

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

STATION 8: "Death: Jesus' Arrest, Trial and Crucifixion"

There is an ugly side to the Gospel. We love the idea of Easter, forgiveness, resurrection, and the hope of Heaven. But none of those things could happen if they had not been preceded by Jesus' betrayal, his arrest, his abandonment by his closest followers, the mocking of his own people, and His most horrific death on a cross.

In the final 24 hours of Jesus' life he was betrayed by Judas, one of his very own disciples who sold him out for a modest price.

He was arrested, falsely accused and convicted of blasphemy in a mock trial before biased judges.

He was abandoned by most of those who knew him best and claimed to love him most.

He was humiliated before Roman and Jewish leaders, whipped and beaten beyond recognition, stripped of dignity, and paraded through crowded streets, carrying his own cross, during the most holy and crowded time of year.

He was subjected to a criminal's death despite his innocence.

As the prophet, Isaiah had predicted some 500 years earlier, Jesus was "led like a lamb to the slaughter". Though he was innocent of sin, God caused him "to become an offering for the sins of many."

Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

In a strange way, each of us bears responsibility for Jesus' death. Jesus took the punishment we deserve. And in doing so, he declared us to be forgiven.

Your sins are forgiven.

Your sins are forgiven.

By His wounds you are healed.

We call this Good Friday. But it is difficult to see the events surrounding Jesus' death and see anything we would call good. Only by the power and wisdom of God could something so horrible be transformed into something necessary and good and beautiful.

Take as long as you need to reflect on the cross, and the price of your sin. Then move to the final station (station 9) located in the bridal room.