

Thought for Good Friday 2nd April 2021

Pastor Gordon Hamilton

There is a green hill far away,
Outside a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains He had to bear;
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His precious blood.

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.

O dearly, dearly has He loved!
And we must love Him too,
And trust in His redeeming blood,
And try His works to do.

Read Matthew 27:11-50

A few years ago, one of my sons, now aged over 50, told us he had received the cane at school, we said, 'how come we were never told,' to which he responded 'I wasn't going to tell you in case you gave it to me again.' We can smile and have a chuckle, but when you think of Jesus coming into this world, he knew, that when he came into this world, he was coming to take our punishment. Could you imagine being a child and going to school, knowing that if you did anything wrong, you would get six strokes of the cane for every offence you committed in your school life, on the very last day you were to attend school, possibly 12 or more years later. So if you had six offences in your school life, then 36 strokes of the cane when you left school! But what if you would get six strokes of the cane for all the pupils misdemeanours in your school, for their whole school lives, how many would that be? That would be a day you would not be looking forward to, especially if everyone was to be there watching! That is what Jesus knew he was going to have to do, that was the punishment he was to receive, the punishment we deserved, for every sin we had ever committed, Jesus took the punishment for us, and it was his dad, his father, that allowed him to take the punishment, and at end of it his father would turn his face away. This was the father who he 'loved' and the father who loved him. This was why Jesus said; '*My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.*' The film 'The Passion,' directed by Mel Gibson was very graphic and there were differing views on the necessity of some of the scenes. Mainly on the scourging that Jesus received. I know there are some people who really struggle with any mention of Jesus

suffering, especially suffering because of us, but scripture is very clear, Jesus paid the price for all our sins. Maybe you feel that your sins didn't need Jesus to take that much punishment but Jesus took on the sins of the whole world. Jesus came into the world, as John 3:17 tells us; *'to save the world through him.'* I believe that when Jesus was a child, for the first time, he found out what physical pain for a human being, was all about. As Jesus grew up and worked in the carpenter's shop with his father, he would have found out that when you miss the metal nail with a hammer and hit the nail on your finger or thumb, it hurts. Jesus would also learn that when you stub your toe, it hurts, so the day before he was to die on the cross Jesus knew it was not going to be pleasant, he knew it would end in death, dying wasn't the problem, it was the dying process. This was also to be the first time ever that Jesus was to be separated from his father. Jesus had no knowledge of what that was going to be like. Maybe you've had children and you may remember their first day at school, when you left them, some children really struggle with that, with their mummy and daddy leaving them with a complete stranger, many young children cry, yet as parents we have to walk away. Jesus also knew he was going to be betrayed by a 'friend.' He knew he was going to be denied by a different friend, 'The Rock' Peter. Is it any wonder that in the garden of Gethsemane he prayed so hard, Luke 22:44 tells us; *'being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.'* Jesus knew what he had to do, but I believe, Jesus wasn't certain that as a human being, whether his humanness could take the pain of the scourging, of the rejection, yes by the leaders of the Jewish faith, but the betrayal and denial of those he called his friends. His prayer was always; *'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'* A song by Robin Mark to close...

All on a Friday evening as the sun went down,
The body of a man who wore a thorn made crown,
Was carried to a graveyard in the fading light,
And laid with deep affection in a garden.

Up on the hill the shadow of his gallows fell
And faded as the sun descended lower still
The ground was worn and bare where many feet had trod
To watch the execution of the young man. *And what of me, so distant from that far gone place?
Still the wonder of that moment crosses time and space
With mystery and majesty none can explain
For it draws me to the story of the young man.*

The next day being Sabbath, was a day of rest
And one of some reflection for the young man's friends
No longer messianic zeal consumed their hearts
Just sorrow for the killing of the young man.

And I suppose some tears were shed 'til sleep came last
Then rising early morning once the Sabbath passed
A woman made her way to find the garden tomb
To leave her oil and flowers for the young man.

And what of me.....