

# Daily Readings

Each of these passages focus on the suffering of Jesus. As we prepare for Easter it is important to realize the full sacrifice that Jesus has suffered for us. Read these passages carefully each day. Examine your faith a dependence on God. How often do you fall asleep when God calls? Is your life full of the joy of obedience or spiritual failure? Do you need the full force of God's forgiveness and love through Jesus Christ? The study guide readings allow us to dig deeper.

**Monday, March 29 – Read Mark 14:32-42** — This is the passage from Sunday's sermon. Read again the story of Jesus agony and the failure of his most trusted disciples. Examine your own life in light of the call of Christ to stay awake just one hour. There is joy in obedience to Christ and the life that is offered through living fully for Him. In what ways today is God calling you to "stay awake one hour"?

**Tuesday, March 30 – Read Luke 22:47-71** — This passage includes the arrest of Jesus and Peter's denial. The arrest begins with Judas identifying Jesus with a kiss. The irony of this passage continues with one of the disciples offering to draw his sword to protect Jesus. On the one hand, Jesus is betrayed with an offering of friendship and love. On the other hand, the disciples who have heard again and again the message of peace and forgiveness from Jesus words now offer violence to protect him. Then we hear the words of Peter's denial (three times he denies association with Jesus). Luke tells us that as the final words of denial come from Peter's mouth, Jesus looks at Peter. Can you imagine the regret that Peter must have felt as he looked into the eyes of Jesus? We read this passage with the knowledge that Peter will be restored to a right relationship with Christ to become one of the great leaders of the early church. Do you need restoration in your life this week?

**Wednesday, March 31 – Read Luke 23:1-25** — Now Luke shares with us the political problem that Jesus must have created for the Roman leaders. A man named Pilot is the governor of the region around Jerusalem does not want to deal with the charges the Jewish leaders have brought against Jesus. Only the Roman government could carry out the death penalty so they brought Jesus to Pilot to carry out their plan to kill Jesus. After much political maneuvering, Pilot finally appeals to a crowd gathered outside the court area. They cry out for Jesus' death by crucifixion. How do you think our culture would deal with Jesus today? What problems would he cause? How would we respond?

**Thursday, April 1 – Read Matthew 27:32-56** — All the gospels record the crucifixion and death of Jesus from different perspectives. Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19 are the references for their unique accounts. Matthew quotes Jesus as saying, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." Any Jew of the day would know that these are the beginning words of Psalm 22. Read this passage and meditate on the similarities of the crucifixion of Jesus and the prophecy of Psalm 22. How are they the same? How are they different?

**Friday, April 2 – Read Psalm 22** — Read this Psalm again. The Psalm ends with these words in verses 27-31, "**All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations. All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him— those who cannot keep themselves alive. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!**" At first it seems that Jesus is crying out in desperation and isolation to God. But when we read all of Psalm 22, we realize that Jesus is proclaiming a victory for all people. Are you part of God's victory that was won on the cross?



TRIETSCH

## STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, March 28, 2010

### Stained

*Broken for Us (Week 2 of 3)*

**Mark 14: 32-42 The Word from the Bible**

*They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus told his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."*

*Jesus took along Peter, James, and John. He was deeply distressed and troubled. He told them, "My soul is overwhelmed. I feel like I am dying. Stay here and keep watch."*

*Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed, "Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet - not what I will, but what you will."*

*Jesus returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. He said to Simon Peter, "Are you asleep? Can't you stay awake for just one hour? Stay awake and pray that you won't fall into temptation. You want to do what is right, but you are weak."*

*Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.*

*When Jesus returned to the disciples the third time, he said, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to sinners. Get up! Let's go. The one who will betray me is already here."*

### **Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane** (from David McKenna's commentary on Mark)

In preparation for the inevitable cross, Jesus retreats to His usual place of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. The name Gethsemane is a forewarning in itself. Synonymous with "tribulation," it means "press," connoting the stomping of the grape to squeeze out the blood of the vine.

Jesus expects Gethsemane to be a time of final communion with His Father in preparation for the cross. Even though He has predicted that all the disciples will deny Him, He takes His inner circle of Peter, James and John with Him to the place of prayer, hoping that their denial will be delayed until the very last moment. In other words, Jesus counts upon communion with God and fellowship with friends to sustain Him until the moment of betrayal.

Our experiences do not permit us to probe the depths of Jesus' emotions in the Garden of Gethsemane. His foreknowledge of suffering and His sensitivity of spirit take His anguish deeper than we have ever known. Even then, Jesus is not prepared for the shock of reality which overcomes Him in the Garden. Mark says, "**He began to be troubled and deeply distressed**" (v. 33). The English translation is not strong enough to carry the full impact of His feelings. A more literal translation is, "**He began to be terrified and disoriented.**" Sheer terror strikes at His soul as He faces for the first time the reality of unbridled evil.

In effect, Jesus stepped beyond the circle of light cast by God's presence into pitch blackness in the jungle of evil. Before this moment, He had theoretically accepted the responsibility for bearing the sins of the whole world. Now, terror tells Him what it really means. Also, before this moment, Jesus has enjoyed unbroken fellowship with His Father. Now, He realizes that He must die alone, His friends will deny Him, and His Father will have to leave Him. The combined weight of sin and loneliness is almost more than He can stand, so to His disciples He confesses, "**My soul is**

**exceedingly sorrowful, even to death**” (v. 34). Terror, disorientation and depression are now so severe that death is the preferable alternative. Jesus, who thought that He knew what to expect and how to handle His Passion, is drinking the **“wine of astonishment”** (Ps. 60:3) from the **“cup of trembling”** (Isa. 51:17) and choking on the dregs.

Leaving Peter, James, and John behind to keep watch, Jesus goes a short distance, falls on His face and pleads like a little child before His Father for release from His compact to drink the cup of suffering. His actions, which are criticized by psychiatrists trying to prove Jesus’ mental imbalance, are consistent with His emotions. To fall face down on the ground in prayer is appropriate to His anguish and to pray, **“Abba, Father”** (v. 36) as a desperate child is in line with His helplessness. No longer is Jesus the self-sufficient adult, teacher and miracle-worker. He who teaches that we must become as a little child to inherit the Kingdom finds His words coming full cycle back to Him. At the end of His reliance on human and supernatural resources, Jesus falls back into the love of the Father, His first and last center of trust.

Jesus also falls back onto the will of God as the only way in which He can accept the intense suffering into which He has entered. Reason has no answer, experience is not sufficient, feeling is out of control, and human will lacks the strength to “tough it out.”

Piece by piece, every layer of Jesus’ self-reliance is peeled off until nothing remains except an unshakable desire to do the will of God at all costs, **“Not what I will, but what You will”** (v. 36). How often do we say this prayer without knowing what Jesus poured into its content? Crushed in the “press,” His blood has begun to flow.

With this prayer of resolve on His lips, Jesus has to check on His disciples who are watching for Him. They have fallen asleep, perhaps victims of the intensity and exhaustion that emanated from Jesus during the past few hours. Now, however, the scene reverses itself. When Jesus enters the Garden, He experiences terror, disorientation and depression that take Him to the edge of death. His disciples are stronger than He, so He asks them to “watch.” Returning from prayer, Jesus is in full control of His mind, emotions and will. It is the disciples who have broken down. As proof of His objectivity, Jesus breaks the gloom of the Garden with a bit of wry humor, **“Simon, are you sleeping?”** (v. 37). Of course, he is sleeping. For Jesus to ask the question is like the person who calls on the telephone in the middle of the night and asks, “Oh, I’m sorry. Were you asleep?” If the mind is quick enough, the best answer is, “No, no problem. I had to get up ad answer the telephone anyway.” Peter has no answer; pledged to die for Him, he cannot stay awake for Him. Jesus digs no deeper. Asking them again to watch, He adds a word of understanding from His own immediate past experience, **“The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak”** (v. 38).

Jesus returns to pray again. It takes time to work through all of the facets of life-and-death decisions. Do the sleeping disciples add another bit of unexpected reality to His suffering? Does Jesus see the torch lights of the betrayer’s band moving across the valley below? Prayer is never simple, quick and easy. The price is too high, the issues are too great, and the results are too far-reaching. When prayer reaches life-and-death levels, it is complex, prolonged, and hard.

On the third time that Jesus returns from prayer and finds His disciples in sleepy stupor, He knows that the hour of His betrayal has come. Prayer is in the past. His mind is clear, His emotions are strong, His will is set. With the dignity and valor of a king who goes to his death with honor, Jesus commands His disciples, **“Rise up, let us go. See, he who betrays Me is at hand”** (v. 42). The initiative belongs to Jesus.

## Prayer Focus

Trietsch is a praying church. This morning, as you worship, one of our prayer volunteers is praying for everyone in each section of our worship center. We believe that prayer changes lives and hearts for good and for God.

We invite you to join these volunteers by praying for those persons around you. We believe these prayers will have an immediate impact on those for whom you are praying.

**Remember... someone is praying for you. Have a great week!**

As we consider the extravagant forgiveness of God’s love in Jesus Christ. Below is Psalm 22. Read Matthew 27:46. You will recognize these words from Psalmist. The words of Jesus which at first seem to be words of despair are actually words of victory for every people and all generations to come.

## Psalm 22

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from the words of my groaning?
- 2 My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.
- 3 Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the praise of Israel.
- 4 In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.
- 5 They cried to you and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not disappointed.
- 6 But I am a worm, not a human being;  
I am scorned by everyone, despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
- 8 “He trusts in the LORD,” they say,  
“let the LORD rescue him.  
Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.”
- 9 Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
you made me feel secure on my mother’s breast.
- 10 From birth I was cast on you;  
from my mother’s womb you have been my God.
- 11 Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.
- 12 Many bulls surround me;  
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
- 13 Roaring lions that tear their prey  
open their mouths wide against me.
- 14 I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.  
My heart has turned to wax;  
it has melted within me.
- 15 My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.
- 16 Dogs surround me,  
a pack of villains encircles me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet.
- 17 All my bones are on display;  
people stare and gloat over me.
- 18 They divide my clothes among them  
and cast lots for my garment.
- 19 But you, LORD, do not be far from me.  
You are my strength; come quickly to help me.
- 20 Deliver me from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dogs.

- 21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;  
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.
- 22 I will declare your name to my people;  
in the assembly I will praise you.
- 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!  
Revere him,  
all you descendants of Israel!
- 24 For he has not despised or scorned  
the suffering of the afflicted one;  
he has not hidden his face from him  
but has listened to his cry for help.
- 25 From you comes the theme of my praise  
in the great assembly;  
before those who fear you [g] I will fulfill my vows.
- 26 The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek the LORD will praise him—  
may your hearts live forever!
- 27 All the ends of the earth  
will remember and turn to the LORD,  
and all the families of the nations  
will bow down before him,
- 28 for dominion belongs to the LORD  
and he rules over the nations.
- 29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;  
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.
- 30 Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.
- 31 They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn:  
He has done it!

**Invite someone to worship this week.**

**You will be glad you did.**

**God is doing great things through  
the ministry of Trietsch.**

**Easter Worship Times**

**Saturday 5 p.m. with Choir, Orchestra & Bells**  
**Sunday 8 a.m. Traditional with Holy Communion**  
**9:30 a.m. Contemporary with Reign Band**  
**11 a.m. with Choir, Orchestra & Bells**