

## **DBC Lent Readings 2023**

### **Week 3 - People of Passion Week**

The narrative of the events of Passion Week, from Palm Sunday to Good Friday, will be well known to us. Our readings this week will not so much focus on the events, but on the people involved, and how they changed over the course of that week.

To paint the picture of their week we draw of verses from different gospels. To make it easier to follow, we have drawn these together for your reading each day. Of course, please read around these verses to have a wider picture of these people.

#### **Mon 6<sup>th</sup> Mar - THE CROWDS**

Singing Jesus praises ... “the great crowd ... heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches, and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” [John 12v12-13]

Shouting for his death ... “With one voice they cried out, “Away with this man!” ... they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” ... they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed.” [Luke 23v18, 21 & 23] ... “let his blood be on us and on our children.” [Mat 27v25]

At the cross ... As Jesus’ cross was being carried – “A large number of people followed him, including women, who mourned and wailed for him” [Luke 23v26-27]

At the cross – “The people stood watching” [John 23v35] Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ... “Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God” [Mat 27v39-40]

Three hours of darkness + earthquake and Jesus “breathed his last”. Centurion said, “this was a righteous man” ... When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away.” [Luke 23v47-48]

QU Who/what influenced the crowds in each of these three situations?

QU How influenced are you, for good or bad, by events or by others?

#### **Tues 7<sup>th</sup> Mar - CAIAPHAS & THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

The Plan formed ... “What are we accomplishing ... Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.” Caiaphas spoke up, “you know nothing at all! You do not realise that it is better for you that one die for the people than the whole nation perish.” [John 11v47-50]

“ ... plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him.” [Mat 26v4]

“ ... Judas Iscariot .. asked, “What are you willing to give me? ... So they counted out for him thirty silver coins” [Mat 26v14-15]

The Arrest & Trial ... In Gethsemane ... “a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and elders” arrested Jesus [Mat 26v47-48]

They ... “were looking for false evidence against Jesus so they could put him to death. But they did not find any” .. until two false witnesses came forward. [Mat26v 59-61]

“The high priest said, “Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God”. “.. it is as you say”, Jesus replied. The high priest said... “He has spoken blasphemy! ... What do you think?” “He is worthy of death, “they answered ... spat on him .. struck him .. slapped him ... mocked him.” [Mat26v63-68]

Early in the morning ... they handed him over to Pilate, the Governor” [Mat 27v1-2]

Judas tries to return the money, but they refuse “it is blood money” [Mat 27v3-6]

With Pilate ... “.. the chief priest .. persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed”. [Mat 27v20]

“We have no king but Caesar, the chief priests answered” [John 19v15]

The Cross (and beyond) ... “ ... they mocked him ... He cannot save himself ... Let him come down from the cross and we will believe in him. ....” [Mat 27v41-43]

“The next day ... went to Pilate ... “give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day” [Mat 27v62-66]

After the resurrection, the guards went to the chief priests who gave them a large sum of money to say the disciples had stolen the body ...” [Mat 28v11-15]

QU What were their motives in each of these situations?

QU Why were they so against Jesus – jealously?? fear? Wanting best for their religion?

### **Wed 8<sup>th</sup> Mar - SMALL PART BUT BIG ROLE**

The Donkey's Owner ... Jesus said .. “Go to the village ... find a colt ... bring it here...” Those who were sent ... found it ... as they were untying the colt, the owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”. They replied, “The Lord needs it.” [Luke 19v30-34]

Owner of the Upper Room ... Jesus said, “as you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house he enters, and say to the owner of the house, “The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there. [Luke 22v10-12]

The Cross carrier ... As they led him away, they seized Simon of Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. [Luke 23v26]

The Undertaker ... As evening approached, there came a rich man .. named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate ... asked for Jesus body ... took the body ... wrapped it in a linen cloth ... placed it in his own new tomb ... rolled a big stone in front of the entrance ... went away [Mat 27v57-61]

QU Which one of these people would you like to talk to, and what question would you ask?

QU Who has played a “small part” in your life, but has been life changing in pointing to Jesus? – take time to thank God for them.

## **Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> Mar - JESUS DISCIPLES**

Brave before the event ... "Then Thomas. said to the rest... "let us also go, that we may die with him." [John 11v16]

The disciples went ... and found the donkey ... and "the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen." [Luke 19v38]

The Night Before ... "Jesus ... got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, wrapped a towel around his waist .. poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples feet, drying them with a towel .." [John 13v4-5] Jesus said, "I have set you an example ..." [John 13v15]

So they prepared the Passover, and Jesus "took the bread .. and gave it to them" and said "This is my body given for you ..." In the same way .. took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." [Luke 22v13 & 19-20]

Then Jesus went to Gethsemane .. began to be sorrowful and troubled .. Then he returned to his disciples and found them asleep [Mat 26v40]

Then "a large crowd armed with swords and clubs ... seized Jesus and arrested him. ... Then the disciples deserted him and fled. [Mat 47, 50, & 56]

What Next – Hiding ... Apart from John, none were with Jesus at the Cross

"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews ..." [John 20v19]

**QU what caused the disciples to change from "bravery" to "fear"?**

**QU How have you responded when picked out by others being a follower of Jesus?**

## **Fri 10<sup>th</sup> Mar – PILATE THE ROMAN GOVERNOR**

" ... Jesus stood before the governor, who asked, "Are you the King of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony .. against you?" But Jesus made no reply, ... - to the great amazement of the governor" [Mat 27v11-14]

" ... his wife sent him a message, "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, ..." [Mat 27v19]

"... the chief priests ... shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!". Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him ... I find no basis for a charge against him." The Jews insisted, "We have a law .. he must die because he claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid." [John 19v6-8]

"When Pilate saw he was getting nowhere, but that .. an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said, "It is your responsibility!" ... But he had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified". [Mat 27v24-26]

"Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS". ... the chief priests protested ... but Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written." [JOHN 19v19-22]

**QU What caused Pilate to change from asking who Jesus was, to naming Him as "king of the Jews"?**

QU Consider the good things Pilate did and also his shortcomings. Overall, how do you judge him??

### **Sat 11<sup>th</sup> Mar - ROMAN CENTURIUN AND HIS SOLDIERS**

Torture .... Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus .... And gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off his robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. [Mat 27v27-31]

Crucifixation ... "There they offered Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall " [Mat27v34]

"When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them ... the undergarment ... was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said ... "Let's decide by lot who will get it." [Mat 27v35-36]

Sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS" [Mat 27v37]

When the Centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God" [Mat 27v54]

But when they came to Jesus and found he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water." [John 19v33-34]

After the Cross ... "The next day ... "Take a guard," Pilate answered, ... So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone, and posting the guard. [Mat 27v62-66]

"... an angel of the Lord came down from heaven ... rolled back the stone ... The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men." [Mat 28v2-4]

After the resurrection, "the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. The chief priests ... gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, "His disciples came during the night and stole him away, while we were asleep. If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble" So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed." [Mat 28v11-15]

QU How would the soldiers' thoughts of Jesus change from the time of brutality, to the cross, then the empty tomb?

QU What did the events at the cross cause the change in how the Centurion saw Jesus? ... does it also change our view of Jesus as well?