

BBC Radio 4 Prayers for the Day

Friday 29th March

Good morning on the day Christians call 'Good Friday'. I don't suppose it felt much good with Jesus dying on a cross and his followers overwhelmed by desolation, their hopes destroyed.

Within the stories of this last week of Jesus' life there are searing moments of revelation and judgement in which the terrible truth dawns. When it has all gone wrong there is a terrible moment of clarity with a centurion standing by the cross on which Jesus died said, "Truly this man was the son of God".

I love the way that in John's Gospel that the glory of God is seen not just in heaven, but already on earth, even in Jesus *raised up* on the cross.

A parish priest, W H Vanstone, wrote a poem about the self-giving love of Christ, 'Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense'. Jesus on the cross is bound in setting others free:

Here is God: no monarch he,
Throned in easy state to reign;
Here is God whose arms of love
Aching, spent, the world sustain.

What is good about Good Friday is that this is the day when God who is among us shows that death is not the worst thing that can happen to us. It never has the last word. Goodness is stronger than evil, love stronger than hate, light always shines in darkness and even in grief life overwhelms death. It is not so because of our own strength, or because we are good, but because in the events remembered by Christians in this Holy Week, God loves us and abides with us.

At the start of this Good Friday,

Day by day dear Lord, of these three things I pray:
to see thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly
and follow thee more nearly.

Amen