

There would have been an eerie silence in Jerusalem within minutes after Jesus gave up his life into the Father's hands. Before that...it would have been chaotic...Braying howling mocking mobs...suffocating darkness...ground shaking...rocks splitting...graves bursting open...Roman soldiers crying out in fear...the Temple curtain tearing in two...Jesus' final cries of dereliction & then release.....then nothing. The whole world held its breath.....then nothing.

It was true...he was dead. Just like the religious hierarchy had planned...he was dead. Just as Pilate had decreed...he was dead. In brutal efficient Roman fashion (& they were *very good* at this)...he was dead. As the earth shook & the crowds scoffed & the religionists gloated & the disciples fled & the women wept...Death moved to claim its next victim.

But unlike those at his left & right, Jesus' battle was not against dying, but against death itself. Death, you see, is not just an isolated instance in Jesus' life, just like it is not an isolated moment in yours or mine. Death is a devourer that swallows up all that is good & beautiful. Death is a mocker who challenges our sense of security & our sense of wellbeing & wholeness. Death is a stalker whose very name sows Fear, Uncertainty & Disorder into our lives. And death is a Mover...who pursues & shadows & dogs our steps throughout life. Death always lurking in the background or stealing into the limelight at the worst possible moments Death moves through this world & ultimately claims every one of us. Death moves through this world haunting human consciousness & consuming every human legacy...

Today Death today moves against Jesus...the Author of Life...and Jesus dies. And in that moment of eerie Death stillness Fear, Uncertainty & Disorder move center stage...You can imagine the fevered questioning: What now? Am I next? Where can I hide? Who can I trust? If that can happen to *HIM*...what could happen to me?

Fear, Uncertainty, Disorder...Sounds like the last few weeks with our neighbours & closest companions seen as potential carriers of illness & death. Fear, Uncertainty, Disorder...with businesses shuttered, schools emptied, chalk marks & taped Xs telling us where to stand...where to sit...where to not walk. Fear, Uncertainty, Disorder...shelves bare, finances dwindling, workers sidelined. Fear, Uncertainty, Disorder...travellers quarantined or punished, playgrounds closed, pubs, restaurants & worship deemed non-essential. Imagine...a lifetime of diligent faithful work in whatever your vocation only to be told...your work is non-essential...which sounds a lot like "you are non-essential."

But this death in fact undoes the power of death. This death defeats the insidious fear uncertainty & disorder of death itself. This death...is life for you...me...all. *Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of death.* - Heb 2:14-15

It was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. We thought his troubles were a punishment from God; a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. By his wounds we are healed... – Is 53:4-6

Just as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. – Jn 3:14-15

This death overthrows the sinister stalking haunting mocking power of death by the very power of love & life which called this world & each of us into existence from the very beginning:

Even before he made the world, God loved us & chose us in Christ to be holy & without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, & it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness & grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son & forgave our sins. - Eph 1:4-6

How much does God the Father love us? Enough to sacrifice His only Son. For how long has God known he would give his Son to death so we would have life? Even before he made the world...from forever...

Jesus himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world. – 1 Jn 2:2

Because Christ offered himself to God, he is able to bring a new promise from God. Through his death he paid the price to set people free from (sin)...He did this so that those who are called can be guaranteed an inheritance that will last forever. – Heb 9:15

Today Death today moves against Jesus...the Author of Life... & Jesus dies. But this death in fact undoes the power of death. This death defeats forever the insidious fear uncertainty & disorder of death itself. This death...is life for you...me...all. In the eerie silence & stillness as Jesus dies...death itself is defeated. This truly is our life our hope & our salvation. Amen