



Jesus Christ: The Good News

THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS


about Jesus the Messiah,
the Son of God.

—Mark 1:1

DAY OF REFLECTION STUDY GUIDE

Good Friday, March 29, 2024

7am-7pm / White Bear Campus

 Calvary Church

Jesus Christ: The Good News

This Reflection is designed so it can be utilized in multiple settings.

IN-PERSON DAY OF REFLECTION*

The ideal experience is in-person at Calvary Church's White Bear Campus on Good Friday, March 29, 2024. Each individual reading is enhanced with visuals that bring the scenes to life.

**In-Person Day of Reflection recommended for ages 8 and up.*

ONLINE DAY OF REFLECTION, OR AT HOME THROUGHOUT HOLY WEEK

Experience this Reflection at home in one sitting, or read one Reflection each day of Holy Week. This can be done individually, or as a family. There are six Reflections, so plan accordingly.

WHEN USED AT HOME, THESE ITEMS WILL HELP BRING EACH REFLECTION TO LIFE:

REFLECTION ONE

Look up where a war is taking place. Draw a heart and write the name of the country or write about a personal war you or someone else are dealing with. Pray for resolution to this struggle throughout the week.

REFLECTION TWO

You will need: A washcloth and bare feet. Wash your feet (or someone else's) and think of what it must have been like to have Jesus wash your feet.

REFLECTION THREE

You will need: A small piece of bread and some red wine/grape juice/water. Use it to take communion.

REFLECTION FOUR

You will need: A computer or phone to click on the link to the video.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R8PsZcwQeND_2xjmvn9xG6hmiANtgX2L/view?usp=drive_web

REFLECTION FIVE

You will need: A white piece of paper and a red pen. Write "FORGIVEN" on it and then place it under a cross if you have one. Or just imagine that you are at the cross. You are FORGIVEN!

REFLECTION SIX

Google: Images of a mustard field.

Listen to: "Living Hope" written and sung by Phil Wickham

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-1fwZtKJSM>

Jesus Christ: The Good News

This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God!

—MARK 1:1

INTRODUCTION

What would you do if the email subject was “You have won an Alaskan cruise!”?

Usually when something is too good to be true, it is. I confidently clicked DELETE. Thankfully, the follow-up email sparked my curiosity. After much internal debate, I opened it. It was legitimate! My stomach churned at the realization I had, literally, almost “missed the boat!” I couldn’t wait to tell my husband the good news.

Living in a world filled with divisiveness, there is one thing we can all agree on—we like good news. Whether it’s that your favorite team won, you were picked to star in a play, your parents are bringing home a puppy, a close relative is having a baby, or someone you love beat cancer—the news does more than just make you smile. It makes you want to tell somebody!

As you walk through these Reflections, it is our prayer that you don’t “miss the boat.” May you not just hear the Good News of Jesus but accept it and rejoice in its message. Jesus Christ, God’s Son, gained the victory over death and offers eternal life for all who will believe. The best news ever! May it make you want to go and tell somebody . . .

“Sing to the Lord; praise his name. Each day proclaim the good news that he saves” (Psalm 96:2).

Sincerely,

Beth L. Dutton, for the Reflection Team

Reflection One

Good News: Jesus Christ, the Savior, is Born!

**“I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.
The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem,
the city of David!”**

—LUKE 2:10

“I really thought he was the one.” Mattias gripped the oil skin in one hand while the other hand struggled to prevent the lamb from escaping his grasp. As Mattias gently massaged the oil into the lamb’s matted scalp, it began to settle down.

“You get too excited Mattias. You think every revolutionary that has a following is the Messiah—our Savior. Yet every one with promise ends up killed. I realize that according to prophecy he should be born about now—but I for one have given up.” His father sighed as he reached over to grab the oil flask from his son’s weathered hand.

Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them.

“Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!”

The angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

After seeing the baby, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished (Luke 2:9-18 paraphrased).

FURTHER REFLECTION

In the time of Christ, the term “good news” or ‘gospel’ was a military term. It comes from the Greek word euangelion.¹ When the army had news of any sort—they would send out a messenger—called an “angelos” (where we get the word angel) to go from town to town. IF the news was good the message was ev+angelos (translated evangelist)—meaning the angelos was bringing good news!

The best good news was “Victory!” The war is over. Everyone in the city was safe! And if your father, uncle, brother, or son survived—they were coming home. As the news spread, joy overflowed and spilled out into the streets. The party began . . . for them. For the defeated foe—not so much.

The Savior of the world was making his debut and it was GOOD NEWS for everyone! God’s “evangelos” had this to say: “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!” (Luke 2:10).

ASK YOURSELF

“This is the message of Good News for the people... that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36).

Around the globe, people in war zones long to hear the good news that their enemy has been defeated and peace will commence. Other wars never reach the news: addiction, depression, anxiety, unpayable bills, housing insecurity, joblessness, abuse, cancer/illness, tension with family, or feeling unwanted. What battles are you fighting? What battle is someone you know fighting?

In John 16:33, Jesus promises good news and bad news. The bad news is “In this world you will have trouble.” The good news is “But take heart! I have overcome the world” (NIV).

Take a moment to pray for those currently at war, whether on a global scale or personal. Ask God to open their hearts to the Good News that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ. That regardless of the troubles of this world, they can rest in the promise of everlasting life.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus Christ—my Savior,

Thank you for loving me so much that you left the riches of heaven to be born in a stable and grow up to sacrifice yourself for not just me, but the world. I pray for all those in the world who are experiencing the ravages of war—whether internal or external. Send your comfort, peace, and salvation to those who are hurting and in need. I pray that in the midst of battle, they may call upon your name and be filled with your presence. For those that don’t know you—I pray for their salvation. In Jesus powerful name, Amen

BEFORE YOU GO

Place a heart on the map of the country/area you prayed for. If it is for a private battle—put a heart where you or the person you prayed for lives.

Reflection Two

Good News: Jesus Christ, the Lord, Serves!

Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant.”

—MARK 10:43

The stench wafting through the air was conspicuously odorous tonight—or at least it was to Peter. His feet hadn’t been washed in awhile—nor had the rest of the disciples. The household did not have a slave to thoroughly wash them, so they would have to deal with the strong smell throughout the evening. Ideally the scent of the Passover Lamb would overpower it. Peter expected the dinner would be served soon. He wasn’t sure how much longer he could take it.

As they waited for the meal to begin, Jesus got up. It looked like he was going to say the blessing. But wait. He wasn’t getting ready to say the blessing—he was taking off his robe! What???

After Jesus laid his outer garment down, he picked up the basin by the side of the door. Slowly, he filled it with water, then wrapped a towel around his waist. The water sloshed about as he carried the basin, stooping to lay it down before the feet of Judas. Jesus bent over to untie his sandals. With the first foot freed, Jesus slowly lifted the mud-encased appendage, and gently began to clean. Using the towel around his waist, Jesus ensured there would be no residue of dirt left as he finished and went on to John. Peter watched in amazement as Jesus repeated this over and over—pausing only to dump and refill the basin. Finally, it was his turn.

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus replied, “You don’t understand now what I am doing, but someday you will.” “No,” Peter protested, “you will never ever wash my feet!” Jesus replied, “Unless I wash you, you won’t belong to me.”

—John 13:6-8

FURTHER REFLECTION

Peter used the Greek word “kurios” (translated Lord) when he addressed Jesus. It means “supreme in authority. Master.” ²

The prophet John the Baptist, who was a contemporary of Jesus, said this about him, “Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals” (Matthew 3:11). During this era of history—it was slaves that would untie the sandals of a person—and then wash their feet. The very thought of a master doing it was appalling.

“You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

—Matthew 20:25-27)

Jesus didn’t “lord” his privilege over his disciples. To show how much he loved them, he took a towel, knelt, lifted their grubby, smelly feet and did the unthinkable—he washed them!

ASK YOURSELF

Jesus our Lord said this:

Then the King will say . . . “For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.”

And the King will say, “I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!”

—Matthew 25:35-36, 40

Jesus leads by example. When he washed the feet of the disciples, he also washed the feet of his betrayer—the ‘least of these’. Who does society consider the ‘least of these’? Maybe for you it is an unhoused person, an unruly teen, a shut-in elderly individual, the boy or girl that sits by themselves at lunch, the annoying neighbor, the clerk that messed up your order or even someone who is against you? How can you show them kindness?

While it isn’t practical to wash their feet, you can share the Good News of Jesus’ love for them in a tangible way. Make it personal. Sit next to them at lunch. Give a bag of goods directly to an unhoused person. Deliver flowers and visit someone at a nursing home who never gets visitors (if you don’t know someone—ask at the desk). Pay for someone’s dinner. Volunteer at the food shelf/ Feed My Starving Children, etc. . . . By your actions, show those that might feel like the ‘least of these’ that they are not. Jesus loves them—that’s the Good News everyone needs every day.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

You have said that even you, my Lord, did not come to be served but to serve others. Help me to have that mindset. Show me how I can serve you and others this week. Create in me a servant’s heart. Amen

BEFORE YOU GO

Take one foot out of the wash basin and dry it, then place it in the bowl. Now take the one someone else dried with you as a reminder that just as Jesus would have washed your feet—we are to wash one another’s. By the way—Jesus thinks your feet are beautiful! “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!” (Romans 10:15).

Reflection Three

Good News: Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, a Willing Sacrifice

**God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors.
And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value.
It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.**

—1 PETER 1:18-19

Three years earlier, conjecture was flying all over Jerusalem. The Jewish leaders kept hearing about a man named John, baptizing people in the wilderness for repentance from sin. As the crowds grew, so did their curiosity. Was he a prophet? Elijah? The Messiah? Finally, when they could stand it no longer, they sent Priests and Temple assistants to find out. They didn't find out much, and what they did hear was confusing. The day after they arrived in the wilderness—

“John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29).

But that was three years ago. Now John was dead—his head handed to the stepdaughter of King Herod on a platter as a present. The Jewish leaders decided this Jesus John had called the “Lamb of God” —should join John in death. Jesus was fully aware of their intentions. After he washed the disciple's feet and shared an intimate supper with them Jesus was anxious to leave. The time had come for the Lamb to be sacrificed. Jesus desperately desired to commune with his Father before he surrendered . . .

Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. There he told them [the disciples], “Pray that you will not give in to temptation.”

He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.
—Luke 22:39-43

Moments later, Jesus was arrested—and the angels stood on alert. When Judas brought the guards to arrest Jesus, Peter was also ready to defend him.

“Put away your sword,” Jesus told him. “Those who use the sword will die by the sword.” Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now.”
—Matthew 26:52-54

The angels stood down . . .

FURTHER REFLECTION

Jesus wrestled with the sacrifice he was about to make. His disciples kept falling asleep, even when he pleaded with them to stay awake. These men who he had lived with, healed with, raised people from the dead with, rescued, served, and deeply loved were all about to desert him. One would betray him, another deny him. All would run away. The Priests, Pharisees, Sadducees and “experts” in the law were about to falsely accuse him, with crucifixion the ultimate goal. Yet, he was about to go through with it anyway. “Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame” (Hebrews 12:2).

ASK YOURSELF

Imagine you arrive at the Garden of Gethsemane just as Jesus is finishing his prayer. For a moment, the agony on His face is replaced with joy when he sees you standing there—he knows you will be with him for eternity because of what comes next.

If you have not taken that step of faith yet, we invite you to do it today. The agony Jesus endured in the garden and on the cross was so he can enjoy eternal life with you in heaven. That is his hope—his plan—but it is your choice. If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

If you choose to do that today—pray the prayer below. If not today, consider praying it soon—because the angels are waiting to party in your honor (Luke 15:10 paraphrased).

The time promised by God has come at last!” he [John the Baptist] announced. “The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!” (Mark 1:15).

If you are a follower of Jesus, celebrate with Jesus knowing that you get to enjoy eternal life with him. Use the prayer below to recommit your life and express your gratitude for what Jesus accomplished on the cross—that is Good News indeed.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

Thank you that you suffered for my sins, once for all time. I confess that you are Lord, and I believe in my heart that God raised you from the dead. This means by belonging to you—I have become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! I have been adopted into your family and will dwell in your kingdom forever. Thank you for this amazing gift from God, who brought me back to himself through your obedience on the cross. May I live in a manner worthy of this calling. Amen

BEFORE YOU GO

Take Communion

*If you prayed that prayer today and/or are a follower of Jesus, we invite you to partake in communion.

On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.” For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.”

—I Corinthians 11:23-26

Reflection Four

Good News: Jesus Christ, the King, is Condemned

**“My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom.
If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over
to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world . . .”**

—JOHN 18:36

He was back!

Pilate was sure he had gotten rid of him. He had sent Jesus to King Herod. After all—Jesus was a Jew, therefore a Jewish problem. Yet here he was—standing before him—looking much worse than when he had sent him away earlier. Was there no way to get these people off his back? Jesus was returned because the crowd wanted him crucified. Perhaps if he had him flogged—would that satiate their appetite?

FURTHER REFLECTION

Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. “Hail! King of the Jews!” they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

Pilate went outside again and said to the people, “I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty.” Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, “Look, here is the man!”

When they saw him, the leading Priests and Temple guards began shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” “Take him yourselves and crucify him,” Pilate said. “I find him not guilty.” The Jewish leaders replied, “By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God.”

When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave no answer. “Why don’t you talk to me?” Pilate demanded. “Don’t you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?”

Then Jesus said, “You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, “If you release this man, you are no ‘friend of Caesar.’ Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar.”

When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). And Pilate said to the people, “Look, here is your king!”

“Away with him,” they yelled. “Away with him! Crucify him!”

“What? Crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the leading Priests shouted back.

Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

—John 19:1-16

ASK YOURSELF

Jesus said to Pilate, “You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above” (John 19:11).

Have I given Jesus my King authority/power over my heart? My time? My money/resources? My school or work? My relationships? What I stream? What I “game?” What I eat? What I drink? My responses? My social media? My entertainment? My decisions? My desire to win? My free time? The words of my mouth? My emotions?

“Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be also” (Matthew 6:21).

Have I given Jesus authority/power over my mind? Do I struggle with pride, worry, anxiety, fear, addictions, lust, discontentment, etc.? Philippians 4:8 says I should think about “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy” (NIV).

Spend a moment to pray and thank God for his presence in your life. Give your King authority/power over your heart and mind. Be specific with what you struggle with. “Jesus understands every weakness of ours, because he was tempted in every way that we are. But he did not sin!” (Hebrews 4:15 CEV).

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, my King,

You have said that where my treasure is—there will be my heart also. Help me to surrender everything to you, specifically _____. I invite you today to be King of my heart and mind. Amen

BEFORE YOU GO

“Jesus Christ—who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and Priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen” (Revelation 1:5-6 NIV).

Watch the video of what Jesus—the ruler of the kings of the earth—went through to free you from your sins so that you could be adopted by God and become a citizen in his kingdom!

If doing Day of Reflection from home, click on this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R8PsZcwQeND_2xjmvn9xG6hmiANtgX2L/view?usp=drive_web

Reflection Five

Good News: Jesus Christ, The Son of God, is Crucified

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

—JOHN 3:16-17

It was so much fun. Really. When I, and the rest of the soldiers, found out that this pathetic man had called himself “the Son of God” we decided to have a little fun with him. Because honestly, how DARE he! Rome already had a son of god—our great emperor Caesar Tiberius.

Justus came up with the brilliant proposal to put a purple robe on him and dress him up to mimic what Caesar might look like. Marcus got the idea to mimic Caesar’s crown. Tiberius wears a “coronet” which is a small wreath created from bay leaves, worn on his head to signify triumph. For a defeated “King” bay leaves were much too good. We wove a crown of thorns and placed it—pounded it—onto his head with a reed stick. Then the real fun began.

We saluted and taunted him—calling him “King of the Jews.” A bunch of us even dropped to our knees in mock worship. When we got tired of this sport—we led him and two others out to be crucified.

When we arrived at Golgotha we crucified Jesus to the chorus of others ridiculing him like we had.

The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders also mocked Jesus. “He saved others,” they scoffed, “but he can’t save himself! So he is the King of Israel, is he? Let him come down from the cross right now, and we will believe in him! He trusted God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Even the revolutionaries who were crucified with him ridiculed him in the same way.

—Matthew 27:41-43

From his perch on top of the cross, Jesus eyes rested on my four men as they gambled for his robe. I noticed Jesus trying to speak as they threw the dice. In fascination I watched as he struggled to get words out—crucifixion making it very painful for him to speak. Would the expected curse words spew forth towards those of us that caused him all this pain? I braced myself for a tirade. Instead, with a voice tender with love, Jesus spoke again of forgiveness—even for those of us who pounded the nails! Never have I heard such a thing!

“I am thirsty” he cried out, yet he turned away the sour wine we offered him. Darkness engulfed Golgotha. After what seemed like an eternity, Jesus’ voice pierced through the pitch black. His was a cry of agony—asking why his Father had forsaken him. “Then Jesus shouted, ‘Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!’ And with those words he breathed his last” (Luke 23:46). Jesus’ spirit was gone.

At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, and tombs opened. Myself—the Roman officer at the scene “and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened.” We all looked at each other and said, “THIS man truly was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:51-54 paraphrased).

FURTHER REFLECTION

Hours earlier the Roman soldiers flogged Jesus, spit on him, paraded him in a purple robe, and mocked him as a pathetic and ridiculous Caesar wanna be. As they nailed him to the cross the last thing on their mind was forgiveness. Then they heard Jesus speak these words: “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). The original text is in imperfect tense and literally means, “He was saying”. This implies Jesus said “Father forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing” over and over.

“Father forgive them”—as they hammered the nails. “Father forgive them”—as they pulled the cross to an upright position. “Father forgive them” as they and others shouted insults and spat on him. “Father forgive them” as his naked body shivered, watching them divide up his clothes and gamble for his robe.

As Jesus breathes his final breath—“It is finished” the realization hits. This wasn’t a Caesar wanna be—they just crucified THE Son of God! Did the Roman officer and his soldiers come to accept and embrace that the Son of God totally forgave them? We can only hope.

ASK YOURSELF

It’s easy to be smug—and think, you might have possibly been in the crowd, but never one of the soldiers. You wouldn’t have been one that needed Christ’s forgiveness for hurting him. Or would you? God says that: “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it” (I Corinthians 12:12-14,27 parts).

Christ’s body consists of the people who belong to him. You may not have beaten, spit on, or mocked Jesus but have you allowed gossip, prejudice, injustice, indifference, or hard-heartedness to inflict hurt upon anyone, especially a fellow Christian? Do you need to ask their forgiveness?

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV).

Have you as a member of Christ’s body been hurt by someone else? Spend some time asking God to help you forgive them.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

I am so sorry for hurting _____. Since God chose me to be one of the holy people he loves, help me to clothe myself with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. And help me to forgive _____. May I make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive anyone who offends me. Help me to remember that you, my Lord, forgave me, so I must forgive others. Above all, help me to clothe myself with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. Thank you for forgiving me! Amen [Based on Colossians 3:12-14].

BEFORE YOU GO

Accept and embrace that the Son of God has totally forgiven you—of ALL your sin! There are strips of cloth (symbolizing Christ’s clothing) and red markers—(symbolizing Christ’s love)—on the table. Write “forgiven” on the strip of cloth and place it under the cross, the place where Jesus forgave the soldiers who had gambled for his robe. You have been FORGIVEN and are FORGIVEN!

*****As you enter reflection six, pick up a yellow mustard flower petal.*****

Reflection Six

Good News: Jesus Christ, the Savior, is Victorious!

**Thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death
through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

—I CORINTHIANS 15:57

The smell of sweat, urine, and vomit mingled in the oppressive air as Barabas sat in his cell—contemplating his fate. He was on Rome’s short list as one of Israel’s most notorious criminals—a high-level terrorist in the fight against Rome. There would be no mercy. Thirty-nine times he would feel the whip on his back as the Roman soldiers took turns beating him. That would be nothing compared to suffering the most horrendous, humiliating, excruciatingly painful death known to man: crucifixion. He had witnessed it done to others—now it would be him. He looked around his cell for a way—ANY way—out.

As he sat, he heard the crowd crying out “crucify him, crucify him!” followed by them chanting his name “Barabbas, Barabbas!” Were they really that anxious to see him killed? The sound of footsteps coming closer caused his empty stomach to churn. The grim guard pulled the keys out creating a macabre jingle as he went to unlock the cell and pull the door open. Then he heard him say the three most beautiful words one could ever hear. “YOU ARE FREE!”

FURTHER REFLECTION

Without Jesus, Barabbas would have died on the cross. Barabbas missed his cross because Jesus literally saved him by taking his place. It is hard to imagine the joy that swept over Barabbas when he was set free.

What Barabbas didn’t know is that the one taking his place on the cross was about to take ALL of our places. “The LORD laid on him [Jesus] the sins of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

Like Barabbas, the world is sitting in a figurative cell. The Good News is—no one has to stay there. Jesus is the key! We were condemned to death. “The wages of sin is death. But the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

“You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross” (Colossians 2:13-15).

Jesus is victorious! “Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Corinthians 15:54). “While the battles may still rage—the war has been won. If the Son sets you free, you are truly free!” (John 8:36). We have HOPE! GOOD NEWS indeed!

Listen to the song “Living Hope” by Phil Wickham. Lyrics on Page 16,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-1fwZtKJSM>

While listening put your name on the mustard flower petal that you picked up.

ASK YOURSELF

Paul said this: “But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

Who do I know who needs to hear the Good News? If no one, pray for God to bring someone onto your path who needs to hear the Good News—and pray with them.

What is something tangible (i.e., beside prayer) that I can do to spread the Good News? Ideas: Take a Scripture verse from this 2024 Reflection and post on your social media page, create a meme or text someone. Share this reflection either virtually or tangibly.

“Jesus said, ‘Therefore, go and make disciples. . .’” (Matthew 28:19a).

Who do I know that is actively ministering to others (could be a pastor, mentor, kids ministry leader, Bible study teacher, group leader, etc.). Send a note of encouragement to them—either a hard copy or email.

Jesus’ last words to his disciples before ascending into heaven were this: Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone (Mark 16:15b).

Who do I know that has left their home to “go into all the world” to share the Good News? If you need names, there is a booklet available of impact partners (missionaries) that Calvary supports. Then send a note of encouragement to them—either a hard copy or email.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

Thank you that You are the Good News. Paul said that his life was worth nothing to him unless he used it for finishing the work assigned him by you—the Lord Jesus. The work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God. Show me how you would like me to share it with others. Lead me to those who need to know, and help me to support those who you have called to share the Good News at home and across the world. Amen [Based on Acts 20:24]

BEFORE YOU GO

Jesus said, “How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it? It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade” (Matthew 4:30-32).

“The most feared plant in all of Israel is the mustard plant. It’s feared because once it takes root it can’t be destroyed. You can try to burn it out, stomp it out, tear it out, but eventually it takes over everything in its way.”

“The mustard seed is the kingdom of God! Once it gets planted nothing can stop it!” ³

“And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14). Come quickly Lord Jesus.

*****As you exit—look at the mustard seeds in the container and place your mustard flower petal in the Kingdom of God. You are part of that kingdom! It cannot be stopped!*****

SONG

Living Hope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-1fwZtKJSM>

Songwriters: Brian Johnson / Phil Wickham

Living Hope lyrics © Be Essential Songs, Bethel Music Publishing

How great the chasm that lay between us
How high the mountain I could not climb
In desperation, I turned to heaven
And spoke your name into the night
Then through the darkness
Your loving kindness
Tore through the shadows of my soul
The work is finished, the end is written
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Who could imagine so great a mercy?
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of ages stepped down from glory
To wear my sin and bear my shame
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven
The king of kings calls me His own
Beautiful savior, I'm yours forever
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Hallelujah, praise the one who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope (2X)

Then came the morning that sealed the promise
Your buried body began to breathe
Out of the silence, the roaring lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me
Jesus, yours is the victory, whoa!

Hallelujah, praise the one who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope (2x)
Jesus Christ, my living hope
Oh God, you are my living hope

From the Author

It felt strange writing the title to some of this year's Reflections. Good News: Jesus Christ, The Lamb of God, is a willing sacrifice. Good News: Jesus Christ, The King, is condemned. Good News: Jesus Christ, The Son of God, is crucified. The title's seemed contradictory. How could a man being sacrificed, condemned, and crucified possibly be "Good News?" As I read through the Gospels in preparation for this year's Reflection my heart broke more with each account until I came to John—where it was hard for my heart to contain the sorrow. It WASN'T good news! It was TERRIBLE news! This man who healed so many and was amazing, tough and tender, brilliant, generous, and loving was going to go through hell. Excruciating pain. All for an ungrateful world who had rejected him. Why didn't he give up on us and leave us in our depravity? There is no doubt I would have. How I wish it didn't have to happen! Yet if he hadn't done it—the world would be without hope. Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God, condemned and sacrificed on the cross for me—and for you. For the joy set before him—Jesus endured the cross. All so that we could be citizens in the kingdom of heaven—joint-heirs with Jesus—adopted into His family—living forever. His love is so much greater than we can ever comprehend. He is our Living Hope! And so, Good Friday is truly GOOD NEWS.

The Day of Reflection is a ministry of the Power Hour that meets on Wednesday nights to pray. We would like to recognize the team effort it takes to make it come to fruition. Thanks to Diane Lysiak for previewing and being such an encourager. Thanks to Marie T. Palecek who not only edited but made the text so much richer by her suggestions—I almost always implemented them! Nancy Boucher—her creative insight for staging the reflections to bring them to life are always amazing. And to the creative team that produced all that you experienced today—a simple thank you is so insufficient. Thank you to Bruce McClay and his facilities team and to all the volunteers, greeters, set up and tear down people whose contributions make the day more meaningful. Thanks to my husband Neal Dutton for his support and patience with me. Thank you also to Cheryl Brunkow for her expertise in designing and putting the booklet together—she is awesome! And to Nita Hodney and the office staff for getting it all out there. Together, we are the body of Christ in action!

I tried to be as accurate as possible in compiling the reflection and I take full credit for any errors it may contain.

May you leave bursting to share the Good News of Jesus!

Blessings,

Beth L. Dutton

RESOURCES

Unless otherwise noted, the scripture quoted in this Reflection comes from the NLT translation.

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CEV: Holy Bible : Contemporary English Version. New York :American Bible Society, 1995.

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Notes

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 25 horizontal dotted lines.

Notes



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