



Passion in Perspective

For our lent course this year we will be following the passion of Christ as told in the Gospel of John while seeking to understand it within the context of the Covid pandemic. We

will look at six aspects of Christs passion; darkness, touch, anxiety, isolation, pain, and re-birth, and look how these aspects manifest themselves within the currant Covid situation

Week One. Darkness

Read John Chapter 12, especially paying attention to the following

Jesus Speaks about His Death

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say— ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people^l to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains

forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light."

Read the whole chapter through. Then read the chapter again. When Jesus talks about his death, consider the following

- Jesus talks about the judgment that is coming upon the world and the ruler of this world will be "driven out" and being "lifted up and drawing all people to himself"
- He talks about the light not being with them much longer, and walking in the light in order that darkness "may not overtake you" and that people who believe in him "should not remain in darkness"
- Jesus is passing on a "direct revelation from God" i.e. "What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me."

Consider the following

In John's Gospel Jesus commands the situation regarding his death. When he is lifted up upon the cross, he will defeat Satan and draw everyone to himself, and people who believe in him will become children of light. Consider the previous passage with this passage from Mark.

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. "And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴ And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand." Mark 14

- What are the main differences between the 2 Gospels? In what ways do the 2 Gospels present Jesus differently?
- Where does "darkness" exist in the passage above? Notice the absent of "light" a key feature of Johns Gospel
- Notice how in John God directly intervenes." *Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."* Yet Jesus seems alone and isolated in Mark

Putting it into context

The Covid Pandemic has plunged many people into darkness. This is the darkness of isolation, the darkness of not seeing another human being, the darkness of loss and bereavement, the darkness of being shut out from our church building, the darkness of not seeing any light to penetrate the gloom

Yet Jesus calls us to be “children of light”

In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus is alone, agitated and afraid. He looks for the comfort of his disciples but they are sleeping. In Johns Gospel, written many years later, Jesus is in full control of the situation regarding his death, in fact, he sees it as a necessity in order to bring about Judgment, the defeat of Satan, and gather the world to him!

Covid has plunged us into darkness. However, as Children of light we have continued to worship, pray, and find ways to connect with each other. The light of Christ finds ways to penetrate this darkness, to bring hope, and a sense of inner peace

Lent can seem like a dark journey. There are no flowers in Church (traditionally) our triptych is closed, the colour purple is a sombre reflection of the penitential season, yet We look through lent to find the risen Jesus, the Christ who transcended Death of that first Easter Sunday!

Let us therefore be mindful of those who we see no longer, through death or shielding, but confident in Gods ability to break through the darkness. You may wish to use the

following compline service at night, with a lighted candle, to reflect on the themes of light and darkness.

Night Prayer

You may wish to light a candle and have some reflective music playing in the background.

Opening Sentences

The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. **Amen.**

Our help is in the name of the Lord
who made heaven and earth.

Pause and reflect on the day that is past.

Save us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ
and asleep may rest in peace.

Bible Reading

You may wish to say here the psalm given below,

1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
and abides under the shadow of the Almighty,
2 Shall say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my
stronghold, my God, in whom I put my trust.'
3 For he shall deliver you from the snare of the

fowler and from the deadly pestilence.

4 He shall cover you with his wings
and you shall be safe under his feathers;
his faithfulness shall be your shield and buckler.

5 You shall not be afraid of any terror by night,
nor of the arrow that flies by day;

6 Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor of the sickness that destroys at noonday.

7 Though a thousand fall at your side
and ten thousand at your right hand,
yet it shall not come near you.

8 Your eyes have only to behold
to see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the Lord your refuge
and the Most High your stronghold,

10 There shall no evil happen to you,
neither shall any plague come near your tent.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over you,
to keep you in all your ways.

12 They shall bear you in their hands,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder;
the young lion and the serpent
you shall trample underfoot.

14 Because they have set their love upon me,
therefore will I deliver them;

I will lift them up, because they know my name.

15 They will call upon me and I will answer them;
I am with them in trouble,

I will deliver them and bring them to honour.

16 With long life will I satisfy them

and show them my salvation.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. *Amen.***

***You may wish to use the following short
reading***

Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. *Matthew 11.28-end*

Prayers

Merciful God, we entrust to your unfailing and tender care this night those who are ill or in pain, knowing that whenever danger threatens your everlasting arms are there to hold us safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the silent hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may rest upon your eternal changelessness;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from it the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us in peace,
and may your blessing be always upon us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.

The Conclusion

In peace we will lie down and sleep;
for you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.
The Lord bless us and watch over us;
The Lord make his face to shine upon us
and be gracious to us;
The Lord look kindly upon us and give us his peace, ***Amen***