

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

A Love That Can't Be Crucified

By Ken Woodley

I remember us gathered in that upstairs room somewhere in the secret heart of Jerusalem on Maundy Thursday.

The Garden of Gethsemane wasn't far away. Neither were those coming to arrest Jesus as he prayed for some other way. Any other way.

We could almost hear the footsteps coming, like a pandemic making its way headline by headline, day be day, getting closer. Jesus knew they were coming but he did not run away. Jesus did not leave us even though he knew what those footsteps meant, even though he knew where those footsteps were going to take him.

The darkness was coming. It was falling all around us, and yet Jesus did not abandon us to the darkness of the world.

Jesus had one more thing to say to us in that upstairs room. One last word. And so it must have been of utmost importance to him. The one thought Jesus wanted to leave behind in our hearts, yeast for our souls, communion words for all those who will follow us, in later years, into "upstairs rooms" around the world with Jesus on Maundy Thursday.

"I give you a new commandment," Jesus told us. "To love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this, everyone will know you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Love?

Remember how disappointed Judas was by those four letters. Nobody's going to kill the Roman oppressors with love, Judas whispered as he headed out of the door to collect his 30 pieces of silver.

But Judas never understood. This was no ordinary love. This wasn't the everyday "luv ya" that people tossed about instead of saying "see ya." This love couldn't be abbreviated for Tweets and other social media.

Jesus didn't say "luv ya" because God's love isn't a "luv ya" love.

The love of which Jesus spoke, and speaks, isn't emotional affection that can be washed away by rains of disagreement or blown off course by the winds of disappointment.

Jesus didn't die on the cross for "luv ya."

Jesus wasn't raised from the dead by "luv ya."

And for sure Easter isn't a "luv ya" day.

This is a love that cannot be crucified.

A love that Judas cannot betray.

A love that cannot be arrested.

A love that cannot be sentenced to die.

A love that cannot be whipped and beaten.

A love that no crown of thorns can touch.

A love that no hammer can nail to a cross.

This is a love that transports us and transforms our lives because it is LOVE.

The thing itself. The LOVE that lives and breathes, that blossoms in every unfolding flower within our heart, if we let it, because it was planted there by God, who is LOVE.

Remember, when we saw them nail Jesus to that cross, standing off in the distance, in company with our fear, we were terrified that the darkening of that day would soon fill the world to overflowing.

Never, ever, we feared, would we ever truly see the light of such love again.

But it suddenly dawned on me today that in actual fact the sun is constantly rising, every minute of every day. As our world spins, the sun is seen to rise above the dark horizon from a endless points of successive geographic perspectives.

That is what this LOVE is like.

My trouble is that sometimes I turn away from the rising and face the other direction, staring into all of my "setting skies" and feel my heart fill with tears as I cry because the sun seems to be constantly waving goodbye and leaving me in darkness.

Nor, I am quite certain, am I the only one.

That is how we all felt that afternoon on the slopes of Golgotha.

I think every time Jesus spoke of love Judas felt the sun set again and again and again.

Judas never understood LOVE.

The rest of us are eternally blessed by the LOVE that rose on Easter morning.

And every morning.

Every morning everywhere.