

## **The Last Hour by the Cross** **Good Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

**Introduction and Prayer:** the Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Grundy

Welcome to this unusual and very special hour. We will watch together and pray together as we follow Jesus through the last events of his earthly life as recorded by St John. We hold in our prayers all those who this day are bereaved, anxious or worried in any way – and those who will die.

Almighty Father,  
look with mercy on this your family  
for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed  
and given up into the hands of sinners  
and to suffer death upon the cross.  
In this cross which Jesus bore,  
we see sin redeemed; sin forgiven  
showing for us the depth of your love.  
In humble hope and fear  
may we place at his feet  
all that we have and all that we are,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**First reading:** John 18:1-27

<sup>1</sup> After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. <sup>2</sup> Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. <sup>3</sup> So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. <sup>4</sup> Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" <sup>5</sup> They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. <sup>7</sup> Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." <sup>9</sup> This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." <sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. <sup>11</sup> Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" <sup>12</sup> So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. <sup>13</sup> First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. <sup>14</sup> Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

<sup>15</sup> Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, <sup>16</sup> but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. <sup>17</sup> The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." <sup>18</sup> Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. <sup>19</sup> Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. <sup>20</sup> Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. <sup>21</sup> Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" <sup>24</sup> Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. <sup>25</sup> Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." <sup>26</sup> One of the slaves 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?" <sup>27</sup> Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

**Reflection:** the Revd Stephen Griffith

### **Choral music**

Remember not, Lord, our offences *Henry Purcell (1659-95)*

Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor th'offences of our forefathers;  
neither take thou vengeance on our sins, but spare us, good Lord, spare thy  
people whom thou hast redeem'd with thy most precious blood, and be not  
angry with us for ever. Spare us, good Lord.

**Second reading:** John 18:28-40

<sup>28</sup> Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. <sup>29</sup> So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" <sup>30</sup> They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." <sup>31</sup> Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." <sup>32</sup> (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.) <sup>33</sup> Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

<sup>35</sup> Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" <sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." <sup>37</sup> Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." <sup>38</sup> Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. <sup>39</sup> But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" <sup>40</sup> They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

**Reflection:** the Revd Dr Gwynne Wright

**Hymn** (*Common Praise* 123)

**There is a green hill far away,  
without a city wall,  
where the dear Lord was crucified,  
who died to save us all.**

**We may not know, we cannot tell,  
what pains he had to bear,  
but we believe it was for us  
he hung and suffered there.**

**He died that we might be forgiven,  
he died to make us good,  
that we might go at last to heaven,  
saved by his precious blood.**

**There was no other good enough  
to pay the price of sin;  
he only could unlock the gate  
of heaven, and let us in.**

**O dearly, dearly has he loved,  
and we must love him too,  
and trust in his redeeming blood,  
and try his works to do.**

*Words* CF Alexander (1818-95)

*Tune* HORSLEY, William Horsley (1774-1858)

### **Third reading: John 19:1-16**

<sup>1</sup> Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. <sup>2</sup> And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup> They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. <sup>4</sup> Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." <sup>5</sup> So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" <sup>6</sup> When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." <sup>7</sup> The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God." <sup>8</sup> Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. <sup>9</sup> He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup> Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." <sup>12</sup> From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor." <sup>13</sup> When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup> Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" <sup>15</sup> They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." <sup>16</sup> Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

**Reflection:** the Revd Kingsley Boulton

**Hymn** (*Common Praise* 127)

**When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the Prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
save in the cross of Christ my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.**

**See from his head, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down;  
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown!**

**His dying crimson like a robe  
spreads o'er his body on the tree;  
then am I dead to all the globe,  
and all the globe is dead to me.**

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were a present far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.**

*Words* Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

*Tune* ROCKINGHAM, Edward Miller (1731–1807)

**Fourth Reading:** John 19:17-30

So they took Jesus; <sup>17</sup> and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. <sup>18</sup> There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. <sup>19</sup> Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." <sup>20</sup> Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. <sup>21</sup> Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" <sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." <sup>23</sup> When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. <sup>24</sup> So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." <sup>25</sup> And that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." <sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. <sup>28</sup> After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." <sup>29</sup> A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. <sup>30</sup> When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

## **Reflection:** the Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Grundy

This is the most solemn hour. Now we come to the final part. There have been more than enough words from me and from others this week. We might just want to keep silent and think about all the things we have heard. Silent to remember the bereavements we have known and still know. Silent and know that there are times when words are not enough.

Silent from hearing other people's words and open to hear again the last words of Jesus:

What did he say to those who accused him: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. *Luke 23:34*

What did he say to the robbers crucified with him: Verily I say unto you, Today you will be with Me in Paradise. *Luke 23:43*

What did he say to Mary his mother and the beloved Disciple: Woman, behold your Son! . . . Behold your mother! *John 19:26-27*

What did he cry out to God: Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? ... My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me? *Matthew 27:46*

The human Jesus says: I thirst. *John 19:28*

The self-giving, undespairing Jesus says: It is finished. *John 19:30*

The Christ on the Cross says: Father, into your hands I commend My spirit. *Luke 23:46*

## **Short silence**

May Christ crucified draw you to himself,  
to find in him a sure ground for faith,  
a firm support for hope,  
and the assurance of sins forgiven;  
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you  
this and every day. **Amen.**

## **Organ music**

Prelude on Rockingham                      *Kenneth Leighton (1929-88)*