

Sunday of the Passion

Zech 9:9-12, Ps. 31:9-16; Phil 2:5-11

March 24, 2024

Mark 14:1 – 15:47

Does God care about my pain? That's what I hear when I attend to the words of today's psalm...or walk the halls of this church...or hear about a childhood friend with a crack addiction, and so many others like her, out there. Does God care?

The answer does not seem to be in a man riding into his capital city with a crowd waving banners in his name for his glory, or, being anointed “king” by a woman with an alabaster box, anointed “priest” by the oil she poured upon him.

The answer seems to me to be in a man who gives his body, his blood poured out for the many...who is betrayed, who contemplates his coming death and is given time, long enough time and opportunity to find an escape from it, but doesn't take it, because He does it for me.

Does God care about my pain...the pain in these church halls...or of my childhood friend addicted and abused...and so many others?

He cares or He would not send one of his own, the Son, one who emptied himself of power, riches, status...came to be our servant, lowered himself like a slave to wash my feet.

To die on a cross out of love.

If it's love that brought him here to me, to you, to all the “them” out there, we worship such love.

For thirty years he endured poverty and obscurity and humbleness—as

a carpenter-man! Why? Not to be a political leader, a Messiah to lead crowds into war, but out of...a tomb---your tomb, my tomb, “their” tombs.

And then, for Him, it would have seemed the end of all. But now begins eternal life!?? O, We ALL have a stake in this. Attend! Listen! This is what WE want, and want for all whom we love. In the end, isn't that it? To see and be with our loved ones, again. The Kingdom of God! Heaven, even! But we get more. We get HIM, with us NOW and forever.

He walks my walk, now. Walks these empty church corridors, now. Walks with childhood addicted friend, NOW. And every day, promising that this is just what God is = love. Loves you.

How do we know? He proved it.

He came for this dying and rising part---for you, for me, for all the “them” out there. He came, and God loved me and you and them so much that He turned His Son **down** when He pleaded and cried in the garden (and Gethsemane echoes with the anguish) but God said NO to HIM. Why? Why? For love of me. For love of you. For love of them.

Then...(you) come to the garden on Saturday, and find HIM in a TOMB!

And on Sunday, and find him risen! Once more, for you, for me, for “them”...Not so He could find his glory, but to be with me, and you, and them. For love. For you see, the love of the Son is for the Father, and the love of the Father for the Son, and it's the same love, for they are One, the same love for me, for you, for them.

O Magnum Mysterium. O Mystery profoundest. O Magnificent in

Majesty. That God would take my pain....my pain, your pain, her pain, his pain. God would take it all, for our gain. Gladly take it all. My pain. Your pain, My sin, all our sin, away. Because what else could it be but for love. Love is the what of what happened, love is the why.

So do not ask what. Do not ask why, or does God care about my pain.

Look at the cross.

Look at the way of the light streaming forth from the empty tomb.

Look at the love of the Father and the Son together, together, having decided to be always *with* us...(You and me and all, of them). If that's not love...?

But it is. And I believe it. And, I believe, you do too.

So, to *this* love we raise our loud Hosanna, today.

Hosanna, Hosanna, in the Highest.