

## **Good Friday reflections from Mark's Gospel**

**Last night we remembered the happenings of the last supper and I asked, would we, over these next few days be participants or bystanders. Would we merely listen and observe or experience in a paradox of time the events for ourselves. Yesterday evening ended in Gethsemane and that is where we begin today.**

### **1. The Garden of Gethsemane**

**Mark 14 v 32-52**

**Each of the Gospel writers gives us a different perspective on Jesus' crucifixion. Mark's account is dominated by darkness and abandonment. We are told that Jesus often withdrew into the desert, up a mountain, or into the stillness of a garden to be alone and to pray.**

**In the darkness of the garden of Gethsemane on the lower slopes of the mount of Olives the synoptic Gospels tell us Jesus agonised over his vocation. “Let this cup pass from me” ...yet not what I want but what you want” In Gethsemane and at moments during the passion, a curtain is drawn aside, and we gain a glimpse of the suffering of Jesus. In the prophecies of Isaiah and in some of the Psalms there are vivid descriptions of an individual who suffers for God. He is a suffering servant in Isaiah, God’s chosen in the Psalms.**

**But right back at the beginning, the book of Genesis tells us about the garden where human beings walked and talked with God in loving and harmonious relationship but when they were tempted, they chose to disobey God’s command, and so became separated**

**from God and marred His image in them.**

**It was in a garden where disobedience  
separated humanity from God,**

**And it was in a garden where Christ's  
obedience opened the way to restore  
humanity to a right relationship with Him.**

*Father, not my will but yours be done.*

*Lord as we remember the place of your agony.*

*Where your sweat fell*

*like drops of blood upon the rock.*

*Help us as we watch with you the agonies and  
suffering of the world and see you there.*

## **2. Jesus before the council; Peter's denial**

**Mark 14 v 53-72**

**Betrayed and arrested Jesus is brought before the Sanhedrin, and Mark tells us Peter watched at a distance. Peter in particular had a somewhat rollercoaster discipleship.**

**His impetuous nature led him to make the declaration, at Caesarea Philippi, that Jesus was the Christ, it compelled him to get out of the boat and try to walk to Jesus on the water; it prompted him to affirm his allegiance to Jesus no matter what should happen, even to the point of giving his life for him. But Peter denied Jesus three times on the night before Christ's crucifixion; he denied even knowing him and we are told over whelmed with remorse he went out and wept bitterly. Tears are very human emotion and are a reaction to the deepest of human**

**experiences. The Gospels tell us that Jesus wept on a number of occasions, He wept at the death of his friend Lazarus, when he looked at Jerusalem and in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus was betrayed by a friend, accused by false witnesses and sentenced to a punishment He did not deserve. When we are hurt by others, betrayed, or treated unjustly, let us turn to Jesus who is close to the broken-hearted and will help us to cope with our situation.**

*Lord sometimes we deny you by our words, by our actions by our silence. Look at us as you looked at Peter and help us repent and be forgiven by your love. Help us remember that you know us for what we are and also for what we shall be. Help us like Peter to fulfil our potential in you.*

### **3. Jesus before Pilate Mark 15 v 1-20**

**The Jewish council had no legal powers so having decided that Jesus should be put to death they handed him over to the Roman authorities. Here the interrogation is focused differently “Are you the King of the Jews” he is asked as opposed to the Sanhedrin’s question “are you the Son of the Blessed?”**

**When the magi came in search of the infant Jesus they asked “where is he who is born King of the Jews” as Jesus stands on trial as the moment for the fulfilment of his vocation draws near the title is used again. The King of Kings is mocked and scorned. As Jesus stands before Pilate we encounter two very different types of power: the power of earthly rulers and the power of Jesus. Pilate holds power and authority over the people under his**

**jurisdiction. Confronted with Jesus he wants to know if he is facing a challenge to this power. Jesus' kingdom is not a place but a rule which transcends time and space.**

**At the beginning of his ministry out in the wilderness, Jesus resisted the temptation of earthly power and later in the garden of Gethsemane he wrestled with the temptation to take the easy way, yet He made the choice to do his fathers will as he prayed “your will not mine be done”**

**He chose the way of the cross so that we might become citizens of his heavenly kingdom.**

**What place does Jesus hold in our hearts and lives? Does he reign in every in every part or**

**are there places in our hearts and lives from  
which we want to exclude him.**

***O Jesus, King of King's whose kingdom is not  
of this world Reign in our hearts.***



#### **4. Crucifixion Mark 15 v 21-32**

**Mark tells us that as Jesus hung on the cross some women stood at a distance, but we are called to come closer and to stand at the foot. Here there is no room for pride in- self or our achievements. To see Christ we have to look away from ourselves. We have to look up. Close your eyes for a moment. The cross is in front of you, remember the hard rough wood sunk deep into the dusty barren rock. Look a little higher and the first thing you see is not Jesus' face but His feet. Feet, which are dirty from the long walk through the dusty streets of Jerusalem: cut and bruised from the rocky climb up the hillside. Smearred with blood and deformed from the nails driven through them. Look a little higher and see his knees, they too are bleeding. Large bruises surround the grazed skin evidence of the times that he**

**fell as he carried his cross to the place of execution.**

**Only the day before he was kneeling on those knees as he prayed to his father “Not my will but yours be done”. Earlier He had also knelt, this time to perform the humble task of washing His disciples feet. Bending forward he took them into his hands, one by one. Each foot he washed and dried with care. As He hangs on the cross there is no one who bathes his knees or washes his bleeding and swollen feet. But here at His wounded feet he invites us to lay our burden of sin and care.**

***We adore you O Christ and we bless you because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.***

## **5. The Death of Jesus Mark 14 v 33-41**

**With your eyes closed see the cross with its rough wood and as you look more intently and raise our eyes higher, you see Jesus hands, pierced by the nails. His arms stretched out. Round his head slumped forward on his chest is a crudely twisted wreath with long sharp thorns, each one puncturing the skin so drops of blood trickle down into his eyes and off the end of his nose. Above his head is an inscription, King of the Jews. The mocking crown encircles the human bleeding head of the King of Glory. Here on the cross, in human sorrow and pain, God's limitless love is displayed. His arms spread out in agony are also extended in love. A love that bids us draw closer to him. "God showed his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." On the cross**

**we see his vulnerability and in his death we find the ultimate identification with our humanity. Jesus bids us come to the foot of the cross, to see his sorrow and to feel his love. As His earthly life draws to an end His final 3 hours are marked by darkness descending on the scene, we are reminded that in the beginning, when God created the world, he brought light into the darkness. Now the Son of God, the light of the world, dies, that humanity might live. There is a deep sense of abandonment as Jesus cries out the words of Psalm 22. “My God My God why have you forsaken me.” The Centurion said “Truly this was God’s Son”**

*Eternal Lord, your death on the cross has opened up for us a new and living way into the heavenly sanctuary: help us sinners to commit our lives into your hands.*

## **6. The Burial of Jesus Mark 15 v42-47**

**Jesus died at 3 o'clock on a Friday afternoon. Mark tells us that Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council went to Pilate to request that Jesus' body be released into his care. Pilate eventually agreed to Joseph's request and allowed him to take the body away and place it in a tomb. The women had watched it happen. The horror of crucifixion, the agony of standing by helpless watching someone they loved suffering, and finally the last gasping breaths of suffocation. They had seen his body brought down from the cross and joined the sad little procession as it was carried to the tomb in the garden and they had taken note of exactly where His body was laid and watched on as the heavy stone sealed the entrance to the tomb: and then they left him, and walked grief stricken**

**away. The had stood by and watched the events but “What of us?” who know the end of the story Are we participants or bystanders, witnesses or just observers of the greatest story of selfless love?**

**My song is love unknown,**

**my saviour’s love for me,**

**love to the loveless shown**

**that they might lovely be**

**O who am I that for my sake my**

**Lord should take frail flesh and die.**

**In life no house, no home**

**My Lord on earth might have**

**In death no friendly tomb but what a stranger gave.**

*Lord, draw us to your cross which brings  
forgiveness that we may be cleansed*

*Draw us to your cross which brings light that  
we may have vision*

*Draw us to your cross which brings us your  
love that we may have compassion*

*Draw us to your cross which brings us life that  
we may live for you*

*Draw us to yourself that we may grow more  
like you.*

