



Opening Scripture: Psalm 40:11-14, 17

Do not withhold your mercy from me, O Lord; may your love and your truth always protect me.

For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.

They are more than the hairs of my head,
And my heart fails within me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to save me; O Lord, come quickly to help me.

May all who seek to take my life be put to shame and confusion; may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.

Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me.

You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay.

Station One: Jesus is Tempted

Reading: Luke 2:39-46

He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done."

Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

Prayer: Lord Jesus, as I reflect upon your experience in Gethsemane, I am once again astounded by your utter humanness. You are not God-in-flesh-well-sort-of, but truly God in human flesh. You are Emmanuel, God with us. Thus, you are also God with me. You understand me. You stand with me in hard times. You encourage me when I wrestle with the Father's will. And you intercede for me. How I thank you, dear Lord, for who you are, for what you have done, and for what you are doing in my life today. Amen.



JESUS IS TEMPTED

Station Two: Jesus is Betrayed

Reading Luke 22:47-48

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than a crowd showed up, Judas, the one from the Twelve, in the lead. He came right up to Jesus to kiss him. Jesus said, "Judas, you would betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Prayer: O Lord, as much as I hate to admit it, to myself and to you, there is a bit of Judas in me. Forgive me for the times I have pledged my love for you, only to reject you in the way I live. Help me to see where my commitment to you is mixed, where my heart is divided against itself. Set me free to be wholly devoted to you, even when I do not understand you, even when I am afraid that following you is too risky. Amen.



JESUS IS BETRAYED

Station Three: Jesus is Condemned

Reading Luke 22:44-71

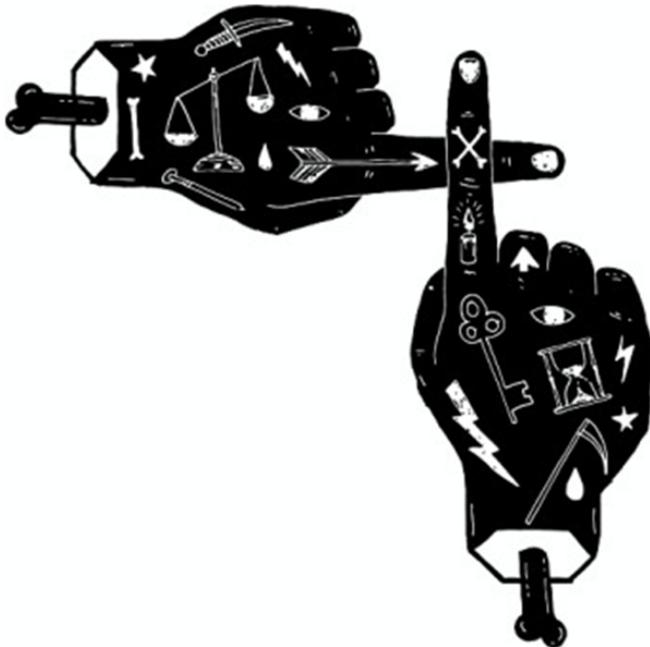
When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council.

They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He replied, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God."

All of them asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!"

Prayer: O Lord, the Jewish officials did not understand what it meant for you to be Messiah, and they condemned you as a

criminal worthy of death. Your own followers did not understand what it meant for you to be Messiah, so they scattered and hid in your hour of crisis. Help me not to be like these! Help me to understand what it means when I confess you to be the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed of God. And may this confession lead me to a life of true discipleship. Let your kingdom come, Lord, and your will be done, on earth as in heaven. And let this happen in my life, even today. Amen.



JESUS IS CONDEMNED

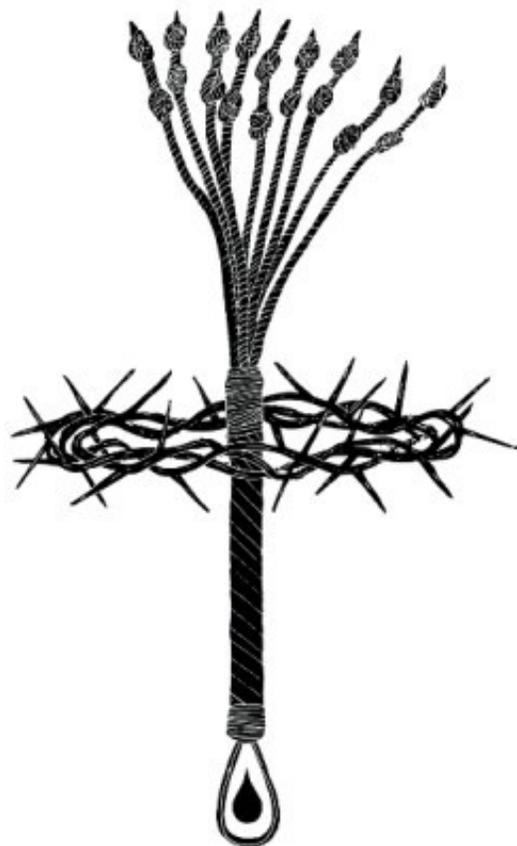
Station Four: Jesus is Mocked

Reading: Matthew 27:27-31

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. 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!" They spat on him, and took the 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.

Prayer: Gracious, merciful Lord, how hard it is to read of the abuse you suffered even prior to your crucifixion. I cannot even begin to imagine what you felt, not only physically, but especially in your soul. What can I say in response but, "thank you," for walking the path of suffering and shame for my sake. You took the abuse that I deserved, and gave me your glory in return. Help me, dear Lord, to honor you as my King in all that I do. May my words and deeds reflect your sovereignty and celebrate your glory. Amen



JESUS IS MOCKED

STATION FIVE: JESUS IS GIVEN HIS CROSS

Reading: Luke 23: 13-25

Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will therefore have him flogged and release him."

Then they all shouted out together, "Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!" (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.)

Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!" A third time he said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him."

But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

Prayer: Dear Lord, you chose the cross. Yes, the Jewish leaders accused you. And, yes, Pilate sentenced you. And, indeed, Roman soldiers led you to Golgotha. But in a very real sense they were simply working out what God had willed and you had freely and painfully chosen. How I thank you for this costly choice. Because you took up the cross, I can take up life in all its fullness. Because you were led to die, I can be led into the eternal life. Because you bore my sin, I can enjoy your forgiveness. How good you are to me, dear Lord, my Savior! Amen.



JESUS IS GIVEN HIS CROSS



JESUS FALLS

STATION SIX: JESUS FALLS

(Time for silent meditation)

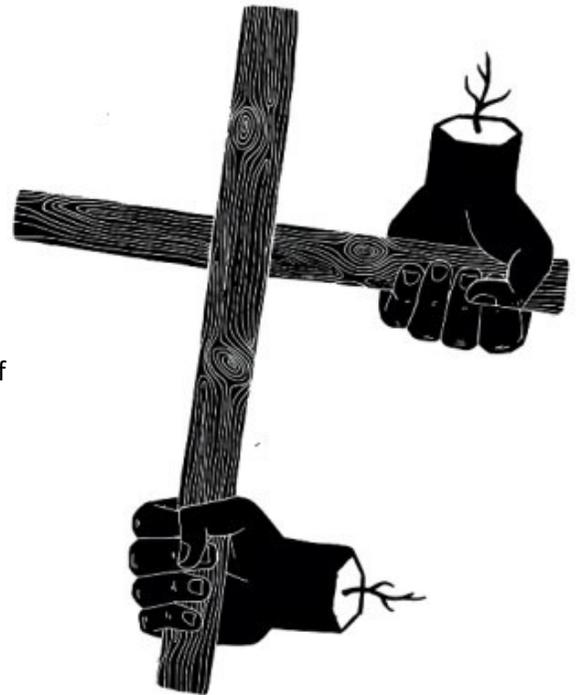
Prayer: Lord Jesus, the weight of the cross made you fall to the ground. The weight of our sin, the weight of our pride, brought you down. But your fall is not a tragedy, or mere human weakness. You came to us when, in our pride, we were laid low. The arrogance that makes us think that we ourselves can create human beings has turned man into a kind of merchandise, to be bought and sold, or stored to provide parts for experimentation. In doing this, we hope to conquer death by our own efforts, yet we are profoundly debasing human dignity. Lord help us; we have fallen. Help us to abandon our destructive pride and, by learning from your humility, to rise again. In Jesus name. Amen.

STATION SEVEN: SIMON CARRIES JESUS' CROSS

Reading: Luke 23:26

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

Prayer: Dear Lord, the powerful example of Simon reminds me that I am also to take up the cross and follow you. You have called me to die to myself so that I might live for you. I confess that sometimes I resist this call, even though I know that in dying to myself I find true life in you. So, help me, Lord, to carry my cross, to give my life away so that I might receive the abundant life of your kingdom. I could not do this were it not for the fundamental fact that you took my place on the cross. Through you, I am forgiven and invited into the fullness of life. In your death, I am raised to new life. All thanks and praise be to you, Lord Jesus, for bearing my sin on the cross, so that I might bear the cross into eternal life, both now and forever. Amen.



SIMON CARRIES JESUS' CROSS

Station Eight: Jesus is Stripped

(Time for silent meditation)

Prayer: Gracious God, to whatever extent there are remnants of bigotry in me, please forgive me and cleanse my mind and heart. Help me not to blame others for the death of Jesus, but to see my own sin as sending him to the cross. Even more, help me to grasp the mystery of your grace, to see in the death of Jesus that which gives me life. May my weeping over the suffering of Jesus, and my sorrow over my own sin, turn to joy when I recognize the majesty of your mercy. Amen.



JESUS IS STRIPPED

Station Nine: Jesus is Nailed

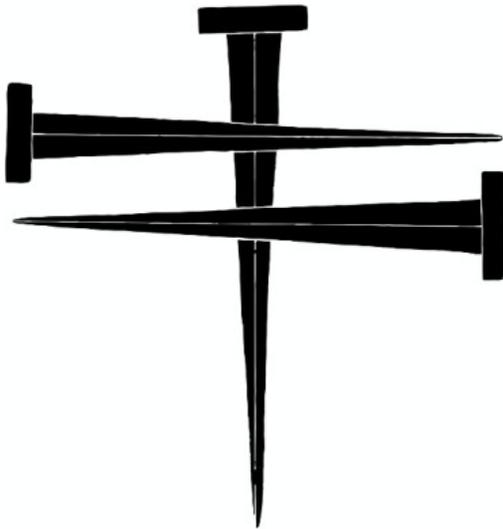
Reading: Luke 22:33-43

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Prayer: Gracious Lord, how can I ever thank you for dying on the cross for me? Your death has given me life. Your sacrifice has led to my blessing. Yet I confess that I can sometimes take your death for granted, forgetting what you did for me and neglecting its significance. Forgive me, Lord. And even when I cannot go to the actual place of your crucifixion today, may the reality of your sacrifice press itself upon my mind and flood my heart. All praise to you, merciful Lord, for Your cross!

JESUS IS NAILED

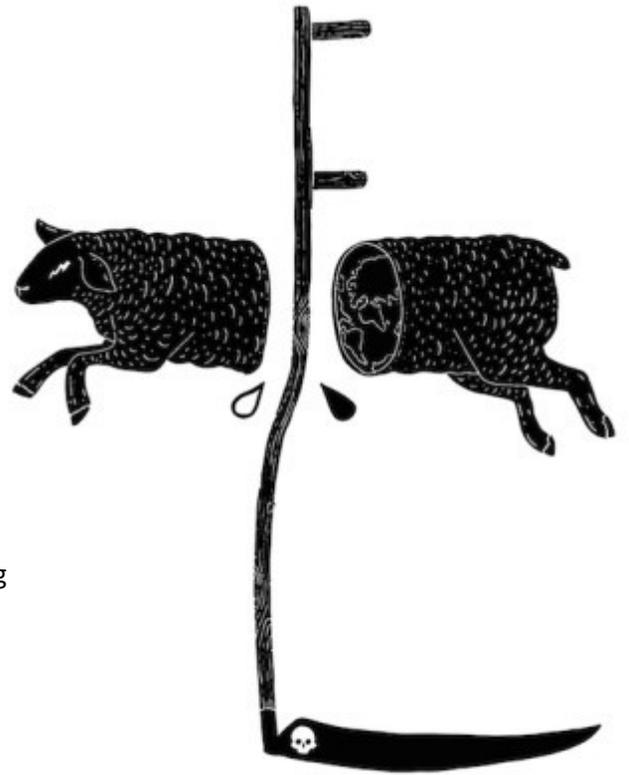


Station Ten: Jesus Dies

Reading: Luke 23:44-47

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."

Prayer: Merciful Lord, thank you for being The Righteous One. Thank you for your perfect life and your sacrificial death. Thank you for taking my sin upon yourself, and giving me your righteousness in return. Like the centurion, I look upon your cross today with wonder. But I am not only struck by your legal innocence. I am astounded by your willingness to suffer and die for me, the Righteous One for the unrighteous. All praise be to you, glorious, gracious, giving Lord!



JESUS DIES

Station Eleven: Jesus is Buried

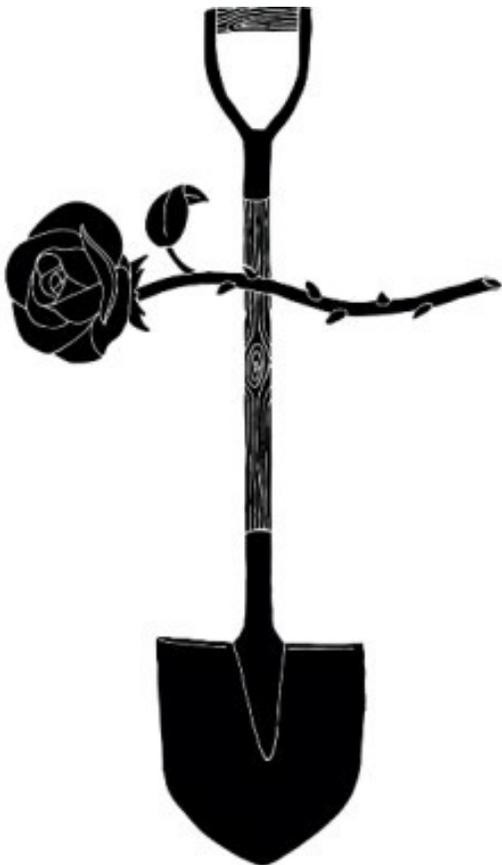
Reading: Luke 23:50-54; Mark 16:1-4

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning.

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, today we remember the fact that your death was not some charade. Rather, you really died. Thus, you experienced the ultimate penalty for our sin . . . for my sin. I will never be able to understand fully the wonder of your death. But I can grasp the fact that your real

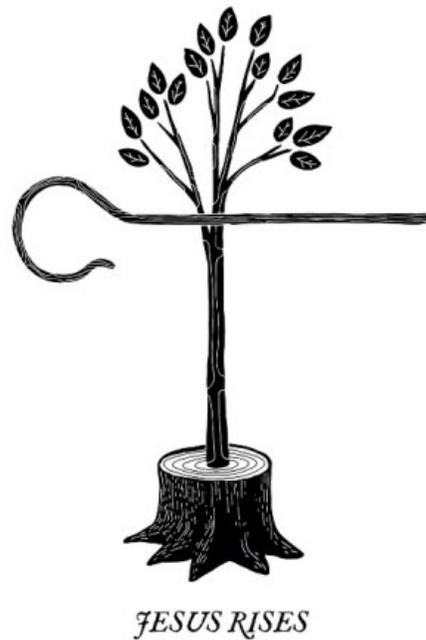
death opened the door for me to experience real life. Faced with such a merciful mystery, I cry, "Amazing love! How can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" To you be all the praise and glory! Amen!



JESUS IS BURIED

Station Twelve: Jesus Rises

To be continued.....



CREDIT FOR IMAGES

Scott Erickson is a touring painter, performance artist, and creative priest who mixes autobiography, mythology, and aesthetics to create art that speaks to our deepest experiences. Scott created and released the images contained here as a series titled, "Stations In the Street," an open share stations of the cross street art show. He has shared the images for faith communities to use in facilitating Good Friday worship experiences both inside and outside church walls.

Learn more about Scott on his website and see "Stations in the Street" installed in other locations at:
<http://scottericksonart.com/portfolio/stations-in-the-street/>

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