

shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the Cross!" In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the Cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him. When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

Reflection: .

Silent Prayer: At Calvary, we witness the wordless anguish of a Father for the agony his Son had endured: the ground shook, the sky grew black, and the curtain in the Temple was torn in two. This was the glory and praise that Jesus sought, and that made it possible for him to endure the long journey from the Incarnation to the Cross and Resurrection.

Our Father ...

Pray together: Lord Jesus, crucified and risen, have mercy on us. Help us walk in your steps.

Hymn - Behold, behold the wood of the Cross, On which is hung our salvation., O come, let us adore. (x2)

6. The Cross as a symbol of God's Extreme Love for us

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 27:46-54

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 "Father! Into Thy hands I commit my spirit." 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. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Reflection:

Silent Prayer: When the love of God is poured out to us through the Cross of Christ, it empowers us to do remarkable things in God's name. Where will the Cross of Christ take you and me? What will the love of God, as revealed by the Cross, empower us to do? Am I willing to allow myself to receive the love of God to such a degree that I cannot contain it? Am I willing to see, despite all appearances, that the stranger before me is the Lord?

Our Father

Pray together: Lord Jesus, crucified and risen, have mercy on us. Help us walk in your steps.

Final Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, your passion and death is the sacrifice that unites earth and heaven and reconciles all people to you. Your Cross is the ultimate symbol of your love and mercy. May we who have faithfully reflected on these mysteries follow in your steps and so come to share your glory in heaven where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. And may the Lord bless us and keep us always in his care – In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit All: Amen.

Hymn - Behold, behold the wood of the Cross, On which is hung our salvation., O come, let us adore. (x2)

Way of the Cross - A way of Extremes

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

Introduction

Heavenly Father, we pause from the cares and concerns of our daily lives to spend a few moments reflecting upon the events surrounding the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus and the power of the Cross. Send your spirit into our hearts, increase our faith and deepen our hope in the resurrection.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen

God of power and mercy, in love you sent your Son that we might be cleansed of sin and live with you forever. Bless us as we gather to reflect on his suffering and death that we may learn from his example the way we should go. We ask this through that same Christ, our Lord. Amen

1. The Cross is a symbol of our Extreme Need for a Saviour

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

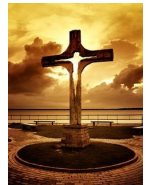
Scripture Reading: Isaiah 53:2-12

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Short Reflection

Silent prayer: Sometimes we live as though God does not see us, yet we know that God is always present, whether or not we acknowledge him. Look over your life and try to see where God has revealed himself at various moments in your life. Then move confidently into the future, assured of God's providential care for you.

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, amen



All Pray together: Lord Jesus, crucified and risen, have mercy on us. Help us walk in your steps.

Hymn - Behold, behold the wood of the Cross, On which is hung our salvation., O come, let us adore. (x2)

2. The Cross as a symbol of God's Extreme Commitment to us

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading: Mark 15:6-15

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Reflection:

Silent Prayer: Jesus taught his followers to trust that the Father would give them "good things" if they asked. What are those good things? For some it may be a material good for others it may be a spiritual good, like patience or forgiveness. Either way, the Cross teaches us what "good things" we need from God. As we live out the gospel, when we are presented with a Cross and we find that we have not the strength to lift it, Christ comes to us and makes it possible for us to receive the nourishment we need, to participate in his life.

Our Father ...

Pray together: Lord Jesus, crucified and risen, have mercy on us. Help us walk in your steps.

Hymn - Behold, behold the wood of the Cross, On which is hung our salvation., O come, let us adore. (x2)

3. The Cross as a symbol of Jesus' Extreme Sacrifice for you

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading: Luke 23:39-43

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."

Reflection

Silent Prayer: We all have our blind spots. When someone disappoints us or harms someone close to us, our inner judge tempts us to punish the offender, to nurse wounded egos, to exact payment for the perceived offense. At such times, passages of Scripture like this one press like a crown of thorns upon the head, or like nails driven through the feet. It can be tempting to turn a deaf ear to truth; it is so much more immediately gratifying to follow where our fallen passions move us, instead of rushing to reconcile ourselves with our brother or sister.



Our Father ...

Pray together: Lord Jesus, crucified and risen, have mercy on us. Help us walk in your steps.

Hymn - Behold, behold the wood of the Cross, On which is hung our salvation., O come, let us adore. (x2)

4. The Cross as an expression of God's Extreme Mercy

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:1-8

And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God

Reflection

Silent prayer: Jesus extends the same invitation to you: Starting today, take up your Cross. Forget the failings of the past. Don't worry about what tomorrow will bring. Open yourself to God's will for your life, with all its unsettling possibilities. Believe in the mercy of God that can withstand an honest appraisal of past sinful actions.

Let go of your right to judge others or dictate terms. This is the power of the Cross: In our weakness and humility, God's love reigns supreme.

Our Father ...

Pray together: Lord Jesus, crucified and risen, have mercy on us. Help us walk in your steps.

Hymn - Behold, behold the wood of the Cross, On which is hung our salvation., O come, let us adore. (x2)

5. The Cross as a symbol of Extreme Glory

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All: Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Scripture Reading: Mark 15:16-33

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. 1And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his Cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him,

