

**Sunday Worship from the URC  
for Palm Sunday 2020**



*Today's service was developed by the Rev'd Andy Braunston who works with Barrhead, Shawlands, Priesthill and Stewarton URCs in and around Glasgow in the central belt of Scotland.*

## Introduction

Good morning, my name is Andy Braunston; I work with four churches in and around Glasgow but much of today's service was recorded in my Manse.

Every year since 1992 I have started the Palm Sunday service with an introduction about the long weeks of Lent and how we've been preparing ourselves, through works of mercy and self-sacrifice, to celebrate Easter. This year we've all given up rather more than we've intended, anticipated or wanted and Lent has seemed very long indeed.

Here, in Glasgow none of us can meet as we are all, like you, allowed very little personal contact with people outside our own homes. When we venture out to the shops we find that Lenten discipline is taking an unexpected turn with fewer things to buy and more limited choices.

We probably haven't got Palm Crosses to bless, there are no donkeys or Palm Sunday processions today and we're starting to wonder when this will all end.

So today, in worship, we will reflect on our situation as we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem where the crowds acclaimed him as their anointed king and listen as those crowds suddenly grow fickle and bay for his blood.

## Call to Worship

People of God, on this wilderness journey, what will you eat?

**The word of the Lord is our daily bread.**

People of God, in this time of temptation, how will you live?

**Our faith is in the faithfulness of God.**

People of God, at this kingdom crossroad, whom will you serve?

**We worship the Lord our God alone.**

## Sources

**Call to Worship** from *Feasting on the Word*

**Prayers of Approach, Confession and Intercession** – Andy Braunston.

**Absolution** adopted from the Roman Rite.

**Affirmation of Faith** from the *Christian Reformed Church of North America*

**Blessing** adapted from the Church of England's *Common Worship*

### Hymns

Make Way, Make Way, by Graham Kendrick sung by the author and others.

We Turn to God by Dietrich Bonhoeffer sung by Barrhead URC choir

My Song is Love Unknown sung by the Choir of the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Truro, Cornwall

I Danced in the Morning by Sydney Carter, unknown performer on Youtube

### Thanks to

Members of Barrhead URC, Lorraine Webb, Jonnie Hill, Margaret Higton, and Marie Trubic for recording parts of the service.

## First Reading: *St Matthew 21: 1-11*

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.' This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

'Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

'Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

**Hymn:** *Make Way, Make Way*  
Graham Kendrick © 1986 Thank You Music

Make way, make way,  
for Christ the King  
in splendour arrives.  
Fling wide the gates  
and welcome him  
into your lives.

*Make way! Make way!  
For the King of kings!  
Make way! Make way!  
And let his kingdom in!*

2: He comes the broken  
hearts to heal,  
the prisoners to free.  
The deaf shall hear,  
the lame shall dance,  
the blind shall see.

3: And those who mourn  
with heavy hearts,  
who weep and sigh;  
with laughter, joy and  
royal crown He'll beautify.

4: We call you now to worship him as Lord of all.  
To have no other gods but him: their thrones must fall!

### **Prayers of Approach, Confession and Absolution**

O God in human form,  
we remember the day when you rode in triumph,  
we hear the crowds acclaim you as king,  
we share their joy and expectation of liberation.

Forgive us, O God,  
when we fail to acclaim you with our words and actions.  
when we fail to share the joy and expectation of freedom.

O God in human form,  
we remember too how those crowds soon turned on you,  
we stand amazed at their fickleness,  
we share your sadness at how easily they were distracted.

Forgive us, O God,  
when we change with the wind,

3: I danced on the Sabbath  
and I cured the lame;  
the holy people  
said it was a shame.  
They whipped and they stripped  
and they hung me high,  
and they left me there  
on a Cross to die.

4: I danced on a Friday  
when the sky turned black  
it's hard to dance  
with the devil on your back.

They buried my body  
and they thought I'd gone,  
but I am the Dance,  
and I still go on.

5: They cut me down  
and I leep up high;  
I am the life  
that'll never, never die;  
I'll live in you  
if you'll live in me -  
I am the Lord  
of the Dance, said he.

### **Blessing**

May the One who so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
bring you by faith to his eternal life.

May the One who accepted the cup of sacrifice  
in obedience to the Father's will,  
keep you steadfast as you walk with him the Way of the Cross.

May the One  
who strengthens us to suffer with Christ  
that we may share his glory,  
set your minds on life and peace.

And may the blessing of Almighty God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with you, and all whom you love,  
now and always, Amen.

## Offering

Last week Phil Nevard reminded us of the need to continue to give, as we are able, throughout this health emergency. We give in different ways - to our churches, to local charities, to those in need. It maybe you are keeping your offering envelopes, putting your money in each week and will return them to your church when all this is over, it maybe you have asked your church treasurer to post you a standing order form, it maybe you're making direct gifts to the church or other charities' bank accounts. However we choose to give, it's important to continue – it's as much a part of our faith as prayer and hymn singing after all. Will you pray with me?

All things come from you, O God,  
and of your own do we give you.  
Help us to continue to be generous, even in times of scarcity,  
to be loving even in times of fear,  
and to have open hearts even as we have to close our homes. Amen.

### Hymn: *Lord of the Dance*

Sydney Carter © 1963 Stainer and Bell

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|---|---|
| I danced in the morning<br>when the world was begun,<br>and I danced in the moon<br>and the stars and the sun,<br>and I came down from heaven<br>and I danced on the earth,<br>at Bethlehem I had my birth. | <i>in the Dance, said he.</i><br><br>2: I danced for the Scribe<br>and the Pharisee,<br>but they would not dance<br>and they would not follow me.<br>I danced for the fishermen,<br>for James and John<br>they came with me<br>and the Dance went on. |
|---|---|

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,  
and I'll lead you all,  
wherever you may be,  
and I'll lead you all*

when our fickleness lets others down,  
and when we are distracted from following you.

O God in human form,  
we remember how the crowds remembered their Bible,  
and found meaning in your message,  
seeing you as their king, their anointed one.  
Forgive us, O God,  
when we pervert the Bible,  
turning it to our own ends,  
using it to challenge others but not ourselves. Amen.

God, the source of all mercy,  
through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ  
has reconciled the world to Himself  
and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins;  
through the ministry of the Church  
may God give you pardon and peace;  
you have been forgiven, so have the strength to forgive yourself.

### Prayer of Illumination

Open your mind to us, O God,  
as we again listen for your Word,  
contained in the Scriptures,  
that we may hear, understand and obey. Amen.

### The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew

Then one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him.

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He replied 'Go to so-and-so in the city and say to him, "The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my disciples."' The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover.

When evening came he was at table with the twelve disciples. And while they were eating he said 'I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me' They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn, 'Not I, Lord, surely?' He answered, 'Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me, will betray me. The Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!' Judas, who was to betray him; asked in his turn, 'Not I, Rabbi, surely?' 'They are your own words' answered Jesus.

Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said. 'Take it and eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them saying. 'Drink all of you from this, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.'

After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all lose faith in me this night, for the scripture says: I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered, but after my resurrection I shall go before you to Galilee'. At this, Peter said, 'Though all lose faith in you, I will never lose faith'. Jesus answered him, 'I tell you solemnly, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times'. Peter said to him, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you'. And all the disciples said the same.

and where the virus will add to a litany of war, famine and poverty.  
Help us, O God, to see unity of humanity,  
and to change how we live.

Eternal One, we pray for our own nations,  
for Elizabeth our Queen, Boris our Prime Minister,  
and for all who are elected to serve us,  
that they may govern with justice,  
and seek the good of all.

God of the Church  
we pray for your people  
adjusting to new ways of being community  
and new ways of worship.  
We pray for those around the world  
who always have to worship at home for fear of the authorities,  
for those who can never take part in Palm Sunday processions,  
for those who can never openly share their faith,  
may they find comfort in you and strength in your love  
as through them  
you allow your Church to grow.

God of tenderness,  
in the silence of our hearts,  
we pray for those we know and love.....

and we pray for ourselves and our own needs....  
Accept these prayers, Eternal One,  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray, Our Father...

From the beginning, through all the crises of our times,  
until His Kingdom fully comes, God keeps covenant forever.

### **Our world belongs to God!**

We rejoice in the goodness of God, renounce the works of darkness,  
and dedicate ourselves to holy living, for **our world belongs to God!**

As committed disciples, called to faithful obedience, and set free for  
joyful praise, we offer our hearts and lives to do God's work in his world,  
for **our world belongs to God!**

With tempered impatience, eager to see injustice ended, we expect the  
Day of the Lord. And we are confident that the light which shines in the  
present darkness will fill the earth when Christ appears for **our World  
belongs to God!**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

We bring our prayers to God for our world, our country, the church and  
those we know, love and worry about.

Eternal God, we lift our planet before you,  
we thank you for its beauty and wonder at its complexity.  
We pray that this time of enforced reflection and stillness  
will be a way for us to re-evaluate how we live and work,  
that we do less harm to this our fragile home.

God of all people, we pray for our world,  
for those living with the virus,  
for those researching into treatment and vaccine,  
for those living in fear,  
for those recovering from illness,  
and for those who are bereaved.  
We pray for those countries where there are fewer resources,

Then Jesus came with them to a small estate called Gethsemane; and he  
said to his disciples, 'Stay here while I go over there to pray'. He took  
Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And sadness came over  
him, and great distress. He said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the  
point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me.' And going on a little  
further he fell on his face and prayed. 'My Father, if it is possible, let this  
cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.' He  
came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter,  
'So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour? You  
should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is  
willing, but the flesh is weak.'

Again, a second time, he went away and prayed: 'My Father, If this cup  
cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done!' And he came  
back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. Leaving  
them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating  
the same words. Then he came back to the disciples and said to them,  
'You can sleep on now and take your rest. Now the hour has come when  
the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us  
go! My betrayer is already close at hand.'

He was still speaking when Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared, and with  
him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the  
chief priests and elders of the people. Now the traitor had arranged a  
sign with them. He had said 'The one I kiss, he is the man. Take him in  
charge.' So he went straight up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi', and  
kissed him. Jesus said to him, 'My friend, do what you are here for'. They  
came forward, seized Jesus and took him in charge.

At that, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he  
struck out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. Jesus said, 'Put  
your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Or do  
you think that I cannot appeal to my Father who would promptly send  
more than twelve legions of angels to my defence? But then, how would  
the scriptures be fulfilled that say this is the way it must be?'

It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds, 'Am I a brigand, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid hands on me.' Now all this happened to fulfil the prophecies in scripture. Then all the disciples deserted him and ran away.

The men who had arrested Jesus led him off to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter followed him at a distance, and when he reached the high priest's palace, he went in and sat down with the attendants to see what the end would be. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, however false, on which they might pass the death-sentence. But they could not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward.

Eventually two stepped forward and made a statement, 'This man said, "I have power to destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up"' The high priest then stood up and said to him, 'Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?' But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him, 'I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God'. Jesus answered 'The words are your own. Moreover, I tell you that from this time onward you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.'

At this, the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'He has blasphemed. What need of witnesses have we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy. What is your opinion?' They answered, 'He deserves to die'.

Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they struck him, 'Play the prophet, Christ! Who hit you then?'

Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him and said, 'You too were with Jesus the Galilean'. But he denied it in front of them all saying: 'I do not know what you are talking about.' When he went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there, 'This man was with Jesus the Nazarene'.

Will you pray with me?

God our hope of victory,  
whom we constantly betray;  
grant us so to recognise your coming  
that in our clamour  
there may be commitment  
and in our silence  
the very stones may cry aloud  
in your name, Amen.

**Hymn:** *We Turn to God when we are sorely pressed*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)

We turn to God when we are sorely pressed;  
we pray for help, and ask for peace and bread;  
we seek release from illness, guilt, and death:  
all people do, in faith or unbelief.

2 We turn to God when he is sorely pressed,  
and find him poor, scorned, without roof and bread,  
bowed under weight of weakness, sin, and death:  
faith stands by God in his dark hour of grief.

3 God turns to us when we are sorely pressed,  
and feeds our souls and bodies with his bread;  
for one and all Christ gives himself in death:  
through his forgiveness sin will find relief.

### **Affirmation of Faith**

As followers of Jesus Christ, living in this world—  
which some seek to control, but which others view with despair—  
we declare with joy and trust: **our world belongs to God!**

because once a month they honour my Sacred Heart.  
As if I loved them only twelve times a year!  
They think they love me because they keep their devotions regularly,  
attend a benediction, eat fish on Fridays, burn a candle, or say a prayer  
before a picture of my Sacred Heart.  
But I am not made of plaster, God says, nor of stone nor of bronze.  
I am living flesh, throbbing, suffering.  
I am among you and you have not recognised me.  
I am poorly paid, I am unemployed, I live in a slum, I have tuberculosis, I  
sleep under bridges, I am in prison, I am oppressed, I am patronised....”

The prayer continues in similar vein drawing links between the God who  
suffered at Calvary and the God who continues to suffer in His people  
now. It’s a deeply Catholic prayer remembering, as often we forget, that  
Jesus suffers with his people – why else would he have told the people, in  
that first Holy Week according to St Matthew’s Gospel – that we will be  
judged on how we treat others as He is present in those we consider the  
“least of these”?

So this Holy Week as we consider the great reversals of our time, we  
think about how we treat Jesus in the supermarket worker, the nurse,  
the junior doctor, the delivery driver – the people who are society has  
undervalued for years but on whom we newly realise we rely.

So this Holy Week as we consider the great reversals of our time, we  
think about how indifferent we are to those who suffer in our world – the  
migrant having to flee home because of war, persecution and poverty.

So this Holy Week as we consider the great reversals of our time, we  
think about how our society could be different, how we could structure  
our world so that God is no longer in agony.

So this Holy Week as we long for the great reversal of Easter we  
remember Jesus, stretched out amongst his people, suffering and dying  
with and for us in the hope that we finally learn to live for Him.

And again, with an oath, he denied it, ‘I do not know the man’. A little  
later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, ‘You are one of them for  
sure! Why, your accent gives you away.’ Then he started calling down  
curses on himself and swearing, ‘I do not know the man’. At that moment  
the cock crew, and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, ‘Before the  
cock crows you will have disowned me three times’. And he went outside  
and wept bitterly.

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people  
met in council to bring about the death of Jesus. They had him bound,  
and led him away to hand him over to Pilate, the governor. When he  
found that Jesus had been condemned, Judas his betrayer was filled with  
remorse and took the thirty silver pieces back to the chief priests and  
elders saying. ‘I have sinned;’ I have betrayed innocent blood’ They  
replied: ‘What is that to us? That is your concern.’ And flinging down the  
silver pieces in the sanctuary he made off and hanged himself; the chief  
priests picked up the silver pieces and said, ‘It is against the Law to put  
this into the treasury; it is blood-money’. So they discussed the matter  
and bought the potter’s field with it as a graveyard for foreigners, and  
this is why the field is called the Field of Blood today. The words of the  
prophet Jeremiah were then fulfilled: And they took the thirty silver  
pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced by children of  
Israel, and they gave them for the potter’s field, just as the Lord directed  
me.

Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to  
him this question, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ Jesus replied, ‘It is you  
who say it’. But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders  
he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him, ‘Do you not hear how  
many charges they have brought against you?’ But to the governor’s  
complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges.

At festival time it was the governor’s practice to release a prisoner for  
the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious  
prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate

asked them, 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message, 'Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him'.

The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they said, 'Barabbas'. Pilate said to them 'What am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' 'Why?' he asked 'What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!' Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.' And the people, each one of them, shouted back, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified.

The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand to make fun of him. They knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him.

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him. Above his head

They rise and needs will have  
my dear Lord made away;  
a murderer they save,  
the Prince of life they slay.

On the Cross we are confronted with Jesus' sense of utter desolation as, quoting Scripture, he cries out to the God whom he feels has deserted him.

On the Cross, Jesus' cry joins with ours as we struggle under the great reversals of our own time.

On the Cross, Jesus joins with our pain, our suffering, our humiliation.

On the Cross, Jesus fully identifies with humanity in the hope that humanity will one day fully identify with him.

In the 1950s the French priest Michel Quoist published a wee book called *Prayers of Life*. This book is still in print and sold over 2.5 million copies. It's a modern spiritual classic steeped in Quoist's deep spirituality and work as parish priest of Le Harve for many years.

My own favourite prayer is called *Son, I beseech you, don't sleep any more*. It's a dialogue between God and a Christian. It starts " 'I shall be in agony until the end of time' God says" The Christian responds saying that this isn't possible, it's an exaggeration, for if this were so we'd do something about it. Quoist has God respond saying that we're deluding ourselves:

"They say they love me,  
they believe they love me, and, as I am willing to admit,  
they are often sincere, but they are terribly mistaken.  
They do not understand, they do not see.  
Slowly everything has distorted, dried up, emptied.  
They think they love me

## Sermon

Today's long Passion reading is full of reversals. The newly-proclaimed king is led away to be killed as a criminal; the crowds who cheered him on a few short days ago now bay for his blood; the gentle teacher is made a dangerous rebel; Jesus' own people - who have heard him teach and have seen his miracles - turn on him, whilst the gentile Centurion, who'd probably never met him before, recognises his divinity; Jesus speaks, not his normal words of consolation but, instead, words dripping in anguish. Reversals like these keep us reflecting on this passage – reversals like these are ones that Samuel Crossman explored in our last hymn.

We're used to seeing reversals in our national life; a busy vibrant economy has ground to a halt; experts – who, not long ago, were derided are now listened to with great respect; suddenly the NHS and social care can have all the money they need, and policies which were, a few months ago, derided now seem sensible and necessary. Reversals are nothing new but continue to surprise us.

Yet changing fortunes, reversals of fate, and pragmatism are always with us. The very fact the crowds acclaimed Jesus on that first Palm Sunday probably sealed his fate. The authorities would have been nervous with the extra crowds pressing into Jerusalem and then he provoked them by fulfilling a prophecy about a coming king. Matthew records Jesus entering Jerusalem and then going straight to the Temple, clearing it of the money lenders and stall holders. Upsetting tables, traders and temple types. Worse, from the point of view of the religious authorities, Jesus doesn't stop there, day after day in that first Holy Week Jesus goes and teaches at the Temple. He teaches about the wicked tenants – whom the Chief Priests rightly discern are cyphers for themselves. Jesus spoke directly, and in parable, and his teaching made the authorities more and more nervous until, in the end, they can take no more and have to silence him. As Crossman puts it:

was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews'. At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said, 'So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!' The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way saying: 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He puts his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, "I am the son of God".' Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah', and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. 'Wait!' said the rest of them 'and see if Elijah will come to save him.' But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

At that, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people.

Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this was a son of God.'

And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him.

Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate thereupon ordered it to be handed over. So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre

Next day, that is, when Preparation Day was over, the chief priests and the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate and said to him, 'Your Excellency, we recall that this impostor said, while he was still alive, "After three days I shall rise again". Therefore give the order to have the sepulchre kept secure until the third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people, "He has risen from the dead". This last piece of fraud would be worse than what went before.' 'You may have your guard' said Pilate to them. 'Go and make all as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the sepulchre secure, putting seals on the stone and mounting a guard.

**Hymn:** *My Song is Love unknown*  
Samuel Crossman (1624 – 1683)

My song is love unknown,  
my Saviour's love to me;  
love to the loveless shown,  
that they might lovely be.  
O who am I, that for my sake  
my Lord should take  
frail flesh, and die?

2 He came from His blest throne  
salvation to bestow;  
but folk made strange,  
and none the longed-for Christ  
would know:  
but oh, my friend, my friend indeed,  
who at my need His life did spend.

3 Sometimes they strew His way,  
and His sweet praises sing;  
resounding all the day  
Hosannas to their King:  
then "Crucify!"  
is all their breath,  
and for His death  
they thirst and cry.

7 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.

4: 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.

5 They rise and needs will have  
my dear Lord made away;  
a murderer they save,  
the Prince of life they slay.  
Yet cheerful He to suffering goes,  
that He His foes  
from thence might free.

6 In life, no house, no home  
my Lord on earth might have;  
in death, no friendly tomb,  
but what a stranger gave.  
What may I say?  
Heav'n was His home;  
but mine the tomb  
wherein He lay.