

[Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 31; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42]

As Jesus had often gathered his disciples together to pray in the garden, so we are together right now as we enter into this passion. And, we all have a passion in our own lives. We all have a cross in our own lives. We don't have to go out and seek a cross, it's given to us. I want you to think about that right now. What is the cross that you've been asked to carry in your own life?

Now, our natural or our human nature has a tendency to want to fight or flee. That's our natural response when we encounter suffering – to either enter into a fight with it or to flee from it. That's our natural response, but Jesus shows us a supernatural response. Jesus shows us that when we encounter suffering, when we experience the cross, we don't need to fight. We don't need to flee. We simply need to stand.

And so, I was praying with this idea. As I went through the passion myself, I realized there is a lot of movement, a lot of motion. I was just going through some of that litany of movement and motion. It helped me to see that, during it all, the one that stands the entire time neither fighting nor fleeing is Jesus. He calls us to do the same with our own cross... not to fight it or to flee from it – but to stand by it and to work through it.

Maybe your cross for you is your marriage, and He's calling you right now not to fight anymore, not to flee from it, but to simply stand.

Maybe your cross is conflict with your children or with your parents, with your brother or sister, and He's calling you right now not to fight it, not to flee from it but to stand.

Maybe your conflict is at work with your boss or your employees, and right now He's telling you not to fight it or to flee from it but to stand. Maybe God right now is asking you to give up something in your life or to let go of something – to stop fighting, to stop fleeing and to stand and accept.

Maybe there's some suffering in your life – some illness, be it spiritual or physical or emotional. Perhaps we have been fighting or running from something all of our lives – and right now, Jesus is just telling you to stand and accept it.

Judas fled, Peter fought, Jesus and the women simply stood.

This Good Friday, whatever is going on in your life, whatever your cross is, whatever your suffering is – know that we're not called to fight it, or to flee it – but simply to stand with it. And to realize that HE is standing right next to us, taking it from us, and laying upon it once more. AMEN!