

## April 22<sup>nd</sup> – Good Friday

### Centering Breath Prayer: Fill my cup, Lord...and let me drink.

#### Opening Prayer:

*Dearest Lord, today I come before you in humble awe for the sacrifice you made for me. On this remembrance of your crucifixion, I bow before you as the Savior of all and the one whose love surpasses any other love. I can never repay the debt I owe. I can only strive to return that love as humbly as I can and tell your story to others so that they, too, may know what you have done for them. Whatever your will for me, whatever my cup, let me drink it in love. In your awesome, loving name, I pray. Amen.*

#### Scripture: John 18:1-11; John 19:1-30

**Key Verses: John 18:10-11: (10) “Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) (11) Jesus commanded Peter, ‘Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?’”**

**John 19:16-18: (16) “Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. (17) Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). (18) Here they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle” (NIV).**

We have come to the cross. Jesus is betrayed by one who has been close to Him throughout His ministry and is now arrested to be taken before the High Priest and the Roman officials, to be tried and executed. During the arrest, Peter finds a moment of brave anger, pulls his sword and strikes Malchus, cutting off his ear. In Luke’s account, we see Jesus healing the ear before confronting the one who injured him. Jesus’ next words strike out hearts, “Put your sword away. Shall I not drink the cup my Father has given me?” Jesus has just spent an agonizing hour in prayer for this very cup to be removed, yet submitting to God’s will because of his passionate love for you and for me.

This cup, this terrible death on a cross as a criminal, for our sake and for our salvation was the ultimate act of love. As we read this entire passage we are struck anew with the awful price paid for us. He, in whom rested all power, did the work God sent Him to do; be the final sacrifice, the final sin offering. It is no wonder we read in Luke 22:44: “And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground” (NIV). Yet, he was obedient to the Father’s plan. He knew the awful price he was paying. But, his love sustained him in his agony. Our cup may not be as awful as his. We do not know until it is handed to us. Sometimes our cup is full of joyful actions and at other times it is full of pain. God will abide with us in love through both. In Jeremiah 29:11-13, God promised the Israelites, being taken away from their homeland that they would return. God had plans for them, ones that would bring them prosperity and hope. God has plans for you and me also, plans which were prepared by the sacrifice of Christ on this Holy Friday, the Friday we call “Good” not because of the suffering but the good which is brought by its fulfilling. The cross lies

here, but there will be something more, something that lies on the other side of the cross, not only for Jesus, but also for us. The memories of this day are awful. We don't like to face them. But, to leave them out of the story is to forget the very reason God came to us in the form of the man, Jesus.

On this Holy day as we remember the price paid for us by the perfect, unblemished, sinless, Son of God, let us be quiet in our contemplation. Let us be sober and thoughtful as we read and recall the events that took place so that we might be free. Let us refrain from looking ahead to the glory that awaits in just three short days. Let us stay in the moment so that we may deepen our understanding of this unequaled sacrifice. Yes, there is something beyond the cross, but it is not yet. His cup must be faced and so must ours.

### **Additional Scriptures: Luke 22:47-51; Jeremiah 29:11-13**

#### **Questions for reflection and/or journaling:**

1. What is my understanding of the sacrifice that Jesus made on my behalf?
2. What cup has Jesus given me to drink?
3. Am I obedient to God?

#### **Suggestions for action:**

1. Phrase for your path: **DRINK THE CUP GIVEN TO ME.**
2. If you are involved in some kind of conflict, at home, at work, in the community or even in the church, put away your sword, so to speak, and seek to forgive and look for a peaceful solution.
3. If you have discovered the cup Jesus has given you to drink at this time, look for opportunities to fulfill your task, whatever the consequences.

#### **Closing Prayer:**

*Holy God, I know only the words I read printed on the pages of my Bible. I do not fully understand this act and the cost to you and your Son. Open my heart and my mind to a fuller knowledge of you and the words I read in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" Your actions, putting your Son on the cross this day, are part of the plans you spoke of so many years prior to his birth, plans to give me a hope and a future. In the name of Jesus the Christ, my Lord and my Savior, I pray. Amen.*