

Good Friday Service, April 10, 2020      Pastor Lynell M. Caudillo  
A Meditation

### **What is “good” about Good Friday??**

Really?

Things were not going according to expectations. The palm parade was a distant memory as the disciples sat at table with Jesus to eat the Passover meal.

The evening got off to a rocky start when no one, save Jesus, would take up the towel and basin of water. Yes, one could say, the room was full of proud hearts and dirty feet.

He had expressed himself quite clearly. But no one wanted to believe *everything* Jesus said. It was incomprehensible.

Would he establish his Kingdom? YES, Go for it Jesus! Kick those Roman butts. Let's go!

But NO, that was not quite what Jesus had in mind.

Jesus had repeatedly predicted his death. Unthinkable! It wasn't like there was a plague or CoVid 19 ravaging the population. Who could handle a dying Messiah? It just did not make sense.

Now Jesus is so bold as to say there is a traitor among us?! Impossible! Or is it? Betrayal? unthinkable! We've been through SO much together. But soon our hopes and expectations will be dashed once again, when Judas departs into the night.

Like one domino falling into another, a series of events is set in motion that the disciples were powerless to prevent.

After the shared Passover meal, Jesus and the 11 depart for the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus prays while the disciples, sated by the meal, fall asleep! No! That seems itself to be a betrayal! When he needed them the most, the disciples are asleep at the switch...

Judas appears with a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. The betrayal complete.

Jesus is bound, presented to Annas, then Caiaphas, the High Priest. The Jewish leaders send Jesus to the palace of the Roman governor. Pilate questions him yet concludes: “I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom to release one prisoner at Passover. Do you want me to release the King of the Jews?”

“NO-give us Barabbas”, is the crowd's reply. (John 18:38-40)

Then as now, there was a conflict between religious law and civil law—but the outcome was the same. Jesus, while innocent of any crime—is sentenced to death.

After being flogged, he is clothed in a purple robe, a crown of thorns placed upon his head. He carries his own cross to Calvary, where he is crucified between two thieves.

### **What is good about Good Friday?**

It seems at every turn, by every disciple--there is betrayal – denial—or desertion. There is a passing of the buck, as no one wants to take responsibility for this prisoner.

There is injustice, a mockery of a trial, an innocent sentenced to death. Flogging is intended to kill, but an even more cruel crucifixion did the deed.

### **What is good about Good Friday?**

That Jesus prayed often during his ministry is not in question. However, the Gospels do not record many of Jesus' prayers, probably because he was often alone, as it was his habit to get up quite early and find a quiet place to pray, removed from others.

Here in the Garden of Gethsemane, is Jesus' greatest moment of need. He needs and pleads for human companionship, but his disciples failed. They can't keep their eyes open...

Here, Jesus prays—pouring out his heart, begging: (Matt 26: 39, 42, 44)

*“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”*

*<sup>42</sup>He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”*

*<sup>44</sup>So he... once more ...[he] prayed the third time, saying the same thing.*

He pleads with God to be spared “the cup”—to be spared from death. In essence, he says to God, “if there is any other way...if you have a ‘Plan B’ up your sleeve, now would be the time to tell me! BUT...if not, I’m willing to do Your will.”

Jesus' prayer betrays his humanity...how like us, Jesus is. He hopes against hope that God will intervene.

How like us Jesus is. Both fear and faith live together.

We believe that God loves us and intends only good towards us, but we confess that we often have NO idea how certain circumstances—CoVid 19 for instance—can ever work for good.

Jesus feels abandoned by both God and man. He cries out to God, just a child cries out in utter dependence on his father.

The answer to Jesus' prayer, is No. There is no other way to accomplish God's will. Jesus' prayer reveals a whole-hearted trust in his Father, as well as Jesus' placing obedience to His Father, above his own security and comfort.

In agony, Jesus begged to be spared the cross.

God the father's answer? No.

"The crucifixion of Jesus is the preeminent example of God's love reaching out to us. It is at the same moment, the worst and the best thing in human history."

(Richard Rohr, blog,4.9.2020)

This "No" was necessary for the decisive defeat of sin and death.

This "No" was the essential prelude to the YES of resurrection...

The NO of God makes possible, an unimaginable "YES"!

***This is what is good, about Good Friday!***

Pray.