

BBC Radio 4 Prayers for the Day

Wednesday 27th March

Good morning.

For Christians this week is called 'Holy Week' because we remember the events of the last week of the life of Jesus that led to his crucifixion on Good Friday and his resurrection from the dead on Easter Day.

One of the things I find captivating about the story is the way the characters reflect the whole of life. The crowd welcomes Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and turns on him later in the week shouting that the authorities should crucify him. Pilate the Roman Governor washes his hands of the problem and asks, "What is truth?" The religious leaders are hypocritical and set out to trap the good man from Galilee who heals people and excites them with a vision of God's justice and love. And two disciples let their friend down; Judas by betraying him with a kiss and Peter who three times denied he even knew him.

Judas and Peter are a puzzle. Judas went out and hanged himself because he recognised that what he had done was so terrible that nothing could ever put it right. He despaired. Whereas Peter, in the resurrection, hears Jesus calling him again on the shore of the Sea of Galilee where he had first left everything to go and follow him. "Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep... Do you love me, do you really love me?", his three responses cancelling out the three denials and getting him going again.

Perhaps that's the greatest lesson of the week summed up in a marvellous verse from St Paul's letter to the Romans that "Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus".

Dear God, when we despair in life or death, in ourselves and one another, in you; open us up again to your eternal love.

Amen