

Sermon
Sunday of the Passion
St. Andrew's, Methuen
April 10, 2022
William Bradbury

Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11
Luke 22:14-23:56

As we enter Holy Week today, we are participating in the Passion of Jesus. We'll have worship services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (both at 7PM) because the Christian Way is not just to think about the life and death of Jesus, but to participate in the life and death of Jesus. **It is a journey to be walked not just an idea to be thought.**

Those whose lives are so busy they come to church only on Easter Sunday are like those who turn on the Super Bowl right after the game is over. They see people celebrating and having a great time, but they can't fully join in because they didn't make the journey.

But the biggest obstacle to participating in Holy Week is not that our lives are so full, but that our minds are so full.

We think we know all about it.

We Episcopalians pride ourselves on what we know: we know the creed and we know the prayer book.

And thus full of knowledge, we don't come to church for a fresh experience of God.

We don't come expecting to be changed.

Rather we hope God will keep our lives static and fixed—so that nothing can threaten my Kingdom of "Me".

This is an old problem, which is why Paul says in Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your minds....**"

And today in Philippians 2: "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus."

And what is **the mind of Christ**: "though he was in the form of God he emptied himself..."

Jesus' mind is empty. Zen Buddhists call it "Beginner's Mind". Jesus empties his mind of what happened yesterday, in order to make room for the novelty of God to enter today.

Jesus is not stuck in the frozen past, full of grievances and certainties, but rather he lives in the flow of the present, where New Creation happens.

That's why, as Beatrice Bruteau points out, Jesus tells us to forgive 70 times 7, because when we fail to forgive, we are freezing that person, the event, and ourselves in the past, so that nothing will ever change. (See her astounding work, [The Grand Option](#))

But when we forgive, we free that person and ourselves to enter an open future. When we forgive, we are joining God in pouring energies of love into them, so their choices today can be healing and hopeful.

 This is what Jesus is doing for us on the cross: **Father, forgive them.... Father, forgive them.... Father, forgive them....**

He is freeing us from the prison of the past, so we can step into the freedom of a new future, ever-growing as a person in communion with God, others, and self—New Creation.

When we realize Christ is doing this for us, we come alive and become capable of doing the same for others.

Be transformed by the renewing of your minds...."
"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus."

We become like the Blessed Virgin Mary who offers to God, not a frozen past but a present emptiness in which to manifest Christ.

Emptiness is all God needs. Christ sweeps away the past, so we can make the journey from certainty to trust, from holding on to letting go, from defending to sharing.

Jesus does not come into the world to change God's mind about us, but to change our minds about God:

Christ reveals God. God is not Frozen Being, but Flowing Communion that invites us in every moment into God's Life.

And for those of us caught in the invincible ignorance of thinking we know who we are, Jesus turns to the convicted criminal next to him and says,

"Today you will be with me in paradise."