

Dead Man

John 18. (*The Message*)

¹⁵⁻¹⁶Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. That other disciple was known to the Chief Priest, and so he went in with Jesus to the Chief Priest's courtyard. Peter had to stay outside. Then the other disciple went out, spoke to the doorkeeper, and got Peter in.

¹⁷The young woman who was the doorkeeper said to Peter, "Aren't you one of this man's disciples?"

He said, "No, I'm not."

¹⁸The servants and police had made a fire because of the cold and were huddled there warming themselves. Peter stood with them, trying to get warm.

¹⁹⁻²¹Annas interrogated Jesus regarding his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered, "I've spoken openly in public. I've taught regularly in meeting places and the Temple, where the Jews all come together.

Everything has been out in the open. I've said nothing in secret. So why are you treating me like a conspirator? Question those who have been listening to me. They know well what I have said. My teachings have all been aboveboard."

²²When he said this, one of the policemen standing there slapped Jesus across the face, saying, "How dare you speak to the Chief Priest like that!"

²³Jesus replied, "If I've said something wrong, prove it. But if I've spoken the plain truth, why this slapping around?"

²⁴Then Annas sent him, still tied up, to the Chief Priest Caiaphas.

²⁵Meanwhile, Simon Peter was back at the fire, still trying to get warm. The others there said to him, "Aren't you one of his disciples?"

He denied it, "Not me."

²⁶One of the Chief Priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?"

²⁷Again, Peter denied it.
Just then a rooster crowed.



Denied

HURT

I hurt myself today
to see if I still feel
I focus on the pain
the only thing that's real
the needle tears a hole
the old familiar sting
try to kill it all away
but I remember everything
what have I become?
my sweetest friend
everyone I know
goes away in the end
and you could have it all
my empire of dirt
I will let you down
I will make you hurt

....

Johnny Cash

(Words Nine Inch Nails)

O GOD WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

O God, Hold me now
O, Lord, hold me now
There's no other man who could raise the dead
So do what you can to anoint my head

Oh God, where are you now?
O Lord say somehow
The devil is hard on my face again
The world is a hundred to one again

Would the righteous still remain?
Would my body stay the same?

Oh God, hold me now
Oh God, touch me now
There's no other man who could save the dead
There's no other God to place our head

Would the righteous still remain?
Would my body stay the same?

There's no other man who could raise the dead
So do what you can to anoint my head

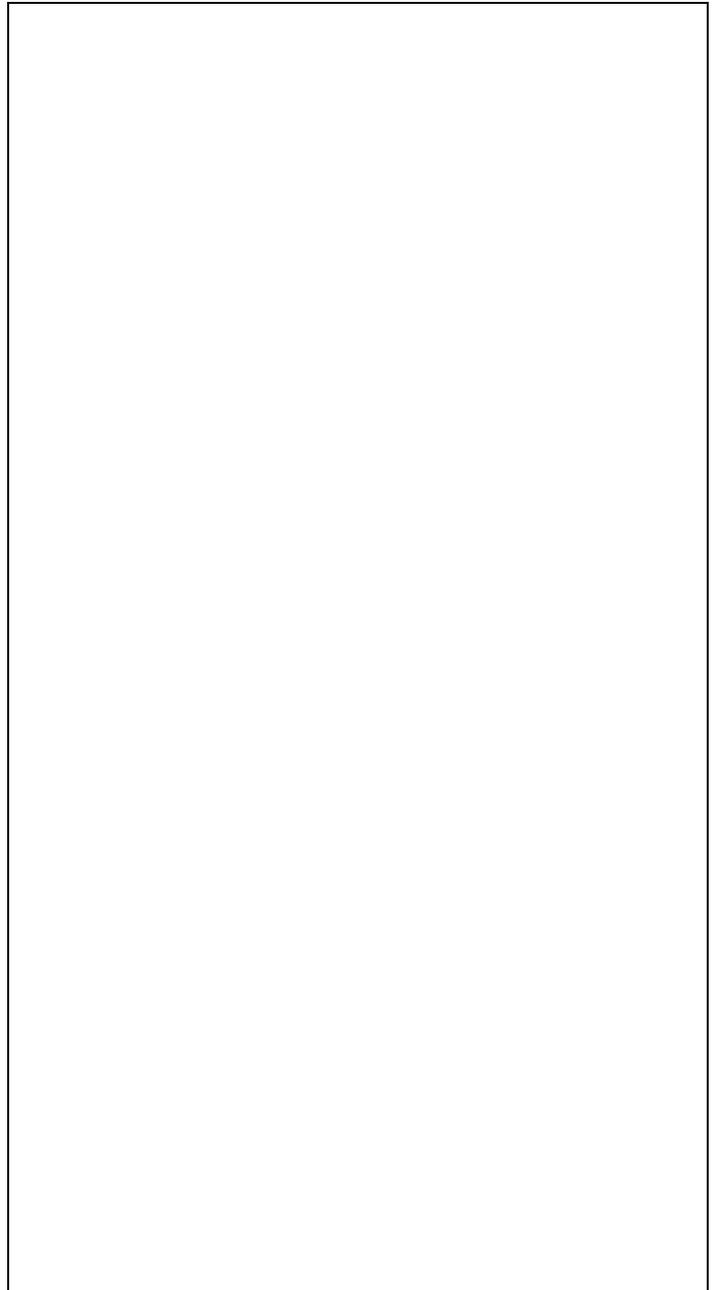
Oh God, hold me now
Oh God, touch me now.
Sufjan Stevens

OPENING RITUAL

Together:

Jesus, light of the world, we confess that you
are here. Shine your light into the hidden
places of our lives, and bring warmth to the
cold places of our hearts. Amen.

(Christ Candle is lit)



Take a barbed wire cross with you as you
leave... hold it in your hand as you move into
the waiting world.

Carry the waiting of the world with you as
you go.

On Sunday the story continues ...

Curated by Mark Pierson
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Response Stations:

There are ten different stations (five are at umbrellas). You can go to any or all or none. They are not in any particular order.

Soaking:

Stay where you are, or move closer to the warmth and light of the brazier and re-read the Story. Note what words or phrases stand out for you. Wonder about what they might mean for you next week.

Eating and Drinking With Jesus:

Among Jesus' closest followers was a person who would betray him, (Judas) and another who would deny ever knowing him (Peter). They were among his closest friends; among those who believed in him most strongly; among those he knew best. He knew who they were and still loved them. Let that soak into your being that this morning.

The Gospels (Bible books named Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) tell numerous stories about Jesus regularly eating with well known and high profile "sinners" of his day. People not considered "nice", significant, or important.

Because of this we can be confident that Jesus welcomed and still welcomes, everyone and anyone at the table with him. There are no requirements beyond a desire to be there with him. The only condition that can keep you from that table is your choice to stay away. Jesus always invites you to join him. The invitation has nothing to do with who you are or what you have done (or not done). It has everything to do with who Jesus is – the Son of the God who loves you to bits.

Take some bread, and some water. Sit around the fire with other "sinners", doubters, betrayers and deny-ers. Know that you are in good company – the company of Jesus who loves you and forgives you and wants to nourish you with his presence for the journey through Easter and beyond.

Think about what it is that you need most from Jesus this Easter. Talk to him about that.

When you are ready, light a candle from the brazier and place it in one of the sand trays as a symbol of your desire to follow Jesus.

Umbrellas of Denial:

(each one is slightly different)

Deny, Denied, Denial: Imagine that you have the opportunity to speak **to**, but are limited to a single word. Consider further that after you say your word you must take a vow of silence. In essence this word would be your last." (Adapted from *Seyed Alavi*, artist). Write that word on a card and attach it to the umbrella.

- to someone who has let you down
 - to someone you have let down
 - to God or Jesus
 - to yourself
 - the Church
-

Pierced Papers:

What do you think stopped Peter owning up to knowing Jesus, even when he was given three opportunities to do so?

What do you feel guilty or have regrets about having done or not done, said or not said in your life, despite what you believe or value – recently or in the past?

What stops you moving on from that?

Make your confession by writing or drawing about how you feel on one or more pieces of paper. As you do so pierce them on a nail, then remove the papers and burn them in the brazier.

"If we confess our sins to God, he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away." 1 John 1/9 (*The Bible*, Contemporary English Version)

Candle Lighting:

Light a candle at any time as a symbol of your prayer for yourself or others....

Barbed Wire Crosses:

Hold a cross as you re-read the story and wonder if you would have responded differently to Peter.

When you want to, drop a grain of incense in the brazier.

"The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God...." Revelation 8/4 (New International Version)