

In between the crucifixion and the ascension

We are living in an unprecedented time- for most of us anyway. Isolation, distancing from friends, neighbors, coworkers, brothers, and sisters in Christ. On Easter Sunday we were not able to look at each other in the eye and say to one another "He is risen" and respond with "He is risen indeed". Parks are closed, restaurants are shuttered and we don't know when this will end- or how it will end.

The bible is replete with events like this- the times in the wilderness- the in-between what's known and the future promises. And it is in these times that God re-forms us and re-shapes our trust.

On Saturday between the shock of the cross and the not yet of the resurrection lies a space that is not talked about much. We celebrate Good Friday- a solemn remembrance of Christ's crucifixion and we rejoice at Easter- He is risen..but what about the in-between.

What were the disciples thinking and feeling on the day between the cross and the resurrection?

The numbness from the emotional shock of the crucifixion.

The desolation of the loss of the Master/friend/Rabbi.

The complete loss of perspective of the future.

Was the kingdom that Jesus spoke about just a feel-good story?

Was he really the Messiah?

Where is God in all of this- was this not His beloved Son?

Is this what the kingdom leads to?

This was an intense spiritual and mental time of uncertainty.

The Psalms describe these moments or themes as being in the pit (Ps 40, Ps 88)- in the wilderness (Ps 63).

Together these themes form a narrative of discipleship in the Bible, a way that God changes us and prepares us for mission- as He did the new nation of Israel and his disciples.

The sociologists describe this as a Liminal Space. Liminal space is a place in-between what was and what will be. The Bible repeats these liminal themes which create a way of ongoing Christian formation.

Being able to live in a liminal space with uncertainty- and leaning into trusting Gods sovereignty- at the edge of the Red sea- on the day between the crucifixion and the resurrection- forms us and prepares us for the work of the Kingdom.

So let us in these difficult and strange times- the season of COVID-19- learn to embrace uncertainty knowing that this is for our good- for us to deepen our trust in a Good and all-powerful God.

Many will see this (Ps 40:3) and ask "Where does your help come from" (Ps 121). Our help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, indeed, he who watches over us neither slumbers nor sleeps. (Ps 121)

Psalm 40

I hoped and hoped in Yahweh,

and he bent down to me and listened to my cry for help.
He got me out from a roaring cistern,
from the overflowing mud.
He set up my feet on a cliff,
he established my steps.
He put a new song in my mouth, an act of praise to our God.
Many will see it and live in awe, and trust in Yahweh.

Goldingay, J., & Wright, T. (2018). The Bible for Everyone: A New Translation.

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