

Jesus Foretells Peter's Denial

³¹ “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” ³³ Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” ³⁴ Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”

Scripture Must Be Fulfilled in Jesus

³⁵ And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.” ³⁶ He said to them, “But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. ³⁷ For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment.” ³⁸ And they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough.”

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

³⁹ And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” ⁴¹ And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not

my will, but yours, be done.” ⁴³ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. ⁴⁵ And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, **“Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”**

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, **“Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”** ⁴⁹ And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, **“Lord, shall we strike with the sword?”** ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, **“No more of this!”** And he touched his ear and healed him. ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, **“Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? ⁵³ When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”**

Peter Denies Jesus

⁵⁴ Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house, and Peter was following at a distance. ⁵⁵ And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the

courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. ⁵⁶ Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.” ⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” ⁵⁸ And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.” ⁵⁹ And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.” ⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ 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.

Jesus Is Mocked

⁶³ Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. ⁶⁴ They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?” ⁶⁵ And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.

Jesus Before the Council

⁶⁶ When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, ⁶⁷ “If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, **“If I tell you, you will not believe, ⁶⁸ and if I ask you, you will not answer. ⁶⁹ But from**

now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” ⁷⁰ So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” ⁷¹ Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.”

Jesus Before Pilate

23 Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. ² And they began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.” ³ And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And he answered him, “You have said so.” ⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no guilt in this man.” ⁵ But they were urgent, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.”

Jesus Before Herod

⁶ When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. ⁷ And when he learned that he belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. ⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. ⁹ So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid

clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹² And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

¹³ Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. ¹⁶ I will therefore punish and release him.”

Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

¹⁸ But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas”— ¹⁹ a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder. ²⁰ Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus, ²¹ but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” ²² A third time he said to them, “Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him.” ²³ But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.

The Crucifixion

²⁶ And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. ²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, “**Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.** ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

³² Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, “**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.**” And they cast lots to divide his garments. ³⁵ And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of

our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ while the sun’s light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, “Certainly this man was innocent!” ⁴⁸ And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

Jesus Is Buried

⁵⁰ Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, ⁵¹ who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. ⁵² This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³ Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet 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 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.

Crucifixion is a most horrible death. And even though Governor Pilate recognised that Jesus hadn't done anything that deserved it (or any other punishment for that matter), to keep the crowds at bay, he had Jesus flogged and crucified.

He released Barabbas. The reason Barabbas was in prison, was for insurrection and murder. But that was from Pilate's perspective. From the Jew's perspective (and this is most probably the reason they wanted him released) – to them he wasn't an insurrectionist – he was a freedom-fighter... And for them, it wasn't murder because insurrection is about killing the enemy...

But from the Bible's perspective (which is God's perspective), Barabbas was in jail for rebelling against the authorities (insurrection), and murder.

So, the criminal gets released, and the world's most innocent man is crucified between two criminals.

Now, we don't know what these two criminals did, but we do know they are guilty (the Greek word used here for "criminal")

means one who does evil). So these 2 doers of evil (crucified each side of Jesus) demonstrate **very** different responses to Jesus. And the way they responded to Jesus, is typical of the polarised responses we get to Jesus today.

One hurled insults at Him (blasphemed; railed; scoffed). The only interest he had in Jesus, was self-interest, “If you’re the Son of God, get us outa here”.

But the other one rebuked him.

“Do you not fear God

You’re under the same death sentence. Only we both deserve it. Jesus doesn’t. He didn’t do anything wrong.

It is perplexing to me, that even though he’s nailed to a cross and only got hours left to live, one of those criminals hurls insults at Jesus, even though the other one recognises that Jesus is the only source of eternal hope.

And even for us today, the most ardent atheist, laying on his death-bed will proudly scoff at and reject Jesus, even though he’s days or hours from death – such prideful arrogance.

But what a wonderful encouragement this is. It’s not too late to turn to Jesus.

The **repentant** criminal confessed his sin: “We deserve this punishment”. And he turned to Jesus,

⁴² ... "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³ And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

This sort of salvation is only possible, because Jesus died that Good Friday.

And so, the death of Jesus, brings to us, an immense hope. We also, will be in paradise with Him.

Don't ever say to yourself, "It's too late for me now". If it wasn't too late for that criminal on the cross, it is not too late for you or I.

But the time is now. And the time will come, when it **is** too late.

Am I a scoffer? Or am I a believer?

How one lives, is evidence of what they believe.

You know, some folk live as if the repentant doer of evil on the cross, timed it perfectly. Do you know what I mean by that? He lived his life his way, and turned to God at the last possible moment... There are many people, who know there is a God, and they intend to pay Him a bit more attention at a later stage in their life, but right now, "I want to do what I want to do"...

But I'm pretty sure all of us know jolly well, that the greatest regret of that man on the cross (beside Jesus), is that he left it so long before making God his priority.

It is not only how we die, that is a testimony to the one we believe in – The greater impact, is how we live... Jesus didn't go through the agony of the cross for us to live our lives for ourselves, and leave it until the last possible moment to give Him a higher priority.

Faith. Men and women of faith, venture their whole lives on this one unmistakable, unassailable truth:

- “Jesus Christ is Lord.
Therefore He is **my** lord.
- Jesus Christ died, that I might live – He give His life, and therefore He has mine...

And may this be the testimony, for every person here..... Is it???

Are you living for Jesus? or have you been holding back, living for yourself, and “Jesus, you'll get more attention later”.

During smoko, we're not just going to talk about:

- the weather;
- our planned Easter activities; and
- our families

Somewhere in your conversation (within the first 3 sentences), I'm asking you to share with each other,

“Because Jesus died for me, this is how I live for Him.”

And if you find that’s something difficult to articulate, it might be important to pray with each other, a prayer of commitment, “Jesus, I’ve been holding back. But I realise the time is “now”, and so now, I live for You.”

Can we do that? It **is** Good Friday, you know. Surely we can do that for Jesus.

Let’s pray,

Lord,

On this Good Friday,

let us share openly and honestly with each other, on issues of faith and life with You and for You.

Amen.