



A responsive reading from the Gospel of John
For worship on Good Friday

Speaker: You have watched as Jesus rode into Jerusalem this week. You waved palm branches and cried out

Crowd: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

Speaker: You sat with him in the upper room. You let him wash your feet. And then he said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified and God has been glorified with him. I am with you only a little longer. I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. The same way I have loved you, you should also love one another."

Crowd: Lord, where are you going?

Speaker: Where I am going, you cannot follow me now. But you will follow me after it is over.

Crowd: Lord, why can't we follow you now? We will lay down our lives for you.

Speaker: Will you lay down your lives for me? The truth is, before the rooster crows, you will have denied me three times.

Crowd: Even if we have to die with you, we will never deny you!

Speaker: He was arrested. You followed him to the trial. And they came to you, and said to you, "You aren't some of this man's disciples, too, are you?"

Crowd: We are not.

Speaker: Are you sure you're not some of his disciples?

Crowd: We are not.

Speaker: I recognize you - you're definitely some of his disciples!

Crowd: A curse on us if we're lying - we don't know the man!

Speaker: And so Jesus was handed over to Pilate. And Pilate brought forth Jesus and a criminal called Barabbas. "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

Crowd: Not this man. Give us Barabbas!

Speaker: And what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

Crowd: Crucify him!

Speaker: I don't see any reason to kill him. Why don't you release him?

Crowd: Crucify him!

Speaker: I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.

Crowd: His blood be on us and on our children!

Speaker: Very well. Here is your king.

Crowd: Crucify him!

Speaker: Are you sure? Should I really crucify your King?

Crowd: We have no king but the emperor. Crucify him!

Speaker: It will be as you say. Take him away and crucify him. **::Pause::**

Speaker: You watch as Jesus is taken and crucified. God is hung on a cross. This is the final battle. This is the end of the story. You've reached the last stop on your journey. Here, on the cross, the war for the world is ended.

Crowd: Rome said, You cannot defy us. You are no king.

Speaker: Jesus replies, My kingdom is not of this world.

Crowd: Rome said, We will break your body. We will tear you apart.

Speaker: Jesus replies, Take my body. It's broken for you. It will become food that gives life to all who eat it.

Crowd: We will spill your blood. We will drain your life away.

Speaker: Take my blood. It's poured out for you. It will become drink that quenches eternal thirst.

Crowd: We will pierce you, hang you high to show what happens to those who defy us.

Speaker: I am pierced for your sins. I must be lifted up so that whoever believes in me may have eternal life.

Crowd: We will take your life. We will show you that we are in control. We have the last word.

Speaker: I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for my sheep. I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me. **::pause::**

Speaker: And with that, God dies. Behold, the Son of Man, lifted up on a cross. Look at him.

Behold the bread of life, broken. Look as the Blood of a new covenant is poured out. See the nails that pierce him for you. This is the Good Shepherd who has given his life for us. Even now he is breathing his last breath. Even now he is crying out. Listen. Can you hear him? What were his last words?

Crowd: It is finished.