

Scripture and Prayer for opening worship:

(Ps 29:3–4) *The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters. 4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.*

In a world so wired and interconnected, our anxious hearts are pummeled by an endless barrage of troubling news.

We are daily aware of more grief, O Lord, than we can rightly consider, of more suffering and scandal than we can respond to, of more hostility, hatred, horror, and injustice than we can engage with compassion.

But you, O Jesus, are not disquieted by such news of cruelty and terror and war. You are neither anxious nor overwhelmed. You carried the full weight of the suffering of a broken world when you hung upon the cross, and you carry it still.

When the cacophony of universal distress unsettles us, remind us that we are but small and finite creatures, never designed to carry the vast abstractions of great burdens, for our arms are too short and our strength is too small. Justice and mercy, healing and redemption, are your great labors.

And yes, it is your good pleasure to accomplish such works through your people, but you have never asked any one of us to undertake more than your grace will enable us to fulfill.

Guard us then from shutting down our empathy or walling off our hearts because of the glut of unactionable misery that floods our awareness. You have many children in many places around this globe. Move each of our hearts to compassionately respond to those needs that intersect our actual lives, that in all places your body might be actively addressing the pain and brokenness of this world, each of us liberated and empowered by your Spirit to fulfill the small part of your redemptive work assigned to us.

Give us discernment
in the face of troubling news reports

Give us discernment
to know when to pray, when to speak out, when to act,
and when to simply shut off our screens and our devices,
and to sit quietly in your presence,

casting the burdens of this world upon the strong shoulders
of the one who alone is able to bear them up.

Amen.

John 18:1–27

- Farwell discourse is done.
- The private ministry of our Lord with His disciples has now ended, and the public drama of redemption is about to begin.
- The next two chapters entail the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus.
- The plot is building as it leads to Easter

Vs 1 *When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.*

- This is a new scene that goes from the upper room, across the Kidron Valley, and into the Garden of Gethsemane.
- The Kidron Valley lies east of the Old City of Jerusalem and separates the city from the Mount of Olives.
- The Kidron brook ran the blood from the Temple sacrifices.
- At the foot of the Mount of Olives is the traditional site of Gethsemane. The Synoptics indicate that this was the place where Jesus was troubled and prayed his agonizing prayer.
- It's important to see the contrast between the first Adam who sinned and rebelled against God in a garden and the Second Adam who obeyed and submitted to God in a garden.

Vs 2 *Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

- The Greek *speiran*, rendered "band", refers to a cohort of six hundred Roman soldiers, but it could also refer to a smaller band such as a *maniple* or detachment of about two hundred soldiers.

Vs 4-6 *Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" 5 They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.*

- Jesus answered the lynch mob, "*Egō eimi*" ("I am") and none could stand in the midst of His declaration.

Vs 7-9 *So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.”*

- This was proof that Jesus was establishing who was really in charge.
- The King was not being captured; he was giving himself over to his enemies.

Vs 10-11 *Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) 11 So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”*

(Mt 26:52–54) *Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”*

- This sword was more like a large knife or dagger, or small machete used for precise cutting – same word in Ephesians 6 for “sword of the Spirit.”
- The severing of the ear of the high priest’s servant would render him deformed and thus unworthy of serving in the Temple.

(Lk 22:51) *But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him*

- Jesus still does that today. We are unworthy of serving the King, but His touch renders us worthy and whole to serve Him.

Vs 12-14 *So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. 13 First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. 14 It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.*

- Annas was like the godfather of whole ring. (give very brief history)
- This so-called trial was fundamentally a sham because a verdict had already been rendered by Caiaphas to the effect that Jesus had to die as an expedient sacrifice (John 11:49–51). This event, therefore, hardly began as anything akin to a fair trial.

Vs 15 *Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest,*

- Peter has made the claim that he would never leave or deny Jesus and so far he has kept his word.

Jn 13:37-38 *Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”* ³⁸ *Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.*

Vs 16-17 *but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. 17 The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”*

- The other disciple was most likely John.
- When Peter was in Jesus’ presence he was bold and courageous but once out of Jesus’ presence he was a coward.
- I also noticed that Peter did the dumbest things when he wasn’t praying...“could you not pray one hour?”
- Some of you are doing “dumb things” right now because of lack of prayer and His presence, and you think you’re getting away with it.
- The rooster didn’t crow after the first dumb move – it was later on after two more.

Vs 18 *Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.*

- The cold and the darkness is indicative of the conditions in the story. Not until the resurrection stories will the night ultimately give way to daybreak.
- The word for charcoal is used twice in the NT. Here and in John 21 where Jesus restores Peter.

Vs 19-21 *The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. 20 Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. 21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.”*

- What about our Lord’s disciples? Were they organized to overthrow the government? Did not one of them use his sword in the Garden? Jesus was careful to say nothing about His disciples
- Jesus deflected the high priest’s question with one of his own. His response essentially was to ask the high priest for his witnesses.

- Jewish trials clearly demanded witnesses. Where are the witnesses?
- While Peter was in the courtyard denying his Lord, Jesus was on trial protecting Peter.

Vs 22-24 *When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" 23 Jesus answered him, "If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?" 24 Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.*

- It is clear that Jesus keeps His composure, remains in control, and keeps His eye on the mission.

Vs 25 *Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You also are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not."*

- Outside the presence of Jesus, we are cold and in a dark place. It's where we do the dumbest things in our lives.
- We are all moments away from doing the same thing you would look at another believer and say it was a dumb thing.

Vs 26-27 *One of the servants 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?" 27 Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.*

(Lk 22:61-62) *And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.*

Our first step toward renewal is to recognize our sins be broken over them. Then Jesus starts new coals to warm and nurture your soul while bringing His presence.

Communion:

What is the Lord's Supper?

Christ commanded all Christians to eat bread and to drink from the cup in thankful remembrance of him and his death. The Lord's Supper is a celebration of the presence of God in our midst; bringing us into communion with God and with one another; feeding and nourishing our souls. It also anticipates the day when we will eat and drink with Christ in his Father's kingdom.

