

The Passion and the Cross

Secrets Hidden since the Beginning of Time

- I. Saturday AM – The Cross in all its Richness
 - II. Sunday PM – The Passion of Jesus
 - III. Monday PM – Living out the Paschal Mystery
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Saturday AM - The Cross in all its Richness

Introduction – Entering the meaning of the Cross

- The Cross as multivalent - a "*diamond in the sun*"
- One point of entry - The Cross as the "secret" to everything
 - "*To YOU is given the secret of the Kingdom of God, but to those OUTSIDE everything is in parables.*"
 - In following Jesus, we can either be "IN" or "OUT" – depending upon whether or not we get the secret
 - Those who "get it" are genuine disciples and those who "don't get it" remain on the edges, outside.
 - But - "get" what? What's the secret they need to grasp?

*In essence - The Meaning of Cross

The brokenness of Jesus on the cross

The wisdom of the Cross

The invitation inside the cross and willingness to live out the demands of the cross

*E.g., Peter is "inside", until he betrays Jesus at during the arrest and trial of Jesus and Mark tells us that when he did this, "he went outside".

II. What is the wisdom of the Cross? What is the secret we need to "get" to be inside the circle of discipleship?

*What is the cross?

- is now **the most universal symbol (of love)** in the whole world

- is, as Rene Girard once said: "**The most revolutionary moral event in all of history** - and we are still absorbing, slowly its meaning."
- Is **partly a mystery** - a mystery of love: Isn't easy to explain in words, we get it more with our hearts and in our feelings than we do in our heads, imaginative constructs, and our words.

***How to begin to understand that?**

III. The Cross as telling us what is most important about God.

- **An image - The Curtain veil was torn from top to bottom**

- *moment of Jesus' death as described by the Evangelists
- *like Rainbow - reveals physically the inner beauty
- *Death of Jesus on the cross - reveals the inner moral beauty

IV. What is revealed? (6)

i) Unconditional forgiveness and love - God's love inside of our sin, infidelity, and twistedness.

ii) Vulnerability as the path of intimacy

- *Exousia - not "dynamis" or "energia"
- *The opposite of the "Tower of Babel"
- *Our talents and attempt to impress spark envy, insecurity, restlessness.
- *Meekness does inherit the earth
- *God's power as "underwhelming" us
- *God as perpetual invitation, and not threat or coercion

Questions for discussion and journaling ...

1. What single thing in the presentation struck me (positively or negatively)? Why?
2. If you are wearing a cross or have one hanging in your house – why? What does it mean to you?
3. What are my questions?

iii) God's identification with the victim and the victim as the cornerstone.

- *Elie Wiesel's story

- *the rejected one is the most important spiritual person in the community.
- *tough to accept; e.g., Timothy McVeigh, Abortion, Tracy Latimer.

iv) God as fellow-sufferer and as redeemer, not rescuer.

- *Jesus and Lazarus' death
- *The invitation to show God where we live.

v) God's radical non-violence

- *A story - Daniel Berrigan on where God speaks in the world
- *A progressive revelation in scripture
- *E.g. - Daniel and Jesus

vi) Jesus' death as God's "descent into hell"

- *A story of human tragedy.
- *Holman Hunt's famous painting: The Christ who Knocks
- *John 20 - Christ as going through walls and doors
- *The ultimate consoling doctrine

V. Living with a secret "*we sometimes know, and then not.*" (Rumi)

Sunday PM – The Passion of Jesus

I. Introduction

II. The concept of *Passion* as *Passio* – as the fruitfulness of Passivity

- Illustration of Jesus – ‘*active*’ life and ‘*passive*’

- *in his activity he gave his LIFE for us
- *in his passivity he gave his DEATH for us

“Blood and water” poured out!

III. Jesus’ agony in the Garden

- a. The concept of “*agonia*”
- b. The archetypal notion of “*Garden*”
 - o Mel Gibson’s “*The Passion of the Christ*”
- c. The Evangelists’ version – Jesus’ aloneness and moral loneliness
- d. Jesus as a Moral and Emotional Athlete
 - i. The concept of “*moral loneliness*”
 - ii. Jesus as “*moral athlete*” – What was his moral drama? (4)

- The struggle to accept powerlessness and humiliation as necessary route to depth and glory – *“Wasn’t it necessary!”*
- The struggle to let powerless and humiliation produce understanding, compassion, and forgiveness rather than bitterness – *“Nobody takes my life from me, I give it up freely!”*
- The struggle to accept a broken heart and broken dreams for the sake of vocation and fidelity. – *“He sweated blood!”*
- The struggle to let go of life itself, with its health, its joys, its connections, and its pleasures, particularly the pleasures of love – *“Let this cup pass from me!”*

IV. Some rich details inside of that essence ...

- *“He was a stone’s throw away!”*
- *“He sweated blood”*
- *“They were asleep out of sheer sorrow!”*
 - Sexual abuse crisis
 - Despair at the root of our sin – *“Sounds better when you’re 20 and know what you’re waiting for!”*
 - *Let the Devil take tomorrow!*
- *“An angel came and strengthened him”*
 - Martin Luther King’s prayer
 - Trevor Herriot – on the work of the desert

V. Elements of Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane

- Was childlike – *“Abba”*
- Trust in darkness
- Radical honesty
- Repetition
- Acceptance
- Absolves evil by eating it – *“taking away the sin of the world”*

*Leo Tolstoy: *“There is only one way to put an end to evil, and that is to do good for evil.”*

*Henri Nouwen: *“At a certain point in our lives the question should no longer be: ‘How can I live my life so that I make a difference? How can I give my life most deeply to others?’ Rather it becomes: ‘How do I live now so that when I die my death will be an optimal blessing for my family, the church, and the world? How do I give my death to others?’”*

Monday PM – Living out the Paschal Mystery

The Paschal Cycle - Jesus' death as "an example that we should follow"

1) Introduction

2) Some key distinctions – between ... (4 things)

- *Biological life* – and *Eschatological life*
- *Terminal death* – and *Paschal death*
- *"Resuscitation"* (Lazarus) - and *"resurrection"* (Jesus)
- *"Life"* – and *"Spirit"*

3) The paradigm of the Paschal Mystery: 5 distinct moments

- 1) **Passion-death** ... *"The loss of life"*
- 2) **Resurrection** *"The reception of new life:"*
- 3) **"Forty Days"** *"A time for grief and adjustment"*
- 4) **Ascension** *"The refusal to cling/ letting the old ascend"*
- 5) **Pentecost** *"Receiving a new spirit for a new life one is already living"*

4) Application

- The death in "aging, losing our health, and being ever more marginalized by our culture"
- The death of our "dreams"
- The death of our "wholeness"
- The death our "innocence"
- The death of our images of Christ, the church, and of faith

5) A note on Grieving

- *"Our problem is not that our needs are unmet, but that they are unmourned."* (David Richo)
- *"In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable we learn that in this life there is no finished symphony."* (Karl Rahner)

- Its proper place
- Its necessary place
- Its own inner demands regarding length
- Its demand that it be honored – making place for sadness in our lives.

6) The life-long paschal cycle

- *Name your deaths*
- *Claim your births*
- *Do your mourning*
- *Let the old ascend/refuse to cling*
- *Receive the spirit for the life you are actually living*