

The Road to Golgotha

Jesus was determined to take the road to Golgotha. What happened in Jerusalem was not a surprise to him. 'From Jesus' own pronouncements ... the claim that he not only died by crucifixion but did so as the climax of a thought-out vocation has always been at the centre of authentic Christianity' (Tom Wright).

Read Mark 10: 32-34

This was (at least) the third time Jesus had told them what the authorities in Jerusalem would do to him, yet they still didn't "get it".

1a. Do you have any sympathy with the disciples' lack of understanding? What reasons could they have?

1b. That Jesus willingly suffered and gave up his life is seen by our secular neighbours as having no meaning or purpose. What similarities, if any, do you see with what you might imagine is in the minds of the disciples as they approach Jerusalem?

It was after Jesus rose from the grave and appeared to them, and after the first Pentecost, that the disciples began to understand why what Jesus did and achieved was absolutely necessary, and what God had purposed from the beginning. Let's look at a couple of readings from Sunday.

Read 1 Peter 2: 21-25 and Isaiah 53: 1-6

Peter here picks up and confirms the prophesy of Isaiah (written some 700 years earlier) 'by his wounds you have been healed', a very clear and powerful statement.

2a. Anyone who has watched the film 'The Passion of Christ' will retain a vivid picture of Christ's suffering. Do you think that to suffer and die in this appalling manner was absolutely necessary? In order to achieve God's objective (opening a way back for humanity to be in relationship with him) can you think of any alternative way?

2b. Whilst Christ has done on the cross everything that was necessary, we, of course, have to 'accept the healing'. What does this 'accepting' mean for you? What should be our response to what Christ has done and made possible?

Read Colossians 1: 15-23

From this barbaric act and the most unjust act in all history flows immeasurable and undeserved blessing, available to all of humanity whose response to what happened and was achieved is faith.

3a. Meditate on the majesty and truth of these verses Paul was inspired to write.