

GISBORNE PRESBYTERIAN PARISH

*Matawhero Church – Church Lane
St Andrew's Church and Community Centre:
176 Cobden Street, Gisborne*

18 April 2025

Good Friday

***Welcome to Matawhero Historic Church,
especially the Rev Michael Cotton,
Lynne Cotton, on organ***

We welcome all visitors to our service this morning.

Please sign the Visitors' Book and make yourself known to the Hosts who stand at the back of the church. A toilet is located in the hall.

*In our worship we use inclusive language as much as possible. Sometimes, especially in the hymns, this is not possible. Feel free to insert the language with which you are most comfortable. **BOLDED WORDS** are for congregational response.*

*Where there is an asterisk * please stand.*

M. As always on Good Friday we gather together for mutual support as Christ's Body in the world to remember what at first sight seems the tragedy to end all tragedies, but was in fact the start of God's bringing to the world a new way of life based on love and understanding. To do that we need to take ourselves back in time, to feel some of the emotions of all the people involved in Jesus death and resurrection.

Let's look at how people acted and see if we can find empathy or understanding of their actions by reading and thinking of what took place.

Hymn

CH4 403

**Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
tremble.**

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Reading John 18: 15 - 18 & 25 - 27 (Paulina Melief)

New International Version

Peter's First Denial

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, ¹⁶ but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

¹⁷ "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter.

He replied, “I am not.”

¹⁸ It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

Peter’s Second and Third Denials

²⁵ Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, “You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?”

He denied it, saying, “I am not.”

²⁶ One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, “Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?” ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

Let’s put ourselves in Peter’s shoes - Jesus’ closest friend and helper, the “Rock” chosen to lead this message of Good News and at the first testing has denied having anything to do with Jesus. Close your eyes and think if you have ever denied Christ or maybe even just turned a blind eye? How did you feel and did you know Jesus forgave you?

Silence

Mike. -Prayer - Lord there are times in our faith walk when we fail to be the person you have called us to be. Give us the strength to always turn to you that we may continue to walk the way of truth.

Hymn

CH4 403

**Were you there when his friend denied him thrice
Were you there when his friend denied him thrice
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
tremble.**

Were you there when his friend denied him thrice

Reading John 18:19 - 24 (Jan Ewart) NIV

The High Priest Questions Jesus

¹⁹ Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

²⁰ “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.”

²² When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded.

²³ “If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” ²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Annas the priest sees Jesus as a threat to the Jewish system and without really wanting to know what Jesus has been teaching and preaching sends him to Caiaphas the High Priest for judgement.

Imagine yourself in a position of power in an organisation that is being threatened by a radical troublemaker. Would you forget the truth and pass them on to a higher authority?

Silence

M. Prayer - Lord forgive us when we fail to see truth and simply pass the responsibility to someone else to make a decision

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
tremble.

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree

Reading John 19: 7 - 16 (Marie Burgess) NIV

⁷ The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹ and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?”

¹¹ Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

¹² From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.”

¹³ When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). ¹⁴ It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

¹⁵ But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"

"Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

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

¹⁶ Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

Pontius Pilate - the Roman governor with the power to do anything in the name of Rome. But even he tries to see justice and not persecution for a while but, eventually under pressure from the Pharisees and the incensed crowd he gives in and hands Jesus over to the mob.

Place yourselves in Pilate's shoes for a minute
- supreme power but bowing to crowd
pressure. How strong would your faith and
belief in a Risen Christ be in a similar
situation?

Silence

M. Prayer - Lord there are times in our lives
when our faith and our strength is tested. In
those times let us always feel your hand in
ours giving us the strength to truly be your
disciples.

Hymn

CH4 403

Were you there when they pierced him in the side
Were you there when they pierced him in the side
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
tremble.

Were you there when they pierced him in the side

Reading John 19: 23 - 24, 31 - 37 (Wendy Johnson) NIV

²³ When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

²⁴ “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,

“They divided my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.”^[a]

So this is what the soldiers did.

³¹ Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ³² The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden

flow of blood and water. ³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken,”^[a] ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.”^[b]

The soldiers, hardened fighting men used to death and savagery and to hasten the death of Jesus and the two criminals were ordered to break the legs of the men either side of Jesus but finding Jesus dead and having witnessed his actions and words on the Cross showed mercy by not mutilating him simply piercing his side to appease the powers that be. But also to fulfil the prophecy in Zech 12:10 *“I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will*

mourn for him as one mourns for an only child."

The soldiers were able to see among all the pain and death that this was a Crucifixion like no other.

For a few moments imagine yourself as one of those battle hardened Roman soldiers being able to see beyond the pain and the horror and the torture of a crucifixion death to see something that could change your life and the way you live it.

M. Prayer Lord Jesus - you taught the way of love, peace, forgiveness and hope as we walk the narrow path that leads to eternal life help us always to hold those thoughts and teachings close to our hearts that we may always stand tall proclaiming "Jesus is Lord"
Silence

Final Hymn My song is love unknown CH4 399

verses 1,2,4,6

My song is love unknown, my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown,
that they might lovely be.

Oh, who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?

He came from his blest throne,
salvation to bestow: But people scorned,
and none the longed-for Christ would know.
But O my Friend, my Friend indeed,
who at my need his life did spend!

Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries! yet they at these
themselves displease, and 'gainst him rise.

Here might I stay and sing: No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King,

Never was grief like thine!
This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.

M. We arose today
Blessed by all things, Wings of breath,
Delight of eyes, Wonder of whisper,
Intimacy of touch, eternity of soul.
Urgency of thought, miracle of health,
Embrace of God.

May we live this day
Compassionate of heart,
Clear in word,
Gracious in Awareness,
Courageous in thought,
Generous in love.

Go now, secure in the knowledge that Jesus
died this day to give us all a chance of new
life. Accept the pain and sorrow of this day
as the cornerstone of your faith, of your
belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

Go now to love and serve the Lord, go in peace.

Readers: Paulina Melief, Jan Ewart, Marie
Burgess, Wendy Johnston

Gisborne Presbyterian Parish wishes you a
blessed Easter weekend.

Our Easter Day service and communion is on
Easter Sunday, 20th April, at St Andrew's
Church, 176 Cobden St, at 10am conducted by
Rev Mike Cotton. All welcome.

Please bring a flower or greenery from your
garden for a "flowered" cross