



The Benefice of
Pimperne, Stourpaine,
Durweston with Bryanston

Good Friday Reflection

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

A reflection in scripture and words for Good Friday

A reading from Matthew 16.24,25

Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.'

Today is Good Friday when we remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the Cross. All this week we may have been following Jesus and his Apostles as they approached Jerusalem with the crowds singing Halleluiah and laying palm branches and cloaks down on the ground where Jesus rode humbly on a donkey. Last night we may have celebrated the Last Supper with Jesus breaking bread and sharing wine using the words *"This is my body, broken for you, this is my blood shed for you."* He then went out to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he prayed fervently to his Father for the burden to be lifted but recognising that he was doing God's will and he bowed to God's will being done.

A reading from Matthew 26.48-50

Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.' At once he came up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him. Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you are here to do.' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

Judas betrayed Jesus, with a kiss. For 30 pieces of silver Judas sold Jesus out to the chief priests, scribes and elders. Jesus was a thorn in their side, their authority was being undermined by his simple teachings and saying that God was a God of love, a forgiving God and that the way to salvation

was following Jesus. The chief priests, scribes and elders saw their livelihood being lost, their control of the people slipping, their status being undermined. They were frightened for themselves.

A reading from Matthew 26.62-66

The high priest stood up and said, 'Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?' But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, 'I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.'

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?' They answered, 'He deserves death.'

Jesus was initially silent in the face of the accusations made against him, many were false, many contradicted others. But to a direct question about his authority, Jesus told the truth, condemning himself in the sight of the high priests. Jesus knew what the outcome was going to be. He knew that he was to die that day, the ultimate Passover lamb, for the sins of all people. The truth served God's purpose.

A reading from Matthew 26.74-75

At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: 'Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly.

Peter, remember him, the rock that Jesus was to use to build his Church. He denies that he knew Jesus, not once but 3 times. It is all too easy at times, especially when under pressure, not to be open about one's faith or even, like Peter, to deny one's faith. But take heart. Peter went on to be the foundation stone of the Christian Church that we know today. We can still be like Peter and have a faith built on his foundation.

A reading from Matthew 27.22-26

Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!' So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Pilate found Jesus not guilty, but he still handed him over to be crucified. His authority was being tested and he gave in to the pressure to have a quiet or quieter life. It is all too easy to follow populism, it takes strength and faith to stick to the right path, however rugged it may be.

A reading from Matthew 27.28,29

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'

Even today people get mocked and tormented for who they are. You only have to look at the attacks on care workers, emergency service staff and members of the LGBT community. What are we doing to stop it, do we speak out?

A reading from Matthew 27.30,31

They spat on him, and took a reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Jesus not only carried the wooden beam of the cross to which he would be nailed, but he also carried the burden of all our sins, past, present and future. He died that we can obtain forgiveness. Are we still carrying burdens that weigh us down, that get in the way of our faith? Let us look to God's love to carry us through difficult times and lift those burdens from us.

A reading from Matthew 27.32

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.

Simon was a passer-by, drawn to the scene by the gathering crowds. He possibly was a strong looking individual, who had the strength to carry the cross for Jesus to Golgotha. In these troubled times, many are putting themselves forward to help others, often in small ways, a comforting phone call, collection of medicines and food, while others put their lives at risk administering to the sick. Do we take on other's burdens, giving them relief when they are overloaded?

A reading from Matthew 27.35,36

And when the soldiers had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him.

Jesus was crucified, the soldiers sat down and kept watch. Let us now take a few moments to contemplate the suffering of Jesus as he hung on the Cross.

<Silence>

A reading from John 19.26,27

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

With many people self-isolating, their sense of loneliness is even more profound than before. Jesus' mother must have been very distraught, but Jesus' love ensured that she was still looked after. How can we ensure that those who are alone, feel wanted and loved?

A reading from Matthew 27.46-52

And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others

said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 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.

Jesus died; the new covenant had begun. God showed that he was no longer confined to the temple and the Jewish Nation. The temple curtain had been torn in two from the top to the bottom. No more sacrifices of doves, sheep and cattle were needed. The one and only sacrifice for our sins had happened. The people were no longer a slave to the old covenant and the law. Christ had died for our sins.

A reading from Matthew 27.59,60

So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

We live in extraordinary times. Funerals are limited in numbers. Family are not able to comfort each other or even attend the funerals. Let us be able to comfort our loved ones and not forget those who have died, but to be able to remember them and celebrate their lives in the future.

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom

In the words our Saviour taught us.

***Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,***

***the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen***

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

May the Lord be with us.

May God bless us,
that in us may be found love and humility,
obedience and thanksgiving,
discipline, gentleness and peace. ***Amen.***