



Kenne Bryant

Prophets, Poets and Disciples: What It Means to Follow Jesus

Part 2

Welcome to the Lenten Devotional Part 2 (Weeks 4-5 & Holy Week)

When Jesus began his ministry he declared:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

- Luke 4:18-19

And then he spent the rest of his ministry proving he meant what he said.

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This devotional looks at the last chapters of the Gospel of Luke, prior to Holy Week, when Jesus is nearing the end of his ministry here on earth. These Gospel texts are held in conversation with different prophets, poets, and disciples who continued to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in this Divine world-shaping Gospel-centered ministry.

Each day is a little different. But every day invites us to walk closer to God.

Sometimes only the readings are present. Other times a picture says it all. Some days have prayer exercises you are invited to engage. And at other times, you will be invited to learn more about the saint who is celebrated on Sunday and throughout the week, modeling for us what it looks like to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Following Jesus is not easy.

But it is the most rewarding relationship and journey that we can take on this earth.

Holy Week at Advent Lutheran Church, 2019

Palm Sunday April 14

9am & 11am | English & 12:30pm | Spanish

Holy Thursday April 18

7:00pm | English

Good Friday April 19

12noon | Interactive English | 3pm Spanish | English 7:00pm

Easter Vigil April 20

7:00pm | Bilingual

Easter Sunday Sunday April 21

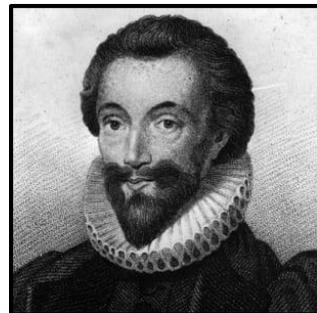
9am & 11am | English & 12:30pm | Spanish

Sunday March 31

What does it mean to follow Jesus in proclaiming God's presence?

A Brief Biography of John Donne (c. 1572–1631)

John Donne was born into a Catholic family in 1572, during a strong anti-Catholic period in England. Donne's father was a prosperous London merchant and his mother, Elizabeth Heywood, was the grand-niece of martyr Thomas More. Religion would play a tumultuous and passionate role in John's life. Donne's father died in 1576, and his mother remarried a wealthy widower.



He entered Oxford University at age 11 and later the University of Cambridge, but never received degrees, due to his Catholicism. At age 20, Donne began studying law at and seemed destined for a legal or diplomatic career. During the 1590s, he spent much of his inheritance on women, books and travel.

In 1593, John Donne's brother, Henry, was convicted of Catholic sympathies and died in prison soon after. The incident led John to question his Catholic faith and inspired some of his best writing on religion. At age 25, Donne was appointed private secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England. It's likely that around this period Donne converted to Anglicanism. In 1615, Donne was ordained and soon thereafter was appointed Royal Chaplain. His elaborate metaphors, religious symbolism and flair for drama soon established him as a great preacher.

In 1617, John Donne's wife died shortly after giving birth to their 12th child. The time for writing love poems was over, and Donne devoted his energies to more religious subjects. In 1621, Donne became dean of St. Paul's Cathedral. During a period of severe illness, he wrote "Devotions upon Emergent Occasions," published in 1624. This work contains the immortal lines "No man is an island" and "never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." That same year, Donne was appointed Vicar of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West and became known for his eloquent sermons.

As John Donne's health continued to fail him, he became obsessed with death. Shortly before he died, he delivered a pre-funeral sermon, "Death's Duel." His writing was charismatic and inventive. His compelling examination of the mortal paradox influenced English poets for generations.

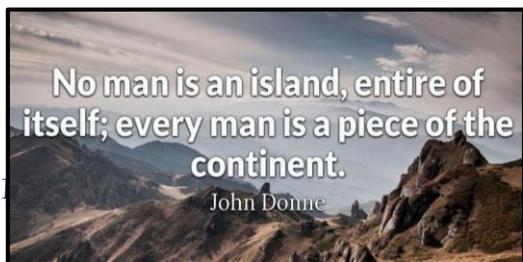
<https://www.biography.com/people/john-donne-9277090>

Recommended Reading for Additional Information:

John Donne - The Major Works: including Songs and Sonnets and sermons, John Donne

John Donne: The Reformed Soul: A Biography, John Stubbs

John Donne: Life, Mind and Art, John Carey



Proclaiming God's Justice

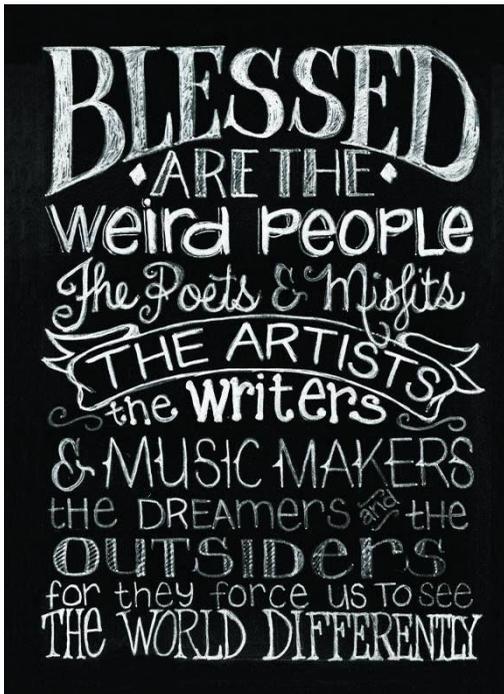
Luke 20:45-47; 21:1-4

In the hearing of all the people he said to the disciples, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.' He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.'

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Directly before Jesus lifts up the widow, he admonishes the practice of fleecing widows. And then, in drawing attention to the widow's faithfulness, Jesus calls attention to the very situation he just brought into question.

Jesus proclamation of the kingdom of God often pointed out the systems and powers that were functioning counter to that proclamation. Even and especially when those systems purported to be in service to God.



This is the work of a prophet. To speak the truth - in love of God and in service to others - even when people do not want to hear it.

And so today, open your ears for the voices of the prophets.

Give thanks for those in our society who continue to call into question the places of power that take advantage of the vulnerable.

Give thanks for the poets and misfits, the artists and writers, the music makers and dreamers who speak a new perspective into the world.

Give thanks for those who position themselves, with Jesus, on the edges of society, in order to speak truth - in love of God and in service to others.

Tuesday April 2

Proclamation of Hard Truths

Luke 21:5-6, 21:20-24

When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, 'As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.'

'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfilment of all that is written. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

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These end times readings are not a pick me up! But we find them in every Gospel. The world we live in is broken. God desires to make it whole. We can only be made whole again through God's presence. Are these dire warnings prophesy of what is to come or merely stated hard truths that speak to the brokenness of our world? We cannot save ourselves. It is only in God, the Creator and source of all things. That is why we have cause to hope, no matter the circumstance.

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars
of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,
the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders
of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is
nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned
in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side
is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world
you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it
against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

In Blackwater Woods

- Mary Oliver

Wednesday April 3

Proclamation of the Apocalypse (the revealing)

Luke 21:7-18

They asked him, ‘Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?’ And he said, ‘Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, “I am he!” and, “The time is near!” Do not go after them. ‘When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.’ Then he said to them, ‘Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

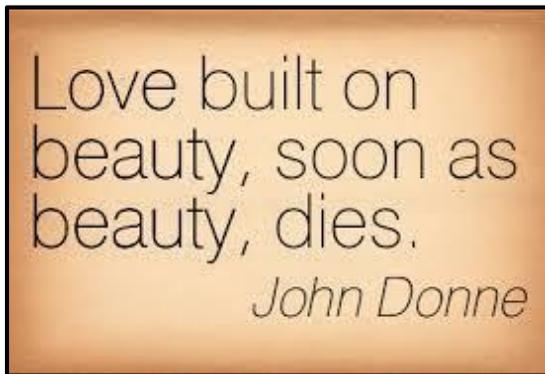
‘But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish.

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“As a clergy person, I'd like to welcome you all to the apocalypse. Pull up a chair, and make yourself uncomfortable. If when you think of an apocalypse, you picture a scary, doom-filled punishment from above, you're not alone. Originally, though, apocalyptic literature existed not to scare the bejesus out of children so that they would be good boys and girls, but to proclaim a big, hope-filled idea-- that dominant powers are not ultimate powers. Empires fall, tyrants fade, systems die, God's still around.

In Greek, the word apocalypse means to uncover, to peel away, to show what's underneath...We need to see how deep the heresy of domination runs, and then remind one another that dominant powers are not ultimate powers. So if those who came before looked to the Bible to justify their dominance, then let us look to it to justify our dignity. It's in there. Theology and liturgy are just too potent to be left to those who would use them-- even unwittingly-- to justify and protect their own dominance. And sometimes the origin of the harm really can be the most powerful source of healing.”

- Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber



Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front
by Wendell Berry

Love the quick profit, the annual raise,
vacation with pay. Want more
of everything ready-made. Be afraid
to know your neighbors and to die.
And you will have a window in your head.
Not even your future will be a mystery
any more. Your mind will be punched in a card
and shut away in a little drawer.
When they want you to buy something
they will call you. When they want you
to die for profit they will let you know.
So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.
Denounce the government and embrace
the flag. Hope to live in that free
republic for which it stands.
Give your approval to all you cannot
understand. Praise ignorance, for what man
has not encountered he has not destroyed.
Ask the questions that have no answers.
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophesy such returns.
Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.
Listen to carrion — put your ear
close, and hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.

Thursday April 4

Proclamation of Here and Not Yet
Luke 21:25-28

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in a cloud” with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.’

Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts.
So long as women do not go cheap
for power, please women more than men.
Ask yourself: Will this satisfy
a woman satisfied to bear a child?
Will this disturb the sleep
of a woman near to giving birth?
Go with your love to the fields.
Lie easy in the shade. Rest your head
in her lap. Swear allegiance
to what is nighest your thoughts.
As soon as the generals and the politicians
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn't go. Be like the fox
who makes more tracks than necessary,
some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection.

Friday April 5

Proclamation of the Tenderness of God

Luke 21:29-33

Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

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In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us.

Gospel of Luke
Song of Zachariah

'as you are.' says the universe.
'after...' you answer.
'as you are.' says the universe.
'before...' you answer.
'as you are.' says the universe.
'when...' you answer.
'as you are.' says the universe.
'how...' you answer.
'as you are.' says the universe.
'why...' you answer.
'because
you are happening now.
right now.
right at this moment
and
your happening
is beautiful.
the thing that both keeps me alive
and
brings me to my knees.
you don't even know how breathtaking you
are.
as you are.' says the universe through tears.

— as you are | you are the prayer

poem. from nejma. by nayyirah waheed. published 2014

Saturday April 6

Proclamation of Divine Expectation

Luke 21:34-38

‘Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.’ Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.

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Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Most merciful God, we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been

saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

A Hymn to God the Father

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt thou forgive that sin, through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sin their door?
Wilt thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallow'd in, a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by thyself, that at my death thy Son
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;
And, having done that, thou hast done;
I fear no more.

- John Donne

Sunday April 7

What does it mean to follow Jesus into uncertainty and joy?

A Brief Biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906 –1945)

Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau, Germany, in 1906. In 1927, he graduated from the University of Berlin. He then spent time in Spain and America. In 1931, he returned to Berlin and was ordained at age 25. The election of Hitler, 1933, was widely welcomed by the German people, including parts of the Church, Bonhoeffer however was an opponent of Hitler's philosophy.



In April 1933, Bonhoeffer raised opposition to the persecution of Jews and argued that the Church had a responsibility to act against this kind of policy. Bonhoeffer sought to organize the Protestant Church to reject Nazi ideology. This led to a breakaway church – The Confessing Church which Bonhoeffer helped form with Martin Niemöller. In practice, it was difficult to agree on bold initiatives to oppose the Nazification of society and the church. Bonhoeffer felt disillusioned. In fall of 1933, he took a two-year appointment to a church in London.

After two years in London, Bonhoeffer returned to Berlin. Bonhoeffer had his authorization to teach revoked in 1936. As the Nazi control of the country intensified, in 1937, the Confessing Church seminary was closed down by Himmler. Worried he would be forced to take an oath to Hitler, Bonhoeffer left Germany for the United States in June 1939. After less than two years, he returned to Germany because he felt guilty for not having the courage to practice what he preached. On his return to Germany, Bonhoeffer was denied the right to speak in public or publish any article.

He joined the Abwehr, the German military intelligence agency. Under the cover of the Abwehr, Bonhoeffer served as a messenger for the German resistance movement. He made contact with associates of the British government. Within the Abwehr, efforts were made to help some German Jews escape to neutral Switzerland. It was Bonhoeffer's involvement in this activity that led to his arrest in April 1943. For a year and a half, Bonhoeffer was imprisoned at Tegel Military prison.

After the failed bomb plot of July 20th, 1944, Bonhoeffer was moved to the Gestapo's high-security prison, then transferred to Buchenwald concentration camp and finally to Flossenburg concentration camp. Even during the privations of the concentration camp, Bonhoeffer retained a deep spirituality which was evident to other prisoners. Bonhoeffer continued to minister his fellow prisoners. On April 8th, 1945, Bonhoeffer was given a cursory court martial and sentenced to death by hanging.

– adapted from www.biographyonline.net.

Recommended Reading for Additional Information:

Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy, Eric Metaxas
Theologian of Resistance: The Life and Thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christiane Tietz
Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works - Reader's Edition Set, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Monday April 8

What does it mean to follow Jesus into uncertainty and joy?

Luke 22:1-6

Now the festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was near. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus to death, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.

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Scripture Exercise:

- Read through the text twice.
- Imagine yourself in the story.
- Who are you? Are you mentioned or are you someone off the side? What do you see? Smell? Hear? What is Jesus saying to you?

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Scripture Exercise:

- Read through the text twice.
- Imagine who is not in the story, but is affected by the events of the story.
- How do the actions of the people who are front and center have a ripple effect?

Example:

Judas' Mother | I am a simple woman. I am not wise like Mary the mother of Jesus. I am not eager like Mary of Magdala. My heart is not filled with gratitude like Mary the mother of James and John. I cannot speak of the healing wonders of Jesus as can the mother-in-law of Simon. For I am the mother of Judas, Judas whose very name is spit upon by those who never knew him truly.

I have collected more tears than memories. I carry more sorrow than regret. I hold more images than truths but I think I understand Jesus better than many. I cannot pretend that I do not see Judas as a loving mother sees her child. He was my son. I love him. I adore him. I held the highest hopes for him. Whenever you hear of a young man who has done something foolish and has ended up in a cave of trouble, think of me. Remember that every one of those young men has a mother and clothe your souls with compassion. Jesus himself would ask no less.

Tuesday April 9

What does it mean to follow Jesus into uncertainty and joy?

Luke 22:7-13

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.' They asked him, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for it?' 'Listen,' he said to them, 'when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters and say to the owner of the house, "The teacher asks you, "Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" "' He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.' So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

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Joy draws its nourishment from quietness and from the unfathomable.

Bonhoeffer

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You have a fortunate disposition:

You are able to be happy.

Be happy as much as you can;

joy makes us strong.

To genuinely rejoice means to see God in everything,

as well as his love, there,

wherever things look cheerful and friendly,

but also there,

where things are not quite

as you wish them to be.

that is not easy.

Bonhoeffer

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Questions for Reflection:

Where do you see God?

Wednesday April 10

What does it mean to follow Jesus into uncertainty and joy?

Luke 22:14-23

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!’ Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

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“Less than twenty-four hours before he left this world, Bonhoeffer performed the offices of a pastor. In the bright Schönberg schoolroom that was their cell, he held a small service. He prayed and read the verses for that day: Isaiah 53:5 (“With his stripes we are healed) and 1 Peter 1:3 (“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”). He then explained these verses to everyone. Best Payne recalled that Bonhoeffer ‘spoke to us in a maner which reached the hearts of all, finding just the right words to express the spirit of our imprisonment and the thoughts and resolutions which it had brought.’

The other prisoners in the schoolhouse hoped that they might be eable to get Bonhoeffer to hold a service for them as well. But there would not be any time for this. Best described what happened:

‘He had hardly finished his last prayer when the door opened and two evil-looking men in civilian clothes came in and said: ‘Prisoner Bonhoeffer. Get ready to come with us.’ Those words ‘Come with us’ – for all prisoners they had come to mean one thing only – the scaffold. We bade him good-bye – he drew me aside – “This is the end,’ he said. ‘For me the beginning of life.’”

- *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, Eric Metaxas (Pg 528)

Thursday April 11

What does it mean to follow Jesus into uncertainty and joy?

Luke 22:24-30

A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. "You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

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Today's Prayer Practice: The Examen

Get comfortable. Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in the breath of God. Breath out the stresses you carry. Open your mind. Breathe in. Open your heart. Breathe out. Open your Spirit.

We begin by giving thanks.

Thank God for what you are grateful for today. Thank God for all the good you have been able to be part of in the world. Allow your mind to wander as you reflect on the ways God has blessed you on this particular day. Allow big things and small things to arise. (2 minutes silence)

And now we ask for the Spirit.

Begin by asking God to fill you with God's Spirit so that the Spirit can lead you through some soul-searching. This is about allowing the God who loves you deeply to hold you closely. (2 minutes silence)

And now we review and recognize failures.

We look back at our day and ask God to point out to me the moments when I have failed in big ways or small. Don't be afraid to be honest. Remember that you are held in God's arms. Take courage. Be honest with yourself. (2 minutes silence)

Then let's ask for forgiveness and healing.

If you have sinned, ask God to forgive. Ask for healing of any harm that might have been done. Ask God for help to get over it and move on. This is also a good time to ask for wisdom to discern how you might better handle such tricky moments in the future. (2 minutes silence)

And now we pray about the next day/or the remainder of this day.

Ask God to show you how tomorrow might go - or simply the rest of this day. Imagine the things you'll be doing, the people you'll see, and the decisions you'll be mulling over. Ask for help with any moments you foresee that might be difficult. (2 minutes silence)

Friday April 12

What does it mean to follow Jesus into uncertainty and joy?

Luke 22:31-34

‘Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!’ Jesus said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.’



Daniel Erlander from *Baptized, We Live*

One of our most remarkable and yet irrefutable experiences is that evil ‘often in a surprisingly short span of time ‘turns out to be dumb and impractical. Fear is a net which evil casts over us that we might become ensnared and fall. Those who are afraid have already fallen.

- Bonhoeffer

I believe that God can and indeed intends to allow good to emerge from evil, even from the greatest evil. To that end, he needs people who make the best of everything. I believe that in every situation of distress God gives us as much strength to resist as we need. But God does not give it to us in advance, lest we come to rely on ourselves rather than on him alone.

- Bonhoeffer

In me it is dark, but in you there is light.
I am lonely, but you do not leave me.
I am faith hearted, bust with you there is help.
I am restless, but with you there is peace.
In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience.
I do not understand your ways, but you know the right way for me.

- Bonhoeffer

Saturday April 13

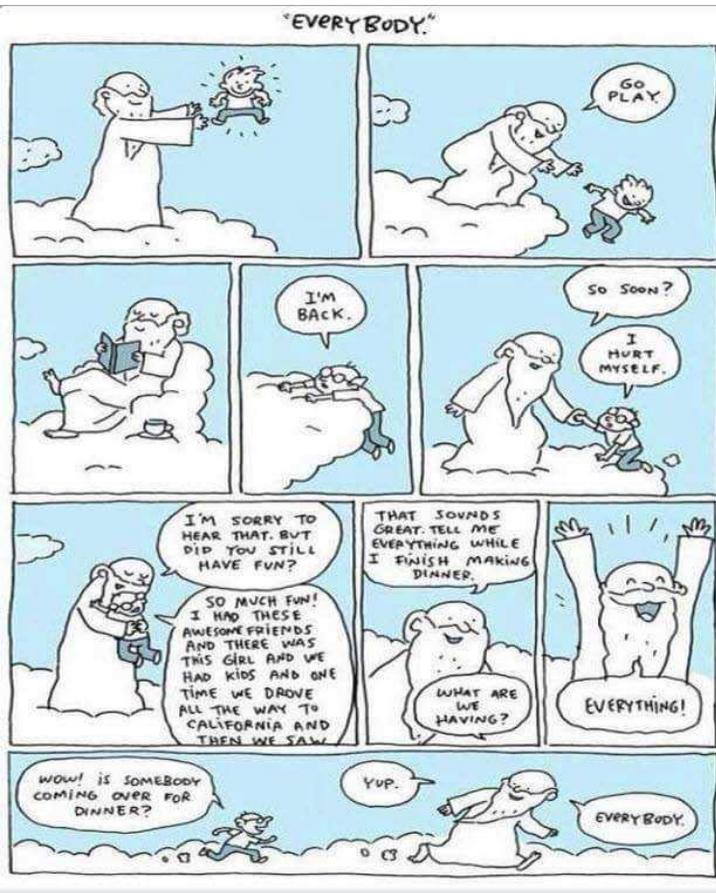
What does it mean to follow Jesus into uncertainty and joy?

Luke 22:35-38

He said to them, ‘When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?’ They said, ‘No, not a thing.’ He said to them, ‘But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, “And he was counted among the lawless”; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled.’ They said, ‘Lord, look, here are two swords.’ He replied, ‘It is enough.’

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The essence of optimism is not this or that view of the present situation, but strength, the strength of hope where others yield to resignation, the strength to keep one’s head high when everything seems to wrong, the strength to endure setbacks, the strength always to claim the future for oneself instead of yielding it to one’s opponent. Bonhoeffer



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Trusting the provision of God has always been a challenge to discipleship. How important it is through the ups and downs of life to remember that it is God who ultimately gives us life and breath. And it is God who will continue to be faithful to the very end and into a new beginning.

It is enough.

Disclaimer: Despite this cute cartoon God is not exclusively male or white.

Palm Sunday April 14

Holy Week Begins / Even the Stones Will Shout

Luke 19:28-40

After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” They said, “The Lord needs it.” Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”



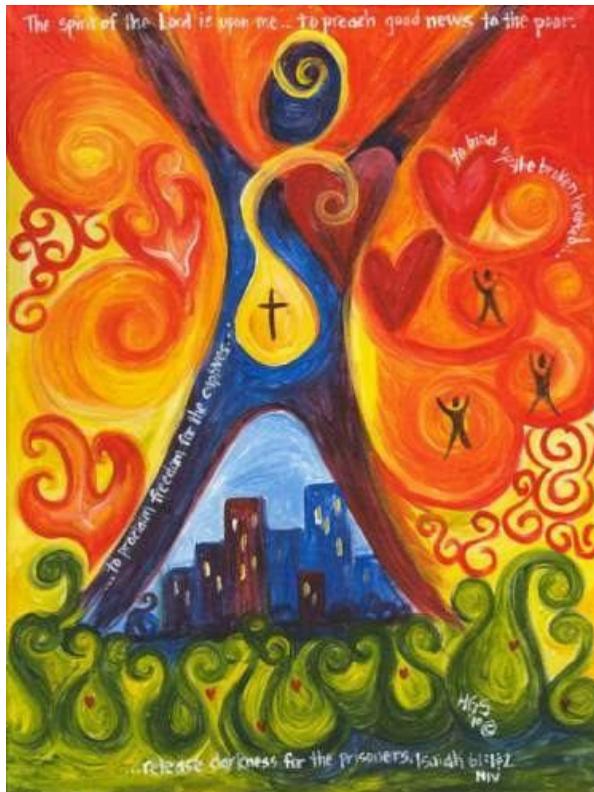
William Hemmerling

Holy Monday April 15

Remembering Jesus Ministry / In the Beginning

Luke 4: 16-30

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.



Holy Tuesday April 16

Stations of the Cross

1 | Pilate Condemns Jesus to Death



5 | Simon of Cyrene Carries the Cross



2 | Jesus Carries the Cross



6 | Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus



3 | Jesus Falls for the First Time



7 | Jesus Falls the Second Time



4 | Jesus Meets His Mother



BRUCE ONOBRAKPEYA,
URHOB, NIGERIA.
THE FOURTEEN STATIONS
OF THE CROSS

Holy Wednesday April 17

Stations of the Cross

8 | Jesus Consoles the Women of Jerusalem



12 | They raise Jesus on the Cross



9 | Jesus Falls the Third Time



13 | Joseph of Arimathea Takes Him Down



10 | They Strip Jesus of His Garments



14 | He Lays Him in the Tomb



11 | They Nail Jesus to the Cross



BRUCE ONOBRAKPEYA,
URHOBO, NIGERIA.
THE FOURTEEN STATIONS
OF THE CROSS

Maundy Thursday April 18

At the Table

Luke 22:14-20

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

In the Garden

Luke 22:39 – 54

He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.” Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”

While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said to him, “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?” Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!”

Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house. But Peter was following at a distance.

Good Friday April 19

Luke 22:55 – 23:49

When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, “This man also was with him.” But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not!” Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, “Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.” But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about!” At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?” They kept heaping many other insults on him. When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. They said, “If you are the Messiah, tell us.” He replied, “If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” All of them asked, “Are you, then, the Son of God?” He said to them, “You say that I am.” Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!”

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.” Then Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He answered, “You say so.” Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no basis for an accusation against this man.” But they were insistent and said, “He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.” When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate. That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies.

Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will therefore have him flogged and release him.” Then they all shouted out together, “Away with this fellow! Release

Barabbas for us!” (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.” But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us. ‘For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?’”

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent.” And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Holy Saturday April 20

...to be continued.