

Sermon

Good Friday 2025 April 18, 2025

Last night we had our final meal with Jesus. Last night we watched, hidden in the shadows, as an innocent man was taken away to be executed. Last night we were too scared to stand up against the authorities. And faced with the shock-troops of the religious and political regime who seek out and crush any dissent, we opted to keep a safe distance, out of sight, and quiet.

As we relive those events, maybe we are Peter who, although a loyal disciple, is not yet willing to make a public stand and denies being part of the movement.

Maybe we are the Pharisees who seek out those who disrupt the status quo or upset a system we believe is the only way to act, and in doing so, we willingly condemn an innocent man to death.

Maybe we are the crowd who gets caught up in a mob mentality, crying out for the execution of someone deemed an insurrectionist, troublemaker, or is simply a scapegoat getting us to focus on something else besides what's really happening.

What just happened here in this place is not simply a reenactment of Jesus' crucifixion. We do not participate in this liturgy simply because the BCP tells us to do so. We do this because what happened to Jesus so long ago still happens today: innocent people are betrayed into the hands of sinners, unjustly arrested, imprisoned, and executed. The State and those in power will use any means necessary to maintain their power and their ability to control those deemed unacceptable.

This story is as relevant today as it was for Jesus. When we don't speak out or stand up for those wrongly accused by claiming to not know them, we are no different than Peter. When we desert people in their time of need, we are no different than the other ten disciples. When we report innocent people to the authorities because they have been deemed a threat, we are no different than Judas. When we allow ourselves to take the easy road of mob mentality rather than critically thinking about the situation, we are no different than the crowd shouting, "Crucify him!"

The crucifixion of Jesus happened because a violent world could not, and cannot, abide the presence of radical and inclusive love. The crucifixion of Jesus happened

because good people allowed evil actions couched in a defense of “just following orders” to rule the day.

Good Friday is not just a day to remember the crucifixion of Jesus. In our world, Good Friday happens every day when innocent people are wrongly attacked, arrested, removed, and/or executed. It happens every day we desert people in need and leave them to fend for themselves. It happens every time people falsely report innocent people as a danger or as a troublemaker.

On this Good Friday when we remember the crucifixion and death of Christ, let us also reflect on how we are complicit in allowing a violent world to execute radical and inclusive love.

As Jesus once said, “Whatever you do or don’t do to the least of these, you do or don’t do to me.” So let us never forget that how we treat others, especially those who are marginalized and deemed “not of us,” is how we treat Jesus.

Amen.