

**Good Friday Reflection 10 April 2009**

Sermon notes – Rev D Blandford

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**The Cross in the Heart**

Crosses are worn by many people Fiona Bruce a BBC Newsreader is seen here wearing the cross. Sometimes people wear a crucifix. At one time I thought only plain crosses should be worn, but for me they express different truths. The crucifix reminds me that in Jesus we have one who is described as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We have in Jesus one who because of his great love for us was willing to suffer and die in order that we could experience forgiveness and a new relationship with God as our Father. However the plain or empty cross reminds us that we have a risen Lord, one who is no longer on the cross but was gloriously raised from the dead but that is a focus for Easter Sunday.

The main thing I want to share or get us to reflect upon is the Cross in the heart.

**1. The Cross in the Heart of God.**

When it comes to the death of Jesus. There is the danger that we split God up. The Father is in heaven, Jesus is on the cross, forsaken or abandoned by God, (we will return to that) and the Spirit is nowhere to be seen. Yet in reality that is not so.

As I have mentioned before the book the Shack written by WM Paul Young is an interesting read. It's fiction but I have found it to be very helpful and moving.

The story is about a family who are devastated by the murder of their daughter in a place called the shack. The Father a man called Mack receives a note from Papa to meet up in the shack. Papa is the name which his wife calls God. Mack accepts the invitation. He arrives at the place and trashes it, he is so full of anger, but then sleeps and wakes up. Suddenly the scene is transformed and the shack is not snow covered because it's like summer. He knocks on the door and meets an African American Woman, who is God. Papa later explains that God is neither male nor female as both genders are derived from God's nature. Later on Mack is with Papa having already met the two other that is Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

[When Mack and Papa are sharing in an activity this is what happens p95-96.](#)

This made me think more about this.

Ray Simpson in Celtic Daily Light had a daily reading called " The Cross in the Creator's Heart" and the key verse comes from revelation

.....**the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.** Rev 13.8

Paul writes to the Christians at Ephesus and says

Ephesians 1.4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

These scriptures throw a whole new light on Good Friday. This has been a part of God's plan before creation itself. In creating a world with a potential to rebel and to sin, God had a strategy. He was not caught off guard. The only reason that makes any sense is that God wanted so much to have this loving relationship with human beings that he took the risk but with a back up strategy.

Right back there – God the father, God the Son known as the Word and the Spirit of God together were in on this.

The events of Gethsemane is Jesus in his humanity crying out to God to see if there was another way – there was not, but the horror of the cross, the awfulness of becoming a sin bearer was felt by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Just for a moment think about that. On our Mens Walking Weekend I was chatting with Mike about his visit to Auschwitz. How he saw piles of suitcases and shoes each pair representing a person's life. The Holocaust reveals the depths of sin. The problem is that the root of that sin, selfishness, greed, abuse of power, racism etc sometimes are found in our lives. The cross was no easy path. Jesus took all the world's sin past present and future upon Himself.

Jesus in John 14 highlights that the Father was with Him. There is mystery, when Jesus cries out My God My God why have you forsaken me, did God the father and the Spirit abandon Him. At that point Jesus

in his humanity experienced that separation. Jesus as the sin bearer and God taking the worlds sin into himself - the affects of that are mind boggling. Such absorption of evil. Yet God having done so breaks its power and releases the goodness or the righteousness of God.

As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5.21

<sup>21</sup>God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus on that Good Friday died for us and the pain of that ripped into the Father and the Spirit.

### **The Cross in You and Me**

**It is one thing to be saved. To believe in Jesus. It is another thing to be healed. It is possible to be saved and miserable. It is possible and not a healthy, whole, life giving person. *It is possible for the cross to have done something for a person but not in them.* Rob Bell Velvet Elvis p 110.**

So what of us – is it a Good Friday? Is it the day when you discovered the amazing grace of God. His over the top generosity as the Street Bible describes God Grace. Is the cross something that we appreciate and celebrate because of what Jesus has done for us. Yet have we embraced the cross? Is there a cross in our hearts? A cross that says that I want to live in the light of what Jesus has done for me. That like Jesus, I am willing to take up my cross and follow him.

Jesus himself says "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Matthew 16:24

Or put another way when you became a Christian or when you become one, you become a new creation, . you discover what it means to be the person God has always created you to be. Therefore when there are things from the old way of living that are anti God and they come to the fore you have to say no to them, or put them to death to use another expression.

God is committed to making this happen – you may not be able to change the whole world, but you can change the world by allowing God to change you and your values and as that happens so we work with God to see God's Values – being worked out. I long for Good Friday next year being a time when as we look back we will have seen God at work, transforming us and others bringing others into his family and enabling our communities to be places where his light

continues to shine; to see the world become a more just place and a more caring place, where both people and God's creation are cared for. That would be good !

The Cross in the Heart

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Good Friday Reflection @ 10.00am

10 April 2009

Candle Light

Possibly clips from the Passion DVD

Hymn O sacred head once wounded 446 SOF

Reflection Neil & Ali

Reading/s John 14.9-12, 19.16-37

Talk The Cross in the Heart

Song How deep the father's love for us 780 SOF

Possibly children in

[Offerings made by children laid at the foot of the cross](#) during which sing ..

There is a green hill 542 SOF

Chris Prayers

Worship Lord you are more precious 368 SOF

Above all others 1151 SOF

Our God is an awesome God 453 SOF

Closing Prayer

