

## **Good Friday. A service of shadows.**

### **Call to worship:**

Leader: The hour is at hand – Jesus Christ is betrayed into the hands of sinners

People: The hour is at hand – Jesus Christ is wounded for our transgressions

Leader: Jesus said to his disciples, Remain here and stay awake with me.

People: We keep watch with Jesus, we pray with our lord.

### **Introduction.**

“I wonder whether we have become so familiar with the cross that we fail to grasp the full shock of it. This year I’ve been confronted by the image of lynch in America. A lynch was a terrible method of social control. An accused had no proper trial, and what really horrified me was that often there would be quite a crowd gathered around while the victim was tortured and then murdered in plain sight. I invite you to consider the experience of Jesus being unfairly crucified by an angry crowd as being similar to a lynching.”

### **Prayer response.**

**Hymn.** There is a Green Hill far away.

Reading one: The garden. Read Luke 22:39-46. Candle extinguished.

Simon: Have I ever been in a position where God was calling me to do something that I did not want to do?

Silence,

Then Simon prays, “Lord we are so used to praying for our desires, we are confused by the idea that you might call us to do something that is hard, or that doesn’t suit us, or that might cost us. Open our ears Lord to your call. Help us to stay awake. Lord hear us ... “

People: “Lord hear our prayer.”

Reading two: Jesus is arrested. Read Luke 22:47-53. Candle extinguished.

Simon: Reflect on a moment when you have betrayed Jesus or when you were betrayed by someone you love.

Silence,

Then Simon prays, “Lord sometime we betray people without even thinking about it, we break a confidence, we use what we know to hurt somebody, we take offence even at a friend and we fail to do our best for them. Help us be see where we betray and ultimately we betray the care you have given us. Lord hear us ...”

People: “Lord hear our prayer.”

Reading three: Peter denies Read Luke 22:54-62. Candle extinguished.

Simon: Have you ever been peer pressured into denying something important to you?

Silence,

The Simon prays, “Lord forgive us when we have gone along with the crowd, we have bullied someone, we have laughed at a demeaning joke, or we have been silent when we should have spoken up. Forgive us and strengthen us not to deny you. Lord hear us ...”

People: “Lord hear our prayer.”

Reading four: Jesus stands before Pilate and Herod. Luke 22:66-23:12. Candle extinguished.

Simon: How am I responsible for Jesus' crucifixion?

Silence,

Simon prays, "Lord help us to see that our petty little sins that we don't bother to correct caused your suffering just the same as those big sins that we are want to hide in the shadows. We know you forgive but let that not be an excuse for our unwillingness to confront our own faults and change them with your Spirit help. Lord hear us ..."

People: "Lord hear our prayer."

**Hymn.** Of Sacred head sore wounded

Reading five Jesus is sentenced Luke 23:23-25. Candle extinguished.

Simon: So it is done.

Silence,

Simon Prays, "Lord we thank you that you were willing to give up your life and carry my sins so that I might be set free, help me to forever live in thankfulness for your great sacrifice. Lord hear us ..."

People: "Lord hear our prayer."

Reading six: Jesus is crucified Luke 23:26-43. Candle extinguished.

Simon: Because of our sin, Jesus gave his life as a willing sacrifice so that we may have forgiveness and eternal life.

Silence,

Then Simon prays, "Lord thank you that when you prayed in the garden and begged your father for a different way that you didn't run, that you didn't hide, that you didn't turn away from his plan. Which you could have done, but instead you chose death so that we can chose life. Lord hear us ..."

People: "Lord hear our prayer."

Reading seven: Jesus dies Luke 23:44-46. Christ Candle extinguished.

Reflection: The winter of the earth has come.

Silence,

Then Simon prays, "May we never under-estimate the cost of our salvation. May we never underestimate the power of your cross. May we never forget your love shown for us. Lord hear us ..."

People: "Lord hear our prayer"

I woke on Tuesday morning to see pictures of Notre Dame Cathedral on fire, how heart-breaking, 800 years and two world wars and that place of worship has been so badly damaged by an accidental fire. Years and Billions of dollars will be required to repair that beautiful cathedral. And it reminds me of Jesus' words, destroy this temple and I will rebuild it in three days. The people in Jerusalem would have been as incredulous as we would be if someone said they could rebuild Notre Dame in 3 days. But what God did in 3 days is so much more than rebuilding a temple of stone. In three days God rebuilt humanity and restored hope, in three days He rescued Jesus from the depths of the grave and built a staircase in heaven for all who would follow. In the next 3 days we mark, God did so much more than rebuild a stone temple, he rebuilt a living temple, large enough to contain us all.

What is even more horrifying than the death of Jesus? Than the death of Jesu on the cross. What is more horrifying, is the casual way we are tempted to treat that gift, it can so easily become the background to a life of little discipleship change. The number of Christians that use Jesus' death as an insurance policy for

when we die is catastrophic, because if we took more seriously the cost of Jesus death, if we took more seriously the power of Jesus death to change us, then we might glimpse how powerful his death really is to change lives, social ills and the world around us. What is even more horrifying than the death of Jesus? Christian apathy.

Sing: When I survey.

Finish.