

St Michael Lichfield with St John, Wall

Bible Study Lent 2021

The Passion of Jesus in Mark's Gospel 17th March 2021

Mark 14.32-72

Gethsemane and the arrest of Jesus

Opening prayer

God of compassion,
whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
shared the life of a home in Nazareth,
and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
strengthen us in our daily living
that in joy and in sorrow
we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Mark 14.32-72

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.'³³ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated.³⁴ And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.'³⁵ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.³⁶ He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.'³⁷ He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?'³⁸ Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'³⁹ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.⁴⁰ And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him.⁴¹ He came a third time and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.⁴² Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

Is there a particular word or phrase in this passage that has particular significance for you? If so, what is it and why?

⁴³ Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.'⁴⁵ So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him.⁴⁶ Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.⁴⁷ But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear.⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit?'⁴⁹ Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.'⁵⁰ All of them deserted him and fled.

From The Poems of Yuri Zhivago (translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky) Boris Pasternak

3 Holy Week

Still the gloom of night around.
Still so early in the world,
The stars are countless in the sky,
And each of them as bright as day,
And if the earth were able to,
It would sleep its way through Easter
To the reading of the psalms.

Still the gloom of night around.
So early an hour in the world,
The square lies like eternity
From the crossroads to the corner,
And the light and warmth of dawn
Are still a millennium away.

The earth's still bare as bare can be,
With nothing to put on at night
To go and swing the bells outside
And there back up the choristers.

And from Great and Holy Thursday
Right to Holy Saturday,
Water bores the riverbanks
And twines in whirlpools round itself.
And the woods are undressed, uncovered,
And at the service of Christ's Passion,
Like the ranks of people praying,
Stand trunks of pine trees in a crowd.

And in town, with very little
Space, as at a local meeting,
Trees, stark naked, stand and look
Through the church's grillwork gates.

And their gaze is filled with terror.
The cause of their alarm is clear.
Gardens are coming through the fence,
The order of the earth is shaken:
It is God they're burying.

And they see light by the royal doors,
A black pall and a row of candles,
Tear-stained faces - suddenly
The procession of the cross
Comes to meet them with the shroud,

And two birches by the gate
Are forced to step aside for it.

And the procession makes its way
Around the yard and past the walk,
And brings to the chapel from outside
Spring, and springtime conversation,
And air that smacks of blessed bread,
And of spring's intoxication.

And March squanders its hoard of snow
On cripples crowding by the porch,
As if a man came out to them
Carrying the ark, and opened it,
And gave away all to the very last.

And the singing goes on till dawn,
And, when it has sobbed its fill,
The reading of psalms and the epistle
Reaches more softly from inside
To vacant lots under the lamps.

But at midnight creature and flesh
Fall silent, hearing the springtime rumour
That the moment the weather clears
Death itself may be overcome
By the effort of the Resurrection.

Closing prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen