

Grace and peace to you my friends and fellow sojourners as we remember the crucifixion of Jesus.

Last week, I spoke about what an up and down week this was in the life of Jesus. *The Faithful Woman* describes it this way, “Jesus rode in to cheers and praise ... but Jesus knew what was coming. The betrayal. The suffering. **The cross.** And Jesus didn’t turn away.”

Our Lenten journey ended last night and tonight our journey is through the Three Days. We journey through the abuse, the hurt, the pain, the trial, and the crucifixion. Tomorrow, as any good Jew would do, Jesus rests on the Sabbath. And then joy comes on Sunday morning. Jesus knew what was coming is the long time Christian mantra, but sometimes I am not so sure Jesus knew. Sometimes I think Jesus just had a very good inkling, I mean, after all like I said last Sunday, Jesus was human and we believers tend to focus more on Jesus’ divinity than on Jesus’ humanness. Is that so that we can say we are weaker than Jesus and that is an excuse for us? On the other hand, if Jesus was human like us, could that not be an encouragement to us? If Jesus could do it, then maybe I can do it too? Could Jesus’ humanity be an **incentive** in some way for us?

Let us return briefly to last night’s upper room, the passover feast, the Seder. It is important, I think, to note that Jesus did not exclude Judas, that in fact, Jesus included Judas in everything Jesus did. The website [@thewomanatthewell](#) describes it this way, “Hours before the death of Jesus, Judas ate too. Jesus fed Judas too. Jesus prayed for Judas too. Jesus washed Judas’ feet too. I struggle to fathom what kind of love this is ... a love that would feed the mouth that deceived you, a love that could wash the feet of a traitor, a love that could forgive even the vilest of betrayals.” Have you ever wondered what really happened to Judas? Was Judas forgiven? Is Judas with God? I do, and for some reason I do believe that Judas was forgiven just as the thief on the cross – or even I am forgiven.

Since I do not believe in the vengeful God of the Old Testament but rather in the loving God of the New Testament that brought Jesus into the world to be our redeemer. I believe Jesus lays down Jesus’ life, not as an act of obedience to God, or payment for the sin or sins of humankind, but as a **sign** of God’s love for all creation. After all, Jesus said in John 15:13, “**No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.**”

Have you ever had arthritis, an ingrown nail, broken a bone, or damaged a joint? These are all individually painful in varying ways and degrees. Can you imagine being whipped and beaten and then suffering essentially all of these at once and even more painful things? This is God, this is Jesus showing us just how much they love us. And **we** show God and Jesus how much we love them by how we love and treat others.

Hear then the good news:

God loves you this much.

To suffer and die so that **we** can also love God and others.

*Mindful Christianity* described Jesus’ mandate to us this way, “Jesus didn’t mean just love those who fit into our idea of **lovable** – Jesus meant those who are broken; those who are scarred; those who no one else will touch. Jesus meant love them **all**. We don’t get to pick and choose.”

Grace and peace to you my friends, love God, love others - period.

**Amen**