

HOLY WEEK: 6

Black Saturday 11th April – Into Silence Reflection: 12:30-1pm

Introduction:

Black Saturday is also referred to as: Holy Saturday or Easter Eve or Easter Even and commemorates the day that the body of Jesus lay sealed in the tomb. Traditionally, the altar, or communion table, remains bare or is draped in a simple black cloth. This dark Saturday is a time of solemnity, silence, and suspense, as Christians reflect on the death of Jesus Christ. Symbolically, the church becomes the tomb of Christ for this one day and is often held as a day of fasting. The words of the creed note that Jesus "descended to the dead" or grave, Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in Greek.

When someone dies after a long and active life we can accept their passing as a natural occurrence, even a release if the quality of life is one of constant suffering. However, when a person dies seemingly before their time it is much more difficult to come to terms with. A murder, a sudden death by whatever means, or the death of a baby seems tragic and senseless. At such times we may retreat into our own thoughts, wrestling with the darkness of bereavement and the reality of our own mortality. Such must have been the thoughts of those who followed Jesus. All their hopes for the future He would bring them seemingly snatched from them in a most cruel and traumatic way. He was no longer there to share with, listen to or ask advice from.

The grief of Black Saturday silently creeps in from the darkness of Good Friday. The finality of the tomb sits there like a black hole of mystery; a void of emptiness; a dark space shrouded in silence and stillness. And yet, held in the devastation of Christ's crucifixion there remains a sense of hope, the anticipation of miraculous expectation. Jesus had prepared His disciples for this moment, assuring them that His death would not be the end. Jesus entered physical death in order to deliver the souls of the faithful and just, who lay 'sleeping' waiting in suspension for the Messiah to 'awaken' them. This seemingly final conclusion to the messianic mission of Jesus, while it may appear condensed in time, is significant beyond measure. The closing curtain on the life of Jesus completes the redeeming work of salvation for everyone; those past, those present and those of the future. Jesus now fulfils all the promises of God's Word in Scripture and His own teaching, despite the worst of Satan's jealousy and spite!

Jesus was dead, killed at the hands of His own people. Guards had been stationed at the tomb to keep watch over the sealed stone to make sure that the disciples did not steal His body ([Matthew 27:66](#)). All had gone home and the garden of the tomb was deserted, save for the guards. Even the faithful women had returned home to prepare spices and ointments ([Luke 23:56](#)). The following day, Saturday, was the Sabbath so the disciples would have mourned the death of Jesus while resting, according to the 4th commandment. It is in this context that we journey into silence with our Lord.

The Lord's Prayer: *All say together*

CD: Out of the Ordinary *by* Graham Kendrick **Track 6:** Crucified man

I have placed all my hope in a crucified Man
In the wounds of His side, His feet and His hands
I have traded my pride for a share in His shame
And the glory that one-day will burst from His pain
I've abandoned my trust in the wise and the proud
For this fragile, mysterious weakness of God
And I dare to believe in His scandalous claim

HOLY WEEK Reflections – 2019 – Take Time Out – Half Acre

That His blood cleanses sin for who ever
Will call on His name, live or die here I stand
I've placed my hope in a crucified Man

I believe as they beat on His beautiful face
He turned a torturer's chair to an altar of grace
Where the worst we can do met the best that God does
Where unspeakable hate met the gaze of unstoppable love
At the crux of it all there He hangs
I've placed my hope in a crucified...

Man of sorrows Man of grief
Will He stay beyond belief?

When the purest and best took the force of our curse
Deaths victory armada juddered into reverse
And either we bow or we stumble and fall
For the wisdom of a suffering God
Has made fools of us all
I gladly admit that I am
But I've placed my hope in a crucified...

Man of sorrows Man of grief
Will He stay beyond belief?

I've buried my life in the cold earth with Him
Like a seed in the winter, I wait for the spring
From that garden of tombs Eden rises again
And paradise blooms from His body
And never will end
He'll finish all He began
Creation hopes in a crucified Man

When I stand at the judgement
I have no other plan
I've placed my hope in a crucified Man

Like a thief nailed beside Him
I have no other plan
I've placed my hope in a crucified Man

Matthew 27:62-66 *A black hole and dark deeds*

⁶²The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³and said, "Sir, we remember that this imposter said while He was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'

CD: Beauty for Ashes *by* Crystal Lewis **Track 5:** Beauty For Ashes

Chorus:... Repeated
He gives beauty for ashes
Strength for fear
Gladness for mourning
Peace for despair

When sorrow seems to surround you
When suffering hangs heavy o'er your head
Know that tomorrow brings wholeness and healing
God knows your need, just believe what He said

Chorus:...

When what you've done keeps you from moving on
When fear wants to make itself at home in your heart
Know that forgiveness brings wholeness and healing
God knows your need, just believe what He said

Chorus:...

BRIDGE:

I once was lost but God has found me
Though I was bound I've been set free
I've been made righteous in His sight
A display of His splendour that all can see
Repeat...

Chorus:...X2

Matthew 27:62-66 *continued...*

⁶⁴Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise His disciples may go and steal Him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first."

CD 1: Holding Nothing Back *by* Tim Hughes **Track 5:** Clinging to the Cross

My soul is weak, my heart is numb, I cannot see
But still my hope is found in You
I'll hold on tightly, You will never let me go
For Jesus You will never fail

My soul is weak, my heart is numb, I cannot see
But still my hope is found in You
I'll hold on tightly, You will never let me go
Jesus You will never fail
Jesus You will never fail

Chorus:...

*Simply to the cross I cling
Letting go of all earthly things
I'm clinging to the cross
Mercy's found a way for me
Hope is here as I am free
Jesus You are all I need
I'm clinging to the cross
Clinging to the cross ... Clinging to the cross*

Even darkness is as light to You, my Lord
So light the way and lead me home
To that place where every tear is wiped away
For Jesus You will never fail
Jesus You will never fail

Chorus:...

What a Saviour, what a story
You were crucified but now You are alive
So amazing, such a mystery yeah
You were crucified but now You are alive

Chorus:...

The Lord has rescued me
Grace has made a way
Lead me to the one that is higher than love
Lead me, lead me, lead me, oh...rescue me
Thank You, thank You... You have rescued me
Lead me on...to Your cross Lord...Your rugged cross
Thank You, thank You

Chorus:...

Clinging to the cross
Clinging to the cross

Matthew 27:62-66 *continued...*

⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." ⁶⁶So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

CD 1: The Best Celtic Worship album in the world...ever!

Track 5: The Lord's My Shepherd (*Stuart Townend version*)

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me lie in pasture's green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

Chorus:...

And I will trust in you alone.

I will trust, I will trust in You

And I will trust in you alone.

I will trust, I will trust in You

For your endless mercy follows me,

Endless mercy follows me,

Your goodness will lead me home.

He guides my way in righteousness.
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.

Chorus:...

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know.

Chorus:...

The impatient zeal of the chief priests and Pharisees to undermine and condemn the Son of God after His death beggars belief! The body of Jesus was not even cold in the tomb yet they continue to plot and scheme against His name. There is no sign of grief, no hint of remorse, and no consideration for those mourning over the passing of a divine life. They merely seek to justify themselves and cover their own backs, which exposes the most deprived nature of human jealousy and spite. Their hypocrisy knows no bounds and such is their self-love that they cannot even recognise their wickedness let alone the magnitude of their sin.

Pilate's callous dismissal of the chief priests and Pharisees demonstrates the stark reality of human self-preservation at all costs. Political power, protection of status and preservation of popularity, overruled his wife's warning, his own sense of justice, and any empathy he may have had for Jesus. He has washed his hands of it all and does not want any further involvement.

Sadly, these human traits are all too prevalent in the world we live in today. There will always be those who seek power and prominence for their own desires but there are also those who have power and prominence thrust upon them without wanting it. The one is a modern day Pharisee, the other is a born leader. Both can choose to use their position for good or evil, justice or corruption. Discernment of whom and what is right with God and whom and what is not, is of vital importance. The words of the following song, written by Keith Green as a promise to his son Josiah, alert us to the challenges of being a Christian in a fallen world.

CD 2: Keith Green-*The ministry years Volume 2: Track 17:* Song for Josiah

Oh my son, you were born in a world that hates you,
And I swear I will never forsake you.
But there was a Father centuries ago,
Who watched His beloved Son die.
Ohoh, die.

Oh my son, I am weak and I'm trembling,
For the Lord I am always remembering.
Oh what a strong Shepherd holds you in His arms.
He'll break you and make you His own.
And then take you home.

Well if I could I would protect you from what you will see.
This world will promise love and beauty, but it lied to me.
And I will show you, if you will listen.
And I will promise, to listen too.

Oh yes, there are some who love the lies, they will kill you if they can.
Though you speak the truth in love, they will hate you like the Man...
Jesus, although he was God, He allowed Himself broken for you.
Oohhh... allowed Himself broken for you.

Well if I could I would protect you from what you will see.
This world might seem so alive, but it's dead to me.
And I will teach you, if you will hear me.
And I will promise, to hear you too.
Yes I do.

Oh my son, I am only your brother.
For a sister, God gave me your mother.
But just like a mother, so long ago, had to watch her beloved Son die,
Oh son, we will try, to let you go.

Loss is an inevitability of life. Grief is a natural process of loss. A time of remembrance; a time to let go; a time to give thanks for what we had and for what we are about to receive. Such is the place of Black Saturday, but never fear because God is near, Jesus will return and the Holy Spirit will never leave us alone.

DO NOT FEAR ©Janice Morgan-October 2011

Do not fear for I AM here, I never left your side.
The path you tread you should not dread for I AM by your side.
My presence will your being fill as I walk by your side.
Your eyes will see what is to be because I AM at your side.
Shadows fall and demons call but none can take ME from your side.
Confusion reigns inflicting pains but I AM always at your side.
Whatever comes, whatever numbs, remember where I AM;
Then fears will cease and you will have peace, knowing I AM at your side.

Resources:

- CD:** Out of the Ordinary *by* Graham Kendrick
- CD:** Beauty for Ashes *by* Crystal Lewis
- CD 1:** The Best Celtic Worship album in the world...ever!
- CD 1:** Holding Nothing Back *by* Tim Hughes
- CD 2:** Keith Green-*The Ministry Years Volume 2:*

Copies of: x7

- Song:** I Have Placed All My Hope (*Crucified man*) – Graham Kendrick
- Song:** Beauty for Ashes – Crystal Lewis
- Song:** Clinging to the Cross - Tim Hughes
- Song:** The Lord's My Shepherd (*Stuart Townend version*)
- Song:** Song for Josiah - Keith Green