

The Final Hours of the Christ - Matt Tullos

A worship service that could be used before or after viewing "The Passion of the Christ."

Reader 1: The greatest story ever told is grace.

Reader 2: The greatest man to ever walk the earth.

Reader 3: The greatest burden

Reader 1: laid on this one man.

Reader 2: The greatest injustice.

Reader 3: The greatest faith.

Reader 1: The greatest pain.

All: The greatest moment in history.

Reader 2: It is the reason guilty men go free.

Reader 3: It is the reason for all hope worth having.

Reader 1: Love worth giving,

Reader 3: And truth worth sharing.

Reader 2: Around a table God built a church.

Reader 3: This is My body.

Reader 1: Jesus said,

Jesus: "I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. For I tell you now that I won't eat it again until it comes to fulfillment in the Kingdom of God."

Reader 1: The garden of Eden.

Reader 2: The flood.

Reader 3: The exodus.



Reader 2: The foreshadowing words of the prophets.

Reader 3: They all looked toward this meal.

Jesus: This bread is My body.

All: Broken for you.

Jesus: This is My heart.

All: Broken for you.

Jesus: This is My will.

All: Broken for you.

Jesus: This is My destiny.

All: Broken for you.

Reader 1: This is the Son of God.

Jesus: I am.

All: Broken for you.

The Presentation and Distribution of the Bread

Reader 1: In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying,

Jesus: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Reader 2: This cup is a promise that slips through the corridors of death.

Reader 1: It reflects surrender.

Reader 3: A cup of payment.

Reader 2: A cup of mercy.

Reader 1: A cup of grace.

Reader 3: Aware of the wrath to come.

Reader 2: Aware of betrayers.

Reader 1: Aware of the loneliness.

Reader 3: Jesus said,

Jesus: Take this cup.

Reader 2: Aware of the wars to come.

Reader 3: Aware of the wretched nature of man.

Reader 1: Jesus said,

Jesus: Take this cup.

Reader 2: Lonely wife.

Jesus: Take this cup.

Reader 3: Angry son.

Jesus: Take this cup.

Reader 2: Disillusioned daughter.

Jesus: Take this cup.

Reader 1: Helpless victim.

Jesus: Take this cup.

Reader 3: Anxious father.

Jesus: Take this cup.

Reader 2: Broken child.

Jesus: Take this cup.

The Presentation and Distribution of the Cup

Reader 1: See our Savior.

Reader 3: Praying in agony.

Reader 2: Alone.

Reader 1: See Him betrayed.

Reader 3: Deserted.

Reader 2: See Him innocent, yet arrested.

Reader 1: Almighty, yet submissive.

Reader 3: Dare to look at the face of grace offered to us.

Reader 2: Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged.

Reader 1: Completely naked with His hands tied against a pole. A centurion held a cat of nine tails.

Reader 2: A whip laced with bones.

Reader 3: Glass.

Reader 2: And metal.

Reader 3: The whip would gouge into His back.

Reader 1: The full torture would occur with the return of the whip with a firm jerk that would tear His flesh.

Reader 3: They continued this process.

Reader 2: Thirty-nine lashes He would endure.

Reader 1: Thirty-nine lashes, tied to the whipping post.

Reader 3: Endure each blow in our place. Stand with us now in honor of this dark moment in history.

All: One.

Reader 2: For the times we proudly did what we wanted.

All: Two.

Reader 1: The weight of senseless violence.

All: Three.

Reader 3: The flattering tongue.

All: Four.

Reader 2: Gossiping lips.

All: Five.

Reader 1: Inhumanity.

All: Six.

Reader 3: Lust and perversion.

All: Seven.

Reader 3: Terrorist plots.

All: Eight.

Reader 1: Child abuse.

All: Nine.

Reader 3: Prejudice.

All: Ten.

Reader 2: War.

All: Eleven.

Reader 1: Blasphemy.

All: Twelve.

Reader 2: Stubborn disbelief in God.

All: Thirteen.

Reader 3: Thievery.

All: Fourteen.

Reader 1: Unforgiveness.

All: Fifteen.

Reader 2: Pornography.

All: Sixteen.

Reader 3: Lies.

All: Seventeen.

Reader 1: Abortion.

All: Eighteen.

Reader 2: Legalism.

All: Nineteen.

Reader 3: Greed.

All: Twenty.

Reader 1: Boastfulness.

All: Twenty-one.

Reader 3: Heretical teaching.

All: Twenty-two.

Reader 2: Pride.

All: Twenty-three.

Reader 3: Murder.

All: Twenty-four.

Reader 2: Contempt for holiness.

All: Twenty-five.

Reader 1: Apathy.

All: Twenty-six.

Reader 3: Betrayal.

All: Twenty-seven.

Reader 2: Gluttony.

All: Twenty-eight.

Reader 1: Drug abuse.

All: Twenty-nine.

Reader 3: Infidelity.

All: Thirty.

Reader 2: Cruelty.

All: Thirty-one.

Reader 1: Rape.

All: Thirty-two.

Reader 3: Jealousy.

All: Thirty-three.

Reader 2: Apathy.

All: Thirty-four.

Reader 1: Lynching.

All: Thirty-five.

Reader 3: Prostitution.

All: Thirty-six.

Reader 2: Witchcraft.

All: Thirty-seven.

Reader 1: Pride.

All: Thirty-eight.

Reader 3: Mocking.

All: Thirty-nine.

Reader 2: Sin.

Reader 1: Stand in silence as we remember that by His stripes we are healed.

Congregation stands for approximately 20 seconds, and then is motioned to be seated.

Reader 1: He was despised.

Reader 2: “What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?”

Reader 3: Pilate asked them.

Reader 1: And rejected.

All: “Crucify Him!” they shouted.

Reader 1: And forsaken by men,

Jesus: Peter, could you not pray with Me one hour?

Reader 1: A man of sorrows

Reader 3: When He saw the throngs, He was moved with pity and sympathy for them, because they were bewildered,

Reader 2: and harassed,

Reader 3: and distressed,

Reader 2: and dejected,

Reader 1: and helpless,

Reader 2: like sheep without a shepherd.

Reader 1: A man acquainted with pain,

Reader 3: The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They tore the robe from His back. The robe had already become adherent to the wounds from the scourging. Once again intense pain, bleeding.

Reader 1: And acquainted with grief

Jesus: Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killer of prophets, abuser of the messengers of God! How often I've longed to gather your children, gather your children like a hen, Her brood safe under her wings—but you refused and turned away!

Reader 1: and like One from whom men hide their faces. He was despised, and we did not appreciate His worth or have any esteem for Him.

All: Surely He has borne our grief.

Reader 2: Divorce, shame, rejection, disillusionment,

Reader 1: sicknesses,

Reader 3: leukemia, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer,

Reader 1: weaknesses,

Reader 2: depression, anger, failure, ignorance.

Reader 1: Yet we ignorantly considered Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God

Reader 1: But He was wounded for our transgressions.

Reader 2: Sharp pain coursing through His body.

Reader 3: Bludgeoned by the closed fists of hardened soldiers.

Presentation of the cross

From the back of the auditorium a large cross is carried in and erected on the platform.

Reader 1: He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities.

Reader 2: Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying,

Reader 3: "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?" And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

Reader 1: They precisely placed the large eight-inch spike into the wrist of Jesus—a place where nerve and muscle would be intertwined to cause torture beyond what we could imagine.

(The sound on the hammer on nails: Six times)

Reader 2: Mocking.

Reader 1: Vulgarities.

Reader 3: Perversion.

Reader 2: Spittle.

Reader 1: Mud.

Reader 3: Harassment.

Reader 2: Religious condemnation.

Reader 1: Naked shame.

Reader 3: Blasphemy.

Reader 2: Loneliness.

Reader 1: Abandonment.

Reader 3: Thirst.

Reader 2: Shock.

Reader 3: Convulsion.

Reader 1: Blood.

Reader 2: Puncture wounds.

Reader 3: And a burning, bleeding back.

Reader 1: Their words spewed forth from all directions and all eras.

Reader 2: He saved others, but He cannot save Himself.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 3: If You are the Son of God, save Yourself.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 1: King of the Jews? You have no kingdom.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 2: I'll do what I want.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 3: I don't need You!

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 1: Leave us alone.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 3: You are a liar. There is no God.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 2: We have the right to choose life or death.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 1: I'm the master of my own life.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 3: Leave us alone. We don't want Your love.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 2: We're doing fine without You.

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 1: You are not wanted here!

Jesus: Father, forgive them.

Reader 3: The crimes of all people.

Reader 2: The sins of all nations.

Reader 1: The climax of history.

Reader 3: The perilous chasm between heaven and hell.

Reader 2: Do you see Him?

Reader 1: Can you feel His isolation?

Reader 3: The shame of His death?

Reader 2: Naked.

Reader 1: Bleeding.

Reader 3: We dare you right now to look squarely and soberly at the cross of Christ.

Reader 1: We invite you to stand and remember.

Reader 3: Oh sacred hands now wounded
That loved this wretched throng
The tortured one discarded,
disfigured, and alone
How cruel the shame and terror
The sacrificial lamb.
Transgressions laid upon him
The dying Son of Man.

Congregation stands.

Reader 1: See, from His head, His hands, His feet,

Reader 2: With thorns Your only crown.

Reader 2: So pale are You in anguish.

Reader 1: Blessed Redeemer!

Reader 3: Seems I now see Him.

Reader 1: Blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins.

Reader 3: Precious Redeemer!

Reader 2: On Calvary's tree

Reader 1: Sorrow and love flowed mingled down.

Reader 3: Wounded and bleeding, for sinners pleading.

Reader 1: With grief and shame weighed down.

Reader 2: He took my sins and my sorrows.

Reader 1: Did e'er such love and sorrow meet.

Reader 3: Now scornfully surrounded.

Reader 2: Blind and unheeding—dying for me!

Reader 1: Sinners plunged beneath that flood,

All: Lose all their guilty stains.

Reader 3: He suffered and died alone.

Reader 2: I stand amazed.

Reader 1: What wondrous love is this.

Reader 3: Amazing love.

All: Amazing . . . grace.

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