

Maundy Thursday Labyrinth Meditation

Introduction: Welcome to the Maundy Thursday Labyrinth Meditation. You are invited to pause at each station to read the scripture passages and the reflection, to use the objects, and to pray. Guiding questions are posed for your contemplation as you move through the labyrinth. All scripture passages are from the New Revised Standard Version and retrieved from <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

Don't worry about coming ... for the right reasons. Just wave branches. Shout praise for the wrong reason. Eat a meal. Have your feet washed. Grab at coins. Shout Crucify him. Walk away when the cock crows. Because we, as we are and not as some improved version of ourselves ... we are who God came to save. And nothing can stop what's going to happen. — *Nadia Bolz-Weber*

At Entry: *Lord Jesus, Living Christ - Prepare me to be with you in the center of Jerusalem in my worshipful heart. Gather me in the upper room of my mind to meet with you in devotion and friendship. I am ready to receive you. I steel my heart to stand in wonder as you surrender to the violent depths of the human condition for my rescue and healing. Amen. (From Centering Prayers, by Peter Traben Haas, p. 65)*

Station 1: The Table – Passover herbs and matzoh

Scripture: Luke 22:14-19

¹⁴When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶for I tell you, I will not eat it^a until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; ¹⁸for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Reflection: **Blessing the Bread, the Cup**

Let us bless the bread
that gives itself to us
with its terrible weight,
its infinite grace.

Let us bless the cup
poured out for us
with a love
that makes us anew.

Let us gather
 around these gifts
 simply given
 and deeply blessed.

And then let us go
 bearing the bread,
 carrying the cup,
 laying the table
 within a hungering world.

As you continue, ask yourself: Who are you as you sit at the Passover table? Who is with YOU at the table?

Station 2: Foot washing – Towel and basin

Scripture: John 13:2-17

²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table,^[a] took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

Reflection:

Helping, fixing, and serving represent three different ways of seeing life. When you help, you see life as weak. When you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. — *Joan Halifax*

Blessing You Cannot Turn Back

As if you could
 stop this blessing
 from washing
 over you.

As if you could
 turn it back
 could return it
 from your body
 to the bowl,
 from the bowl
 to the pitcher,

from the pitcher
to the hand
that set this blessing
on its way.

As if you could
change the course
by which this blessing
flows.

As if you could
control how it
pours over you...
unbidden,
unsought,
unasked,

yet startling
in the way
it matches the need
you did not know
you had.

As if you could
become undrenched.

As if you could
resist gathering it up
in your two hands
and letting your body
follow the arc
this blessing makes.

As you continue, ask yourself: How do you feel as Jesus washes the feet of the one who loves him? The one who betrays him? The one who denies him? How do you feel as Jesus washes *your* feet?

Station 3: Betrayal – 30 silver coins

Scripture: John 13:21-30

So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot.^[b] ²⁷ After he received the piece of bread,^[c] Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.”

Reflection:

People who live close together can be sources of great sorrow for one another. When Jesus chose his twelve apostles, Judas was one of them. Judas is called a traitor. A traitor, according to the literal meaning of the Greek word for “betraying,” is someone who hands the other over to suffering.

The truth is that we all have something of the traitor in us because each of us hands our fellow human beings over to suffering somehow, somewhere, mostly without intending or even knowing it. Many children, even grown-up children, can experience deep anger toward their parents for having protected them too much or too little. When we are willing to confess that we often hand those we love over to suffering, even against our best intentions, we will be more ready to forgive those who, mostly against their will, are the causes of our pain.
(from <https://henrinouwen.org/meditations/being-handed-over-to-suffering/>)

As you continue, ask yourself: How do you betray Jesus? How do you show your love for Jesus?

Station 4: Asleep – Hourglass timer and rock for kneeling

Scripture: Luke 22:39-46; Mark 14:37

⁴⁵ When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”^[c]

³⁷ He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?”

Reflection: Imagine Jesus confronting you with the question, “Can you not keep awake one hour?” Pause here for 2-3 minutes of silence.

Blessing for Staying Awake

Even in slumber,
Even in dreaming,
Even in sorrow,
Even in pain:

Awake, awake,
Awake my soul
To the ONE who keeps vigil
At all time for you.

As you continue, ask yourself: What is your prayer? How will you stay awake?

Station 5: Denial - Rooster*Scripture:* John 18:15-18; 25-27

⁷ The woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”

²⁵ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” ²⁶ One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

*Reflection:***The Courtyard Scene** by Ann Weems

Over and Over again we sit in our courtyards,

our mouths speak what our hearts are full of...

WE DO NOT KNOW HIM. DONOTDONOTDONOTDONOT
KNOWHIMKNOWHIMLKNOWHIMKNOWHIM

echoes loudly, emphatically, filling time and space, heaven and earth;
and yet

the saddest part is when the cock crows

we don't have the ears to hear TOHEARTOHEARTOHEAR.

At least Peter had the ears to hear and the heart to weep.

As you continue, ask yourself: How do you deny Jesus?**Station 6: Truth - Handwashing***Scripture:* John 18:33-40

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters^[a] again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” ³⁵ Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” ³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my

kingdom is not from here.”³⁷ Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”³⁸ Pilate asked him, “What is truth?”

Reflection:

Anne Lamott says: Number one: the first and truest thing is that all truth is a paradox. Life is both a precious, unfathomably beautiful gift, and it's impossible here, on the incarnational side of things. It's been a very bad match for those of us who were born extremely sensitive. It's so hard and weird that we sometimes wonder if we're being punked. It's filled simultaneously with heartbreaking sweetness and beauty, desperate poverty, floods and babies and acne and Mozart, all swirled together. I don't think it's an ideal system.

Who do *you* say Jesus is? How does your life reflect truth? How can we know the truth today? How do we discern truth? Pilate washes his hands of the whole matter. What do you do?

Jesu said, “I am the way, the truth, the life.” How does that impact your understanding of truth?

As you continue, ask yourself: What is truth?

Station 7: Tension – Crown of thorns and purple cloth

Scripture: John 19:1-16

² And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³ They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face. ⁴ Pilate went out again and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” ⁵ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!” ⁶ When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.”

Reflection:

A cross and nails are not always necessary.
There are a thousand ways to kill him,
some of them as obvious as choosing where you will stand
when the showdown between the weak and the strong comes along,
others of them as subtle as keeping your mouth shut
when someone asks if you know him.

Today, while he dies, do not turn away.
 Make yourself look in the mirror.
 Today no one gets away
 without being shamed by his beauty.
 Today no one flees
 without being laid bare by his light.

by Barbara Brown Taylor

Position yourself within the crowd. Where are you as Pilate washes his hands? As the crowd shouts crucify? What do you say? What do you do? What is your truth?

As you continue, ask yourself: How do you hold the tensions of so many voices shouting their truth?

Station 8: Glorify - Candle

Scripture: John 12:23-28

²³ Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

²⁷ “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.”

Reflection:

In his book *Finding Our Way Home*, Henri Nouwen reminds us that finding our way home “to be handed over” is the meaning of passion. Things are being done to Jesus over which he has no control. Passion is a kind of waiting...waiting for what other people are going to do.

Jesus went to Jerusalem to put people in a situation where they had to say ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ This is the great drama of Jesus’ passion: he had to wait for their response. What would they do? Betray him or follow him? In a way, his agony is not simply the agony of approaching death. It is also the agony of being out of control and of having to wait. It is the agony of a God who depends on us to decide how to live out the divine presence among us. It is the agony of the God who, in a very mysterious way, allows us to decide how God will be God. Here we glimpse the mystery of God’s incarnation. God became human not only to act among us but also to be the recipient of our responses.” (p. 109-110)

“Precisely when Jesus is being handed over into his passion, he manifests his glory. ‘Whom do you seek? ... I am he’ are words that echo all the way back to Moses and the burning bush: ‘I am who I am. I am the one.’ These words are the glory of God

manifesting itself, and those present fell flat on the ground. Then Jesus was handed over. But already in the handing over we see the glory of God handing himself over to us. God's glory revealed in Jesus embraces passion as well as resurrection." (p. 113)

"...we realize that the glory of God, the divinity of God is bursting through in Jesus' passion precisely when he is most victimized. So new life becomes visible not only in the resurrection on the third day, but already in the passion, in the being handed over. ... because it is in the passion that the fullness of Jesus' love shines through. It is a waiting love, a love that does not seek control. When we allow ourselves to feel fully how we are being acted upon, we can come in touch with a new life that we were not even aware was there." (p.114)

As you continue, ask yourself: How do we stand in the face of chaos? How do we carry the glory of the hour? How do we sit in the darkness of Friday and Saturday?

As you exit the labyrinth: Reflect on Jan Richardson's poem, "Still"

This day
let all stand still
in silence,
in sorrow.

Sun and moon
be still.

Earth
be still.

Still
the waters.

Still
the wind

Let the ground
gape in stunned
lamentation

Let it weep
as it receives
what it thinks
it will not
give up.

Let it groan
 as it gathers
 the One
 who was thought
 forever stilled.

Time
 be still.

Watch
 and wait.

Still.

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- Blessing the Bread, the Cup, p. 133
- Blessing You Cannot Turn Back, p. 131
- Blessing for Staying Awake, p. 134
- Still, p.

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