

Stations of the Cross

Episode #5 - Jesus Dies

Jesus Dies - Station #13

1. Luke 23: 44 says - It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45 while the sun's light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46 Then Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. 47 When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." (NRSVUE)
2. The Greek and Hebrew words for "spirit" are also the words for "breath." How does this help with the meaning of Jesus "commending his spirit" and "breathing his last?" What then is the literal meaning of "Ex-spire" and "In-spire?"
3. That Jesus surrenders his spirit to the father, how does that reflect on the role of the Trinity?
4. Have you ever surrendered something to God, not having the energy to cope with it any longer?
5. What is the significance of the testimony of the Centurion?
6. Hebrews 10: 19 says - Therefore, my brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (NRSVUE)
7. The writer of the Hebrews sees the temple curtain symbolizing that access to the grace of God is no longer restricted to sacrificial animals, but is available to us the Jesus. How powerful is that change to humanity? What courage does this give you to boldly approach God and receive God's grace and forgiveness?
8. How does Jesus being the curtain enhance the meaning of the Jesus words in John, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me?"

Jesus is Entombed - Station #14

1. Luke 23:50 says - Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph who, though a member of the council, 51 had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. 54 It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. 55 The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. (NRSVUE)

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2. Read the accounts of Joseph of Arimathea in all of the Gospel accounts. How are they alike? How are they different?
3. Mark 15: 43 says - Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. How might this explain why he went to Pilate to ask for the body? What risk did incur by taking this step? It would appear that at least some people of Jesus day understood the Kingdom in religious and not political terms.
4. Why was he willing to give up his newly created tomb? Do you think he might have believed that Jesus' use of the tomb would be temporary?
5. Why do you think he brought so many spices? What role did the women seem to play on the day after Sabbath?
6. Were you intrigued by how much of the story's timing revolves around the coming of Sabbath? Even in church tradition today, nothing is celebrated on Saturday after good Friday. How important should Sabbath, a holy day of rest, be to us? In what ways do you make time for Sabbath in your life? What might it mean that God rested before moving to resurrection?