

Journey to the Cross

This is a ***Journey to the Cross***.

You will walk through the last moments of Jesus' life. Each step begins with a scripture reading and short devotion. You are encouraged to read these out loud. The items at each station are there to deepen this experience for you. Look at them, touch them. The items in the basket are for you to take with you.

You are invited to walk through each moment at your own pace.

Families with younger children may choose just to read the scripture as the devotion may be difficult to understand.

As you complete this experience, you may remain in the prayer room as long as you need.

The **Reflection** element is for your personal study/contemplation time. You are invited to visit our website: www.hillcrestcov.org for your own copy of ***Journey to the Cross***.

1) Jesus prays in the garden Read Matt 26:36-45

Jesus takes the 12 disciples into the garden with Him. Then, He takes his closest three, Peter, James and John, a little further, but He alone goes "further still" to pray. The "further still" is a place we must go alone when we are overwhelmed by life. It is a place of honesty and nakedness before God. Our friends can stay close by praying, but we go alone into the "further still." It is there that we wrestle with God until His will becomes our own. Three times Jesus went back to pray. Three times He confessed that He didn't want to face His certain future. Three times He prayed "Thy will be done." Finally, He is ready to face His Father's will. Verse 40: "Rise, let us go!" We must stay in the "further still" until we too can make God's will our own. We must emerge changed.

All pray: *Lord Jesus, help me to follow you, to stay in a place of "further still," to be honest and open with my Father. Help me to be able to pray "Thy will be done" and really mean it.*

Reflection: **What in God's will do I not want to face? Am I willing to go into the "further still" and stay there until His will is my own?**

2) Jesus is betrayed and arrested
Read Matthew 26:47-56

Jesus is betrayed twice. First by one: not a stranger, not the enemy, but one of His 12 disciples. One who ate with Him, walked with Him, learned from Him, witnessed His miracles. Judas took a symbol of love, a kiss, and used it to reveal Jesus to those seeking to arrest Him.

Secondly, Jesus is betrayed by the rest of His disciples as they all run away in fear when He is arrested. Those who vowed to not disown Him even if it meant their own death, deserted Him.

***All pray:** Lord Jesus, we are quick to show you affection in our praise and worship, but we confess that too often our words and actions reveal hearts turned away from You. Help us to remain faithful even when we are afraid.*

Reflection: When have I deserted Jesus with my actions? When have I left Him to follow my need for self preservation?

3) Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin
Read Matthew 26:59-66

Although many false witnesses are brought forward to testify against Jesus, they find no evidence against Him. Jesus stands silent in the face of the lies. When the high priest asks Him if He is the Christ, Jesus responds, "Yes." His own words condemn Him as He speaks the truth. Jesus could have remained silent, but He knew all that had to happen. When the *false* testimony of many could not seal His fate, His *truthful* words do.

***All pray:** Lord Jesus, Help me to always speak the truth about who You are regardless of the consequences.*

Reflection: Am I willing to speak the truth even though it may cost me my reputation? My job? Even my life?

4) Peter denies knowing Jesus
Read Matthew 26:69-75

Jesus knows Peter better than Peter knows himself. Peter doesn't believe Jesus' warning that he will deny Him three times. Peter relies on his own ability, and when faced with personal consequence, finds that he is not faithful to his own claims.

***All pray:** Lord Jesus, Many times I have started to follow you only to turn around and go my own way. I confess I have failed to acknowledge you before others. I love you Jesus, please help me to rely on Your Spirit to make me faithful.*

**Reflection: When have I denied you Jesus?
When have I relied on my own strength to
face trials and failed?**

5) Jesus is condemned by Pilate
Read Matt 27:11-18, 20-26

Although Pilate finds no wrong in Jesus, he gives in to public pressure and condemns Jesus to death. He hears the voices of the crowd over his own conscience. In an attempt to relieve his own guilt, Pilate washes his hands in front of the crowd to lay blame elsewhere.

***All pray:** Lord Jesus, help me choose the right way in all circumstances; to listen only to Your voice. Fill me with compassion for those in this world who are condemned by the majority. Lord, lead me beyond the crowd.*

**Reflection: When have I heard the voice of
the crowd over my own conscience? Over
Your voice speaking to my heart? When
have I sought to remain neutral when I
should have made a stand for what I knew
was right?**

6) Jesus is whipped and crowned with thorns
Read Matt 27:27-31

Jesus doesn't just receive the punishment of death. He is humiliated publicly and repeatedly. He is hurt physically, emotionally, and mentally. Jesus receives the physical blows, endures the mocking, and wears the spit of rejection. Jesus goes through all of this so that we will have a Savior who identifies with every kind of pain that we may face in this life. Each strike against His body, each word spoken to hurt His heart, each thorn embedded in His head, is for us.

***All pray:** Lord Jesus, surely You love me to endure such abuse. Help me to remember that You KNOW. There is nothing that I face in this life that You have not faced first.*

Reflection: When have I felt alone in my pain? When have I cried out that no one understood?

7) Jesus takes up His cross
Read John 19:16b-17

Jesus carries His own cross. He takes up His own means of execution and walks to the place He is to die. He willingly accepts the burden of our sin and carries the cross of our guilt.

***All pray:** Lord Jesus, Your own words tell us that "there is no greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." Thank you for loving us. Help us to love as You did.*

Reflection: Am I willing to accept that each step you carried that cross was done in my place?

8) Jesus is crucified
Read Matt 27:33-38

Jesus is crucified as a common criminal. This means that they nail His hands and feet to a cross and hang Him 12-18 inches above the ground. Jesus is offered wine mixed with gall which is a sedative to ease the pain. He refuses. Jesus chooses to feel everything. Not only is crucifixion painful; one actually dies by suffocation caused by the chest cavity collapsing. Those dying this way have to catch a breath by pushing up on the feet nailed to the cross and pulling up on their hands already in great pain. It is a slow, painful way to die. Yet, during this entire time, Jesus never once speaks out in anger to those inflicting His pain and watching His death.

***All pray:** Lord Jesus, help me to never forget the pain of your death. Let me not pass over the words "He was crucified" without acknowledging the greatness of Your pain and the depth of Your sacrifice.*

Reflection: Am I willing to endure quietly when life is full of pain? Do I offer forgiveness to those who seek to hurt and even destroy me?

9) Jesus dies
Read Luke 23:44-46

Jesus honors the words of His Father all the way into His own death. He speaks, "Father into Your hands I commit my spirit," so that scripture is fulfilled. Gods' Word tells us that Jesus gave up His life. It was not taken from Him.

***All pray:** Lord Jesus, forgive me when I forget why I am here and do something other than love. Thank you for being trustworthy. You fulfilled each letter of the law, so that Your Word would remain true, and so that I could trust You with my life and my needs even this day over 2000 years later.*

Reflection: Am I a willing participant with Christ in reaching out to those who do not know Him, or do I sit back and watch while others do the work? Do I live a life surrendered in every moment, or do I keep some back for myself?

10) Jesus is buried
Read John 19:36-42

We might see the cross as the end of the story, but for Jesus it was just the beginning. He is still saving souls, speaking truth and proving God's love to all men and women through His words and through the actions of His followers.

***All pray:** Lord Jesus, You are the lover of our souls. You really did enter this world as a man. You accomplished the will of our Father in Your death, but it was also in the tomb that you began saving us from an eternity without You. Help me to do no less. Strengthen me to remain faithful unto death, so I may receive the crown of life.*

**Reflection: Am I willing to go the distance?
To see God's will accomplished in my life
no matter where it takes me, even to a
tomb?**

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Acknowledgements/Resources:
He Chose the Nails by Max Lucado
Jesus the One and Only Bible Study by Beth Moore