

Good Friday

The shape of love

What is it that you see when you look upon the Cross of Jesus?

Can you see beyond the cruel instrument of torture and execution?

...the blunt instrument of the power of empire...over the human spirit?

The cruellest of means...of humiliation, degradation and coercion?

Can you see beyond the victory of power over weakness? Of violence over peace?

The cross can reveal the truth to us...**about us**...

...in ways that see deep into our souls...and that cut to the quick of who we have become...

The cross is the world that we have created...**A world of scapegoats and victims**

Perhaps you are able to see beyond the revelation and horror...

Perhaps you find yourself...sifting instead through all of the countless words and theories and doctrines...that have surrounded the cross from the beginning

A sea of words...rich in meaning... that lap teasingly at the shore of your understanding

Atonement, substitution, redemption, sacrifice, exodus, salvation, satisfaction, conquest, victory, Passover, reconciliation...

Words that work their way up through the cracks between the centuries...

Words that seek to grasp to understand God and his purposes in his son Jesus Christ...The Crucified Saviour

The cross is all of these things...It is a collision of meanings...

And I believe so much more

We must say that the cross is also beyond us...In a sense we need it to be beyond us

We look upon an unfathomable mystery...An eternal unravelling of truth about God

However, we try to understand it...we cannot truly understand it

God's ways are beyond our understanding...

But here stands the cross of Christ...

A coming together of opposites...A paradox

In all of its horror...and beauty...

In all of its violence...and peace

In all of its deathliness...and life

...and we believe it is the gate of eternity

We believe it is the tree of life for the healing of the nations

The ladder to heaven that Jacob saw in his dream

It is the seat of agony...But also the throne of God

It is here that the Kingdom of God...the earth realms touch and meet

Where the curtain is torn open

At the centre of all of history...all of time...Is the Cross

I would go so far as to say that all of history...is truly cross-shaped

So allow me if you will to add one more idea to the multitude of others

Consider carefully the wooden post driven into the ground...

...that reaches from the depths of the earth towards the sky...

From the Humus to the heavenly Kingdom of God

It is an invitation and a command...To love the one who made all things

You dear friend...look up...and see your God

Consider then carefully the crossbeam...

These arms are stretched out wide to the world...

Arms that envelope every orphan and widow, every leper and every stranger...To the good and the bad

It is an invitation and a command...To love all those that God loves

You dear friend...look around...and see your neighbour

This is the shape that God has drawn throughout our scriptures

Throughout the history that belongs to him

Reach up...Love God with all of your heart, mind, strength and soul

Reach out...And in the same way love your neighbours

That is the sum of everything Jesus said

Everything is here...at the cross

It is the cross shaped reality of God's will...which is eternal love

When you see the pattern you begin to see the cross as being there from the very beginning

The shape in the fabric of God's plan...

In every act of God's gracious self-giving...

In every act of selfless act love by his children

In every commandment

In every moment of forgiveness

In every exodus...In every dream

In every knee that has ever bowed
This Cross...is the shape of God's will

When see Jesus hanging there...we see our God

And we are called to change our hearts and minds about him and
each other

Although it looks very much like defeat...It is in fact the greatest of all
victories

In the cross we see our God and he is good and full of grace

The cross is the **shape of love** and we are called not only to
contemplate it...but to pick it up every day

Love God with all your, heart and mind and strength and Spirit...and
in the same way love your neighbour

As Jesus said...It is finished

Amen