

## **Passion of Our Lord According to St. Luke Luke 22:14-23:56 (NLT)**

For this reading, the congregation will be asked to read those parts which are printed in bold type.

**Narrator (N):** When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. Jesus said,

**Jesus (J):** I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.

**N:** Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said,

**J:** Take this and share it among yourselves. For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come.

**N:** He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying,

**J:** This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.

**N:** After supper he took another cup of wine and said,

**J:** This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you. But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. For it has been determined that the Son of Man must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him.

**N:** The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing. Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. Jesus told them,

**J:** In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.' But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves. You have stayed with me in my time of trial. And just as my Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.

**N:** But Peter said,

**Congregation (C):** Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to die with you.

**N:** But Jesus said,

**J:** Peter, let me tell you something. Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.

**N:** Then Jesus asked them,

**J:** When I sent you out to preach the Good News and you did not have money, a traveler's bag, or an extra pair of sandals, did you need anything?

**C: "No,"**

**J:** But now, take your money and a traveler's bag. And if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one! For the time has come for this prophecy about me to be fulfilled: 'He was counted among the rebels.' Yes, everything written about me by the prophets will come true."

**C: Look, Lord, we have two swords among us.**

**J:** That's enough,

**N:** Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. There he told them,

**J:** Pray that you will not give in to temptation.

**N:** He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed,

**J:** Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.

**N:** Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood. At last he stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief.

**J:** Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation.

**N:** But even as Jesus said this, a crowd approached, led by Judas, one of the twelve disciples. Judas walked over to Jesus to greet him with a kiss. But Jesus said,

**J:** Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?

**N:** When the other disciples saw what was about to happen, they exclaimed,

**C: Lord, should we fight? We brought the swords!**

**N:** And one of them struck at the high priest's slave, slashing off his right ear. But Jesus said,

**J:** No more of this.

**N:** And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

Then Jesus spoke to the leading priests, the captains of the Temple guard, and the elders who had come for him.

**J:** Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there every day. But this is your moment, the time when the power of darkness reigns.

**N:** So they arrested him and led him to the high priest's home. And Peter followed at a distance. The guards lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter joined them there. A servant girl noticed him in the firelight and began staring at him. Finally she said,

**Women:** This man was one of Jesus' followers!

**N:** But Peter denied it.

**Men:** Woman, I don't even know him!

**N:** After a while someone else looked at him and said,

**Women:** You must be one of them!

**Men:** No, man, I'm not!

**N:** About an hour later someone else insisted,

**Women:** This must be one of them, because he is a Galilean, too.

**N:** But Peter insisted all the more,

**Men:** Man, I don't know what you are talking about.

**N:** And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly, the Lord's words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me." And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly. The guards in charge of Jesus began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and said,

**C: Prophecy to us! Who hit you that time?**

**N:** And they hurled all sorts of terrible insults at him. At daybreak all the elders of the people assembled, including the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. Jesus was led before this high council, and they said,

**C: Tell us, are you the Messiah?**

**J:** If I tell you, you won't believe me. And if I ask you a question, you won't answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated in the place of power at God's right hand.

**N:** They all shouted,

**C: So, are you claiming to be the Son of God?**

**J:** You say that I am.

**C: Why do we need other witnesses? We ourselves heard him say it.**

**N:** Then the entire council took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor. They began to state their case:

**Women:** This man has been leading our people astray by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman government and by claiming he is the Messiah, a king.

**N:** So Pilate asked him,

**Men:** Are you the king of the Jews?

**J:** You have said it.

**N:** Pilate turned to the leading priests and to the crowd and said,

**Men:** I find nothing wrong with this man!

**N:** Then they became insistent.

**Women:** But he is causing riots by his teaching wherever he goes—all over Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem!

**Men:** Oh, is he a Galilean?

**N:** When they said that he was, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, because Galilee was under Herod's jurisdiction, and Herod happened to be in Jerusalem at the time. Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle. He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused to answer. Meanwhile, the leading priests and the teachers of religious law stood there shouting their accusations. Then Herod and his

soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. (Herod and Pilate, who had been enemies before, became friends that day.) Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, and he announced his verdict.

**Men:** You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him.

**N:** Then a mighty roar rose from the crowd, and with one voice they shouted,

**C: Kill him, and release Barabbas to us!**

**N:** (Barabbas was in prison for taking part in an insurrection in Jerusalem against the government, and for murder.) Pilate argued with them, because he wanted to release Jesus. But they kept shouting,

**C: Crucify him! Crucify him!**

**N:** For the third time he demanded,

**Men:** Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him.

**N:** But the mob shouted louder and louder, demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their voices prevailed. So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded. As they had requested, he released Barabbas, the man in prison for insurrection and murder. But he turned Jesus over to them to do as they wished. As they led Jesus away, a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large crowd trailed behind, including many grief-stricken women. But Jesus turned and said to them,

**J:** Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are coming when they will say, 'Fortunate indeed are the women who are childless, the wombs that have not borne a child and the breasts that have never nursed.' People will beg the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and plead with the hills, 'Bury us.' For if these things are done when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?

**N:** Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. Jesus said,

**J:** Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.

**N:** And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed.

**C: He saved others, let him save himself if he is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One.**

**N:** The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. They called out to him,

**C: If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!**

**N:** A sign was fastened above him with these words: "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed,

**Men:** So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!

**N:** But the other criminal protested,

**Women:** Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong. Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

**N:** And Jesus replied,

**J:** I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.

**N:** By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. Then Jesus shouted,

**J:** Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!

**N:** And with those words he breathed his last. When the Roman officer overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said,

**C: Surely this man was innocent.**

**N:** And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow. But Jesus' friends, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching. Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph. He was a member of the Jewish high council, but he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. He was from the town of Arimathea in Judea, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come. He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Then he took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in a long sheet of linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb that had been carved out of rock. This was done late on Friday afternoon, the day of preparation, as the Sabbath was about to begin. As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.