

Psalm 36: 5-11

John 12: 1-11

Introduction

I don't know about you, but in these last two weeks of lockdown due to the coronavirus crises I have experienced many emotions, often changing at the drop of a hat. I have had times of utter peace and calm, times of joy, gratitude and contentment through to times of feeling overwhelmed in a way I have never felt before, frustrated and at times anger, times of questioning and of doubt, times of feeling helpless to help those who need help.

As I was preparing for this reflection I began to think about the range of emotions experienced by so many in the events of that first Holy Week.

As we journey through this Holy Week, in a time that is so different to what we could ever have imagined it to be may this be a very real space where we can be honest, where our hearts and minds are open afresh to the events of this week and may what we discover in this week and through what we are now experiencing daily take our faith and that of our community to a deeper level of love and understanding of God's love for us.

Let's just take a moment to be still, wherever we are, and ask God to be present by his spirit and to meet with us in this moment.

Reading John 12:1-11

Reflection

So here we are again in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, but this time it is different. This time Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead is here eating with Jesus along with others. Martha is serving.

And Mary who we are going to focus on this evening. Where is she? Mary is again sitting at the feet of Jesus, but this time perhaps for a different purpose.

(Pause)

What is Mary doing now? She is pouring a most expensive perfume over Jesus feet and wiping it with her hair. An outrageous gesture. The cost of this perfume for a start would have paid a labourers wages for a year. And yet a gesture that anticipates Jesus' washing of the disciples feet. Jesus will command the disciples to wash others feet and yet here, without being asked and ahead of time Mary performs an act that is a distinguishing mark of the community of disciples. An act of costly loving discipleship.

But what are others thinking? Is anyone going to say anything? What are you feeling about Marys actions right now?

(Pause)

Mary is criticised. This time by Judas. But Jesus affirms Mary. 'Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. Has Judas missed the point? Is there a complete lack of insight into what he has just witnessed? Do we often miss Jesus when he speaks or shows things to us through the actions of others. Take a moment to give God space to speak to you now, to say the words he wants you to hear.

(Pause)

Marys act was beautiful

Beautiful because it was an act of love for Jesus.

Beautiful because it entailed considerable sacrifice.

Beautiful because she prepared for what she did.

Beautiful because it was done without any fuss.

Beautiful because she did it in complete disregard of criticism.

Conclusion

What is God saying to you through this passage? How is he calling you and I to respond in these days? Who is Jesus to you in this passage.

What words or phrases have been speaking to you – perhaps spend a moment reflecting on those words and phrases.

As you reflect, you might want to light a scented candle if you have one and experience the aroma filling the atmosphere or perhaps respond using the words of this song as a prayer.

<https://youtu.be/kQkzHwz2eLE>

