



The Things He Carried

Reflections for Good Friday

29th March 2024



Welcome to this series of reflections for Good Friday. They are taken from a book by Stephen Cottrell, entitled The Things He Carried.

Each section consists of a hymn, a reading from the book, a Bible Reading, followed by a time for silent reflection. You are invited to pick up the item that is relevant to each section to help you focus. Please feel free to use the space in the church as feels most appropriate to you.

Each section will end with instrumental music as we regather and a prayer. You may wish to keep the object or place it in front of the cross.

If it's comfortable for you, please stand to sing the hymns. There will be a short pause before The Liturgy of Good Friday begins at 2pm.

He carried a large wooden beam, one half of a cross...

We sing:

**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.**

**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.**

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Reading: The Cross

Reading from St Mark's Gospel

Now at the festival Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, 'Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. (15.6-15)

Time for Silent Reflection: if you wish please take a piece of wood. As you hold it, notice its texture. imagine where it came from. Imagine it growing.

Instrumental music as we regather

We pray: We adore you O Christ and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

He carried a crown of thorns...

We sing:

**O sacred head, sore wounded,
defiled and put to scorn;
O kingly head, surrounded
with mocking crown of thorn:
what sorrow mars thy grandeur?
Can death thy bloom deflower?
O countenance whose splendour
the hosts of heaven adore.**

In thy most bitter passion
my heart to share doth cry,
with thee for my salvation
upon the cross to die.
Ah, keep my heart thus moved
to stand thy cross beneath,
to mourn thee, well-beloved,
yet thank thee for thy death.

My days are few, O fail not,
with thine immortal power,
to hold me that I quail not
in death's most fearful hour:
That I may fight befriended,
and see in my last strife
to me thine arms extended
upon the cross of life.

Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) tr. Robert Seymour Bridges (1844-1930)

Reading: A crown of thorns

Reading from St Mark's Gospel

The soldiers led Jesus into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

(15.16-20)

Time for Silent Reflection: if you wish please pick up a piece of holly carefully. How would it feel if you had to wear it on your head?

As you reflect on this scripture how does it feel to be ridiculed? What does it mean to say Jesus is King?

Instrumental music as we regather

We pray: We adore you O Christ and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

He carried the sins of the world...

We sing: Drop, drop, slow tears,
 and bathe those beautiful feet,
 which brought from heaven
 the news and Prince of peace.

Cease not, wet eyes,
his mercies to entreat:
to cry for vengeance
sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods
drown all my faults and fears;
nor let his eye
see sin, but through my tears.

Phineas Fletcher (1582-1650)

Reading: the sins of the world

Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand... God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

(5.1-2, 8-11)

Time for Silent Reflection: pick up a flower. Hold it in your hand, then take it apart. Look at it for a while. Now try to put it back together again as best you can.

As you reflect on this scripture, how might it feel to have things put back together or re-created into something more beautiful?

Instrumental music as we regather

We pray: We adore you O Christ and we bless you.
By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

He carried our sorrows...

We sing:

It is a thing most wonderful,
almost too wonderful to be,
that God's own Son should come from heaven,
and die to save a child like me.

I sometimes think about the cross,
and shut my eyes, and try to see
the cruel nails and crown of thorns,
and Jesus crucified for me.

But even could I see him die,
I could but see a little part
of that great love which like a fire,
is always burning in his heart.

It is most wonderful to know
his love for me so free and sure;
but 'tis more wonderful to see
my love for him so faint and poor.

And yet I want to love thee, Lord!
O light the flame within my heart,
and I will love thee more and more,
until I see thee as thou art.

William Walsham How (1823-1897)

Reading: Our sorrows

Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans

If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (8.31b-39)

Time for Silent Reflection: you are invited to pick up a piece of paper and write on it anything that you would like Jesus to hold – your fears, your anxieties, sorrows, doubts and place them in the basket at the foot of the cross. Imagine them being held in

Instrumental music as we regather

We pray: We adore you O Christ and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

He carried a heart that was about to be broken...

We sing

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| 1. Glory be to Jesus,
who, in bitter pains,
poured for me the life-blood
from his sacred veins. | 2. Grace and life eternal
in that blood I find;
blest be his compassion
infinitely kind. |
|--|---|

3. Blest through endless ages
be the precious stream,
which from endless torments
did the world redeem.

4. Lift ye then your voices;
swell the mighty flood;
louder still and louder
praise the precious blood.

Italian c. 18th Century. tr. Edward Caswall (1814-1878)

Reading: A broken heart

Reading from St John's Gospel

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' And again another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.'

(19.31-37)

Time for Silent Reflection: you are invited to pick up a cross and hold it in your hand. Hold it in the palm of your hand and think about what it means and what it carries. You are welcome to take the cross with you, or you may prefer to place it in the basket at the foot of the cross.

Instrumental music as we regather

A prayer as we prepare to move into the Liturgy of the Day.