrists and feet – He nearly loses consciousness with each swing of the hammer. Now He is raised up and the cross drops with a thud into a hole in the ground. Jesus’ weight hangs on those spikes and to breathe He must pull Himself up on the nails. A sponge with vinegar is thrust into His mouth, and soldiers below Him gamble for His clothes, even as the blood, breath, and life drain from His body.

**Reflect.** How can I be content with my sin knowing His suffering? How can I not tell another person of Christ’s love while seeing a picture of His bleeding body gasping for air? Can I be this selfish? Can I disobey Him? Can I ignore this Servant King who hung in agony for me?

**Pray.** O Jesus, dear Jesus, though You never sinned, You hung there on the cross. I should be there, not You. You hung there in my place. Let me live in the full reality of Your sacrifice. Let me strive to live holy because You gave Your life, Your last breath, Your body for me.

**Apply.** Pick up one of the spikes. Consider the pain it caused as it passed through skin and muscle with blood pouring out of Jesus’ body. This spike was never meant to nail human flesh to wood. Jesus’ pain was for you. He suffered excruciating agony for your good, for your freedom, for your healing.

As a way to remember this amazing reality throughout the days ahead, take a red marker and color a solid circle (maybe ½ inch in diameter) on the palm of your hand. Then take the black marker and write your name across the red. Look at it often throughout the rest of Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Let Christ remind you throughout these coming days of His death...for you.



## Station 7

# Jesus cares for His mother

*...but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. (John 19:25-27ESV)*

**Consider.** The pain is unbearable. Death is near. God the Father turns His back on His Son. The weight of all sin is on Him, yet Jesus looks down and sees His mother. Once again He ministers to her, while in His own pain. He makes sure that she will be cared for after His death. He leaves John, His closest friend, to look after her. There He hangs, naked, bleeding, dying. Yet He still shows compassion and care. No one would have thought twice had this event not taken place. But as always Jesus became our Example.

**Reflect.** How often do I use my own pain, my own need, my own selfishness as an excuse to not care for someone else? I am far more blessed than many in our world, even more than many in my city. There are those who have no warm place to sleep, no hope for tomorrow's food. There are those who struggle every day just to have the basics of life. They may even be my brothers and sisters in my church.

**Pray.** O Lord, make me more sensitive to the needs of others than to my own needs. Help me to see the hurt of others over my own. Break my heart for those who sleep in the shelters, who eat in the soup kitchens, whose only income comes from charity and government programs, who struggle to find dignity when they cannot find a job. Help me not to casually judge, but to care. Make me a part of the solution.

**Apply.** What regular, ongoing ministry do you have to those who are less fortunate than you? Who do you know that you share your resources with on a regular basis? What ministry could you involve yourself in to give of yourself and your resources?

Consider what tangible way you can start doing this or if you already do this, what new level of sacrifice might God be calling you to? Write it here:



## Station 8

# Jesus dies on the cross

*Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, “Wait,*

*let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.*

*And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”*

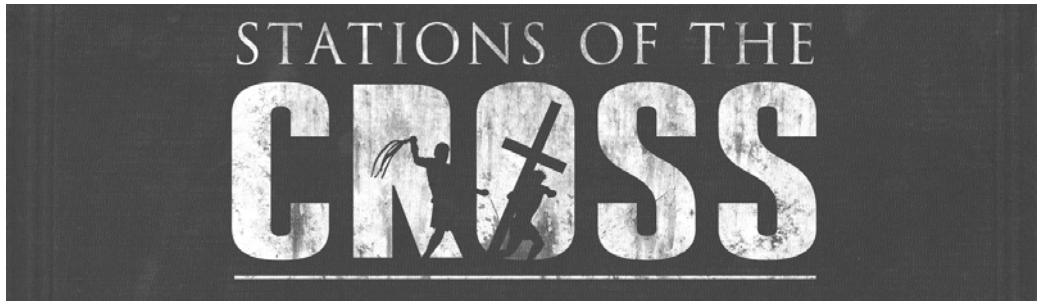
*(Matthew 27:45-54 ESV)*

**Consider.** How much does God love me? Every breath is a struggle. Wheezing, Jesus whispers in a voice barely audible, “Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.” One more gasping breath, then His head drops, and it is finished. A soldier jams a spear between His ribs as a test. Blood and water pour out showing conclusively that the Savior of the world is dead. The price is paid, and we are redeemed. He is taken down from the cross, nails having to be hammered and pried out. He lies in His mother’s arms one final time. Could this be the first time since He was a child that His mother cradles His body and rocks it gently... one last time? His body, His life for you, friend – friend of God!

**Pray.** Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you.

**Apply.** Take one of the cards in front of you and write a “love note” of sorts to Jesus. Tell Jesus that you love Him. Express your gratefulness for His sacrifice. If you are His follower, express your gratitude for your salvation. If you are not, ask Him to draw you to Himself and give you the desire to fully see your need for His mercy and grace. Place these anywhere in the open place on the floor in the center of the room (let them spread out).

Also...It’s time to drop your rock! Take that stone that represents your sin that Jesus carried to the cross and place it on top of your note. The price of your sin was paid at the cross – leave it there in gratefulness... depart in freedom to LIVE for Him!



**Be changed by your journey... and by  
Christ's journey for you.**

Be transformed by our  
transforming God!

**Remember...Easter is coming!**

The journey continues...

*Join us on Easter weekend as we celebrate our Risen Savior!*  
**Gahanna Campus: Saturday at 6pm & Sunday at 9 & 11am**  
**Whitehall Campus: Sunday at 11am**