

Holy Saturday – ‘It is finished.’



GATHERING IN GOD’S PRESENCE

If you would find it helpful, light a candle as a symbol of God’s presence with us. Consider placing a cross on a table, perhaps making one out of two twigs.

Call to worship

We gather at the foot of an empty cross.
We watch for signs of hope in the midst of despair.
We wait for the sting of death to be overcome.
But not now, not yet.
Today we watch and wait.
But joy when the morning comes.

Suggested hymn: [Jesus Christ, I think upon your sacrifice](#) (StF 274) (11/25)

- 1 Jesus Christ, I think upon your sacrifice,
you became nothing, poured out to death.
Many times I've wondered at your gift of life,
and I'm in that place once again.
And I'm in that place once again.
*And once again I look upon
the cross where you died,
I'm humbled by your mercy
and I'm broken inside.
Once again I thank you,
once again I pour out my life.*
- 2 Now you are exalted to the highest place,
King of the heavens, where one day I'll bow.
But for now, I marvel at this saving grace,
and I'm full of praise once again.
I'm full of praise once again.

Refrain

Thank you for the cross,
thank you for the cross,
thank you for the cross, my Friend.
Thank you for the cross,
thank you for the cross,
thank you for the cross, my Friend.

Refrain

Matt Redman (b. 1974)

Opening Prayer

We have heard your words of hope:
'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'
We have heard your words of promise:
'Today you will be with me in paradise.'

We have heard your words of sacrifice:
'Into your hands I commend my spirit.'

But now we stand before an empty cross.
Where are you, Lord,
and where are we?
Is this really the end?
Can it really be finished?
Help us to watch and wait,
to stand in the in-between time,
and look beyond the emptiness of 'now' to the hope of 'but not yet'. Amen.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

John 19: 30-42

³⁰When Jesus had received the wine, he said, '**It is finished.**' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³¹Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. ³²Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵(He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) ³⁶These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' ³⁷And again another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.'

³⁸After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. ³⁹Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever

been laid. ⁴²And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.



A Time of Reflection

1. What images does the word 'empty' bring to mind for you?
2. How patient are you at waiting?
3. How does the 'watching and waiting' of Holy Saturday speak to you in our current situation?
4. If you're able to go for a walk today, walk slowly, think about the empty cross and Jesus in the tomb and listen to the sounds around you. If you're not able, sit by an open window and watch and listen. What do you notice?

As you reflect on these words you might like to listen to the following piece of music: 'Nuvole Bianche' by Ludovico Einaudi <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VR-6AS0-l4>

A Time of Prayer

'It is finished.'

Now, Lord Jesus,
you have finished your work.

You have convinced us of our sin
and you have forgiven it.
You have convinced us of your way
and you have welcomed us along it.
You have shown us a foretaste of heaven
and received us into your Kingdom.

You have done all that's needed
and it will be for your Spirit soon
to continue your work in us.

Having overcome the sin of the world,
death is a small obstacle.

Just as you foretold
that you would be handed over to be crucified
and this has come true;
also as you foretold,
on the third day,
you will rise again.
And we will be your witnesses. Amen.*
(Adapted)

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come, your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
 Now and forever. Amen.

Suggested hymn: [My song is love unknown](#) (StF 277, vv.1-7) (11/28)

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| <p>1 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?</p> | <p>Yet they at these
 themselves displease,
 and 'gainst him rise.</p> |
| <p>2 He came from his blest throne,
 salvation to bestow;
 but they made strange, and none
 the longed-for Christ would know.
 But O my Friend,
 my Friend indeed,
 who at my need
 his life did spend!</p> | <p>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.</p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>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?
 Heaven was his home;
 but mine the tomb
 wherein he lay.</p> |
| <p>4 Why, what has my Lord done?
 What makes this rage and spite?
 He made the lame to run,
 he gave the blind their sight.
 Sweet injuries!</p> | <p>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.</p> |

Samuel Crossman (c. 1624-1683)

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SENDING OUT

We are silent before your empty cross.
We are broken in our emptiness.
We are thankful for your sacrifice.
We look forward in hope.

Stay with us, O God, as we gaze upon the cross,
Stay with us as we await the joy of tomorrow.
Bless us, O God and bless the world which you love so much. Amen.

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