

# Good Friday Worship

Welcome to our time of worship and reflection this Good Friday 2020. I have gathered a few songs, prayers and thoughts for us to use together, and we have a talk from our friend Wendy Watkins from the Salvation Army. Unfortunately Wendy has been ill with coronavirus so hasn't been able to record it for us, but she has still managed to send us a written version with pictures. So, BIG thanks to her for making the effort while she was ill, and please pray for her continued recovery.

We will start with some words by Ann Siddall to help us focus on Jesus's journey towards the cross and his crucifixion:

Today is one of the grey areas of the Christian year; a day when the lights are dimmed and the sky feels overcast even if it isn't; a day when theologians and poets feel as if a heavy veil is drawn over heart and mind. An inexplicably sad day.

We resist the grey areas, prefer to see everything in black and white, look for cloudless, sunny skies, try not to read between the lines; throw in a bright colour or two to try and enliven the scene.

In the grey light of early morning - after a night in the ecclesiastical high court, and denial by one of his own circle - Jesus found himself at the gates of the reluctant Pilate, who promptly tried to hand him back to the Jews.

And though the sun rose that morning, the whole world turned grey for One who found himself without friend or helper, faced with drinking a cup he'd prayed would be turned away from him, knowing that life was about to be drained out of him.

We are invited to accompany Jesus through this grey day; to be witnesses to his suffering, to keep silence before his cry of dereliction. In our imaginations, let us trudge through Jerusalem, until we come to the place of the Cross and then, let us not turn our faces away.

In this grey day lie all the sorrows and failings of a humanity that strives for high success, yet comes up against human limitations, and falls to the ground in despair. A humanity whose peace plans give way to guns, and whose political promises become papers in filing cabinets.

Here is a day marked by the brokenness of the world. But it is not a day to wallow in misery, or to indulge in morbid thoughts about the crucifixion. It is simply a somber, dignified day when we remember how it was for Jesus, and find at the foot of the cross a place to lay down ours and the world's sorrow.

On grey days it is hard to see clearly, difficult to understand things that aren't clear. Yet all we are asked to do today is to be present to the sacred story as it is retold, and to the inexplicable, mysterious, wondrous transaction that was, and still is taking place.

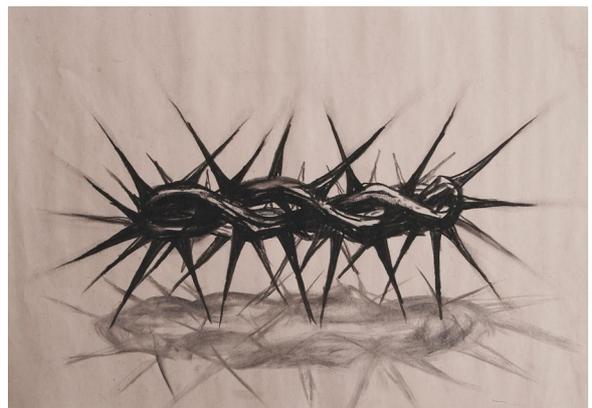
Let's sing *Man of Sorrows* together.

The [song is here](#) and the words are available on the VPBC site.

Take the time to read Matthew chapters 26 and 27.

You can use your own bible, or [read them here](#), or [listen to them here](#).

In the last hours before his crucifixion Jesus experienced betrayal, denial, aloneness, accusation, humiliation, physical suffering, and finally death. I suspect each of us have tasted some of these things ourselves, and the coronavirus situation may be bringing some aspects to the fore. As I consider what Jesus went through for us I have a variety of responses including distress, comfort, horror, gratitude.



Please use this next song - *When I survey the wondrous cross* - to reflect on your responses to what we have just read or listened to from Matthew.

The [song is here](#) and the words are available on the VPBC site.

After skipping past the advert this version has a long instrumental intro and the singing starts after 1.35 minutes – you can use the musical space for your own worship or prayer, but feel free to skip to the singing if you wish.

Let's pray this prayer written by John van de Laar:

If the cross tells us anything, O Lord,  
it is that You know and share our suffering:

You are with us, and all those who are victims of disease,  
of the violence or abuse of others,  
of our own ignorance, foolishness or sin.  
Help us and restore us, O Lord, we pray.

You are with us, and all those who inflict pain on others and on our world,  
through our selfishness or greed,  
through our brokenness or anger,  
through our rigidity or need to be right.  
Help us and restore us, O Lord, we pray.

You are with us, and all those who are fearful of threats  
to this world we call home,  
to our safety and survival,  
to our sense of community and togetherness as people.  
Help us and restore us, O Lord, we pray.

Christ of the Cross,  
See our need of Your grace,  
Hear our prayer for Your mercy,  
And come to us again, to help and restore,  
because we cannot heal ourselves.  
Amen.

Please read the talk prepared by Wendy, which can be found [here](#).

You may want to take a minute or two to think about what Wendy has brought to us. And then we will sing *And can it be*. [This is a version](#) by Lou Fellingham and Phatfish, and the words are available on the VPBC site. However if you would like the traditional tune you can find Stuart Townend leading it [here](#) – this one has words included. Please skip past the adverts.



Let's leave this time using these words by Jan L. Richardson

We never  
would have wished it  
to come to this  
yet we call  
these moments holy  
as we hold you

Holy the tending  
holy the winding  
holy the leaving  
as in the living

Holy the silence  
holy the stillness  
holy the turning  
and returning to earth.

Blessed is the one  
who came  
in the name

blessed is the one  
who laid  
himself down

blessed is the one  
emptied for us

blessed is the one  
wearing the shroud.

Holy the waiting  
holy the grieving  
holy the shadows  
and gathering night

Holy the darkness  
holy the hours  
holy the hope  
turning toward **light**.



May the grace of the  
Lord Jesus Christ, and  
the love of God, and  
the fellowship of the  
Holy Spirit be with us  
all. Amen.