



Meditation: Pilate

It's all my fault. I'm a weak man. They think I'm strong, but I'm not. They think I have power, but I don't. The more power you get, the more you are

desperate to hold on to it. The higher up the pole you climb, the more people are desperate to push you off. All the decisions I make are about me, about keeping my grasp on power, inching my way further upwards in the eyes of those above me.

It was the same with him. I made that power calculation, but it wasn't the same. I could sense it – he was like nobody else I've ever met – he wasn't afraid of me. In him was the chance to break that dog-eat-dog cycle. He held it out to me, the chance to act selflessly for once in my life. And for a millisecond I was tempted, but I bottled out. I couldn't do it. I failed him. I failed myself. I let us both down. I washed my hands.

What if I had pardoned him? Who knows what would have happened? Probably there'd have been a riot. I would have sent out the soldiers and there would have been blood in the streets. Perhaps I would have lost my job, my position, maybe even my life, but could it have felt any worse than this? I have failed him – it's all my fault.

Oh, my Lord (I can't believe I'm calling him that) – what have I done?
It's all my fault, I'm so sorry...

Closing thoughts of a bystander

Look at your hands

It was hands like yours that were nailed to the cross

Look at your feet

It was feet like yours that stumbled their way to Calvary

Look into the eyes of your neighbours

It was for ones like these, that Jesus was crucified

Look at yourself. It was for you that Jesus died.



Church in a Bag
Good Friday
Dubbo Uniting Church



A prayer of approach

Jesus Christ, Son of God, you humbled yourself obedient to the point of death

Help us to follow you, whatever the cost

Jesus, you are the name above all names

We bend our knee before you now, to the glory of God the Father.

Amen

A song to sing or to read: *When His Time Was Over* (TIS 357)

When his time was over, the palms lay where they fell

As they ate together, he told his friends farewell

Jesus, though you cried out for some other end

Love could only choose a cross when our life began again.

Secretly they planned it, with money changing hands

In the quiet garden a kiss betrayed their man

Priests and elders tried him; soldiers crowned him king

We were in the crowd that day when our life began again.

Women wept to see him: he said, 'Don't weep for me'

Many laughed and mocked him: 'Forgive them, they don't see'

Jesus, please forgive me, you know what I am

I was the one who nailed your hands when our life began again.

There was one who asked you, 'Remember me this day'

Jesus, when I'm dying, remember me that way

When my life is over, be with me, my friend

Like the thief upon the cross, when our life began again.

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Meditation: Mary



It's all my fault. Something terrible is going to happen – and it's my fault. Simeon warned me right from the start. 'This child will break your heart,' he said. I remember it like it was yesterday. It's my fault, I should have stopped him. I'm his mother. I should have made him see sense. I saw what happened to John – he preached this message of a coming kingdom and he was beheaded. Elizabeth would not be comforted.

I should have known. I should have seen it coming. I'm his mother – I should have protected him. It's my fault – I should have made him go back to his father's workshop. It's not a glamorous life to build things, to make things – but it's a decent life, a life with prospects – a job, a wife, children. Am I so different from other mothers in wanting these things for my son?

But what sort of a mother have I been? Now he's in chains, they won't even let me see him, as if he's a dangerous criminal. Words, words are his crime. What harm has he done anyone? They say he's to be crucified in the morning unless Pilate gives him his pardon.

Oh, my son, my son, what have I done? It's all my fault, I'm so sorry...

Meditation: Peter

It's all my fault. He was never a strong man physically, not like us fishermen. We should have protected him. There I was blurting it out – 'Whatever happens I'll go with you. I'm by your side until the end.'



But when it came to it, in the garden, I ran off with the rest of them, scared for my life. I left him with the soldiers – pushed about, spat on, beaten and humiliated, dragged off in chains. It's all my fault, what kind of friend am I?

And then in the courtyard, foolishly thinking there was something I could do to put it right, I was a coward again. The servant girl made a big thing about me being a Galilean, about being one of his followers,

and I hid my face, and worse – I even denied knowing him. And the cockerel crowed just as he said it would.

What if we'd stopped him from going to Jerusalem? What if we'd protected him better? What if we'd all stood by him when he needed us? What if...? What if...? What if...? But it's too late now. I failed him, and they say he'll be crucified tomorrow.

Oh, my master, my teacher, my friend, what have I done? It's all my fault, I'm so sorry...

Meditation: Judas

It's all my fault. Not the betrayal, so much, but my total lack of understanding. Yes, I was responsible for the betrayal, but they could have found him anytime they wanted



to – it's not as if he ever made a secret of his movements. He often went alone to pray – they could have taken him anytime. So, what was it about then, you ask? I was frustrated. I wanted to force the issue. I wanted to stir him into action, bring matters to a head.

No, that's just an excuse really – an excuse for my failure to listen and to understand what he was really about. I guess there were things I wanted Jesus to do – like freeing us from the power of Rome. I wanted him to wield the power he had and rid us of those brutish Roman thugs once and for all – call down legions from on high, rain down fire from heaven – you know the kind of thing.

I guess I was so wrapped up in what I wanted that I never really listened. I had my own agenda for him, and he wasn't following it. What if I'd taken the time to listen? What if I'd put my own agenda aside for a moment? What if I hadn't been so wrapped up in my hopes and dreams that I'd considered his for a moment? Could it all have turned out differently?

Oh, my Lord, my companion, my friend, what have I done? It's all my fault, I'm so sorry...