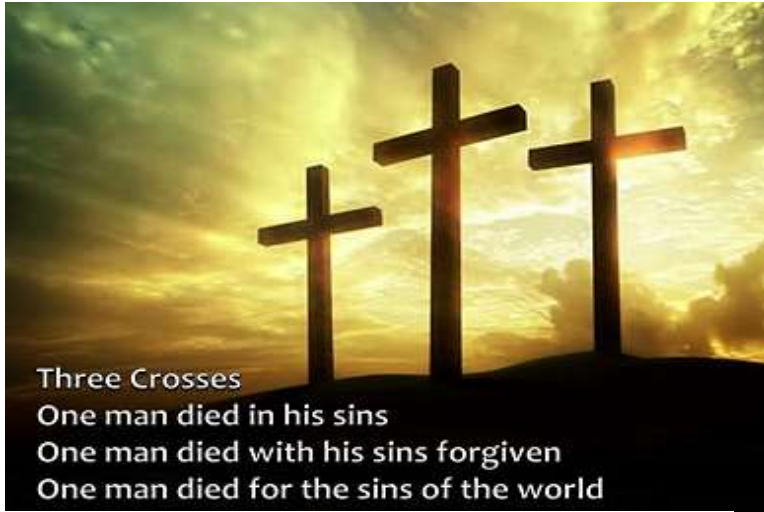




# Church in a Bag

## Good Friday

Dubbo Uniting Church



## Preparation

### *“Come”*

One meaning of the word **come** is to reduce distance. Today the time has **come** on our church calendar to remember the ever sombre but amazing sacrifice that changed the world. Jesus said:

“Let the little children **come** to me, do not hinder them.”  
(Matthew 19:14)

“I have **come** that you might have life more abundantly.”  
(John 10:10)

“No one **comes** to the father but by me.”  
(John 14:6)

## First Reading: Psalm 22

### Reflection

Psalm 22 starts with the well-known verse “My God, My God, why have you abandoned me” and it ends with “People not yet born will be told the Lord saves his people”. This is a prophetic, never ending legacy. Jesus repeated these first words as he hung on the cross hundreds of years after the psalmist wrote them.

## Second Reading: John 18:1–19 and John 19:1–7, 16

### Reflection

How much could it hurt if a good friend deserted you or betrayed you? How much could it hurt if someone tells lies about you and rubbishes your qualifications? Could you imagine your crowd popularity going from “hero” to “zero” in one week? Can you imagine being at the mercy of officials who have no respect for you or worse, hating you with no-one to support or defend you? These hurts are gigantic both emotionally and mentally.



As well as this, Jesus suffered physically. He was spat upon, slapped, had a crown of thorns put on his head and whipped. These horrid things are too gruesome to contemplate without evoking revulsion – cruelty at its utmost especially when you add in crucifixion with real nails.

All this would have seemed a shocking end to a growing and promising ministry. What a hopeless situation. What a waste. Where to now? Why go on? Was all this real? These thoughts were probably in the minds of the disciples and followers of Jesus.

Isaiah, speaking on behalf of God, gives us a clue when we read in chapter 55 verse 8: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord”.

If God is a loving God, as the bible claims, then we ask “How could God allow such a thing to happen”. I was excited to read in “The Message” from John 3 these words:

“This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed: by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person’s failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him.”

As Rev Mel said to us a few weeks ago, “God has **come** to us so that we can **come** to Him”.

### Prayer inspired by the hymn 'How Great Thou Art'

O lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works your hand has made.  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder  
your power throughout the universe displayed.  
How great you are! How great you are!

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing sent him to die  
I scarce can take it in  
that on the cross our burden gladly bearing  
he bled and died to take away our sin.  
How great you are! How great you are!

Lord, we realise how far we fall short of your purpose for us. Our selfishness leads us away so often, sometimes without us noticing. We say and do things we shouldn't and we are easily distracted. We ask for the forgiveness that you offer through Jesus death, admitting our wrongs and being thankful.

**Amen**



## A song to sing or to read: See His Hands

See his hands, see the cruel marks of bitterness and shame.  
See his hands reaching out to take the whole world's pain.  
O, see his hands (O, see his hands)  
O, see his wounds (O, see his wounds)  
O, see his hands reaching out to the world.

Feel his hands, feel his touch upon your tear-stained face.  
Feel his hands gently lifting you to beauty and grace.  
O, feel his hands (O, feel his hands)  
O, feel his wounds (O, feel his wounds)  
O, feel his hands reaching out to your pain.

Take his hands in your own, touch those precious scars.  
Take the love from his wounds: heal your wounded heart.  
O, take his hands (O, take his hands)  
O, touch his wounds (O, touch his wounds)  
O feel his love flowing into your heart.

*This will be a new song to you, but there are a number of other songs referenced today.  
I hope you can take the time to reflect on the words to this song.  
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## Closing Prayer

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died he for me, who caused his pain; for me, who him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be that thou, my God, should die for me!  
You have come and shown such amazing love and grace, inviting us to come  
into your presence and experience your forgiveness, love, grace and glory,  
unlike on Mt Sinai where you forbade people to come into your presence on  
the mountain. May we come so that we can walk in unison with you.  
No condemnation now I dread. Jesus, and all in him is mine!  
Alive in him, my living Head and clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne  
and claim the crown through Christ, my own. **Amen**

**With thanks to David Pattinson for preparing today's reflection**



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