

**Voice 2** 'Jesus remember me'.

**Voice 1** 'Today ... in Paradise.'

[pause]

**Voices 1&2** Then the end.

**Voice 4** Luke 23: 44 – 49

*<sup>44</sup> It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, <sup>45</sup> for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup> Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ When he had said this, he breathed his last. <sup>47</sup> The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, ‘Surely this was a righteous man.’ <sup>48</sup> When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. <sup>49</sup> But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.*

**Voice 1** The voices of hate were silenced.

**Voice 2** The shouts of condemnation were cut off.

**Voice 1** As a lamb before its shearers, Jesus was silent. All was lost.

[long pause]

**Voice 2** But is that the sound of gentle stillness? Is there a whisper of hope?

**Voices 1&2** Is there?

**All leave in silence**



# The voices

A meditation for four voices  
based on the Gospel of Luke

**Voice 1**           Where did the first shout come from? Who called it out? Who called Him out?

**Voice 2**           It began in the synagogue, of all places. A demon inside a troubled man could not stay quiet: ““Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!’

**Voice 1**           And Jesus spoke: ‘Be quiet. Come out.’

**Voice 2**           And the people were amazed.

[pause]

**Voice 1**           Then the louder voices of upset holy folk started.

**Voice 2**           It began over a meal in a friend’s house. ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’

**Voice 1**           Jesus answered – as he showed them the new wineskin - ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick do. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.’

**Voice 2**           And the people were puzzled.

[pause]       Optional song

**Voice 3**       Luke 7: 36-50

*<sup>36</sup> When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table. <sup>37</sup> A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. <sup>38</sup> As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.*

*<sup>39</sup> When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is – that she is a sinner.’*

*<sup>40</sup> Jesus answered him, ‘Simon, I have something to tell you.’*

*‘Tell me, teacher,’ he said.*

*<sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment he was taken away.  
Yet who of his generation protested?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living;  
for the transgression of my people he was punished.*

*<sup>9</sup> He was assigned a grave with the wicked,  
and with the rich in his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
nor was any deceit in his mouth.*

*<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer,  
and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,  
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,  
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.*

*<sup>11</sup> After he has suffered,  
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;  
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,  
and he will bear their iniquities.*

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,  
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,  
because he poured out his life unto death,  
and was numbered with the transgressors.  
For he bore the sin of many,  
and made intercession for the transgressors.*

**Voice 1**           More dangerous than the terrorist Barabbas

**Voice 2**           ... because the words of the Living Word cut sharper than any sword.

**Voice 1**           He was led away in a King’s robe and the crowd’s voices screamed out the sentence:

**Voice 2**           ‘Take him away! Crucify him! Crucify him!’

[pause]

**Voice 1**           Now the voices were silent as the sound of nails being hammered into flesh echoed on the city rubbish tip.

**Voice 2**           The men had left but the women remained and wept.

**Voice 1**           At the cruellest moment, skin torn and bloodied, his voice spoke forgiveness and hope to a thief.

**Voice 1**            The holy leaders hated him and looked for a way to arrest, to kill, to silence him.

**Voice 2**            But Jesus said: 'If the crowd keeps quiet the very stones will cry out.'

**Voice 1**            Just a few days later a kiss signalled his vulnerability and the shouts changed to a chorus of condemnation.

**Voice 3**        Luke 22: 47-54

*A crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, <sup>48</sup> but Jesus asked him, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’*

*<sup>49</sup> When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, ‘Lord, should we strike with our swords?’ <sup>50</sup> And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.*

*<sup>51</sup> But Jesus answered, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.*

*<sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, ‘Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? <sup>53</sup> Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour – when darkness reigns.’*

*<sup>54</sup> Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest.*

[pause]        Optional song

**Voice 1**            Arrest, mockery, beating ...

**Voice 2**            A chorus of condemnation

**Voice 1**            'Are you Messiah? Are you the King of the Jews? Are you the Son of God?'

**Voices 1 & 2**        (getting louder) 'Are you! Are you!! Are you!!!'

**Voice 4**        Isaiah 53: 7 – 12

*<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.*

*<sup>41</sup> ‘Two people owed money to a certain money-lender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup> Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?’*

*<sup>43</sup> Simon replied, ‘I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.’*

*‘You have judged correctly,’ Jesus said.*

*<sup>44</sup> Then he turned towards the woman and said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.*

*<sup>45</sup> You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. <sup>46</sup> You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.*

*<sup>47</sup> Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven – as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.’*

*<sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’*

*<sup>49</sup> The other guests began to say among themselves, ‘Who is this who even forgives sins?’*

*<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’*

**Voice 1**            'If this man was a prophet ...'

**Voice 2**            'Sister, your sins are forgiven ...'

**Voice 1**            'Who is this who even forgives sins?'

[pause]

**Voice 2**            Then nature raised its voice against him. A boat and a storm and a teacher asleep in the centre of it all.

**Voice 1**            'Master. Master! We are perishing. Don’t you care?'

**Voice 2**            Quietly, he called out: 'Peace. Be still.' Silence and amazement from wind and wonderers.

[pause]

**Voice 4**            Luke 11: 37-54

*<sup>37</sup> When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. <sup>38</sup> But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed that Jesus did not first wash before the meal.*

*<sup>39</sup> Then the Lord said to him, ‘Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and*

dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. <sup>40</sup> You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? <sup>41</sup> But now as for what is inside you – be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practised the latter without leaving the former undone.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the market-places.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which people walk over without knowing it.’

<sup>45</sup> One of the experts in the law answered him, ‘Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also.’

<sup>46</sup> Jesus replied, ‘And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your ancestors who killed them. <sup>48</sup> So you testify that you approve of what your ancestors did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. <sup>49</sup> Because of this, God in his wisdom said, “I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.” <sup>50</sup> Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, <sup>51</sup> from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.’

<sup>53</sup> When Jesus went outside, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, <sup>54</sup> waiting to catch him in something he might say.

<b>Voice 1</b>	'Teacher, you insult us ...'
<b>Voice 2</b>	'Woe to you. You load people down with burdens they can hardly carry ...'
<b>Voice 1</b>	And the voices grew louder, the questions became more fierce ...
<b>Voice 2</b>	... they longed to trip him up.
[pause]	Optional song
<b>Voice 1</b>	(loudly) 'Trouble-maker!!'

<b>Voice 2</b>	'Who do you say I am?'
<b>Voice 1</b>	(loudly) 'Sinner!'
<b>Voice 2</b>	'Who do you say I am?'
<b>Voice 1</b>	(loudly) 'Insulter!'
<b>Voice 2</b>	'Who do you say I am?'
<b>Voice 1</b>	(loudly) 'Sabbath-breaker'
[pause]	
<b>Voice 2</b>	(quietly) 'Who do you say I am?'
<b>Voice 1</b>	Holy one, we believe you are the finder of lost sheep and the one who recovers lost treasures. Your arms are opened wide for the prodigal. Your Kingdom embraces the lost and the leper; the lonely and the last to be loved. You call us to greet the Kingdom as a little child receives a gift.
[pause]	
<b>Voice 1</b>	Suddenly the shouts got louder. But these were shouts of joy and hope.
<b>Voice 2</b>	'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!'
<b>Voice 1</b>	It was as if the Psalmist’s words came true on the streets of Jerusalem.
<b>Voice 2</b>	Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
<b>Voice 1</b>	Who is this King of glory?
<b>Voice 2</b>	The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
<b>Voice 1</b>	Who is he, this King of glory?
<b>Voice 2</b>	The Lord Almighty – he is the King of glory!
[pause]	