

Communion Thoughts – April 12, 2020

This is a unique time that we are living in. Being created in the image of the Triune God, we were meant to be in relationship with others. We have grown accustomed to a certain way of experiencing relationships and we are dealing with the challenge of coming up new and creative ways of maintaining relationships with those we love. I am a hugger by nature, and I won't lie, air hugs don't really cut it.

As we approach the Easter weekend, we all know it will look unlike any Easter that we have experienced before. Although we will deeply miss the events we love, like gatherings, family dinners or other group events we typically celebrate on Easter weekend, my hope is that you will be encouraged. As I have reflected on the Easter story this week, I have been profoundly impacted by an image that has not taken hold of me before.

In the Gospel of Luke, the encounter of Jesus and the two criminals is recorded.

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Jesus, in the darkest hours of his life, enters into a relationship with this man. In Christ's loving way, he extends himself and restores him. Jesus provides him with relationship like he had never experienced before. I've tried to sit quietly this week and let Jesus words to the man pour over me. "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Before you partake of the elements, take a moment to reflect on those words in silence. Try and imagine how hearing those words would have felt to that man.

I believe those words are true for us every day. I have felt great encouragement this week as I try to let those words sit on my heart. Church, we will get through this and I trust we will be better for it on the other end. I love and miss you all deeply and I am waiting and anticipating with excitement the day that we will be able to worship together in person again. But I am encouraged in this time, knowing that in Christ's death and resurrection we have victory. Continue to strive for relationship with Him.

I have also been singing one of my favourite hymns this week. You can picture me singing it, but with the voice of Alan Jackson. You might find that more helpful.

Blessings and love to all of you this Easter weekend. He Has Risen!!

Scott Jacobson

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

1. What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!

2. Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

3. Are we weak and heavy-laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

4. Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised
Thou wilt all our burdens bear;
May we ever, Lord, be bringing
All to Thee in earnest prayer.
Soon in glory bright, unclouded,
There will be no need for prayer—
Rapture, praise, and endless worship
Will be our sweet portion there.