



Saturday 11 April 2020

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assisted by resources from
Spill the Beans
<http://spillbeans.org.uk>

Gathering with God. *If you wish, light a scented candle if you have one, and say:*

We light this candle, the warmth of the Presence of God in our midst. Today, many candles are lit, in various homes - but the light is the same: Jesus is the Light of World and we remember this light during these times of darkness.

Prayer

Pray these words, silently or aloud. If with others, consider sharing the reading together.

What words shall we use this day
in this hollowed out space of Holy Week,
where their sound cuts deep into the silence,

How can silence be so deafening?

Friday has gone, and we wonder what has happened?

We hide away in our homes, wondering what might happen if
we step outside. The world as we know it has changed, and we
wonder if it will ever be the same again.

We might join with those who were thinking: "All that hype of
Messiah talk? Just another delusional magician who couldn't
magic his way out of execution. "

It is a silence charged and pulsating, a silence that feels as
though it's about to burst. All is not well. There is something
terrible in that silence, as though hell is about to burst through
and only God can prevent it. Amen.

Reflection & Bible reading. Matthew 27:57-66

If you are able, watch the video reflection by Richard Moors at www.ssuc.org.au/devotionals, otherwise please read on for the full text.

Maybe it's the effect of almost a decade of Easter Camp going
from Thursday evening to Monday afternoon, but I always want to
encourage people to stop and think on Holy Saturday. I don't want it to
be just a breather in the week long story, but for it play its part. For me
I think it is a day which points to our place in history, and which I think
says something important about our faith. For me maybe it is one of the
most important days of the Christian calendar.

You might be wondering, well what do we think about on this day, Jesus
is dead in the tomb, the disciples are locked away, nothing happens. But
I want you to think about what the disciples are thinking at that time.

They don't know the ending of the story like we do, they don't know what will happen on Sunday, all they know is
what happened on Friday. They have been following Jesus for three years, they have given up all to follow him.
They had worked out he was the Messiah, they thought that his kingdom would come to rule, and that they would
support him in that rule. And now as they sit there, locked away, scared that they might be next, they must be
wondering were they wrong? Was the last three years all a waste? Should they give it all away? They live
between the cross and the resurrection (ok I'll admit that's the title of a book by Alan E. Lewis).



We too live between the cross of Jesus, and our hoped for resurrection at the end of days. Like the disciples we might sometimes wonder if it was all wrong? I know there have been times when I have thought that. And I know that I have heard Christians talk about how it is wrong to doubt. I know in the Upper Hunter when I talked at one of our churches about the need for us to doubt and explore in faith one of the members pointed me to Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” (NIV) Unfortunately it wasn’t till I got home that I discovered that most translations suggest more uncertainty: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (NRSV). We have a conviction that what we believe is true, but we can’t prove it, there might always be some doubt.

Perhaps you have been taught that doubt is a bad thing? Perhaps we do that because we have never stopped to think about this day. And perhaps because we have always looked negatively at Thomas, rather than the positive way that Jesus seems to react. But central to the Christian story is that people questioned Jesus and God. They wondered if it was all true. We might shy away because we see them get into trouble. But rather they are in trouble because they doubt and so turn away, rather than starting to question and explore. Doubt is a good thing when it is linked with searching.

Personally I have always seen my role as getting people to question what they believe, not so they throw it all away, but so that they explore and it because what they discover to be true, rather than what someone has told them is true. I would love to encourage you to take some time today to write down the questions about faith you have. Make a list, no one is going to be examining it, just you. And in the year to come, seek out some answers. You might read the Bible. You might find a good book/podcast/website which talks about your questions. You might talk with one of the ministry team, or with a friend. Don’t hide the fact you have doubts, but own them so that you can explore and grow in your faith.

We continue our Holy Week journey to the cross

Pray these words, aloud. If with others, consider sharing these words together.

Loving God, help me in my unbelief. Help me when like the disciples I hide away in my doubt. Help me to remember you love me as I am, and you want to help me to find answers and comfort. May you take my list of doubts this year, and show me more of who you are. Amen.

