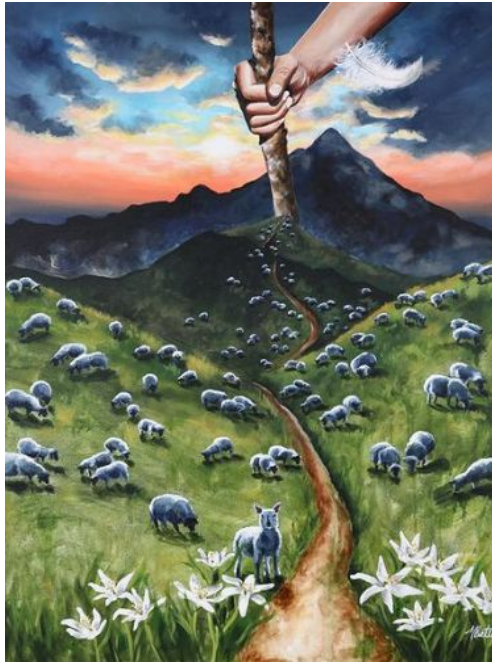


ALL WE LIKE SHEEP



*The Good Shepherd (Micah) copyright Mindi Oaten
www.mindioaten.com*

The Temple officials told Pontius Pilate,

*“We have a law, and by that law this man must die,
because he has made himself the Son of God.”*

God also has a law.

And by that law this man will die, if this sin-sick race is to have a hope.
God’s law is simple:

For every evil thought, every evil word, every evil act, there is a price to pay.

Innocent blood cries out, the whole universe cries out until the price is paid.

Isaiah understood this long ago, when he wrote:

*All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own
way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Isaiah 53:6

It was just another crucifixion, like thousands before it. Criminals, outsiders, anyone who displeased the Roman governor. Nail 'em up! Hang 'em out to die! Crucifixions took place in public, as a warning. Watch yourself. It could happen to you.

As he hangs there between two criminals, the Temple officials stand nearby, stroking their beards with satisfaction. Off to the side some women are weeping.

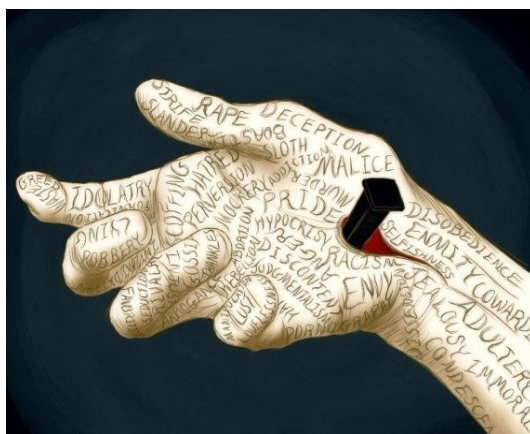
Strange. The sky has grown dark. And as he breathes his last breath the earth begins to tremble. A minor earthquake. Nothing to worry about. It happens all the time. Up in the Temple the few Levites who stayed behind are terrified. The earthquake has ripped apart the heavy veil which concealed the Holy of Holies, exposing this sacred space to common view.

What's going on?

No one has a clue.

What they were looking at, and what we are looking at back across the centuries, is the pivotal moment in the history of this troubled planet.

The God of the universe, in the person of that dying man, is taking upon himself the evil, the guilt, the curse hanging over the entire human race, dragging it down into the Abyss forever.



Our Sins Nailed to the Cross; from fullofeyes.com

This man, who healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, raised the dead, now dies in utter weakness. And as he dies, his Spirit tears apart that veil in the Temple, as a sign that he has now opened the way for us into the blazing presence of God.

This crucifixion is the power which can bring you and me from darkness into the magnificent light of God's World—

not after we die, but now, here in this life!

“And I, when I am lifted up from the earth (on the cross) will draw all people to myself.”

All people.

Sooner or later we will all get there. We will encounter that cross, and we will begin to understand exactly what divine forgiveness means.

And then we decide, every day, for the rest of our lives:

Am I going to receive God's forgiveness and walk in it?

Am I going to abandon the darkness of my own ego, and live by the power of that cross?

Or am I going to sigh, turn and walk away?

Here's what the crucified Lord offers us when we draw near to his cross and open our hearts:

Freedom from our past.

Forgiveness of our sins.

Eyes to see God's Kingdom

Power to live as daughters and sons of God.

Freedom from our past

Some of us are always looking back. Always trying to relive the good old days. And some of us are still dragging with us regrets and resentments from things that happened years ago. And some of us are still trying to prove ourselves to that hard-nosed teacher, or that skeptical uncle, or that father we could never please.

When we come to the cross and open our hearts, the blood of that dying man washes it all away. All that regret, all that fantasy, all that bitterness.

"You've given it to me," says the Crucified One, "I'll take care of it. Just put your hands on the plow, follow me, and never look back."

Forgiveness of our sins

Who can explain it? Who can understand it? When we draw near to the cross, staggering under the weight of our guilt, Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven."

And they're gone!

And now the Crucified One empowers us to show that same forgiveness to those who have sinned against us. And as we walk in forgiveness, we have peace which passes all understanding.

Eyes to see God's Kingdom

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

What do I see? I see God's World, the Kingdom Jesus planted on this earth by his death on that cross. So that when I pray, "Thy Kingdom come!" I know the difference between God's World and this world.

God's World will remain on this earth long after the Lord has cleaned up this mess.

And God's world is open to us right now.

Power to live as daughters and sons of God

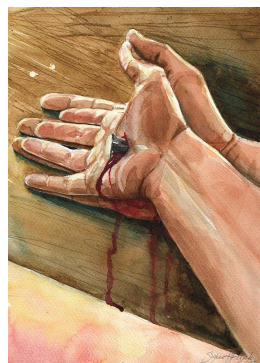
Power.

Paul writes,

When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

I Corinthians 2:1-5



*Crucified with Christ: Signe Sandelin
deviantart.com/signesandelin*

It's when Jesus takes us down into his death and up into his resurrection---
that's when we begin to taste the power of the World to Come.

We die with him and rise with him every day afresh. Until we can say with Paul,

“I am crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ, who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2:20

This man, who healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, raised the dead, *dies in utter weakness*. And as he dies, his Spirit tears apart the veil of the Temple, opening a way for us into the blazing presence of God.



*God So Loved the World: Signe Sandelin
deviantart.com/signesandelin*

We can enter that presence, not after we die, but right now, even as we read these words.

We can draw near to the crucified Lord
and be lifted out of our miseries into God's World.

Or we can sigh, turn and walk away.

At the cross he gives us...

Freedom from our past.

Forgiveness of our sins.

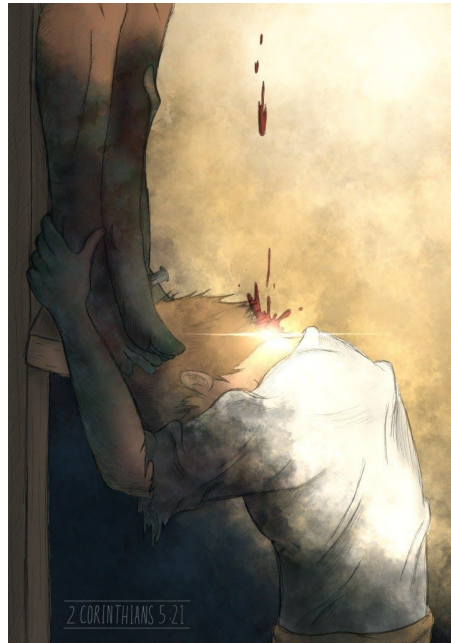
Eyes to see God's Kingdom.

Power to live as daughters and sons of God.

The door is open.

The Crucified Lord is waiting.

All we have to do is come, and keep coming to that cross, for the rest of our lives.



*We May Become the Righteousness of God:
from Full of Eyes.com*

Prayer

Lord draw us to your cross and keep drawing us each day of our lives. We drop to our knees knowing that you, the King of Kings, paid the price for our sins. What forgiveness. What love. We open our hearts to this divine forgiveness today. We draw near to you in your suffering, in your utter weakness so that we may be lifted from our own past, our own sins. Draw us near so that we can live in your Kingdom now, receiving the power to live as your sons and daughters, and experiencing your divine presence and your divine sacrifice each day of our lives.

Maranatha Mirror Messages

mmirror.net



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WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN