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Good Friday Devotional

April 3, 2026

Prayer (from Psalm 22)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? We cry by day, but you do not answer. We cry by night, but find no rest. Yet in you our ancestors trusted. They trusted you, and you delivered them. So we praise you among the great congregation, telling all of our siblings of your deliverance. All the ends of the earth shall remember and return to the Lord. Dominion belongs to you, and you shall rule over the nations. Amen.

Scripture Reading Luke 22:47-53

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” ⁴⁹ When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?” ⁵⁰ Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him. ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as though I were a rebel? ⁵³ When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness!”

Love & Love & Love Again

If you back a cat into a corner
she'll arch her back,
show her teeth,
hiss in your direction.
If you back a human into a corner,
we'll raise our fists,
raise our voices,
throw words of hate in your direction.
But when we backed Jesus into a corner,
he said, *Forgive them, for they know not what they do.*
He turned and looked at Peter, love in his eyes.
He offered grace to the criminal hanging beside him.
When we backed Jesus into a corner,
he loved and loved and loved again.

In this war-torn world,
we could do the same.
We could ground the bomber planes,
empty the gun cartridges,
unclench our fists, soften our jaws.
They say it can't be done,
but don't believe them.
In this war-torn world, we could try—
love and love and love again.

*Poem by
Rev. Sarah Speed*

Scripture Reading Luke 23:13-25

¹³ Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people, and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ I will therefore have him flogged and release him.”

¹⁸ Then they all shouted out together, “Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!” ¹⁹ (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city and for murder.) ²⁰ Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, ²¹ but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” ²² A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.” ²³ But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified, and their voices prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. ²⁵ He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

What Wondrous Love Is This 215



1 What won - drous love is this, O my soul, O my
 2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing
 3 To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will
 4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, what won - drous love is this, O my soul! What
 down, when I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when
 sing, to God and to the Lamb, I will sing; to
 on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and



won - drous love is this that caused the Lord of
 I was sink - ing down be - neath God's righ - teous
 God and to the Lamb who is the great I
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joy - ful



bliss to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul, for my
 frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul, for my
 AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing, I will
 be, and through e - ter - ni - ty, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, to bear the dread - ful curse for my soul!
 soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul!
 sing; while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing!
 on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

Scripture Reading

Luke 23:33-49

³³ When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [[³⁴ Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”]] And they cast lots to divide his clothing.

³⁵ And the people stood by watching, but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom.” ⁴³ He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵ while the sun’s light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent.” ⁴⁸ And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these things.

Nonviolent Resistance

Commentary Rev. Dr. Brian Blount

The Son of Man is on a mission—to resist the powers, human and otherwise, that foment injustice and tolerate brokenness. He speaks for the poor, advocates for release of the imprisoned, grants vision to the blind, and champions the oppressed. Judas betrays Jesus, and his emancipatory mission, with a kiss that signals to the authorities: he is the one you seek! He is the one whose ministry resists the human inclination to legitimize the diminishment of society's most vulnerable through laws and glorified traditions. Consistently, defiantly, furiously—but always nonviolently—Jesus challenged those laws, even the Sabbath law, and reframed many traditions whenever those laws and traditions were treated as more important than delivering wholeness, healing, and liberation to shattered human lives.

Jesus’ defiance made him a marked man. The authorities sought his arrest, but feared apprehending him publicly lest the people he fought for rise up in his defense. So, with

Judas's treachery, they seize him secretly. In the chaos of the moment, forgetting the nonviolence Jesus has modeled, his disciples ready their weapons. One even swings his sword and cuts off the ear of an arresting official. Immediately, Jesus reminds his people that they fight with words, ideas, and vision. To press the point, he touches the wounded officer and heals him. The power of God that Jesus represents shows care even for the oppressor—even as Jesus uses God's power to overturn systems of oppression. Dying on the cross, Jesus reinforces his message of nonviolent resistance in the most heartbreaking of ways. As the authorities crucify him for proclaiming and prosecuting the hope of liberation for all God's people, Jesus asks God to forgive them. To the end, he fights them by loving them.

Our calling is to go and do likewise. Fight: Consistently. Defiantly. Furiously. Nonviolently. Whenever and wherever we encounter brokenness, injustice, and oppression. To do otherwise is to betray everything for which he lived and died.

What might it look like to fight injustice with "words, ideas, and vision"?

Closing Prayer

Loving God, you sent Christ to save us.

We have betrayed him. We have denied him.

We have abandoned, mocked, and crucified him.

Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us... (Time for silent prayer)

Show us the truth of your saving power. Show us the way beyond the grave.

Show us the life that is everlasting; through Jesus Christ, our hope. Amen.

Please Join NCPC in Worshiping our Risen Lord on Easter Sunday

Our Sunrise Service will be outside at 6:30 a.m. at the New Castle Pier at the end of Delaware Street.

Our Easter Worship Service will be in the Meeting House at 10:30 a.m.

Our Easter Fair will begin during Sunday School and conclude with the Easter Egg hunt at 12p.m.