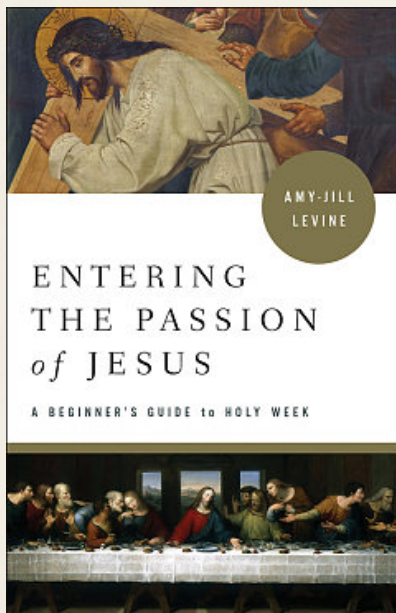




ENTERING THE PASSION OF JESUS
PICTURING OURSELVES IN THE STORY

Weekly Lenten Reflections



Based on six works of art from
Sunday worship services and
inspired by Levine's six book chapters

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p. 5 Swanson, John August. *Entry into the City*, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56544>. Original source: www.johnaugustswanson.com - copyright 1990 by John August Swanson.

p. 7 Aertsen, Pieter. *Cleansing of the Temple* from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56496>. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pieter_Aertsen_Christ_cleansing_the_Temple.png.

p. 9 Tissot, James Jacques Joseph, 1836-1902. *The Tribute Money*, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=55996>. Original source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Tribute_Money_\(Le_denier_de_César\)_-_James_Tissot.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Tribute_Money_(Le_denier_de_César)_-_James_Tissot.jpg).

p. 11 Anonymous (German School, 19th Century). *Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet*, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56136>. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:German_School,_16th_Century_-_Mary_Magdalene_anointing_the_feet_of_Christ.jpg.

p. 13 Paynter, David, 1900-1975. Detail from the mural of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54318>. Original source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gillpoole/182397726/>.

p. 15 JESUS MAFA. *Christ on Gethsemane*, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48391>. Original source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr>.

Entering the Passion of Jesus: Chapter One Time for Self Reflection

"[The disciples] brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and [Jesus] sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'" — Matthew 21:7-9

Take some time to look at this artwork and place yourself "in the picture" by choosing any character in the painting. Contemplate the following questions:



What is your chosen character noticing in this moment? What do they hear? What do they see? What do they smell?

What can you imagine they are thinking? How might they be feeling?

Why are they there? What can you imagine about what they were doing just before this moment, or what they might have done afterwards in response to being involved in this moment?

What would you have thought, felt, and done if you could paint yourself into the scene?

Spend some time praying this prayer from our worship:

*We stand at the gate,
hesitant and uncertain.
Will we join the parade,
risking our reputation along with Jesus?
Or will we play it safe?
Forgive our fear, our indecision, our apathy.
Such moments in life are not easy, O God,
yet we know you are with us.
You entered our story through Jesus,
now help us to enter fully into the story
of your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

And remember this assurance from our worship:

*Know this: you may join the parade at any time,
no matter how slow you've been to say "yes."
You are forgiven and freed,
encouraged and loved
by a God who wants you to live fully.*

My thoughts and prayers:

Entering the Passion of Jesus: Chapter Two Time for Self Reflection

“Then they came to Jerusalem. And [Jesus] entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers... He was teaching and saying, ‘Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations”? But you have made it a den of robbers.” — Mark 11:15-17

Take some time to look at this artwork and place yourself “in the picture” by choosing any character in the painting. Contemplate the following questions:



What is your chosen character noticing in this moment? What do they hear? What do they see? What do they smell?

What can you imagine they are thinking? How might they be feeling?

Why are they there? What can you imagine about what they were doing just before this moment, or what they might have done afterwards in response to being involved in this moment?

What would you have thought, felt, and done if you could paint yourself into the scene?

Spend some time praying this prayer from our worship:

*The temple of the world can be
a busy, noisy place, O God.
Too often the rule is, "everyone out for themselves."
Too often we don't stop to think about
how our actions affect others.
Forgive us.
Turn us toward the temple of our hearts
where you await.
You entered our story through Jesus,
now help us to enter fully into the story
of your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

And remember this assurance from our worship:

*Know this: you can open your eyes and see with your heart,
at any moment, no matter how hesitant you have been.
You are forgiven and freed,
encouraged and loved
by a God who wants you to live fully.*

My thoughts and prayers:

Entering the Passion of Jesus: Chapter Three Time for Self Reflection

“But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.’ And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, ‘Whose head is this, and whose title?’ They answered, ‘The emperor’s.’ Then he said to them, ‘Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” — Matthew 22:18-21 (with references to Matthew 22:15-22, Mark 12:13-17, Luke 20:20-26)

Take some time to look at this artwork and place yourself “in the picture” by choosing any character in the painting. Contemplate the following questions:



What is your chosen character noticing in this moment? What do they hear? What do they see? What do they smell?

What can you imagine they are thinking? How might they be feeling?

Why are they there? What can you imagine about what they were doing just before this moment, or what they might have done afterwards in response to being involved in this moment?

What would you have thought, felt, and done if you could paint yourself into the scene?

Spend some time praying this prayer from our worship:

*We come here to encounter the teachings of Jesus.
Many wanted to destroy him for these teachings,
and sometimes we too find that his words challenge us,
calling us to more than we think we can be or do.*

Forgive us, O God.

*Let us be shaped into a new people,
made in the mold of justice,
not the stamp of Caesar's coin.*

*You entered our story through Jesus,
now help us to enter fully into the story
of your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

And remember this assurance from our worship:

*Know this: There are people whose lives
have been changed completely
by this story of love and passion.*

Transformation is possible.

*You are forgiven and freed,
encouraged and loved
by a God who wants you to live fully.*

My thoughts and prayers:

Entering the Passion of Jesus: Chapter Four Time for Self Reflection

“While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, ‘Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.’ And they scolded her. But Jesus said, ‘Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me.’”

— Mark 14:3-7 (with references to Mark 14:3-9, Matthew 26:6-13, John 12:1-8)



Take some time to look at this artwork and place yourself “in the picture” by choosing any character in the painting. Contemplate the following questions:

What is your chosen character noticing in this moment? What do they hear? What do they see? What do they smell?

What can you imagine they are thinking? How might they be feeling?

Why are they there? What can you imagine about what they were doing just before this moment, or what they might have done afterwards in response to being involved in this moment?

What would you have thought, felt, and done if you could paint yourself into the scene?

Spend some time praying this prayer from our worship:

*It is so hard to not be afraid.
Sometimes our fear makes us less compassionate,
and more judgmental.
We think we can ward off getting hurt by holding back,
unwilling to risk putting ourselves out there for the sake of love.
Forgive us, O God.
Encourage us to extravagant acts of love,
especially when we are frightened.
You entered our story through Jesus,
now help us to enter fully into the story
of your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

And remember this assurance from our worship:

*Know this: There is no limit on love.
Love doesn't run out,
and you can start giving more of it anytime.
You are forgiven and freed,
encouraged and loved
by a God who wants you to live fully.*

My thoughts and prayers:

Entering the Passion of Jesus: Chapter Five Time for Self Reflection

“After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.’”

— John 13:12-16 (with references to Luke 22:14-27, John 13:1-16, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)



Take some time to look at this artwork and place yourself “in the picture” by choosing any character in the painting. Contemplate the following questions:

What is your chosen character noticing in this moment? What do they hear? What do they see? What do they smell?

What can you imagine they are thinking? How might they be feeling?

Why are they there? What can you imagine about what they were doing just before this moment, or what they might have done afterwards in response to being involved in this moment?

What would you have thought, felt, and done if you could paint yourself into the scene?

Spend some time praying this prayer from our worship:

*Sometimes we just aren't paying attention.
We can keep our heads in the sand
when we really need to attend to difficult situations,
or the needs of your people.
Forgive us, O God.
Guard us from distancing ourselves,
and help us to care for what's right in front of us.
You entered our story through Jesus,
now help us to enter fully into the story
of your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

And remember this assurance from our worship:

*Know this: Our lives contain continual opportunities
to be in humble service to friends and strangers.
You are forgiven and freed,
encouraged and loved
by a God who wants you to live fully.*

My thoughts and prayers:

Entering the Passion of Jesus: Chapter Six Time for Self Reflection

“They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.’ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, ‘Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.’”
— Mark 14:32-36 (with references to Mark 14:32-52, John 18:1-11)

Take some time to look at this artwork and place yourself “in the picture” by choosing any character in the painting. Contemplate the following questions:



What is your chosen character noticing in this moment? What do they hear? What do they see? What do they smell?

What can you imagine they are thinking? How might they be feeling?

Why are they there? What can you imagine about what they were doing just before this moment, or what they might have done afterwards in response to being involved in this moment?

What would you have thought, felt, and done if you could paint yourself into the scene?

Spend some time praying this prayer from our worship:

*Here we are, Jesus.
We find ourselves alongside you in a garden of grief
for the violence so many of this world endure.
We are tired. We don't know what to do next.
And so we sleep sometimes,
hoping to awake from a bad dream.
Forgive us, O God.
Help us face this hour
knowing you are always here.
You only ask the same of us... to be present, to be awake.
You entered our story through Jesus,
now help us to enter fully into the story
of your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

And remember this assurance from our worship:

*Know this: We can open to let the story remind us
that no matter what we face, or how we fail to meet the demand of the moment,
second chances are possible.
You are forgiven and freed,
encouraged and loved
by a God who wants you to live fully.*

My thoughts and prayers: