

## Introduction

I've been "doing" the Stations of the Cross for 30 years in different settings. The first sets of Stations I encountered made me sad for Jesus. I cringed as I witnessed His suffering along The Way of the Cross. That just didn't do it for me. I wanted something more, but I didn't know what. Then I met a Roman Catholic priest who had re-written the Stations so that all of Jesus' suffering was depicted in the lives of those suffering around me, both locally and in the world. So this set of Stations made me sad for the Jesus in all those whom He called "the least of these." That made sense for a while, but it still left me wondering why this set of Stations didn't produce any visible results in the hearts of those who walked them. Oh, we wept all right, but nothing changed.

After leading folks through that group of meditations for 10 years or more, I was introduced to something called "mimetic theory." Mimetic theory taught me how it was that Jesus' Passion was intimately linked to my own passions. It taught me to understand how my own ways of thinking and wanting caused Jesus' suffering in a very concrete way. I wrote my own set of Stations to illustrate that. That worked for me for a while, but in the end I was still hungry. I had a set of Stations that accurately diagnosed the disease in me that made the world sick enough to crucify the Lord of Life, but I didn't have a solution.

Over the years I became increasingly uncomfortable with my own set of Stations as I grew to understand where the solution lay. I can best sum it up in the words of Paul, from his letter to the Romans, "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4, NKJV) Sometimes "goodness" is translated "kindness." I especially like that version. God's kindness, His goodness works in a way that my accurate diagnosis never can. The goodness of God convicts me of my complicity in Jesus' death by it's contrast with my current way of life, but it also invites me into something new and wonderful. It offers me the medicine that makes me whole - the forgiveness and love poured out and represented by Jesus' precious Blood. It replaces the condemnation of my terminal diagnosis with a hunger to step into the new life purchased for me on the Cross.

So I wrote this new set of Stations to try to display this love that convicts AND transforms. It is an examination of the way in which the heart of the Father is radically displayed in each of the moments memorialized by the traditional Stations of the Cross.

For those of you who find the non-Biblical Stations offensive, I understand, and I'd invite you simply to leave them out. For those of you who find the addition of a fifteenth Station problematic, I'm sorry. This all makes no sense apart from the new life inaugurated in the Resurrection. I can't imagine leaving that one off.

When I first wrote these Stations, inclusive language wasn't as important as it is today. I recognize that the repeated references to God as "Father" may be difficult for some people. For that I apologize, recognizing that these Stations just won't work for you. I

confess to my own inability to write them any other way. You're truly welcome to edit them to suit you if it will help.

Finally, it is customary when walking the Stations to sing something as you move between them. I don't think the old "Stabat Mater" works for me any more, so we're just singing the chorus from Jared Anderson's "Amazed." I hope to get permission soon to include the text and melody of that chorus in this booklet, but I can't do that now without violating Jared's copyright. I'd suggest you use a song that speaks to you of the incredible love in which you're held, something simple to sing between Stations.

I pray that this set of Stations blesses your contemplation of the Father's heart as writing them has blessed me.

## Station One

### Jesus Is Condemned By Pilate

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (II Corinthians 5:21)

Father, someone had to bear the guilt of countless years of sin, sin past and sin yet to come. But You were unwilling that any of us, Your children, should bear that condemnation. So Jesus stood before Pilate and received from his hand the sentence that would have been ours. You made Him to "be sin" who knew no sin. You didn't make Him sinful, you made Him to *be* sin. He became that which You despised so that He might make us beautiful to You, a fragrant offering.

### Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, I struggle not to collapse beneath the weight of the thought that Your Son became sin for me. My own sin makes me cringe, but You never see it because I am hidden in His wounds. Keep my eyes on Jesus as he accepts my sentence of death. Draw me closer to You, make Your ways as sweet to me as honey.

## Station Two

### Jesus Takes Up His Cross

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (I Corinthians 1:18 NKJV)

Father, the more we learn about love the less sense it makes. Somehow, we can't comprehend that we offend and You pay the price. We desperately want to change it all, to even things out so that we don't lose our minds. We plead with you like children about to watch their Father die to save them. "Don't go, Papa!" And then in your eyes we see the deeper logic of it all. It is only through this death that we can finally be set free.

### Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, everything my mind calls "true" crumbles in the face of the Love that takes up my cross. Your ways, the ways of love, are truly higher than my ways. Help me to surrender my precious rationality and simply receive. Keep my eyes on Jesus' eyes so that He can teach me the deeper logic of love.

## Station Three

### Jesus Falls the First Time

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.'" (Mark 14:27 NKJV)

Father, this first fall feels so familiar to us, and so wrong. Jesus, so strong, so stable, so reliable. Still, He had to fall because we fall, and You would not leave even this fault of ours untouched by Your healing presence.

### Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, I have fallen so many times, and I have fallen so far. But Jesus shows me your heart. In Him I see that no matter how far I fall, I will always find that You have gone one step lower, so that you can raise me up. I can never fall so hard or so far that I am beyond the arms that wait to catch me.

## Station Four

### Jesus Meets His Mother

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you." (Isaiah 49:15 NKJV)

Heavenly Father, in Mary's face we see the pain You must have known as you watched your Only Son on his way to Calvary. She reaches out with Your hands to comfort Him, she wets His face with Your tears. We shrink back from the realization of just how precious we must be to You, that You would endure His agony to save us.

### Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, the more I gaze at the love You have for me, the more I long to live a life worthy of Your sacrifice. Still, I know that there are many corners of my heart that still cling to the old and the familiar. Search me, O God, and show me every weight that I still choose to carry.

## Station Five

### Simon helps Jesus carry the Cross

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "Do not hide Your face from me; Do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; Do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation." (Psalms 27:9 NKJV)

Scourged, beaten, Jesus accepts help from a stranger. Heavenly Father, you have been our Helper from before time and forever. But not today. You left it to Simon to lighten Jesus' burden lest it be said that Jesus' sacrifice was somehow mitigated by Your mercy. So you became the man beaten by the side of the road. Today you let the Samaritan man minister to You.

## Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, how You must have struggled to hold back Your hands as the weight of that Cross drove Jesus to the ground. How much harder not to help than to help. But somehow Your love for me was even stronger than Your ache to lessen His load. I am that precious to You. I am that precious to You.

## Station Six

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." (Luke 9:51 NKJV)

Jesus was moving resolutely toward His triumph on the Cross. He had been on this course for a long time. In this last, most painful stretch it would have been easy for Him to push past a young woman with a damp cloth who only slowed the process down. But He came to reveal You, Father, to reveal Your heart, and so He stopped and allowed her to minister to Him. How gracious You are, Father, that You receive my meager love no matter the circumstance.

## Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you for the Cross, but even more, I thank You that you accept my thanks, which are completely inadequate. I thank you for the joy I see in Your eyes as you accept what I can offer, no matter how small or foolish it may seem to me or to others.



## Station Seven

Jesus falls the second time

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Corinthians 12:9 NKJV)

Where are you, God? As Jesus crashes to the earth again, we ask, "Where are you? Where is the Father's heart in this?" Your love eludes our attempts to find it, but that tells us more about us than it does about You. We keep looking for the heroic father or the knight in shining armor whose love carries the battle, but instead You fall to the ground. Real love is vulnerable to the beloved, and You are faithful to that real love. Your strength really is made perfect in weakness.

Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, You showed me love by remaining vulnerable to my sin. And You modeled for me a kind of love I could not have chosen, but the only love I can really imitate. I thank You for a love that truly overcomes the world.

## Station Eight

### Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "A voice was heard on the desolate heights, Weeping and supplications of the children of Israel. For they have perverted their way; They have forgotten the Lord their God." (Jeremiah 3:21 NKJV)

Jesus' heart is so tender toward those for whom He is about to die that He hears the sobs of the women who line the street on His way. It isn't that He isn't suffering, but His pain is not great enough to blot out His grief for His children and so He invites them to see themselves through His eyes, lost and lonely. "Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children."

### Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, help me to see Your tears, to hear Your invitation to see myself through Your eyes. Show me the things in myself that cause You to grieve for me, and let Your sorrow lead me to true repentance.

## Station Nine

Jesus falls the third time

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing." (Isaiah 40:26 NKJV)

Though You were in the form of God, You did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Yourself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. It beggars the mind to consider that for the sake of love, the One through whom, by whom and for whom all things were made became subject to His own created beings. Though Your strength makes the idea of strength meaningless, You surrendered it all.

You surrendered it all.

Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, Your love, when I see it for what it is, is truly irresistible. The bars that guard my heart crumble, the gates that guard my private hell cannot prevail. You shatter my strength with Your weakness. I am consumed by love for You.

## Station Ten

Jesus is stripped before the crowd

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: And so we look "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame..." (Hebrews 12:2a NKJV)

What a shift. From the adoration of the angels to the ridicule of the people gathered at Calvary to witness Your execution. Most of us would kill, or die, rather than endure the shame of being stripped before a jeering crowd, but You despised the shame for the joy You felt at the knowledge that all of this would redeem us, the very ones who have gathered to laugh and point fingers. This is the measure of Your heart for us, that it dwarfs the shame you endured.

Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, Your love transforms shame into glory. The more I jeer, the greater the glory with which You clothe Your Son. Help me to shift my gaze from His nakedness to the love in His eyes, so that my heart might be changed.

## Station Eleven

### Jesus is nailed to the Cross

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, 'Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!'" (Mark 6:2 NKJV)

Hands that healed. Hands that blessed children. Hands that blessed bread and fish. Hands that lifted up. Hands that loved. These are the hands that Jesus offers as they fasten Him to the Cross with rough nails. In this final act of unimaginable grace He opens His hands to receive the nails from the soldiers. Redeeming Love nears its perfection as the palms that once held the world are pierced.

### Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, help me to hunger for the abundant life that Jesus purchased with these scarred hands. As Jesus is lifted up, draw me to Him, to the foot of the Cross where I might lay down my old life and take up the one He offers.

## Station Twelve

### Jesus dies on the Cross

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:3-4, NKJV)

He who knew no sin became sin. And now He who is Life itself suffers death. Only You could go to such lengths to save Your children, Father.

Only You *would* go to such lengths to save Your children.

From the moment of Creation You knew that our freedom would result in the alienation that so grieves Your heart. And so the Lamb has been slain from the foundation of the world. The Lamb who is the light of the new city of God. Jesus dies to show us that mystery, hidden from the beginning of time.

### Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, Jesus gives himself up to a death that He would never have authored. He takes into Himself every deadly echo of His children's willful shout and shields them so that He might draw them to Himself. I pray that the contemplation of this foolish truth will turn my heart back to You, my first love.

## Station Thirteen

Jesus is taken down from the Cross

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon Has devoured me, he has crushed me; He has made me an empty vessel, He has swallowed me up like a monster; He has filled his stomach with my delicacies, He has spit me out." (Jeremiah 51:34 NKJ)

Such is the love of the Father, that He who filled the hungry with good things is now empty Himself. He has grasped at nothing, kept nothing for Himself, to Himself. Everything He had to give for you and me has been poured out. As we gaze upon the empty shell of Jesus' body, we hear God speak from the deepest, emptiest places in our souls. "Fear not. I am even here, too."

Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, I have rarely had the courage to look into the chasms of my own heart, afraid that I might fall in and never stop falling. As Mary receives Your Son's body, would you continue to speak, to confirm to me that there is no place that You are not?

## Station Fourteen

### Jesus is laid in the tomb

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (Matthew 22:13 NKJV)

What a strange conquering hero, He who rides lifeless into the kingdom of death to rescue all her captives. Not as it was with Lazarus, this time. Jesus doesn't stand on the lively side of death and call us forth. This time He enters the prison that we have built so that He might shatter its walls from the inside. As the tomb opens its terrifying maw to consume Him, death itself is swallowed up by Life.

### Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, this is the perfect love that casts out fear. I look upon Your Son as he lies in the tomb and I see a love that drives the darkness of doubt away. Oh, I may yet fear, but when I do I will trust in the One who has gone before me to deliver me.



## Station Fifteen

Jesus rises from the grave

All: Dear Heavenly Father, let Your goodness lead us to repentance. Let the heart of a Father displayed for us on Calvary so overwhelm us that we can only turn to you, laying aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set before us.

Leader: "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Romans 5:10 NKJV)

It would have been enough, Father, to save us from our sins by the Blood of Your Son. We might have lived with less anxiety about death if that had been all You wanted for us. But Jesus came to give us life in abundance. We are reconciled to You by His Blood, but by His rising to life again we discover a whole new way of being alive that we had never imagined possible! We are children of the King!

Silence

All together: Dear Heavenly Father, I want to walk as the royal child that I am. Help me to surrender to you every impoverished spirit that I still carry. Help me to live the life that Jesus died to give me. Make me a beacon of the life You intended to everyone around me!

About this work.

This version of the Stations of the Cross was written in its entirety by Jeff Krantz. It is published in this format so that it may be more easily used either in whole or in part by anyone who finds it meaningful. No attribution is required.