

Pastor Roy's "Good Friday" Sermon - April 3, 2015

Christians embrace Jesus as God in flesh. Tonight we are confronted with God in flesh who suffers and dies. Tragedy strikes God. Of course, we naturally think of God as powerful, and find it a stretch to think of God as vulnerable. So given the options, we think of the cross more in terms of Jesus courageously winning salvation for the masses; than Jesus simply acting faithfully, vulnerably entrusting his life into God's care. In God's care he lives and proclaims A Kingdom of justice and mercy. And in God's care he dies.

Does it matter how we think of Jesus' death—whether he died powerfully “in control” . . . or vulnerably with no sense of control? We prefer to be in control; but sooner or later in life we realize we are neither strong nor in control. Still, it is a challenge to trust the way of Jesus. The way of honesty. The way of mercy. The way of justice. The way of compassion.

What do we learn this day as we watch our good Lord die? Do we learn something about the presence of God? About the promises of God? About the true nature of power? Whether it is more important to be *strong* and to *know*. . .or to live in love? What does it mean to release ourselves into the care of this God of Jesus? . . . Where God's care has a ***much deeper foundation*** than our physical wellbeing. Here, by the side of Jesus we learn that life is unconquerable, that love never ends, and that life is much more than me and what *I* want and what *I* need. Ultimately, here by Jesus' side we learn that we are safe in our living ***and*** in our dying.

I offer an invitation this evening—let us consider Jesus' death not as a final guarantee of what we desperately want, but as a journey into true freedom, a faith journey into the presence of God, *come*. . .*what*. . .*may*. God's presence is so much stronger than our breathing and eating. Stronger than the fulfillment of all our hopes and dreams. Stronger even than our ability to be faithful to this Lord who freely releases his life to define faithful love. In these days of darkness, may you find time to ponder this invitation to live freely in the far reaching mercy of God. . . .Ponder the mystery that we must learn to die with Christ before we can ever hope to live with him, that therein is true freedom.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.