

PEOPLE ON THE EDGE OF HIS PAIN

Introduction

How often we have heard the story of the passion. Every Palm Sunday we are gripped by the drama of the story of Jesus' suffering and crucifixion. Many others were caught up in that drama, not least those who had been central to Jesus' life and ministry. How did they react to these events? How did they feel as partners in the unfolding drama of the passion? Much of this remains unknown, but we can perhaps imagine. We can place ourselves within the drama: in the market square, in the Temple, on the Via Dolorosa or at the foot of the cross. Lent 2010 and 'People on the edge of His pain' is an opportunity to work ourselves into the characters and action, to experience afresh that sense of history and humiliation that would change the world forever.

We will explore the characters of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of our Lord, Judas, Peter, Barabbas and Jesus himself. In these characters we hope that we can engage with some of the tensions, the arguments, the disappointment and the hopelessness. All will lead ultimately to the joy of the Resurrection and to the journey of faith.

We will develop the characters and build a scenario which can allow us to 'touch and be touched' by the Holy Spirit as, each week, we walk and talk with each of our chosen followers on our road to the cross.

The course allows for the use of drama, poetry and meditation as well as scripture. It is essentially an 'experience' of Lent and its meaning for each of us individually or corporately. It might also allow us to explore contemporary issues and concerns in the light of our thinking and praying with particular individuals in the drama.

The Study material

There is study material for individuals and local church groups who wish to follow the theme. It contains the following elements:

- Bible Reflection
- Meditation on the theme
- Questions for discussion
- Prayer

Themes and characters

- Jesus – In the wilderness, from the edge towards suffering
- Mary Magdalene – Soul Sister
- Judas – Cheating Heart?
- Mary – Grieving Mother
- Peter – Weakest Link?
- Barrabas – Daylight Robber

Luke 4:1-13

JESUS

In the wilderness, from the edge towards suffering

Comment

On the first Sunday of Lent the Church has traditionally focused upon Jesus' temptations in the wilderness. Here Jesus ponders the different paths that he might take in his ministry, knowing that the only path which he will tread will lead him to Jerusalem, to the cross and to suffering. Here Jesus stands at the threshold of his ministry; Jesus himself is on the edge of his pain.

This story is traditionally seen as a preparation for the ministry that was to lie ahead, but it also looks firmly towards the cross and the resurrection. Jesus eschews the path offered by Satan and embraces what, in worldly terms, is weak and illogical.

In his great novel *The Brothers Karamazov* the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky includes a parable where Jesus, who has returned to earth, is confronted by the Grand Inquisitor, who tells Jesus that he made the wrong choices when he was in the desert – he ought to have turned the stones into bread, he should have thrown himself off the pinnacle of the temple and he should have taken the opportunity to be king of all the nations of the earth. The choices were wrong because he had misunderstood human nature – human beings are not able to handle the freedom which he gave them.

Some years prior to his writing this novel, Dostoevsky famously said: “If someone were to prove to me that Christ was outside the truth, and it was really the case that the truth lay outside Christ, then I should choose to stay with Christ rather than with the truth.” In this Lenten season we are invited to travel a path with Christ that seems to the world illogical, weak and foolish. We step outside of the world's ‘truth’ into the possibilities of life in Christ. As we travel we will encounter some of the people on the edge of Christ's pain. And we are invited to ponder our own responses, on the edge of His pain.

“I simply argue that the cross be raised again at the centre of the market place as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap; at a crossroads so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek (or should we say in English, in Bantu and in Afrikaans?) at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse and soldiers gamble. Because that is where he died. And that is what he died about. And that is where churchmen should be and what churchmanship should be about.”

George F. MacLeod

Meditation – Monologue

It is difficult to put ourselves into the shoes of the Biblical characters – and most of all of Jesus himself. Each week there is a short monologue whose purpose is to help us do just that – to think about the character of the person and relate that person to our own time, culture and place.

It has been so liberating... this stay in the wilderness. In spite of all the temptations overcome, I have found freedom. Freedom for my ministry. I have had to consider what I should leave behind. But first remember that freedom from... is freedom for – it is doing what is contrary to natural



expectations. The evil one expected me to accept the offer of power and status. But prayer has given me clarity. We don't pray to change God, we pray to change ourselves. Every day and every time we stop and enter into prayer we set about changing ourselves – what have I done, what ought I to do?

The world of power and status has been left behind and I'm seeing beyond judgment right through to forgiveness. I know where this path leads and I fear for those of my family and friends who will be damaged by it.

I must remain focused on my ministry in the service of my Father. Everything else has been stripped away...All that is left is trust. I know that all eyes will be fixed on me. There are so many expectations. Abba, it is not what I do that counts most, it is how I trust. When all of the distractions and attachments are taken away, it's not what you do or don't do, it's about trust and intention, why you do it. Here in the wilderness is a purifying of all that is unimportant. Being here is living as though an encounter with God is unavoidable. And it is.

But soon I must move on, move on to the way of the cross. I must remember that the God centred life has to be as much a journey towards perfection as it is a desire for salvation. My ministry is about restoring every person, all creation, to the original perfect state of the Father's intention, but first we must endure much together.

Regardless of where we live or what we do, the wilderness has to be about a vocation of creativity and love. It can never be about blind obedience to a duty which leads in the end to thirst and emptiness. On the road I will meet my heavenly Father in many people. I hope I can heal many and bring joy. You never know where Grace is...

Silence

Questions for Discussion

- Lent is traditionally a time of fasting and inward reflection. How are you planning to navigate your journey through this Lenten time?
- Lent is also a time when we try to think more deeply about our faith and how we live it: Reflecting on our Gospel reading, what are the implications for our faith of following Christ and not the world?
- Have you ever been in a wilderness? What kind of vulnerabilities emerged when you were there?
- What kind of vulnerabilities might Jesus have experienced?

Prayer

Liberating God

Lead us into the depths of your wilderness

Free us from everything that distracts from your way

Free us for life with you in this wilderness place

Free us to live and love and become fully what you want us to be

Fix our eyes on your path

Restoring every person

Restoring all creation

Serving others as you served us. Amen



Luke 8.1-3; Mark 15.33-41; 42-47

MARY MAGDALENE

Soul Sister

Comment

Of all the people ‘on the edge of His pain’ we will consider, Mary Magdalene always seems ‘on the edge’ – few mentions in the scriptures and often at the tail end of a story. She is a figure shrouded in legend and mystery. Many (including some of those who have translated scripture into English) assume that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute although there is no evidence to suggest this. More controversially there is the view that there was a more romantic relationship between Jesus and Mary. This idea is older than we think – it goes back to the 2nd and 3rd centuries where it is mooted in some of the so-called Gnostic Scriptures.

In contrast to this, the Eastern Orthodox tradition has maintained that Mary lived a moral virtuous life throughout. There is even a tradition that Mary Magdalene’s chastity led Satan to think that she might be the woman whom God would choose to give birth to Jesus.

In recent years some feminist writers have claimed that Mary Magdalene went on to become a major leader in the early church.

Yet, interesting as this may be, we can see in her someone who responds to Jesus in faith – such that, come Easter Sunday, she is propelled to the centre of the stage as a central witness.

Meditation – Monologue

It is difficult to put ourselves into the shoes of the Biblical characters. Each week there is a short monologue whose purpose is to help us do just that – to think about the character of the person and relate that person to our own time, culture and place.

I was drawn to him... like a fly drawn to a fire, but his fire was purifying. “We are good because we are loved,” he said, “not loved because we are good.”

I felt a whole person in his presence. Just being in his company made me feel part of life, made me feel whole... again. I know what you’re thinking, lots of people did. But it wasn’t like that. He touched my soul, made me feel... I mattered.

No-one had done that before.

When he talked to all of us together, it was as if he was only speaking to me. My tongue often stuck to the roof of my mouth. My heart skipped... I loved him so much...

I know the others did too, but somehow I always felt special. It was so different from the rest of my experiences. Normally I would walk in the market and have to endure the looks and the comments, like many women do... the lewd shouts across the street, the young single woman making her way to this new master. “Oh yes,” they would call, “let me be your master!”



They don't understand that love takes many shapes and forms. Just being in his company, just being around with him, it made me feel complete... and so at peace with myself.

I would have followed him to the ends of the world, and in some ways I did. I thought my world had ended, actually. It was the Passover and all the men were in the upper room. Later they went to pray at the Garden of Gethsemane. I knew something bad was going to happen, I just knew.

Late at night someone, I can't remember who, banged on the door and said they had taken the Master prisoner. That's when the nightmare began.

I took Mother Mary and together we stayed on the edge, watching... trying not to be noticed and thrown out by some soldier or official.

So much is a blur now, we were numb with shock... you know when you can't even cry... it was as if I was floating above everything.

It was so quick. The judgement, the terrible torture. I still suffer terrible nightmares... cold sweats, running over and over and over everything that happened. I still can't remember it all.

Mother Mary had fainted... and we got water. She was slumped like a rag doll across my legs, and there was a strange thumping in my head. The next hours were unspeakable... unbearable...

Somehow we ended up at Golgotha... and the abyss...

When the pain goes I think of the Master's face and smile.

I was good because he loved me...

...he didn't love me because I was good.

Silence

Questions for Discussion

- How does the person of Mary Magdalene resonate with your experience of faith?
- Do women have a different experience of discipleship from men? If so, how?
- What is your own experience of God's unconditional love?
- Are we good because God loves us?

Prayer

Loving God
We are good because you love us
Thank you for your gift of unconditional loving
We have been touched by your Spirit
That grounds us in your cross and passion
Renew us with your power
Enfold us in your presence
And bring us finally to see your face. Amen



Matthew 26.47-56; 27.3-10

JUDAS

Cheating Heart?

Comment

In a famous painting by Giotto of the arrest of Jesus, Jesus and the 11 disciples are depicted with halos whilst Judas (without halo) is donned in a yellow robe. The yellow is often interpreted to symbolise cowardice.

Judas makes us uncomfortable. Classically he is the betrayer, the coward, the ungodly, the one who lets the side down. Yet he fascinates us. Can it be that we see something of ourselves – something of human nature – in his actions? Is this why so often we seek to explain his actions? Judas finds himself on the edge of Jesus' pain in a way that is too hard to bear.

The person of Judas has had an almost folk-lore status. We still refer to a person who betrays others as a "Judas". Throughout the centuries Judas has been seen as the embodiment of evil. In more sinister times the person of Judas has been cast as the wicked Jew who led Jesus to his suffering and death. Renditions in art of the arrest in the garden have sometimes depicted an obviously Jewish Judas kissing a very European, white, blond Jesus. The manner in which the person of Judas has been distorted in anti-Semitic polemic is not something that can be ignored or forgotten and it gives us a warning not to use scripture as a means of waging war on vulnerable minorities.

A straightforward reading of the story suggests that Judas was motivated by his own greed but was overcome with remorse.

More recently there have been attempts to 'explain' Judas' motives in betraying Jesus. Many have preferred to see Judas as the disciple who wanted to precipitate the kingship of Jesus, hoping that his arrest would lead to a popular uprising. Those who take this point of view have drawn attention to the possibility that 30 pieces of silver was a fairly small sum of money. If this interpretation is followed then Judas is the loyal, but misguided, disciple.

Meditation – Monologue

It is difficult to put ourselves into the shoes of the Biblical characters. Each week there is a short monologue whose purpose is to help us do just that – to think about the character of the person and relate that person to our own time, culture and place.

I made the wrong choice. Ok, ok, I thought I was doing the right thing. I wanted to reflect your light, project you into power. I misunderstood. Is there forgiveness for me, even me..?

Mine was an emptiness seeking security. I found it in the Lord. In Jesus I found liberation and a way to reach for a new beginning, a new way of being...

Now I am manipulated and in misery...

My own fragility and need has led me to the place of death and my dreams lie in shattered pieces, shards at my feet.



We were told that old and broken people can still dream dreams, that the lame might walk, the blind see, the deaf hear.

Now I am hopeless and hirkled[†], without sight and sound. I am inoculated from sensation. I seek sedation of conscience. There are so many like me...

Perhaps...

I wanted to do well and meant for the best. I didn't understand...
I was full of anxious imaginings and ominous fears.
Now I am stumbling and grasping, a bye word for cheating and desertion.

And yet... was I called... was this my vocation... to be this... was it necessary?
My heart is being squeezed and I have no words.
If I didn't love the Lord so much, why do I feel such pain and desolation, such separation?
I smell of corruption and death, it clings to me and is unshakeable, shrinking my soul into nothingness.

I can never find peace and a whole heart... can I Lord?
Even me..?

Silence

[†] 'Hirkle' – Scots word, derived from Old Norse, meaning "to limp, walk with a limp". In Old Norse – "to suffer from cramp"

Questions for Discussion

- How do you interpret the motives of Judas? Do you feel any sense of empathy with him?
- Is it ever justified to see any person as wholly evil?
- What are the possibilities of forgiveness and redemption for people who commit acts that are so terrible and horrific?
- How do you react when you have been betrayed?
- How might your attitudes be changed in the light of the Gospel?

Prayer

Calm us, Loving God
When we feel let down, betrayed
Unclench the moment and let us breathe deeply of your spirit
Soften us into understanding of your ways
Deepen us into understanding and forgiveness
Fill us with hope for a future with you
That is you. Amen



Luke 1.39-45; John 19.16-30

MARY

Grieving Mother

Comment

Michelangelo's sculpture *La Pietà*, which is found in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, depicts Mary the Mother of Jesus with the body of her Son after it has been taken down from the cross. For many this has been an important image for prayerful meditation.

The person of Mary is unique in Christianity – even for those for whom Mary is not a significant feature of their spirituality. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition Mary is *Theotokos* (Mother of God) which attempts to emphasize the divine nature of Christ rather than suggesting divine status for Mary. We might also see Mary as the bearer of the Word (cf. John 1).

But Mary is also a mother. During this week – when we have marked Mothering Sunday – we think of Jesus' mother on the edge of his pain. But Mary's experience would have been like no other – a mother's grief, a mother's torment.

As she sat at the foot of the cross what must have passed through her mind? Perhaps she remembered the visit from the Angel Gabriel who came to her saying "hail Mary, full of grace". We often associate these words with Christmas time and assume that she is full of grace because of the promise, because she is greatly favoured. But were the words of the Angel in Nazareth also looking forward to this time of grief and redemption, when she would wait at the edge of His pain, when she would be a witness to saving acts of God in her Son?

Today, as we remember the Mother of our Lord, we also pray for all mothers, that they too may be filled with God's grace – especially those who endure great suffering and heartbreak.

Three reflections

Ikos (a short poem in the Orthodox tradition particularly for the Dead)

Seeing her own Lamb led to the slaughter, Mary His Mother followed Him with the other women and in her grief she cried: "Where dost Thou go, my Child? Why dost Thou run so swiftly? Is there another wedding in Cana, and art Thou hastening there, to turn water into wine? Shall I go with Thee, my Child, or shall I wait for Thee? Speak some word to me O Word; do not pass me by in silence. Thou hast preserved my virginity, and Thou art my Son and my God"
(Small Compline of Holy Friday, Eastern Orthodox Church)

Indifference

When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged Him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His wounds and deep,
For of those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham they simply passed him by,
They never hurt a hair of him, they simply let him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give him pain
They only just passed down the street, and left him in the rain.
Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do,"
And still it rained the wintery rain that drenched him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary.



A Mother Understands

(From *The Unutterable Beauty: the Collected Poetry of G. A. Studdert Kennedy*)

Dear Lord, I hold my hand to take
 Thy body, broken here for me.
 Accept the sacrifice and make
 My body, broken, there, for thee.
 His was my body, born for me,
 Born of my bitter travail pain,
 And it lies broken on the field
 Swept by the wind and the rain.
 Surely a Mother understands Thy thorn crowned head,
 The mystery of Thy pierced hands – the Broken Bread.

Meditation – Monologue

It is difficult to put ourselves into the shoes of the Biblical characters. Each week there is a short monologue whose purpose is to help us do just that – to think about the character of the person and relate that person to our own time, culture and place.

I am silent, shocked.

You passed me by and I saw your eyes. Those deep pools of disappointment and despair. We have known each other from that first moment of conception, that deep indwelling. That moment of divine encounter has brought us both to this. This place... of darkness and humiliation. How many mothers have travelled this road before, and how many must walk this way in times to come? My love, my heart.

I would take your place willingly, but know it cannot be. So I must again fall back into God's grace and be carried to this hill, which seems so steep.

I am haunted by your face, that I have fed and cleaned and wiped and loved. My dear Son, what will become of us. Such pain is indescribable, for both of us, and there are no tears now because they have already been drained and dried.

And yet I must pray.

Are tears prayers?

Then perhaps I have already said a thousand this day. We have lived so much with mystery, unknowing but accepting, rooted in a life directed by our life's source. O God, in the midst of this pain shape my weakness. I must seek your face always, reach into your unknowable ways and be sustained through this madness that surrounds me. We must do what God requires of us... both of us. *Silence*

Questions for Discussion

- Reflect on how you respond to Mary, the mother of Jesus. How important is Mary in your spirituality?
- Does the experience of motherhood offer a unique insight into the nature of Christian discipleship?
- We have many examples of a loss of a child, not least in current wars. How does your own understanding of parenthood and loss compare to Mary's loss?
- What does the experience of Mary's anguish and loss offer for those who long to experience being parents?

Prayer

Holy One

Grace us into understanding

Fill us with your Word made flesh

Shrink our certainties and enlarge our need of you

Unlock the dark places in our hearts

So that we might become wholly, completely yours

Grace us into loving and living and laughing

Your Kingdom come. Amen



Luke 22.31-34; 54-62

PETER

Weakest link?

Comment

“Have mercy, Lord, on me, regard my bitter weeping, look at me, heart and eyes both weep to Thee bitterly.”

These words are taken from the St. Matthew Passion by Johann Sebastian Bach. They are sung as the comment of the Church to the denials of Peter as Jesus was being questioned by the High Priest. Some have described this section of Bach’s masterpiece as the most heart-wrenching.

Peter is a believable character. Like so many of us he is quick to offer a response, but often speaks without thinking. He is sincere in what he says but does not always follow through with action. “He talks a good game” could well have been said of Peter!

There are many different texts we could have chosen for this week. Like J S Bach we might have chosen Matthew’s Gospel. Or we could have opted for the passage in John’s Gospel, traditionally read on Good Friday. Instead, however, we have selected the less well known account of Peter’s denials in the Gospel of Luke. As with the other Gospels, Peter follows at a distance – always on the edge of His pain. But in Luke, Jesus turns and looks at Peter after he has denied his Lord for the third time.

Despite being on the edge of Jesus’ pain, Peter is not unnoticed. Being on the edge does not equate with invisibility. Luke’s telling of the passion story reminds us of this. In Luke, Jesus looks at Peter and reminds him of how he falls short of his own words of enthusiastic loyalty and faith.

Meditation – Monologue

It is difficult to put ourselves into the shoes of the Biblical characters. Each week there is a short monologue whose purpose is to help us do just that – to think about the character of the person and relate that person to our own time, culture and place.

I am Peter the Rock.

I am looking over to the cross.

It feels as if I am slumped in rushing water. The stones of His stories are lying about us, beneath the surface, one touching another.

My world is melting, dissolving in front of me.

Stories of the night before – being taken to the garden after the last supper. Exhausted, frightened. I was holding the group together, it was tough! I followed, scouting around to see what was happening.

“Feed my sheep.” He said it again and again.

“Do you love me, do you love me? Feed my sheep.”

When they took him we all stood back.

So many soldiers.

You know how you feel when you get a panic attack – buzzing in the ears, breathless. I was sick.

His Rock he called me... and he said I would betray him three times.

Let me tell you about that:

Three serving girls – nobodies.



Why should I say yes to them? I was doing better by telling them to get lost.
 So... a question... Why do I always have to be strong?.. Would anyone else have replied differently?
 Can't I be vulnerable...
 Can I tell you about earlier –
 Hitting I can cope with... but spitting on Jesus the Lord... it makes me cry
 Is that weakness?
 I am Peter the Rock. What will I do without him?.. He was everything to me...

In a quiet moment the Lord said “Love is still love, Peter. It takes different forms, that’s all. When someone dies you can’t see them smile or bring them flowers, or tousele their hair. But when one sense weakens another is heightened. Memory becomes your partner and you nurture it. Life ends but love doesn’t.”

It seems funny to think of that now...
 Am I not just the same as you? And yet you judge me for denying the Lord.
 When do you deny God and I do not..? When are you weak and I am not..?
 Here at the cross I am broken, I am Peter a shattered rock.
 I can only offer my weakness...

Silence

Questions for Discussion

- How does the character of Peter resonate with your own discipleship?
- Does being on the edge of someone’s pain mean that you are invisible to the sufferer?
- Have you ever felt powerless to change something in your own life?
- How do you deal with the guilt of this experience?

Prayer

Feed us Lord
 In these starving times
 When our need of you is so great and our faith so small
 Feed us Lord
 When our dreams are so often broken and we have such need of good news
 Feed us Lord
 When our path seems full of difficulty and we are asked for yet more
 Feed us Lord
 For we know that without you there is no way we can be sustained. Amen



Matthew 27.15-26

BARRABAS

Daylight robber

Comment

This week's title is "daylight robber" but is this describing Barrabas or someone else? Jesus Barrabas we know to be a robber or a bandit. Some writers have suggested he might have been a terrorist or a serial murderer. So we know where this character stands ethically. But if we reflect a little deeper we realise that Barrabas is not the one who commits the robbery on this day. On this day Barrabas is merely a man on the edge of Jesus' pain – what is more he benefits from it! The real robbers are the crowd! It is the crowd who steal justice, who rob Jesus of his life and whose theft takes us to the darkness of Golgotha.

In his commentary on Matthew's Gospel, Stanley Hauerwas refers to the fickleness of public opinion, and that whilst Jesus always shows love to all people – even the crowd – his call is to leave the crowd behind and follow him.

Meditation – Monologue

It is difficult to put ourselves into the shoes of the Biblical characters. Each week there is a short monologue whose purpose is to help us do just that – to think about the character of the person and relate that person to our own time, culture and place.

I had to get out of there sharpish. I thought they had me that time.

Most of them think I'm a brute. I care, no doubt about that, but I care mostly about myself.

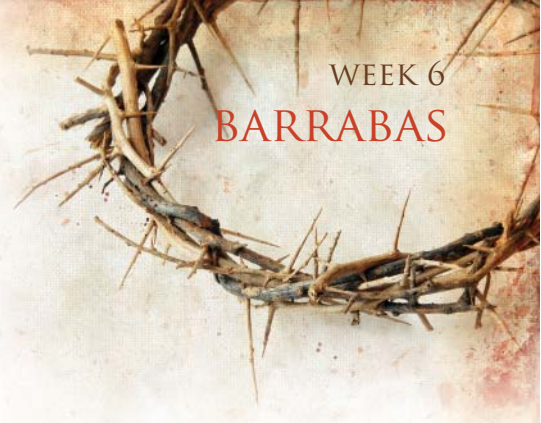
Dog eat dog eh.... no place to be getting starry eyed, if you win you win, if you lose you lose. He lost. Tough luck.

Ok, so I was guilty and he was innocent, at least that's what they all said. But suppose we all took up this idea that we had to be fair, had to "love your neighbour". Unrealistic really. All these religious people were manipulating me as much as him. They were the ones doing the shouting, it's not me to blame. These religious types all say one thing and do another. Preaching one thing and doing the opposite behind the scenes. Yeah, they make agreements and break them, next time I won't be so lucky.

But this Jesus, he seemed different, I've never come across someone like him before. Before they grabbed me from the inn, I had heard about this Jesus. Great prophet they said, new Messiah they said. I don't know about all that stuff, but even standing next to him, being released, hearing them shouting, I felt something different. Can't explain it really, but he went in my place without a word. He didn't shout or make a big fuss, didn't even complain much.

I know it should have been me going down. Here I am getting all sorry and glassy eyed for Jesus when I was the lucky one. Makes you think though. Nothing's going to change because I feel a bit guilty. As long as I make money, get the bonus on the bets and deals I'm placing, setting up a few 'contracts', why should anybody care? No real harm done, eh!





Except that Jesus was different. Any trouble I get I deserve, but not him. Do I feel guilty? Sure. He took my place, took the fall for me, got nailed.

I have to keep the hard man image going and don't want my crew to think I'm getting soft. Business is business. But deep down, in the middle of the night, when I have my own thoughts and even an odd prayer, I know he was good. I know who and what was right and wrong. Deep down.

Silence

Questions for Discussion

- Discuss your reactions to the character of Barabbas?
- Do you agree that “crowds are fickle and untrustworthy because they depend on opinion”?
- If it is true that one needs to “escape the crowd and follow Jesus”, what does this mean for the Church’s mission to the world and its ministry to the poor and dispossessed?
- Have you ever stood back and allowed someone else to take the blame for your own actions?

Prayer

Dear God
 Sometimes it seems such a risk to pray
 To know your still small voice
 In everything
 Overcome my doubt and release me
 From myself
 Make me aware of all that I have missed
 Self seeking to overcome
 Opportunities to serve
 People to love
 Give me courage to pray
 And be changed forever. Amen