

Pastor Jon Mark
Good Friday
April 2, 2021

Meditation

We walk with Jesus to the tomb.

This evening marks the lowest point in the Christian year. We enter the deep darkness of the tomb and the disciples outside have lost all hope. Today, is a day that the disciples expected, but also when it arrived they did not know what to do.

Peter was prepared to confirm his allegiance to Jesus, in the garden Peter even drew a sword, but when the people around the fire asked him if he was connected to this condemned messiah, Peter was afraid and denied that he even knew Jesus. Jesus

The Disciples knew that Jesus would die on the cross this day, because it was the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath. But it was Nicodemus who prepared the linens and oils to prepare his body for burial, Still, the only tomb they could find was somewhere nearby. Just some empty tomb.

I've lost two close family members this past year, my grandfather and uncle Kenegy, both on my mother's side. These people were both critical people in my life. My grandfather taught me about doing right by people, saving every scrap of lumber for projects, and the joy of work. My uncle taught me about the love of going into nature and the struggles we face from chronic disease. I owe so much to those two men and the year 2020 was made all the worst by their loss. Still, their loss struck me differently because I was not ready for my grandfather's death, while my uncle had been seriously ill for years. Still, loss is loss, no matter how ready we think we are for it.

But perhaps this year has also been made more difficult because of our expectations. While scientists told us in the early months that this would last for months, I think most of us were thinking we'd be back in the sanctuary by Easter or at least by the end of 2020. Like the disciples we did not understand the true gravity of our situation. And so, speaking for myself, this time felt worse then if someone had told me to prepare for more than a year of online ministry.

Still, the crucifixion finds the disciples flat footed. They have lost their leader, their teacher, their friend. The disciples probably each had their own ideas of how this would happen. Perhaps Judas thought that a confrontation is what Jesus needed to transform his peaceful movement into a violent revolution. Perhaps Peter thought that Jesus would always be in charge of their movement and he could rest secure in his teacher's shadow. Perhaps Mary the mother of Jesus thought she would not have to go through the terrible experience of outliving her eldest son. Jesus had told them over and over again that his ministry was leading to his death and resurrection, but nevertheless the disciples are not prepared. A reminder that they are just as

human as all of us. That even if we have many warnings that tragedy will strike, somehow we keep getting knocked off balance. Because we are human. We are beloved children of God. We are made in the image of God. And we together grieve the loss of our savior on a Roman cross.

We must go through this grief even though we know Easter is coming, because loss demands to be felt. Right now, like the disciples, we are stuck in the middle. Good things may come our way, but right now, loss demands to be felt. And so lets come to the cross with our wounds open.