

Lent 2021 – I Wonder

Week 5 – “Obedient”



It can be interesting to compare a traditional and more modern version of the same passage.

Mark 15:16-20 The Passion Translation

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

¹⁶ The soldiers took Jesus into the headquarters of the governor’s compound^[a] and summoned a military unit of nearly six hundred men.^[a] ¹⁷ They placed a purple robe on him *to make fun of him*. Then they braided a victor’s crown, a wreath made of thorns,^[a] and set it on his head. ¹⁸ And with a mock salute they repeatedly cried out, “Hail, your majesty, king of the Jews!” ¹⁹ They spit in his face and hit him repeatedly on his head with a reed staff, driving the crown of thorns deep into his brow. They knelt down before him in mockery, pretending to pay him homage. ²⁰ When they finished ridiculing him, they took off the purple robe, put his own clothes back on him, and led him away to be crucified.

King James Version:

¹⁶ And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band.

¹⁷ And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,

¹⁸ And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

¹⁹ And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

By the time that Jesus was led into the Praetorium He had been scourged, flogged almost to the point of collapse and death, His skin lacerated and bleeding, His body in a state of shock. Taken to the Praetorium, the guards called together the remainder of the garrison or military unit, maybe as many as 600.

For some reason, in my mind, I had always imagined that there were perhaps, only a few soldiers present, I had not appreciated that this would be so public, a spectacle possibly, to be relished and even enjoyed, a stress buster in a time when perhaps they were expecting unrest amongst the Jewish people with their Messianic expectations during the Passover.

Imagine, for one moment that you are one of the soldiers, insignificant, just following orders. You have been commanded to come along and join the spectacle. Word has it that this Jesus, whom they had heard about, on the streets, had been arrested. Thought of as a King, someone who would set the people free, but look at Him now. A poor sight, bleeding, weak, exhausted. Your comrades start to mock and jeer Him, you join in. After all, it was expected of you, part of your duty and what's more, you enjoyed it. All about being part of the crowd. Someone went and found an old military coat which had faded and looked like the purple of a royal robe, putting it around Him. Another found a stick, forcing it into His hand to hold as a sceptre, whilst a few others wove together a crown from a load of thorny branches. A poor substitution for gilded leaves.

I wonder how painful that might have been for the ones who were entwining the thorns? Did they use bare hands, in which case, they would have been scratched and cut by the thorns, or did they wear protective gloves?

I wonder, if they had found themselves cut and bleeding, would they have thought about their victim in any way, however small?

Some of the soldiers were bowing the knee, as low as they could go "Hail your majesty, King of the Jews" they seemed almost to be sneering as they mocked Him. They took the staff from His hands and beat Him mercilessly over the head, time and time again driving the thorns deeper into His skin and spitting over Him. You would have joined in, but you were too far away. Pain poured upon pain. Would there never be an end to it? You were one of the last to see Him as he passed by, now with His own clothing on. His eyes caught yours for a flicker of time and you found yourself wondering. Were you wrong, was this

truly the Son of God, the long expected one? There was something about this man, something quite compelling.....

I wonder if there was anyone amongst those who were watching who might have had some sympathy for Jesus, someone who might have questioned in their own heart and mind whether this was indeed the Lord? I'm sure that even if there was such a person, they would have stayed silent.

I wonder if we have ever found ourselves in a group of people, holding a completely different viewpoint, a lone voice. Do we stand up for what we believe in or avoid any confrontation? What would Jesus have done in those situations and how might we learn from His approach?

Jesus was very much alone. His friends and Disciples dispersed. Mocking faces all around, no sense of kindness, no one to encourage, nothing but the inevitability of what was to follow.

I wonder what the thoughts of Jesus were?

We know that Jesus had asked the Father if there was another way, yet He remained obedient to His Father's will.

I wonder, if, in a much smaller way, there have been times in our lives when we have felt the prompting of the Holy Spirit to do something that we might not feel we were able/qualified to do? With what result?

Take some time to talk to Jesus, to share any fears that you might have. Tell Him how you are feeling at present. Ask Him how to cope with confrontational situations, if these are difficult to deal with, taking time for regret at letting opportunities of sharing your faith with others, pass by, and courage to share in future times.

Take time to, simply listen and enjoy being in Jesus' company.

Below is a poetical video link with a unique viewpoint!

The Crown of Thorns by Danielle Rose

<https://youtu.be/5JG0ZpiRRhQ>

Reflecting on the video, give praise and thanks for all that Jesus has done and continues to do, for each one of us.



Easter 2017

As we think about the violence that was meted out on Jesus, even before the crucifixion, please focus your prayers, this week on those who suffer at the hands of others:

For their faith, for their ethnicity, for their gender, throughout the world.

Pray for those who are the abusers, those who have leadership responsibilities who either encourage the harm inflicted on their citizens or turn a blind eye.

There are many countries across the world, where there have been peaceful marches for freedom of speech and change for the good which have been met by a violent response from those in authority.

Pray for those who take part in those marches and for the small number of people set on destructive behaviour.

Pray for ourselves, that we might find ways to stand up for injustices, praying continuously for God's Kingdom to come, here on earth, as it is in heaven.

Amen

A couple of activities:

For those who enjoy colouring in, there is a sheet incorporating each of the six "I Wonder" themes. It can simply be coloured or for those who enjoy collaging and want to be a little more adventurous, sections can be cut out and applied to a background of your own choosing. Both are illustrated below.

A link for the Colouring in Sheet can be found below.

<https://stjameswoodley.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/I-Wonder-5-Colouring-Sheet.pdf>



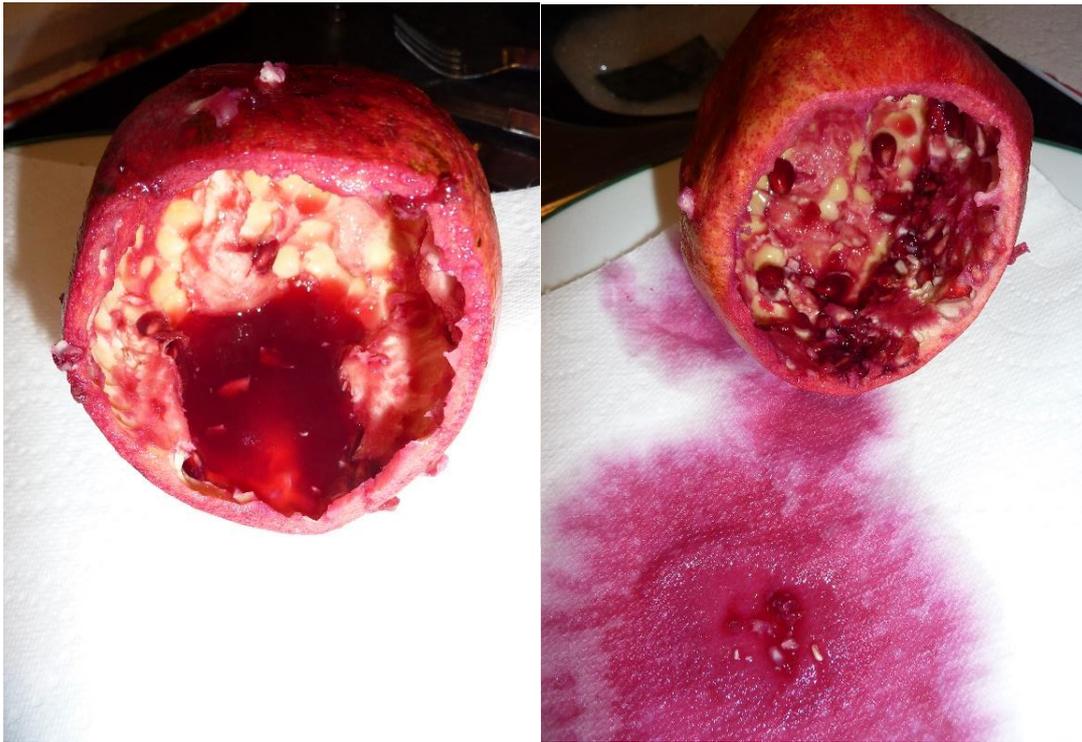


Or

A pomegranate reflection.

This is an exercise which has been used on my Lent Reflecreate (Reflecting creatively) days which I have found particularly helpful when thinking about the events leading up to and especially those of Good Friday. It is quite simple, involving one cut of a section from the side or across the top of the pomegranate, which is placed on a piece of white kitchen towel. This is followed by scooping the contents out with a spoon. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you work. Almost without exception, it has proved to be a powerful experience for those who have prayerfully sought the leading of the Holy Spirit. I have prepared upwards of 50 pomegranates, which are used for another activity, and have always learnt something new each time.

For those who prefer, there are two pictures below, which can be reflected upon instead.



Please listen to:

<https://youtu.be/b48fPuO8GY0>

Man of Sorrows by Hillsong Worship

A Final Prayer and Blessing:

May the Father,
who so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
bring us by faith to his eternal life.

Amen.

May Christ,
who accepted the cup of sacrifice
in obedience to the Father's will,
keep us steadfast as we walk with him the way of his cross.

Amen.

May the Spirit,
who strengthens us to suffer with Christ
that we may share his glory,
set our minds on life and peace.

Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be
upon us and remain with us for ever. *Amen.*

