

# **Stripped**

## **Station #5**

**John 19:23–25 (NRSV) —**

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. 24 So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says, “They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.” 25 And that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

**Introduction**-The fifth station of the cross is “Jesus was stripped of his garments”. There is a great deal of extreme emotions that take place with the visual act of stripping off Jesus’ garments. When Jesus entered in to Jerusalem. It was a huge rejoicing! A great celebration. The crowds were shouting great praises. For they believed the messiah came! The messiah who they were longing for to come finally came! But it was not the messiah they had in mind. We saw tremendously Jesus go from welcome hero to someone they did not want to claim. The shouts of praises that were echoed tremendously throughout his triumphant entry became shouts of crucify him.

**Vulnerability**-The act of crucifixion was a barbaric form of capital punishment performed by the Romans, Assyrians, Babylonians, and others. It was a horrible and humiliating way to die. The Romans chose this as a form of capital punishment as a way to put people in fear of going against Roman law. The criminal would be stripped naked of all his clothes. We know from the time Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the tree and suddenly became aware of their nakedness that being naked is a vulnerable place to be.

There is a vulnerable aspect to all of this. Being naked we are brought we are exposed for the whole world to see. We cannot hide from the world. To be exposed in that manner is a horrifying moment. A place of embarrassment. To be exposed like this is another form of torture and punishment. Christ’s garments were stripped off him as a form of humiliation. Then, which is common for those who were crucified, their clothes became property of the executioners. Jesus’ simple wardrobe was composed of five items: a turban or headdress; an outer robe; a sash or girdle, the folds of which would provide pockets; sandals; and a fairly long tunic which was woven in one piece that went under his garments. The first four was not a problem to divide amongst the four Roman legionaries. But the fifth was...and if cut into four pieces would not have been useful. So they gambled for the fifth garment. The tunic was awarded to the one who casted the dice. Jesus rode in triumphantly into the city like royalty. He ended his time having a crown of thrones placed upon his head, being mocked and humiliated by having his garments stripped. Showing his humanity and brokenness to all.

**Humiliation to Humbleness**-April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945 Dietrich Bonehoffer was executed by Nazi Germany. Bonehoffer was a pastor in Nazi Germany who professed the faith till his end. Even when the Nazis came in trying to turn Christianity into their form of religion, Bonehoffer stood up for what was right. He challenged the authorities in a variety of ways. When Hitler took office as chancellor, Bonehoffer got on the radio and attacked Hitler by warning Germany not to fall into the trap of idolatrous cult worshipping the furher. He even ran underground seminaries to educate pastors instead of the way the Nazis wanted. He was banned from public speaking at one point and was told he had to inform the Gestapo where he was at all times. On April 8<sup>th</sup> he was tried and hung by Nazi Germany. They further added to his execution by stripping him of his clothes as an act of humiliation. A movie was released where it shows Bonehoffer walking naked to his execution, not with fear and humiliation, but true humility. Eberhard Bethge, a

student and a friend of Bonhoeffer writes of a man who witness the execution. "I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer kneeling on the floor praying fervently to God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the few steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In the almost fifty years that I worked as a doctor. I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God." Bonhoeffer went to his execution with so much humility and trusted God.

**Humbleness of our Savior**-The humiliation, the gruesome and horrible emotional pain that Jesus went through is so hard to imagine. So hard to think of. What is powerful about all of this is that Jesus went through with it as an act of submission to the will of God. He went through this terrible humiliation for us. He road in with a royal entrance at the beginning and ended it cast aside, stripped of his clothes, and nailed to the cross for us. What a powerful thing he did for us, that our King and Lord, our savior, humbled himself and made himself vulnerable for us. All out of an act of love.

We may walk around in this world carrying shame, feeling broken and even vulnerable. We try to hide all of that brokenness and are afraid to show ourselves to others. We hide who we are behind a variety of different devices. Give an impression we are someone else at times. But God knows who were are, the mistakes and the heartaches we have experienced. No matter how we hide it or try to cover it up God can see all. He still loves us anyway. We were loved enough that Jesus was willing to surrender to the will of God and be stripped down for all the world to see. God still loves us.