

GOOD FRIDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Year A, B, C

Reading 1

*Citation: Isaiah, Chap. 52, Verse 13 to Chap. 53, Verse 12
Isaiah 52:12 – 53:12*

Often referred to as the “Suffering Servant” passage (referring to Jesus), Isaiah is reminding his people that God will keep His promise to deliver them from their captors in the near future. God will provide a leader (the Messiah) for them and He will ultimately be an exalted one. As this new leader moves the people away from their captors they may still look like slaves and losers as they move forward. Their new leader will give them his own example of conforming to God’s desires even though the leader is ridiculed or scourged. The ultimate example will be the leader’s willingness to die on behalf of his people and their sins. And the people will respond positively. Have the confidence of Isaiah as you describe who this Messiah will be and how we will recognize him.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

See,
my servant shall prosper, (be positive!)
he shall be raised high
and greatly exalted. (be proud) (short pause)

Even as many were amazed at him
so marred was his look (almost parenthetical)
beyond human semblance
and his appearance beyond that of the sons of man (very short pause)
so shall he startle many nations, (slowly but convinced)

because of him
kings shall stand speechless; (very short pause)
(short pause)

for those who have not been told shall see,
those who have not heard shall ponder it. (very short pause)

Who would believe what we have heard? (wonder!) (very short pause)
To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? (short pause)

He grew up like a sapling before him,
like a shoot from the parched earth; (very short pause)
there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him,
nor appearance that would attract us to him. (very short pause)

He was spurned
and avoided by people, [this whole section is one of disdain?
(very short pause)
a man of suffering,
accustomed to infirmity,
one of those from whom people hide their faces,
spurned,
and we held him in no esteem. (short pause)

Yet it was our infirmities that he bore,

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our sufferings that he endured,
while we thought of him as stricken,
as one smitten by God and afflicted.

{it begins to dawn on people
{what is going on here!

But he was pierced for our offenses,
crushed for our sins;
upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,
by his stripes we were healed.

(very short pause)
(very short pause)
(very short pause)
(sorrowful recognition!) (short pause)

We had all gone astray like sheep,
each following his own way;
but the LORD laid upon him the guilt of us all.

{almost disbelief!
{ “ “
(very short pause)

Though he was harshly treated,
he submitted and opened not his mouth;
like a lamb led to the slaughter
or a sheep before the shearers,
he was silent
and opened not his mouth.

(very short pause)

(very short pause)

Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away,
and who would have thought any more of his destiny?
When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people,
a grave was assigned him among the wicked
and a burial place with evildoers,
though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood.
But the LORD was pleased to crush him in infirmity.

(You are the Narrator, reporting +
(almost disbelief

(very short pause)
(Pause)

If he gives his life as an offering for sin,
he shall see his descendants in a long life,
and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him.

(Narrator is pondering all this, now)
(very short pause)

Because of his affliction
he shall see the light in fullness of days;
through his suffering,
my servant shall justify many,
and their guilt he shall bear.

(More pondering, but beginning to understand!)

(very short pause)

Therefore I will give him his portion among the great,
and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty,
because he surrendered himself to death
and was counted among the wicked;
and he shall take away the sins of many,
and win pardon for their offenses.

(God speaking/thinking ?)

The word of the Lord.

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Reading 2

Citation: Hebrews, Chap. 4, Verses 14-16 to Chap. 5, Verses 7-9
Hebrews 4: 14-16 – 5: 7-9

The *Hebrews'* author's words track closely with Isaiah's as they both describe this new leader the God had promised. The exception is that now we know the Messiah – Jesus – and what He has done for mankind. The letter contrasts Christ with the Israelite High Priest by emphasizing Jesus' identity with us as a fellow human. Consequently, Jesus' sacrifice is so much more effective than the priests, even the Chief Priests, of the past. The author is arguing for the case. Be as insistent as he is!

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brothers and sisters: (very short pause)

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens,
Jesus,
the Son of God, (you're announcing this!)
let us hold fast to our confession. (short pause)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,
but one who has similarly been tested in every way, (the sentence = affirmation)
yet without sin.

So let us confidently approach the throne of grace (very short pause)
to receive mercy (gratitude)
and to find grace for timely help. (thanksgiving) (very short pause)

In the days when Christ was in the flesh,
he offered prayers and supplications
with loud cries and tears
to the one who was able to save him from death,
and he was heard
because of his reverence. (almost parenthetical)

Son though he was, (very short pause)
he learned obedience from what he suffered; (confidence building)
and when he was made perfect, (extreme confidence)
he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

The word of the Lord.

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Verse Before the Gospel

Citation: Philippians, Chap. 2, Verse 8-9
Philippians 2: 8-9

[There is no spoken citation]

Christ became obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.

(very short pause)

Because of this,

God greatly exalted him

and bestowed on him

the name which is above every other name.

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The Passion

Citation: John, Chap. 18: Verse 1 to Chap. 19: Verse 42
John 18: 1 – 19: 42

A most moving narrative filled with drama and emotion as John paints the pictures of the events leading to Christ's death on the cross. He presents Jesus as a man who knows his fate is taking shape and, undiscouraged and with acceptance, that he can predict how events will play out. The significance of the Jewish leadership in the drama is highlighted and emphasized. The confusion of Pilate who must choose between justice and possible mob violence can be felt. Don't shirk from the responsibility to present the story as an effective description of the real weakness and ignorance of human egos before God's Plan.

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Jesus went out with his disciples
across the Kidron valley (parenthetical?)
to where there was a garden,
into which he and his disciples entered. (very short pause)

Judas
his betrayer (parenthetical?)
also knew the place,
because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. (parenthetical)

So
Judas got a band of soldiers
and guards
from the chief priests and the Pharisees
and went there
with lanterns, torches, (somewhat ominous)
and weapons. (more ominous) (very short pause)

Jesus,
knowing everything that was going to happen to him,
went out
and said to them,
"Whom are you looking for?" (gentle question)
They answered him,
"Jesus the Nazarene." (soft voice tone)
He said to them,
"I AM." (forthright, honest) (very short pause)
Judas
his betrayer (parenthetical)
was also with them.
When he said to them,

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"I AM,"
they turned away and fell to the ground. (not the same tone as the first time)
(alarmed!)

So he again asked them,
"Whom are you looking for?" (insistent question)

They said,
"Jesus the Nazarene." (insistent tone)

Jesus answered,
"I told you that I AM. (almost exasperated?)

So if you are looking for me,
let these men go."
This was to fulfill what he had said, (parenthetical)
"I have not lost any of those you gave me." " (short pause)

Then
Simon Peter,
who had a sword,
drew it, (parenthetical?)
struck the high priest's slave, (excited)
and cut off his right ear. (more excited)

The slave's name was Malchus. (parenthetical)
Jesus said to Peter,
"Put your sword into its scabbard. (a command!)
Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?" (sorrowful)

So the band of soldiers,
the tribune,
and the Jewish guards
seized Jesus, (excited)
bound him, (more excited)
and brought him to Annas
first. (almost warning)
(very short pause)

He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas,
who was high priest that year. (explaining)
(parenthetical)

It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews
that it was better that one man should die
rather than the people. (very short pause)

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. (parenthetical)

Now the other disciple was known to the high priest,
and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus.

But Peter stood at the gate outside. (parenthetical)
So the other disciple, (narrating)

the acquaintance of the high priest,

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went out and spoke to the gatekeeper
and brought Peter in. (short pause)

Then the maid
who was the gatekeeper (matter-of-factly)

said to Peter,
"You are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" (insistent; suspicious)

He said,
"I am not." (insistent; matter-of-factly)

Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made,
because it was cold, (parenthetical)

and were warming themselves.
Peter was also standing there
keeping warm. (short pause)

The high priest questioned Jesus (narrating)

about his disciples and about his doctrine. (very short pause)

Jesus answered him,
"I have spoken publicly to the world.

I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area
where all the Jews gather, (almost parenthetical)

and in secret (word-by-word – voice down)

I have said nothing. (almost disbelief)

Why ask me?
Ask those who heard me
what I said to them. (insistent)

They know what I said."

When he had said this,
one of the temple guards standing there
struck Jesus and said,

"Is this the way you answer the high priest?" (very angry) (very short pause)

Jesus answered him,
"If I have spoken wrongly,

testify to the wrong;
but if I have spoken rightly,
why do you strike me?" (strong question; each word separately) (very short pause)

Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. (very short pause)

Now Simon Peter was standing there keeping warm. (gentle; very positive)

And they said to him,
"You are not one of his disciples, are you?" (insistent)

He denied it and said,
"I am not." (every emphatic)

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One of the slaves of the high priest,
a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said,
"Didn't I see you in the garden with him?"

(almost parenthetical)
(insistent; almost anger)

Again

Peter denied it.

And immediately

the cock crowed.

(short pause)

Then

they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium.

(ominous tone) (very short pause)

It was morning.

And they themselves did not enter the praetorium,

in order not to be defiled

so that they could eat the Passover.

(almost parenthetical)
(almost parenthetical)

So Pilate came out to them

and said,

"What charge do you bring against this man?"

(raise volume; imperial tone)

They answered and said to him,

"If he were not a criminal,

we would not have handed him over to you."

(insistent; argumentative)
“ “

At this,

Pilate said to them,

"Take him yourselves,

and judge him according to your law."

(he's *dismissing* them!)
“

The Jews answered him,

"We do not have the right to execute anyone,"

in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled that he said

indicating the kind of death he would die.

(almost whining)
(parenthetical)
“ (very short pause)

So Pilate went back into the praetorium

and summoned Jesus

and said to him,

"Are you the King of the Jews?"

(disbelieving; disdain)

Jesus answered,

"Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?"

(sincere)

Pilate answered,

"I am not a Jew, am I?"

(strong disdain; sneering?)

Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me.

What have you done?"

(confused; pleading "help me"?)

Jesus answered,

"My kingdom does not belong to this world.

(softly insistent to end)

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If my kingdom did belong to this world,
my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews.
But as it is,
my kingdom is not here."

So Pilate said to him,
"Then you are a king?" (satisfied; got the answer he wanted)

Jesus answered,
"You say I am a king.
For this I was born
and for this I came into the world,
to testify to the truth. (very short pause)

Everyone who belongs to the truth
listens to my voice."
Pilate said to him,
"What is truth?" (despairing)

When he had said this,
he again went out to the Jews and said to them,
"I find no guilt in him.

But
you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. (testing them)
Do you want me to release to you
the King of the Jews?" (some respect)

They cried out again,
"Not this one (raise volume)
but Barabbas!" (raise it more)

Now Barabbas was a revolutionary. (quietly emphatic)

Then
Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. {each sentence separate)
And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns {staccato pace)

and placed it on his head,
and clothed him in a purple cloak,
and they came to him and said,
"Hail, King of the Jews!" (sneering; very disrespectful)
And they struck him repeatedly. (slow) (very sad tone)

Once more Pilate went out and said to them,
"Look, (volume increases gradually)
I am bringing him out to you,
so that you may know that I find no guilt in him."

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So Jesus came out,
wearing the crown of thorns
and the purple cloak.
And he said to them,
"Behold,
the man!"

(Firm; loud)

“

When the chief priests and the guards saw him
they cried out,
"Crucify him, crucify him!"
Pilate said to them,
"Take him yourselves and crucify him.
I find no guilt in him."

(separate the two phrases; loud)

(almost "Oh, go away"!!)

(insistent)

The Jews answered,
"We have a law,
and according to that law
he ought to die,
because he made himself
the Son of God."

(increase firmness line-to-line)

“

“

“

“ (a warning, too)

Now when Pilate heard this statement,
he became even more afraid,
and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus,
"Where are you from?"

(disbelieving) (short pause)

Jesus did not answer him.

(matter-of-factly)

So Pilate said to him,
"Do you not speak to me?
Do you not know that I have power to release you
and I have power to crucify you?"

(offended)

(mounting frustration)

“ (very short pause)

Jesus answered him,
"You would have no power over me
if it had not been given to you from above.
For this reason
the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

(He's shaking his head)

(calm but sad)

Consequently,
Pilate tried to release him;
but the Jews cried out,
"If you release him,
you are not a Friend of Caesar.
Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar."

(raise volume)

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When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out
and seated him on the judge's bench
in the place called Stone Pavement,
in Hebrew,
Gabbatha.

It was preparation day for Passover,
and it was about noon.

And he said to the Jews,

"Behold,
your king!"

(Announcing tone; loud)
(very short pause)

They cried out,
"Take him away,
take him away!
Crucify him!"

(volume increases, each line)
"
(very short pause)

Pilate said to them,
"Shall I crucify your king?"

(almost sneering)

The chief priests answered,
"We have no king but Caesar."

(loud; crazed tone)

Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

(somewhat sad)

So they took Jesus,
and,
carrying the cross himself,
he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull,
in Hebrew,
Golgotha.

(growing sadness)

"

"

There they crucified him,
and with him two others,
one on either side,
with Jesus in the middle.

(very quiet tone)

(very short pause)

Pilate also had an inscription written
and put on the cross

It read,

"Jesus the Nazarene,
the King of the Jews."

(matter-of-factly)
(very short pause)

Now many of the Jews read this inscription,
because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city;
and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

(parenthetical)

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So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate,
"Do not write
'The King of the Jews,'
but that he said, (disrespectful)
'I am the King of the Jews.' "

Pilate answered,
"What I have written,
I have written." (very firm; in charge!)

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus,
they took his clothes
and divided them into four shares,
a share for each soldier.
They also took his tunic,
but the tunic was seamless, (almost parenthetical)
woven in one piece from the top down. "
So they said to one another,
"Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it
to see whose it will be,"

in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled that says: (almost parenthetical)

*They divided my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.* (a quote – change tone)
“

This is what the soldiers did. (very short pause)

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister,
Mary the wife of Clopas,
and Mary of Magdala.

When Jesus saw his mother
and the disciple there whom he loved
he said to his mother,
"Woman, (gentle sadness)
behold, your son."
Then he said to the disciple,
"Behold, your mother." (firm but sad)
And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (parenthetical)

After this,
aware that everything was now finished,
in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, (parenthetical)
Jesus said,

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"I thirst." (hoarse voice)

There was a vessel filled with common wine. (Narrator)
So they put a sponge soaked in wine
on a sprig of hyssop
and put it up to his mouth.

When Jesus had taken the wine,
he said,
"It is finished." (finality; loud but hoarse) (very short pause)
And bowing his head,
he handed over the spirit. (voice goes down each word)

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

Now (storyteller takes over)
since it was preparation day,
in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, (insistent)
for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, (parenthetical)
the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken
and that they be taken down.

So
the soldiers came
and broke the legs of the first
and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus.
But
when they came to Jesus
and saw that he was already dead,
they did not break his legs,
but one soldier
thrust his lance into his side,
and immediately blood and water flowed out. (very short pause)

An eyewitness has testified, (very confident tone)
and his testimony is true;
he knows that he is speaking the truth,
so that you also may come to believe.

For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be fulfilled:

Not a bone of it will be broken. (quote; change tone)

And again another passage says:

They will look upon him whom they have pierced. (quote; change tone)

After this,

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Joseph of Arimathea,
secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews,
asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus.
And Pilate permitted it.

(parenthetical)
(very short pause)
("Thank God!")

So he came and took his body.

Nicodemus,
the one who had first come to him at night,
also came
bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds.

(parenthetical)
("WOW"?)

They took the body of Jesus
and bound it with burial cloths
along with the spices,
according to the Jewish burial custom.

(almost parenthetical)
(very short pause)

Now
in the place where he had been crucified
there was a garden,
and in the garden a new tomb,
in which no one had yet been buried.

So they laid Jesus there
because of the Jewish preparation day;
for the tomb was close by.

(slower pace)
(parenthetical)

The Gospel of the Lord.