



First Baptist  
Greenville

The Stations of the Cross  
at  
First Baptist Church, Greenville, SC



## A Brief Introduction

Walking the path of Jesus' final footsteps on this earth is a highlight of any pilgrimage to the Holy Land – a journey that has been undertaken by millions of Christians since at least the fourth century. One of them, a young girl named Egeria, kept a pilgrimage journal of the Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter rituals of her century that have shaped the order and content of our present observance of this high, holy season.

For decades, members of First Baptist Greenville, South Carolina have made pilgrimages to the Holy Land and have walked the Via Dolorosa – the way of suffering, the path from the Garden of Gethsemane atop the Mount of Olives to the place of Jesus' crucifixion and all points in between.

Unfortunately, every Christian cannot make this pilgrimage in person. For all the millions who have traveled to this sacred place, millions more have only dreamed of traveling there. To accommodate the latter, the Church has attempted to bring the final steps of Jesus – the Stations of the Cross – to her congregants. In 1521, a book was written and illustrated with the fourteen biblical and traditional final moments of Jesus' life, beginning with Jesus being condemned to death at a mock trial and ending with his burial. In the early 15th century, Franciscans began building shrines to represent each station throughout Europe. Pilgrims who could not afford to visit the Holy Land would travel to each shrine to commemorate and pay homage to the suffering, saving work of Jesus. In 1686, Pope Innocent XI granted Franciscans the right to display artistic images of the stations in their churches. By 1862, the right to display the stations was extended to all Roman Catholic Churches. Today

the stations can be found in almost all Roman Catholic Churches, many retreat centers and a few churches outside the Roman Catholic tradition.

In 2017, a pilgrim from First Baptist Greenville saw a set of hand-carved Stations of the Cross in Bethlehem. Having a heart that reflected the hearts of the early Franciscans, this pilgrim desired for everyone to experience the last moments of Jesus' life. The dream was shared, and these beautiful renderings of the final moments of Jesus' life were purchased, shipped and anonymously donated. These stations were hand-carved by Zachariah Alber Zachariah, a renowned Palestinian Christian artist in Bethlehem. They now hang in the Carpenter Chapel of First Baptist Greenville, South Carolina. It is our prayer that they will usher you toward the height, breadth and depth of God's love for you revealed in Jesus Christ.

Jim Dant  
Senior Minister

1. *Jesus is condemned to death.*

*Matthew 27:22-23*

Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let him be crucified! Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

**Loving Christ, you were condemned to death by those who did not truly know you. In these moments – on this journey – walk with me and show me who you are. Amen.**

2. *Jesus takes up his cross.*

*Matthew 27:31*

After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

**Strong Savior, is there any weight too great for you? You took the crossbeam of a cross upon your shoulder. You have taken the sins of the world into your heart. You have carried me through every chapter of my life. Thank you, Strong Savior. Amen.**

3. *Jesus falls the first time.*

*Philippians 2:5-8*

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness; And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on the cross.

**Jesus, my brother, you chose to be like me. You chose to know me by becoming like me. There is no hurt or suffering I have felt that you have not known. Because you know what it feels like to fall, I can trust you with my pain. Amen.**

4. *Jesus sees his mother, Mary.*  
*Luke 2:34-35*

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother, Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

**Child of Mary, you longed to be loved and cared for in the journey of your life. Jesus, know that I love you and care for you. May you see in my eyes, my words and my life, the deep love I have for you. Amen.**

5. *Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross.*

*Matthew 27:32*

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.

**Generous Lord, you have been the giver of every good and perfect gift. Allow me to give to you. Allow me to carry the burden of your work in your world. Give me a generous heart, O Lord. Amen.**

6. *Veronica wipes Jesus' face.*  
*John 16:19b-20, 22b*

A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me. Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

**Courageous Christ, help me to overcome my fears. Give me the courage to step away from the crowd and offer you whatever you need, regardless of what anyone says or thinks of me. May I be the one to comfort you, come close to you, and serve you when others keep their distance. Amen.**

7. *Jesus falls the second time.*

*Hebrews 2:9*

But we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

**Merciful God, you know what it is like to fall and fall again. I have fallen many times in many ways. Be merciful to me. Forgive my inherent weaknesses and my misused strengths. Amen.**

8. *Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.*  
*Luke 23:27-28*

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

**Compassionate Christ, show me what grieves you. Open my eyes and my heart to the needs of your world. May I reflect your sacrifice and your compassion in my service to others. Amen.**

9. *Jesus falls the third time.*

*John 12:23b-24*

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

**Persistent God, the path was not too hard, too long or too costly for you. No matter how many times you stumbled, you stood up and walked. May I know your perseverance in the living of my days. May no obstacle or challenge keep me from faithfully moving forward in your kingdom work. Amen.**

10. *Jesus is stripped of his clothes.*

*Mark 15:24*

And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

**Revealed Christ, what have you withheld from me? In your words and in your life, you opened the mystery of yourself to me. May my life be a reflection of your transparency and authenticity. Help me trust that 'who I am' is who you created me to be. Amen.**

11. *Jesus is nailed to the cross.*

*Mark 15:25-26,29-30*

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

**Suffering Servant, I choose you as my king. May nothing in my life or in my words mock you or betray you. May no doubt in my mind drive me to test you. You have already proven you love for me. Amen.**

12. *Jesus dies on the cross.*

*Mark 15:37-39*

Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

**Redeeming Gift, I do not understand the mysteries of your death on the cross. I cannot completely fathom the reconciling depth of this tragic moment. Nothing, however, can separate me from your love. At our worst – crucifying you – you are at your best – completely loving us. May I rest in the assurance of that love. Amen.**

13. *Jesus is removed from the cross.*

*Mark 15:46a*

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth . . .

**Gentle God, grant me an opportunity today to care for you. Amen.**

14. *Jesus is buried.*

*John 19:39-42, Mark 15:46b-47*

Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid him there . . . then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

**Light of the World, the darkness is not dark to you. My darkness is not dark to you. No grave, no pit, no wilderness, or no death is**

**ever the last word. Deepen my trust in you  
so I might rest in your peace, live in your  
peace and hold to your hope. Amen.**



