

RESURRECTION SUNDAY

THE POEM – RECOGNISING YOU

Jesus in the garden, newly risen from the dead,
Who stood by weeping Mary, and who heard the words she said
As if you were the gardener, till at last your shepherd's voice
Called her 'Mary' and with one word gave her reason to rejoice,
Jesus in the garden, ever new but still the same:
 help me recognise you in the speaking of my name.

Jesus on the journey, fellow traveller on the road,
Who met two sad disciples, walking with them as you showed
The meaning of the scriptures that predicted you would rise,
But only when you blessed the meal could they believe their eyes.
Jesus on the journey, meet me where my hopes have fled:
 help me recognise you in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus in the locked room, breaking through despair and doubt,
Who comforted your friends when they had shut the whole world out,
Who came again for Thomas, and revealed your hands and side
So that he could touch and know you as alive, though you had died.
Jesus in the locked room, breaking through our self-built bars:
 help me recognise you in the touching of your scars.

Jesus on the shoreline, cooking breakfast for your friends,
Who offered guilty Peter one more chance to make amends,
Who filled a net with fish for him, and helped him to recall
The first catch that convinced him to respond to your first call.
Jesus on the shoreline, know my best, forgive my worst:
 help me recognise you in the way I met you first.

JESUS STANDS WITH US IN SUFFERING

- Jesus appeared to the disciples – afraid, ashamed, doubting
- “Magic sweetie” for scraped knuckles and bruised knees
- Fine for things that just need to be “got over” – and there are grown-up versions for bad days at the office, sleepless nights or cooking disasters.
- But when it comes to real suffering, we don’t want a sweetie – or equivalent. We want the company of someone who knows our pain, loves us, and is with us.
- “He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and

familiar with pain.” (Isaiah 53:3)

- This is part of His glory – “See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.’ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne” (Rev 5:6)
 - *Those wounds yet visible above // In beauty glorified!*
- Jesus does not offer a “magic sweetie” to our suffering. He does not offer cheap distraction, but costly love.
- Two images
 - Two research doctors with their team, all sick and dying from the disease they’re trying to cure. Arms round each other’s shoulders, sharing sorrow.
 - Same scene again, but one doctor now holds in his hand the cure. Doesn’t invalidate the suffering, but it’s also a victorious picture.
- Jesus is with us in our suffering, but not defeated. He doesn’t just stick with us in our troubles – He also promises us an answer: a sure and certain hope that He has prepared a place for us, the other side of death, where there is no pain, no hurt, no suffering, no death. Sure? Certain? Guaranteed in His scarred body, raised from death and there in front of them.
- To this day, every time a scholar goes to the resurrection to disprove it, they end up more convinced that Jesus truly did rise from the grave. No other answer makes sense. Jesus rose from the dead, and so proved everything else He said was true – there is a life to come, which eclipses the pain of this current one.
- When you find yourself stressed, sad, in pain, anxious, depressed, bereaved – remember Jesus, nail-scarred and glorious – with you, and pointing ahead to a speck on the horizon that is eternal life, the other side of death.

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PAINTER (CONT'D)
You think he's crazy?

DAVENPORT
Certifiable. And no matter what his credentials are, I don't like him wearing the uniform.

PAINTER
When you shook hands with him, you notice the ring on his finger, Chuck? (Davenport didn't)
Academy, Class of '72. Marine Corps.

DAVENPORT
You're putting me on. How did you —

PAINTER
Greer told me about him. Three weeks after he was commissioned, he was in a chopper on a rescue mission in the Med. They went down. Bad. Pilot and crew killed instantly. That kid spent eight months in traction with a broken back, and two years learning to walk again. I think it's OK for him to wear the uniform.
(beat)
Don't you?

JESUS IS LOOKING TO INCLUDE, NOT TO EXCLUDE

- Peter is back fishing again. He's followed Jesus – first of all as a gifted teacher, then as Messiah. He's sworn unending loyalty to Jesus, and then he's blown it. What else is he good for now?
- I want you to see the beauty of how Jesus deals with him.
 - Jesus goes to him
 - Jesus reminds him of that first step of obedience
 - Jesus has already prepared breakfast, but gives Peter the dignity of bringing some of "his" catch
 - Peter had denied Jesus three times; Jesus gives Peter three chances to proclaim his love
 - Jesus gives Peter calling and purpose, and tells him that in the future he will have another opportunity to risk himself for Christ – one that he'll take this time around.
- Jesus is making a way to re-include Peter.
- Jesus went to all kinds of people, looking to find and even making ways to include them.
 - To those who lived sinful lives, He sought them out, ate with them, and showed them love before they changed – and many then changed and followed Him.
 - He taught and warned the Pharisees and other religious teachers, who made themselves His enemies – and some listened and followed Him.
 - He sought out people who Jewish society held in lower esteem – women, children, foreigners, those who were ill – and some followed Him.
- Peter's past failings were not greater than Jesus's forgiveness. And his intent was not to condemn Peter, but to re-include him.
- If you are not a whole-hearted follower of Christ this morning, God is not looking for a reason to exclude you, but to include you, **if you are willing**. The glorious, nail-scarred, victorious Jesus is standing at the door to His Kingdom, holding it open and calling out to you, "come in, while the door's still open!" Take the offer!
 - He won't hold your past against you, but offers forgiveness if we will admit our faults and ask.
 - He won't protect you from all pain in this life, but He promises an eternity free of it.
 - What He asks of us is that we believe in His resurrection, ask forgiveness for having lived our own way instead of His, and agree to treat Him as our highest authority from this day on. Take the offer! Pray today!

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