

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Mar 29th 2013

Today's scripture readings are familiar. And there is a lot of reading. Isaiah is speaking of Jesus when he says "he gives his life as an offering for sin". The psalm response is, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." In Hebrews, we are told that Jesus is our high priest who has been tested in every way. That through his death, he became the source of eternal salvation. And in John we hear the story of Christ's arrest, trial and crucifixion.

Good Friday. I've always thought that was a misnomer. What is good about the day they crucified the Son of God? Why was this part of God's plan? God's plan seems painful and perplexing. Even Jesus asked if there could be another way. But what if God had changed His plan? What if there was no crucifixion? No atoning sacrifice. No forgiveness. Would we have a relationship with God? If yes, I'm betting it would be more about fear than love. Would we know Jesus? Would we want to follow him or see him as a model? What would love mean to me? Would I even be able to feel love? Love is messy and love is inefficient. Kind of like God's plan. But, boy, without it life would be pretty meaningless. I guess Good Friday is critical in shaping who we are, how we live our lives, how we relate to God and how we relate to each other.

Love is messy and love is inefficient. Two things I dislike. Yet what would life be without love? Several weeks ago, my wife and I were sitting at the breakfast table discussing our relationship. We both find it amazing that we found each other. When I was single, if I had had a list of what I was looking for in a wife, Deb would not have been on it. For the record, I did not have a list.; 32 years and 7 children later, it's like, how did that happen? I believe God places people in our lives at specific times for specific purposes. As we discussed this mystery, Deb blurted out, "I don't know, but you work for me." Well, at this point in time, Deb was unemployed and I was quite offended. Is that what I am: a paycheck? a drone? a worker bee? Thankfully, I just thought that and I did not say that. And I realized, she meant that even though she did not understand it, in our relationship, as a husband, I worked for her.

Some people reject or do not understand Christ's sacrifice. Some do not understand our faith. Even I don't understand it fully. That said, I recognize a gift from God and I am thankful for it. I am thankful for the gift of faith. God's love. Messy and inefficient. Confusing and mysterious. Yet it works for me.

My prayer today is for those of us unsure in our faith. Unsure about God's plan. That we would recognize the extent of God's love for us, exhibited in Christ's sacrifice. That we would simply trust

and accept this gift. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

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