

## YOU ARE THE PRISONER

1987. At the heart of the Christian faith is the mystery of Jesus' humiliating death on a Roman gallows. 'For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God' (2 Corinthians 5:21. Jerusalem Bible). 'He was deep in Jesus' misery' is how one of Flannery O'Connor's leading characters is described. Should we aim to be like that too? Not in a self-flagellating way, but in sympathy. This is our hero, and fans identify with every single aspect of the one they idolise. Christians can start by looking at the story of Jesus' suffering and death in the gospels. Also at many books, pictures, songs and poems. Once we've identified with Jesus and his story, we might catch glimpses of him anywhere: especially in suffering people, in those who need our help, in those who need us to be Jesus to them.

1. You are the prisoner, shackled and bound.  
Soldiers mistreat you, you make no sound.  
They lead you captive for all to see.  
You are the prisoner, and I am free.

2. You are abandoned, left all alone.  
Your friends are faithless  
— hearts made of stone.  
Blood from your crown seeps down on your face.  
You are abandoned, I am embraced.

3. You are condemned to carry a cross.  
'Guilty' the verdict — this is the cost:  
thirty-nine lashes, hung among thieves.  
You are condemned, and I am reprieved.

4. You are brought down and you are despised,  
humiliated, dehumanised.  
Cruel is your suffering, bitter your cup.  
You are brought down, and I am raised up.

5. Let me look closely into your pain,  
learn of your suffering, know all your shame.  
Let me attend to all of your wounds —  
Jesus, you'll never suffer alone.

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