

Good Friday-C, 2007

April 5, 2007

John 18-19

Title: Passion

Grace and peace to you this Holy Night.

Beauty amidst
Darkness.

Good amidst Evil.

Life amidst Death.

Truth amidst Falsehood

Innocence amidst Guilt.

Love where there is Hatred.

Forgiveness over against Despair

Passion.

To treat the passion of Jesus with anything other than awe and wonder is to
Trivialize it. God comes and dies a criminal's death?

God who creates the whole universe, who makes rivers and
Mountains and trees, flowering azaleas, pink dogwoods,
Babies, sunrises and sunsets

And this and more from the hand of God who does what? Dies.

Himself born in a stable, lives as an itinerant teacher, gathers
A few followers, challenges the religious order of his day,
And is hung on a cross between two criminals.
Is this your picture of God?

Is this what passion is? Being passionate is bantered around a good deal
today. Find your passion, we say. Such talk is about fulfillment in life,
Using your energy, your gifts with vigor and purpose.

John's gospel gives us a window into passion –God's version of it.
Listen in

“Hail, King of the Jews!!”

Words spoken to Jesus to make fun of him.

A king is not someone who is weak, a failure, defeated.

Kings are powerful, successful. People who are kings

Do everything they can to come across as in charge, capable.

Able and ready to answer every dilemma or issue.

Jesus our king. God chose this moment of apparent

Failure and weakness to disclose the bottom line—

Love, grace and mercy toward lost humanity.

Here is passion God sized.

Jesus says very little from the cross. Standing near it is his mother
Mary and the unnamed, beloved disciple.

“Woman,” he says to his mother, “here is your son.”

“Here is your mother.”

This we can understand. A passion to care for a loved one.

That at your death you seek assurances about the needs of
Others.

And yet, here is a window into a cross shaped family. Where

The boundaries between me and mine are stripped down.

Where true family is redefined. That in Jesus' true family

No one is excluded. That when we talk about standing at the
Foot of the cross as much as we want to talk about

That mercy we need, that forgiveness that gives

Life, we are also to look around and see who else

Is there.

That somehow the passion of Jesus evens the playing field—There's Mary
The mother from Juarez. There's the unnamed disciple with the multi-
syllabled name from Zimbabwe. There's my family...It's a vision we could
hang with and likely be transformed by.

Simply to ponder whose there at the cross is expansive and freeing. It's passion.

“I am thirsty.

Often what we tend to do on Good Friday is focus on
All that Jesus did for us. Look at what He endured, we say.
The beatings, the humiliation, the agony and pathos of dying in
Such a way . . . showing us the love of God, a love that

When so rejected refuses to reject.

If we stick with John's Passion Jesus is in charge.

He doesn't come across as victim, but as committed

To this mission. Passion.

In order to fulfill the scripture---“I am thirsty.”

So that we won't miss it . . . the direction and thrust of scripture
Is to the sacrifice of Jesus. Here is the fullness of God.

So that when Jesus says “It is finished” these are not words of lament or
sorrow, the tone is not pleading, the tenor and tone is forceful, strong

Jesus has fulfilled scripture. Jesus with his very passion
Discloses God's good and holy love for creation.

While this service tonight casts us in greater and greater

Darkness, that darkness is not for what God has done,

Rather our darkness is exposed in the passion of our Lord.

Beauty, Goodness, Life, Truth, Innocence, Love, Forgiveness----Passion,

The cross of our Lord Jesus,

Savior, King, God's strength, God's judgement on

Sin and on what the world considers power and success.

“Women, behold your son.

Son, behold your mother.

I am thirsty.

It is finished.”

What's your picture of passion? Here is God's!

