

### Preparation.

You will need a nail, a piece of purple cloth or paper, a bowl of vinegar and a cross. You can also find the music using the YouTube links.

Be still as you begin and ask God to prepare you for worship.

**Hymn** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0ybUpuLn8M>

There is a green hill far away  
Outside 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 forgiv'n,  
He died to make us good  
That we might go at last to heav'n,  
Saved by His precious blood

There was no other good enough  
To pay the price of sin  
He only could unlock the gate  
Of heav'n 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



## Good Friday Last Hour at the cross

### 1. Crown of thorns

Reading John 19:1-6

#### Comment

It took five days for the people to go from hailing Jesus as King - cries of Hosanna and blessing still ringing in his ears, the feel of the donkey - warm on his body as he swayed side to side, the sight of the cloaks and palm branches on the ground - to Jesus being insulted as a King with a mock crown made of thorns. The pain must have deadened all other senses.

As you sit and look at the crown of thorns use the stillness to think about the hate, the insults, the mockery he endured. How often does he endure those things today?

#### Prayer

Today he who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the cross;

He who is king of the angels is arrayed in a crown of thorns;

He who wraps the heaven in clouds is wrapped in the purple of mockery;

He who at his baptism set Adam free, receives the blows upon his face;

The bridegroom of the church is transfixed with nails;

The son of a virgin is pierced with a spear;

We venerate your passion, O Christ;

Show us also thy glorious resurrection.

### 2. The nails

Reading John 19: 14-18 A nail

#### Comment

Nails were familiar to Jesus - a carpenter's son. Tools of the trade. But now the nails which Jesus had used creatively were turned against him to be used for cruelty. It was God himself - the creator - whose hands were pierced as they were nailed to the cross.

Take a nail and look at it. Think of the things it can be used for, and then think about the damage and pain it can cause when used to pierce flesh.

#### Prayer

O Jesus, we watch with shame as you are nailed cruelly to the cross.

We watch with shame for our actions which have distressed others. **Lord Jesus, forgive us.**

We watch with shame for our words which have grieved others; **Lord Jesus we are sorry.**

We watch with shame for our thoughts which have diminished others; **Lord Jesus have mercy.**

We nail to the cross all that we have done wrong asking you to take it away and lead us to a better life. Amen

**Song** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gizXMaQ7Y5o>

Come and see come and see  
Come and see the King of love  
See the purple robe and crown of thorns He wears  
Soldiers mock rulers sneer, as He lifts the cruel cross  
Lone and friendless now He climbs towards the hill

*We worship at your feet  
Where wrath and mercy meet  
And a guilty world is washed by love's pure stream  
For us He was made sin, Oh help me take it in  
Deep wounds of love cry out 'Father forgive '  
I worship, I worship the Lamb who was slain*

Come and weep come and mourn  
For your sin that pierced Him there  
So much deeper than the wounds of thorn and nail  
All our pride all our greed, all our fallenness and shame  
And the Lord has laid the punishment on Him

Man of heaven born to earth  
To restore us to Your heaven  
Here we bow in awe beneath Your searching eyes  
From Your tears comes our joy  
From Your death our life shall spring  
By Your resurrection power we shall rise

### 3. The sign

Reading John 19: 19-22



#### Prayer

Lord Jesus for those today who suffer like you - entirely unfairly - we weep  
For those who are behind bars because they stood for justice - we weep  
For those who are separated from their families because they could not let evil go unchallenged - we weep  
For those who are tortured because they spoke out against what is wrong - we weep  
For those whose loved ones have disappeared without trace - we weep  
For the torturers and jailers, tyrants and oppressors - we weep  
Because for them the day of reckoning is bound to come.

### 4 The robe

John 19: 1-3, 23-27 A piece of purple cloth

#### Comment

Purple is a colour which signifies royalty - and in the time of Jesus was expensive to produce. As he was mocked they dressed Jesus in a purple robe. But when it came to his crucifixion he was in a simple white piece of cloth which was seamless.

It was common for Roman soldiers to take the clothing of people who were to be crucified - drawing lots to decide who got which bit. It was the final insult for Jesus to have even his undergarments taken from him. But we're told he wore a seamless piece woven in one piece from top to bottom. This was what Jewish high priests would wear - its purpose to symbolise the oneness of the Jewish people under God. The job of the high priest was to bring God and the people together.

So Jesus was the great High Priest who by his death on a cross brought God and all people together and made it possible for us to know the Father.

#### Prayer

Clothe me, Lord Jesus, with your protection to keep danger from me  
Clothe me, Lord Jesus, with your hope to keep doubt from me.  
Clothe me, Lord Jesus, with your light to keep darkness from me  
Clothe me, Lord Jesus, with your peace to keep evil from me  
Wrap me, Lord Jesus, in the seamless love of the cross. Amen

**Song** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzQj7XvKFmA>

How deep the Father's love for us  
How vast beyond all measure  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure  
How great the pain of searing loss  
The Father turns His face away  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross  
My sin upon His shoulders  
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers  
It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished  
His dying breath has brought me life  
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything  
No gifts no pow'r no wisdom  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ  
His death and resurrection  
Why should I gain from His reward  
I cannot give an answer  
But this I know with all my heart  
His wounds have paid my ransom



### 5. The drink

Reading John 19: 28-30 A bowl filled with vinegar

Jesus was so tired and weak by this time he could hardly speak - he says two things. 'I am thirsty' and someone in their human kindness took some vinegar and wiped his dry lips with it. Then Jesus spoke again 'It is finished' - the end.

Listen to 'God so loved the world'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQ1k1INUuQU>

### 6. The spear

John 19: 31-35

#### Comment

One of the things that we notice reading the passion story is that from the moment of his arrest Jesus puts up no opposition to what happens to him. He goes along with it, he appears passive, even weak perhaps. But actually what this is all about is power. The Jewish priests think they have power, Pilate thinks he has power, the Romans think they have power - and they show through insult, cruelty, physical force - taking away Jesus' freedom and ultimately his life. But the cross is a symbol of a different power. A power that can't be overcome. Jesus is actually in charge throughout his trial and crucifixion. He can endure all that is given to him because he holds the power.



He knows that this time is the inevitable outcome after his ministry - that his message about a God of love was so radical that people couldn't take it. Their closed minds would not accept they had got it wrong. They thought the only way to get rid of this troublemaker was to kill him. Jesus knew that. Only his death would satisfy them.

But what they didn't reckon on was that Jesus had power over death too - not just life as he demonstrated with the healings and raising people to life. His whole earthly life had been leading up to this point - not as a downward spiral or descent into human depravity and sin - but an upward movement to the greatest demonstration of God's power and love and grace - and the fact that death does not have the final word.

The sorrow we feel as we relive the events of Holy Week comes from our shame as we acknowledge how cruel human beings can be - we're aware that any of us could become caught up in those kinds of acts towards our fellow human beings. And our sorrow comes too from knowing that Jesus, in all his humanity, went through all that pain and suffering for us - to demonstrate his love. This was real agonising torture and death.

But when Jesus said 'It is finished' - he didn't mean that's it, it's all over, the end. He meant - the work he had come to do on earth had finished- now was the next and glorious stage. Because God's power is never finished and never runs out.

The cross is a mystery. We cannot understand its full meaning, we can only glimpse aspects of it. It's something to be experienced as much as to be thought about. It has a power of its own as we gaze at it, reflect on it.

Jesus' power to overcome death itself brought us life - eternal life. It brought us forgiveness and a way to the Father for ourselves. Somehow his perfect humanity has redeemed our fallen humanity and given us hope of new things and new possibilities.

The cross is a symbol of torture and cruelty - but for Christians it has been transformed into a symbol of love. Amazing and everlasting love.

## Prayer

What shall I give you Lord in return for all this kindness?

I shall give you glory.

Glory to you for your love

Glory to you for your mercy

Glory to you for coming to save our souls

Glory to you for receiving the lash

Glory to you for enduring mockery

Glory to you for your crucifixion  
Glory to you for your burial  
Glory to you for your resurrection  
Glory to you that you were taken up into heaven  
Glory to you for forgiving all our sins  
I shall give you glory  
I shall give you glory

Reflect on a cross

**Hymn** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDkuxE1epdI>

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 death 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 ever such love and sorrow meet  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown

Were the whole realm of nature mine  
That were an offering far too small  
Love so amazing so divine  
Demands my soul my life my all



## Closing prayer

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: Grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**