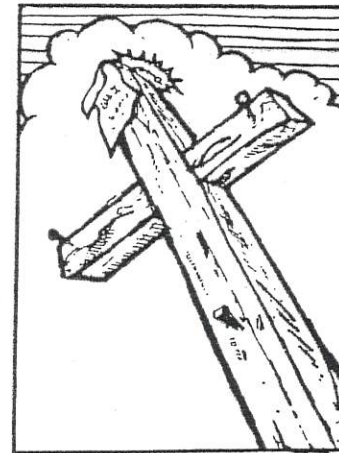


THE PASSION OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
ACCORDING TO MATTHEW



Grace Episcopal Church
Waycross, Georgia

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew

The customary responses before and after the Gospel are omitted.

The congregation may be seated for the first part of the Passion. At the verse which mentions the arrival at Golgotha, all stand.

The congregation reads the part of the Crowd.

Narrator	Jesus went to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples,
Jesus	Sit here, while I go yonder and pray.
Narrator	And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them,
Jesus	My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.
Narrator	And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed,
Jesus	My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.
Narrator	And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter,
Jesus	So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Narrator	Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed,
Jesus	My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done.
Narrator	And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them,
Jesus	Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.
Narrator	While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying,
Judas	The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him.
Narrator	And he came up to Jesus at once and said,
Judas	Hail, Master!
Narrator	And he kissed him. Jesus said to him,
Jesus	Friend, why are you here?

Narrator Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him,

Jesus Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?

Narrator At that hour Jesus said to the crowds,

Jesus Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.

Narrator Then all the disciples forsook him and fled. Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders gathered. But Peter followed him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said,

Witness This fellow said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days."

Narrator And the high priest stood up and said,

High Priest Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?

Narrator But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him,

High Priest I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.

Narrator Jesus said to him,

Jesus You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Narrator Then the high priest tore his robes, and said,

High Priest He has uttered blasphemy. Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?

Narrator They answered and said,

Crowd He deserves death.

Narrator Then they spat in his face, and struck him; and some slapped him, saying,

Crowd Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?

Narrator Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a maid came up to him, and said,

Maid You also were with Jesus the Galilean.

Narrator But he denied it before them all, saying,

Peter I do not know what you mean.

Narrator And when he went out to the porch, another maid saw him and she said to the bystanders,

Maid This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.

Narrator And again he denied it with an oath,

Peter I do not know the man.

Narrator After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter,

Crowd Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.

Narrator Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear,

Peter I do not know the man.

Narrator And immediately the cock crowed. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Narrator When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death; and they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor. When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying,

Judas I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.

Narrator And they said,

High Priest What is that to us? See to it yourself.

Narrator And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver said,

High Priest It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.

Narrator So they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to his day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me." Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him,

Pilate Are you the King of the Jews?

Narrator Jesus said to him,

Jesus You have said so.

Narrator But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him,

Pilate Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?

Narrator But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so the governor wondered greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them,

Pilate Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?

Narrator For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him,

Pilate's Wife Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream.

Narrator Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them,

Pilate Which of the two do you want me to release for you?

Narrator And they all said,

Crowd Barabbas.

Narrator Pilate said to them,

Pilate Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?

Narrator They all answered.

Crowd Let him be crucified.



Narrator And Pilate said,

Pilate Why, what evil has he done?

Narrator But they shouted all the more,

Crowd Let him be crucified.

Narrator So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying,

Pilate I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.

Narrator And all the people answered,

Crowd His blood be on us and on our children!

Narrator Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying,

Crowd Hail, King of the Jews!

Narrator And they spat upon him, and took the reed and stuck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross.

All stand

Narrator And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying,

Crowd You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Narrator So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying,

Crowd He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him; for he said, "I am the Son of God."

Narrator And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, eli, lama sabachthani? That is: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of the bystanders hearing it said,

Crowd This man is calling Elijah.

Narrator And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said,

Crowd Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.

Narrator And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

Silence may be kept

Narrator And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said,

Crowd Truly this was the Son of God!