

Mark 14:32-42
Jesus Walked that Lonesome Valley
WRCoB 4.5.20

To this day, I remember my first day of Kindergarten!

I remember standing in the doorway
Hanging on to my mother's leg

Watching as Mrs. Zeigler
A rather large, intimidating figure, approached.

My mom left me at the doorway
And I had to walk into that room by myself!

Such trauma!

~~

There are certain things in life
We just HAVE to do by ourselves.

No one can do them for you.

No matter how much we study with others
The final exam is ours alone.

No matter how often we drive the car with mom or dad
We take the driver's test alone.

In fact, think about it . . .
Some of the most significant events in life
Are things you do alone.

The first day of class
 The first job interview
 The first day of work

A major illness
 Surgery
 And ultimately our own death

There are certain things we just have to do alone.

~~

And so, I wonder what was on the mind of Jesus
 As he entered Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday.

I wonder, as the crowds surrounded him
 What he was thinking
 Knowing how things would turn out.

Jesus predicted his death 3x in the Gospel of Mark.

He knew what he was facing.

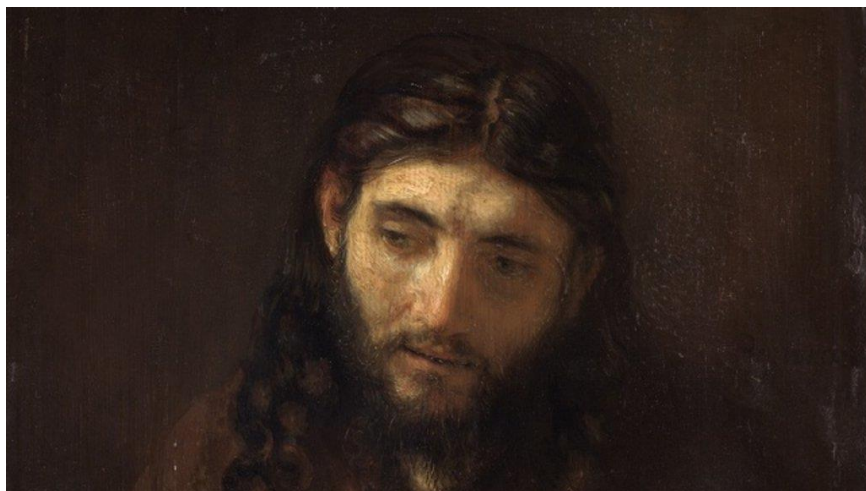
I wonder if, despite the crowds
 And the disciples around him
 Jesus felt quite alone.

John Piper makes a comment about this in a sermon.

He calls it the tragic beauty of the triumphal entry.

Piper illustrates by using a painting of Jesus by Rembrandt.

Let me show you the painting.



If you take your hand and cover the right side of the portrait.

Go ahead and do that.

See the brightness in the face of Jesus.

But if you take your hand

And place it over the left side of the portrait

There's a rather dark, haunted look in his eye.

~~

Jesus knew there would be two parades that week.

The first one was Jesus entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday
With the crowds wildly cheering him on.

The other one was Jesus leaving Jerusalem on Good Friday
On his way to Mt Calvary
The crowds jeering him on.

Let me show you one more painting . . .

This one by Hieronymus Bosch

Entitled *Christ Carrying the Cross*



*Jesus walked that lonesome valley
He had to walk it by himself*

*Nobody else could walk it for him
He had to walk it by himself.*

~~

Today, we move from Palm Sunday to Thursday evening
Of the week we call Holy.

Jesus and his disciples leave the upper room.

They go out to the Mount of Olives
Outside of Jerusalem
To the Garden of Gethsemane.

The garden was most likely an olive orchard
Located on the hill called Mount Olivet
Separating Jerusalem from Bethany.

The time is midnight.

Jesus tells his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

He takes with him, Peter, James, and John.

~~

There was no one awake in the garden
On that night
To record the words of Jesus.

No one heard him praying.
Jesus was alone
His disciples asleep.

I'm not sure how we know the content of Jesus' prayer.

But knowing what Jesus prayed is truly a gift
An insight into the anguish Jesus experienced.

His prayer is deeply personal.

It offers a glimpse into the mind and heart of Jesus.

He begins to feel the crushing weight
Of the evil smothering him
The darkness engulfing him

Jesus is in the heart of the intense battle raging
Between good and evil
Right and wrong
Life and death

In deep distress, Jesus pleads with God.

Mark 14:36a NRSV He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me

There is agony in his words
As Jesus grasps for any option
Other than the one presenting itself.

“Anything, Lord, but this!”

However, in the same breath, Jesus prays:

Mark 14:36b NRSV . . . yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

~~

Here we discover the willful surrendering of control
Over one’s own life.

There is no prayer on earth harder to pray
Than to pray, **“Thy will be done.”**

Think about it . . .
Complete submission to God?

Complete acceptance to God’s will no matter what?

I mean, it goes against every grain of our controlling beings.

But Jesus' highest aim in life
Was to put the will of God before his.

~~

You might ask at this point in the conversation
Isn't God's will the same as Jesus'?

For we know that Jesus is God in the flesh.

But the passage distinctly says . . . "not mine but thy will"?

My answer is to say that both
God's will and man's will
Are in the person of Jesus.

When Jesus was on this earth
There was this tension between
His divinity and his humanity.

We see it during Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness
When tempted by the devil.

We see it now as he faces his approaching death.

He was susceptible to the same emotions
All humankind is vulnerable to.

Hunger, tiredness, fear, and perhaps, even doubt.

The difference then?

Jesus never allowed his human feelings
To control his ultimate desire
To do God's will while on earth.

We must never forget, as Christians
That Jesus was human.

And that night in the garden he was afraid.

As the disciples slept
Jesus knelt down and poured out his soul to God.

What Jesus faced, he faced alone
No one could do it for him.

But his prayer strengthened his resolve
And reassured him
That he would not walk alone.

For God, who makes a way
Led Jesus out of the shadows of doubt and fear
And carried him the final steps to Golgotha.

~~

And God can do the same for you!

For you see, life is really just a battle of wills.

What we most often pray is
“Lord, my way, or the highway!”

But what Jesus models for us is this
“God, your way is the high way!”

The ultimate prayer to God is a prayer of surrender.

Jesus prayed for what was on his heart
And so should we.

“God, let me get through the first day of Kindergarten.”

“God, help us get through this pandemic.”

But Jesus drew strength from God his Father
When he prayed

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done!

When we submit our will to God’s
When we invite God to steer the course of our life
When we ask Jesus to be savior and director

We may physically walk alone
But in spirit, we walk with Christ our Savior
By our side.

~~

We are in challenging times.

A feeling of isolation has come over us
As we honor the stay-at-home mandate.

There are those of us struggling with loneliness and fear.

There are people near to us that are fighting for their lives.

All of us are unsure how the future will unfold
Unsure how it will impact us
Unsure how it will ultimately affect us.

Though everyone is experiencing the same situation
Through the enforced isolation
Individually, many face it alone.

People in nursing homes, home-bound
People isolated in hospital quarantine.

People unable to be with their loved ones

In many ways
It feels like we have to go it alone
During this pandemic.

~~

Nonetheless, let us trust in the prayer
Prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane
By Jesus our Lord and Savior

**Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me.
Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.**

Through the surrendering of his will
Jesus' paved the way to eternal life
So that we too . . .

When we surrender our own will to his . . .
We'll never have to face anything alone again.

Deuteronomy 31:6 ESV Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will never leave you or forsake you.

Jesus walked that lonesome valley so that we don't have to.

Praise be to God!