

Good Friday 2022

Reflection # 1

Let's kill him!

Luke 20:9-19

You may think that a strange reading for Good Friday

But here we see – **with disturbing insight** – how Jesus himself understood his impending doom

The tension between the Pharisees and other religious leaders and Jesus had been building

Jesus saw his mission as to seek and to save the **lost**

But the Pharisees wanted Jesus to keep as far away from the lost – those **sinners** – those **prostitutes** – those **tax collectors** – as **possible!**

But the **lost** – like the younger son in the **parable** of the **lost sons** – were coming to their **senses** – they were realising that life **without** God was **not** all it was **cracked** up to be – and they were gathering to **hear** Jesus – and hanging on his every **word**.

The **religious** leaders – grumpy at how all their traditions were being broken – had no interest in saving the lost – they just stood there – arms folded – **indignant** at **Jesus** and the **sinners**.

But this **parable...** this parable sheds much **light** on **Jesus' death** and where it fits in the history of God's dealing with Israel. ///

Running as a beautiful golden **thread** throughout Scripture is the notion of Israel as God's **vineyard** – **FROM** whom he expected **fruit** – **growth** – **impact** – a **yield...**

So for those who knew their **Old Testament** – Jesus' reference to a **vineyard** and **tenants** and expected **fruit** would not have been **unfamiliar**

The man who planted the vineyard is reminiscent of **God** himself

The **tenants** – are the religious **leaders** throughout Israel's **history**

The **servants** he sends are the **prophets** down through time who **continually** held Israel to **account...**

They were often treated **shamefully** – **ignored** – **rejected**

The owner of the **vineyard** **said**, *'what shall I do?' I will send my son whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.*

My son... whom I love... remember the words heard at Jesus' **baptism??** Matthew 3 ¹⁷ *And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

Jesus understands and makes clear – that HE **HIMSELF** is the **son** of the owner; who the **owner sends** in the light of the continual **rejection** of the **prophets**.

But the tenants – the **religious leaders** of **Jesus' time** – decide – “**let's kill him**” – thinking they will retain all the **power** and **assume ownership**

Let's kill him...

He's a **threat**

We don't want him to **rule over us**

We don't want to **surrender** to **him**

We don't **need** him... or **love** him... or **respect** him //

And the story ends as Jesus announces that the tenants will be outed and the vineyard given to **others...**

That is - the vineyard will be taken from **Israel** and given to the **Gentiles...!**

...because in a mixing of metaphors – the **stone** the builders **rejected** has become the **cornerstone...**

That is – the very one the religious leaders **rejected** – became the one upon who God's new work in the **church** was **built**.

In **immediate** fulfilment of the very parable – did they not see the reality? - *the teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them*

The reaction to Jesus is still the same today... perhaps even reflected by those **here** / those **watching** today...

Jesus **rejected**.... /////

Jesus **revered**...

Are you plotting as it were to get rid of him: to **exclude** him from your **life**

Or have you welcomed him and surrendered to him.

Plotting to exclude him – will result – as it was for the tenants in Jesus' story – will result in you being excluded

Welcoming him and surrendering to him – will result in you being welcomed, embraced, forgiven, reconciled that is why today is // **GOOD Friday**....

Reflection # 2

“That should have been me”

Luke 22:66-23:25

His name was **Barabbas**.

He was in prison for rioting and murder.

Exactly where he **should** have **been**.

He wasn't the sort of person you'd like your daughters to date.

He was against the **Romans**. Against the **elite** of **Israel**.

Against just about **everything**.

Loved causing **trouble**. ///

But the Roman governor had a **tradition**.... As a kind of sop to the nation of Israel and their religion: **every** year at the **Passover** he released a **prisoner** chosen by the **crowd**.

Not for a moment did Barabbas **ever** expect it would be **him**.

He had enemies **everywhere**.

So you can imagine his surprise when they pulled him out of his cell, stood him on the same platform as **Jesus** and asked the crowd '**which one?**'

Barabbas had heard about Jesus.

Heard that he attracted **crowds** wherever he went.

Heard that he was a popular teacher – people hanging on every word

Heard that he had healed people.

Even raised someone from the **dead**.

But he also knew that the **religious people** didn't like **Jesus**.

He didn't **fit** their **plans**.

They were **jealous** of all the **attention** he was getting.

He **broke** their **rules**.

Got their **noses** out of **joint**.

He hung round with the likes of **Barabbas** MORE than *the religious people!*

And now Barabbas and Jesus were standing **side by side**.

Jesus of course, had done **nothing wrong!**

Governor **Pilate** knew that **too!**

Then there was that **moment** – when Pilate asked “who do you want released – Jesus or Barabbas?”

And they called out **BARABBAS**.

Amazing!

Then he asked them what they wanted him to do with Jesus and they started chanting – ***Crucify him Crucify him!***

Pilate asked – ‘**why**; what crime has he committed...?’ and they just shouted all the louder – ‘***Crucify him Crucify him!***’

So Barabbas - was **released there** and **then**.

Went **free**. Just walked **away**.

As if he’d never done anything wrong.

The **innocent** one, got was coming to **Barabbas!**

He didn’t **deserve** that!

And Barabbas went **free**. He didn’t **deserve THAT!**

Jesus got **death**.

Barabbas got **life**. //

Had Barabbas looked up at that hill outside the city that afternoon and saw Jesus hanging there – he might have said to himself – ***that should have been me!*** //

Barabbas’ story is **your** story – if you trust Jesus.

You’ve been set **free**.

You don’t **deserve** it – but you’ve been released

God treating you, as if **you’d** never done anything wrong!

The price has been **paid**.

You walk **away**.

He got **death**. You get **life**.

You **too** can say – **THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ME!**

That is why today is **GOOD** Friday....

Reflection # 3

"It is finished"

John 19:16b-30

Jesus said "it is finished". With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

What did Jesus **mean**?

It's a been **tough few days** – a tortuous few **hours** - I'm glad it's **over**?

Was it a grim **resignation** to the fact that his death was imminent?

Was he giving **up**? "I've had **enough** – it's all too **much**"?

Was it a cry of **defeat**...? "They've **won** – it's **finished**... they **got me**...?"

No.... no.... no and no!

It was **none** of those...

This wasn't Jesus resigning to an inevitable **end**.. nor was it a cry of **defeat**....

It was like a **victory cry**!

It was a cry of '**mission accomplished**'...

What his Father had sent him to **do**, he had **done**

What was that? – let me remind you from the Bible what Jesus came to do that had now been done!

1. Come into this world to bring **light** to its **darkness** – John 1:4-5
2. He took on human flesh and make his **dwelling** among us – John 1:14
3. Come with **grace** and **truth** and make the **Father known** – John 1:14-18
4. Become **poor**, so that we through his poverty might become **rich** – 2 Cor 8:9
5. Become obedient to **death**, even death on a **cross** – Phil 2:5-11
6. He came to be the **lamb** of God who takes away the sin of the world – John 2
7. Give his life as a **ransom** for many – Mark 10:45
8. He came to be **pierced** for our **transgressions** – and **Crushed** for our **iniquities** – to take the **punishment** that brought us **peace** – Isaiah 53
9. Come into the world to **save sinners** – 1 Tim 1:15
10. To be our **advocate** before the **Father** – 1 John 1:1-2
11. To become **sin** for us that we might become **right with God** – 2 Cor 5:21

12. **To die** for us, while we were still **sinner**s – Rom 5:6
13. **To redeem** us by his blood – which means the **forgiveness** of sins... Eph 1
14. To be the means by which we are **justified** through **faith** and therefore have **peace** with **God** – Rom 5:1
15. To make us **alive** with him even when we were dead in our **transgressions** – Eph 2
16. **He came to forgive us** all our **sins** – cancelling the written code that stood against us – Col 2
17. He came to reconcile **all things** to **himself** – by making **peace** through his **blood**, shed on the **cross** – Col 2
18. He came to bare our **sin** in his **body** on the **tree** – 1 Peter 2:24
19. to save us - by his **mercy** – not by nothing we have **done** – Titus 3:3-5
20. to be a **sacrifice** for us to take away the sins of many people... Hebrews 9:28
21. to open a **new** way to into the holy presence of God through the curtain... so that we may approach God with **confidence**... Heb 10:19-20
22. and make it possible for us to be **made completely new!** – 2 Cor 5
23. he came to be the means by which God **reconciles** us to **himself!!** - 2 Cor 5

.... **THAT** is what he **finished!**

The work of your **salvation** – if you have repented and believed

...of **cancelling** your **sin**

...of **reconciling** you to the **Father**

...of opening **access** to the very **presence** of the **Father**

---- all **THIS** was being finished – as Jesus breathed his last

“It is finished” Jesus said

With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

That is why today // is **GOOD** Friday....