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**It’s Friday! But Sunday Is Coming!**



(Luke 23:44-49 KVJ)

*44And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. 46And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. 47Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. 48And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. 49And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.*

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esus died in the dark. In the middle of day, when the sun was supposed to shine, from noon to three, a deep darkness shrouded the whole land. The sun wouldn’t shine. Just as, “In the beginning,” when the earth was a dark, formless, chaotic mass, before God said, “Let there be light,” as Jesus hung on the cross, the earth was plunged, once again, into chaotic darkness. This is strange, because Jesus came to be a light in the darkness to the whole wide world.

Yet, that Friday, it seemed darkness had overcome the light, overwhelmed the light, snuffed out the light. Indeed that Friday the light of the world – the innocent, sinless, Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world, was crucified by evil men who would rather witness him inhale and exhale his last segment of oxygen because of traditional Judaism.

They’d conspired against him. They’d told lies on him. They’d taken advantage of the weakness and greed of one of Jesus’ own trusted inner circle. And, now, the miracle worker and so called, “King of the Jews,” was defeated. They believe that darkness won, or so it appeared!

He was arrested, tied up, interrogated, tortured, and executed. After that his executioners took and divided his clothes among themselves. Sadly the crucifixion and the cross is always a story of suffering and death. There’s just no way around it!

How is it that something as brutal as this has become the centerpiece of our faith? There is something about this story that is attractive and repulsive, compelling and embarrassing. We glory in the cross and we denounce such violence when it happens in the world today. So why is this story of suffering and death at the heart of our faith?

Some say that Jesus suffered and died because we are so bad. But I totally disagree with that analogy. I think Jesus suffered and died because we suffer and die. Who among us today has not known suffering, loss, sorrow? Who here has not wept and felt powerless, ineffective, and immobilized at the suffering and loss of another person? Who here has not in some way been touched and affected by the sting of death?

 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining as the son hung between two worlds. We often, rightly, associate darkness with evil. In fact, evil activities are done under the cover of darkness. But the darkness on this particular Friday was indeed the reality of the darkness of evil. Moreover, though dark deeds were done, this darkness was something totally different.

What was this darkness? This was the darkness of the Father’s grief, watching his beloved son suffer and die. This was the darkness piercing the heart of God, as the Holy Trinity experienced the separation and death of the Son. This was creation reacting to the evil done to its creator. The sun, itself, refused to shine on this dark day.

How do you make sense of the crucifixion? What do you do with the world’s suffering? How do you understand your suffering? What explanations do you have for the tragedies of life? What do you say when someone asks you about her or his suffering?