

A STAY-AT-HOME GOOD FRIDAY OBSERVANCE

FOR KIDS AND ADULTS

From St Peter's United Church, Sudbury

First – the Scripture... It's long... SO for kids – see the “gist of the story”, found in Part 2

John 18:1 - 19:42

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ²Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' ⁵They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'* Jesus replied, 'I am he.'* Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶When Jesus* said to them, 'I am he',* they stepped back and fell to the ground. ⁷Again he asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'* ⁸Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he.* So if you are looking for me, let these men go.' ⁹This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.' ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. ¹¹Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?'

¹² So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who

guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷The woman said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' ¹⁸Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing round it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

¹⁹ Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.' ²²When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' ²³Jesus answered, 'If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' ²⁴Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, 'You are not also one of his disciples, are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not.' ²⁶One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, 'Did I not see you in the garden with him?' ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

²⁸ Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters.* It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters,* so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' ³⁰They answered, 'If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.' ³¹Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.' The Jews replied, 'We are not permitted to put anyone to death.' ³²(This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters* again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' ³⁴Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' ³⁵Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' ³⁶Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is

not from here.' ³⁷Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' ³⁸Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, 'I find no case against him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' ⁴⁰They shouted in reply, 'Not this man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a bandit.

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ²And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. ⁴Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' ⁵So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' ⁶When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' ⁷The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'

8 Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. ⁹He entered his headquarters* again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?' ¹¹Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' ¹²From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.'

13 When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat* on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew* Gabbatha. ¹⁴Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' ¹⁵They cried out, 'Away

with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.'¹⁶ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus;¹⁷ and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew* is called Golgotha.¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.¹⁹ Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth,* the King of the Jews.'²⁰ Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew,* in Latin, and in Greek.²¹ Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews." ' ²²Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.'²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.²⁴ So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says, 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.'²⁵ And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.'²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.'²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.³⁰ When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.'³¹ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³¹ Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed.³² Then the soldiers came and broke the

legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵(He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows* that he tells the truth.) ³⁶These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' ³⁷And again another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.'

38 After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. ³⁹Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

PART 2: THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DO ON GOOD FRIDAY

The death of Jesus is a pretty grim story no matter which gospel you read it in. It's a story of an unjust death – of someone betrayed and denied by their own people, a scapegoat when others couldn't stand up and get beyond their fear; whose words were twisted; who doesn't seem to get much of a hearing; who gets caught in the snare of everyone else's interests.

Maybe he thought he would be able to touch the hearts of the most hardened and most fearful.

No matter what he said, he couldn't get through to them and they killed him.

But what I would like to focus on today is the way that Love entered pain on this day.

Other gospels have much longer tellings of Jesus betrayal and death. John is more succinct. In other renderings of this story, Jesus forgives his tormenters “for they know not what they do”; he tells a thief that he will be in paradise – and it is isn’t by merit, it’s by God’s love.

Here, he gives his Mother into the care of a disciple, knowing, perhaps that together they would support each other through their grief, and giving his Mom a home.

In this story also, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea take care of Jesus’ body. Normally it would have been tossed out with the bodies of the other criminals. But kindness changed that.

And God...God took that pain and worked something new out of it.

There is a lot of suffering and fear in our world right now.

I would like to invite us, like Jesus and Joseph and Nicodemus, bring some love and kindness into it.

Here’s what you can do this Good Friday:

Some traditions observe the stations of the cross today. It’s a walk to honour Jesus’ own walk to the cross. There are stopping places along the way to remember certain moments on that journey.

1. Go for a walk and consider how you can bring some kindness into this day for someone else. OR
2. Make some Kindness Rocks – 4- 8 if possible. Find some stones and make Kindness Rocks. (see below or find a tutorial by searching for ‘Kindness Rocks’ online.) With sharpies or markers, write words of encouragement on the stones or draw cheerful pictures. Some words might be: LOVE; PEACE; STRONG, BRAVE, HOPE, FAITH. Pictures of flowers, a rainbow, a smiley face, sunshine, a heart. If it’s big enough, maybe a phrase, like “You are loved”. Then go for a walk, and place the stones along the way for people to find. This way you speak love into a hurting and frightened world. OR

3. Instead of Rocks, make kindness notes – On a note card, print those words of encouragement, and leave them outside the door of your neighbours.
OR
4. Write one or two heartfelt notes of encouragement or thankfulness to someone: your mail carrier, your grocer, your pharmacist, your City Councillor, your Doctor, Medical Officer of Health the parent on the street who has to try to work from home and has little kids, too.
5. Call or Email instead of mailed notes or stones: Do the above by email, or make a phone call to check on someone.
6. Make a donation to an organization making a difference in this pandemic – the Food Bank, The Mission, Genevra House.

BLESSING: Before or after your Good Friday activity, offer these words as prayer:

Living God, we remember the ways in which Jesus lived his last day seeking justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with You. May what we do today bring justice, kindness and hope into the lives of the people around us. Amen.

One way to make Kindness Rocks

Paint the top of the stones in solid colors (white is great, if you have it) and let them dry.

Place your word or message in the centre of the white with a Sharpie (best) a marker or paint.

When dry, cover with mod podge if you have it and let dry. if not, don't worry about it.

Another Way to Make Kindness Rocks Without Paint

Clean the stone. Draw/Print your encouragement on a sticker/ mailing label/masking tape with marker, pen, crayon... use your imagination!!!!