

Tracing the Savior's Steps



First Baptist Church

Carnegie

Welcome!

For centuries, Christians have observed the “Stations of the Cross,” or the Via Dolorosa (“The Way of Sorrow”). These early Christians set up trails with guided stops along the way to remember the pain and power of Jesus’ journey to the cross.

This experience is not a traditional display of the stations of the Cross, but the things you encounter today will provide a fresh opportunity to remember Jesus’ love and sacrifice as presented in the Bible.

As you prepare to journey through the six stations, begin to think about Jesus, our Savior and Rescuer, fully man yet fully God. Philippians 2 says, “He emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant.”

This booklet will guide you through the stations. You’ll have opportunities to pray, read the Scriptures, and meditate. Move along at your pace.

Before you begin, take a few minutes to pray and prepare your heart. Parents/Spouses, say a prayer over your family. Ask God to remind you of the love He demonstrated by sending His Son Jesus as the Savior and Rescuer. Pray you will see the words and actions of Jesus in a fresh way.

Our prayer is that you will be moved closer to Jesus through this experience.

Thank you for being with us!

“I am the way,
and the truth,
and the life;
no one comes to
the Father but
through Me.”

John 14:6

1. HAND WASHING

Scripture

“Test me, Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness...I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, Lord, proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds.”

Psalm 26:2-3, 6-7

“The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters. Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.” Psalm 24:1-4

Context

In Old Testament times, God used the Tabernacle to teach the people how to approach Him, a Holy God. The priests were completely washed and consecrated to God only once, but every day when they approached God they were required to wash their hands in the laver of the courtyard of the Tabernacle before they came before Him.

Now, in our New Testament times, we too are completely washed once and consecrated to God, by Jesus' sacrifice. He is our salvation; every day we can come to Him. We wash our hands as an act of cleansing and fellowship.

Action

Take this time to wash your hands at the washing station provided. As you do, remember how Jesus washed His disciples' feet but also gave Himself so they would be fully clean. Hebrews 10:22a says, "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith..." Jesus' sacrifice was great; but because of Him, we are able to confess our sins and find full forgiveness. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Reflection & Prayer

Father, thank you for who you are; a righteous, holy, and loving God. Thank you for the blood of Jesus that purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:7). As I wash my hands, I ask that you create in me a pure heart (Psalm 51:10). Thank you for this time to draw close to you. I give you all glory, honor, and praise. Amen.

2. THE LAST SUPPER

Scripture

“The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had giving thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.” 1 Corinthians 11:23b-26

Context

Jesus knew this Passover dinner would be the last time He met with all His disciples gathered together. The dinner typically involved Seder bread, unleavened to commemorate the Israelites' hasty departure from Egypt (Deuteronomy 16:3); roasted lamb, signifying the Passover lamb that was slain and whose blood marked the threshold of Jewish homes (Exodus 12:21-24); and bitter herbs, used to prepare the meal (and to remind the Israelites of the bitterness of slavery from which God had rescued them). When Jesus shared this last meal with His disciples, He broke the bread to symbolize the breaking (and death) of His body. The pouring of the wine symbolized how His blood would be poured out on the cross so that the whole world could be made right with God.

Action

If you have come today but have not yet confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior and followed in believer's baptism by immersion, we ask that you not take of the bread and juice. These elements do not cause a person's sins to be removed, but the eating and drinking are powerful ways for followers of Jesus to remember the price He paid to destroy sin and death.

If you are a follower of Jesus who has been baptized by immersion, after you have read the Scripture and prayed, take one of the crackers and a cup of juice. As you taste the bread and juice, reflect on what Christ taught His disciples about how His death would pave the way for complete forgiveness and salvation. Also, celebrate how Christ's death connects you to other Christians and allows you to look toward the future with hope.

Reflection & Prayer

Reflect on Jesus. Consider the significance of His death and its impact on you today. Consider as well how Christ's work in your life makes you part of His Church. Remember that the Lord's Supper is an important and unifying ordinance for all believers.

Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for making a way so that we are no longer alienated from God. Thank you for the redemption you have provided through your blood, the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7). Help me to remember, not only today, but every day all that you have done for me. Thank you for your love. I praise you for who you are. Amen.

3. IN THE GARDEN, THE BETRAYAL

Scripture

“He proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. When He arrived at the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’ And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and began to pray saying, ‘Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done.’ Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.” Luke 22:39-44

“Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?’ And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. From then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus.” Matthew 26:14-16

Context

In the garden, the full scope of His mission had become apparent. Jesus knew what was coming: the treacherous betrayal by one of His own (Judas); being made sport of by soldiers; a circus trial in which guilty politicians proclaimed judgment on an innocent man; brutal beatings; and then, the cross, where He bore the sins of the whole world. Yet, even His closest friends and followers couldn’t stay awake long enough to pray.

Thirty pieces of silver. That was all it took. In Old Testament times, thirty pieces of silver was the value of a slave accidentally gored to death by an ox (Exodus 21:32). Thirty pieces of silver was all the people were

willing to pay Zechariah for his prophetic message. This amount given to Zechariah is an intentional insult for the rejected shepherd, who was a pre-figure of the Messiah.

Action

Consider the anguish Jesus felt; the mental strain as He grappled with His Father's will. It was so great that His sweat became like drops of blood. But everything pivoted on one word: nevertheless. "Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done." Pick the coins and ponder what value you place on your relationship with Christ. How much is Jesus worth?

Reflection & Prayer

Jesus said His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow. Three times He prayed His Father would take the cup of suffering (the cross and God's wrath) from Him, but more than that, He desired to accomplish God's will. How can you pursue that kind of prayer and commitment?

How highly do you value your salvation and relationship with Jesus? Do you value Jesus above all else?

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the times I have traded my faith so cheaply for things that are of no eternal value. Thank you for bearing my sins on the cross (1 Peter 2:24); it is by your wounds that I have been healed (Isaiah 53:5). Thank You for accepting Your mission; now I pray that You will grant me a willing heart to accept mine. Let "Not my will, but Yours be done" be my prayer always. Amen.

4. THE TRIALS & INSTRUMENTS OF SUFFERING

Scripture

“[They] arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.” John 18:12b-13

“Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.”
John 18:24

“Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ asked Pilate. “‘You have said so,’” Jesus replied.” Mark 15:1-2

“When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased...he plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer... Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. So Pilate decided to grant their demand....and surrendered Jesus to their will.” Luke 23:7-8a, 9-11, 24, 25b

“After twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and a reed in His right hand and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’” Matthew 27:29

Context

Jesus was tried three times before Jewish authorities and three times before Roman authorities. Jesus was utterly,

perfectly, and completely innocent. This was essential to emphasize, in six trials, that Jesus died not for His own sins—there were none—but for ours.

Traditionally, Roman soldiers attached criminals to crosses with ropes. Using spikes was an added cruelty. Setting a crown of thorns—sharp enough to dig beneath the skin—onto Jesus’ head was a further act of malice, completely unnecessary and without precedent. All were used to further the suffering of Jesus. In spite of all this, Jesus spoke the words He so often taught, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing!”

Action

See the spikes and mallet. They cut through the skin, crushed bone, and sliced through nerve endings. Jesus felt the pain. There was no anesthesia, nothing to lessen the sheer agony of these cruel instruments of torture.

Consider the insult that the crown represented to Jesus’ rightful authority, and the way it was forced onto His body must have sent pain from the top of Jesus’ head down to the bottom of His pierced feet.

Refection & Prayer

Reflect on the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain that Jesus suffered for you.

I know Father, that a sacrifice had to be made to redeem me. Thank You for giving Your Son, Jesus, for me to be made right with You. May I always remember that Jesus 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.” (Isaiah 53:5) May my life reflect Your Son by having a heart that quickly forgives others. Amen.

5. THE CROSS

Scripture

“And He Himself bore our sins in His Body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” 1 Peter 2:24

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” Luke 9:23-24

Context

Because He died, we can live. Because He obeyed, we can be forgiven. Because he was condemned, we can be saved.

Choosing to follow Jesus has nothing to do with being better, faster, stronger, or smarter. It is about recognizing our helplessness, admitting our guilt, and receiving His sacrifice on our behalf. Everything depends on the crucifixion and resurrection. Nothing depends on us. Grace is something we receive, not something we earn. We do not come to the cross as worthy people, promising to do better, rather, we come as desperate beggars, acknowledging our need, and seeking God's empowering grace.

Herein lies the tremendous hope: since nothing depends on us, since everything depends on God, victory is certain. God promises forgiveness, grace, and eternal life, if we will receive Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.

As we surrender to Him we find ourselves led to a more fulfilling life. Jesus showed us that things are upside

down in His Kingdom: the first are last—the greatest are servants—we give and find that we're receiving.

Action

What is it that is keeping you from living fully for Jesus? Are there sins that are keeping you from experiencing the fullness of Christ in your life?

Use this time to confess to Christ the obstacles between you and Him. Ask the Lord to forgive you and renew your relationship. Once you've done that, use the paper and pens provided and write, "It is finished," on the paper ... and leave it at the foot of the cross.

Reflection & Prayer

Think about those words: "It is finished." Ponder them. Celebrate the hope of those words. Allow them to give you courage and strength to deny ungodliness and to live fully for Christ.

Father, You sent Your Son to shoulder my cross, and I thank you for rescuing me through His sacrifice. Because of Your forgiveness and mercy, I will never be separated from Your love. Help me to die to the things I think will satisfy me, but can't. Teach me to rely on You alone. Help me to let go of all my selfish desires: the need to be seen, heard, valued, and liked by others. Remind me that all my value and worth is found in You alone. I am willing to accept the cost of following You, and I humbly and gratefully declare that I too "have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20). Amen.

6. THE CURTAIN

Scripture

“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split.”

Matthew 27:50-51

“And so, dear brothers and sister, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.”

Hebrews 10:19-22

Context

The “veil of the temple” refers to the inner curtain of the “Holy of Holies,” which resided in the center of the Old Testament Temple of worship. The curtain severely restricted access to God to only a privileged few.

Something incredible happened the moment Jesus died. His frayed flesh opened a new and living way to God for everyone. That curtain barrier was taken away, ripped from top to bottom. We are given a

clear picture of Jesus' death opening up access for us, sinful man, to our most holy Heavenly Father.

Now, the gates to God's presence are open wide to all who would enter through the cross of Jesus Christ. God Himself tore the curtain in two, proclaiming that in Jesus' death, the final sacrifice had been made for sins.

Action

After reflecting and praying in front of the curtain (see just below), walk boldly through the curtain and celebrate your free access to God, won for you through the obedience, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We, who were alienated from God, even under His wrath, have been brought near, cleansed, forgiven, and granted complete and full access into God's favor and presence. God has given us access to Him, the Holy One, by making us holy through Jesus. Rejoice in this amazing truth!

Reflection & Prayer

Do you feel as if you can boldly approach God? Take some time to contemplate how God has made Himself directly available to you at any time.

Heavenly Father, thank You for receiving the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on my behalf, for tearing away the veil that kept me from You, and for granting me access to enter Your holy presence. May I fully grasp Your forgiveness and mercy this Easter season. May I have the confidence and full assurance to enter Your presence. Amen.

After your visit ...

We're grateful that you joined us *for Tracing the Savior's Steps*. We pray this experience has drawn you closer to Jesus.

If you encountered anything here that stirred a need to meet with a member of our staff, please don't hesitate to contact us.

If you desire to follow Christ for the first time, you can do that at this very moment. Simply confess to Him your need for a Savior, turn from your sin and commit your life to Him. If you are doing that now, please let us know. We want to rejoice with you and provide useful materials that will help in your walk with the Lord.

Thanks again for taking this time to be with us.
He is Risen!

