

*Sermon preached by Revd Rachel McDougall*

*St Paul's Canterbury, Victoria*

*Good Friday*

*10 April 2020*

*For whom are you looking?*

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Jesus begins the day of his dying with a question.

A crowd come with lanterns and torches and weapons and he meets them with a simple question, for whom are you looking?

'Jesus of Nazareth' they answer. 'I am he'. He replies simply.

So begins the final journey to his destiny, being lifted up before all, until all is accomplished, and all is finished, complete.

For whom are we looking this Good Friday?

How is this Friday good, in staying home, in living through these unusual days, in which many struggle?

Whom do we seek?

Can it be one who suffers for us, who suffers with us?

Can we see in this despised one, rejected, a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity, something of hope?

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases.

Do we look for Jesus amongst the vulnerable and ill, the scared and the sad, the marred and the countless suffering ones?

For whom are you looking?

The message of Good Friday is that Jesus is found even in our fear, even in our sadness, even in the weight and sorrow of this pandemic and the infirmities the world is suffering.

God is found even in the depths of despair and even within our anxiety, even in this waiting time and that none of this has the last word.

There is nowhere that God's love cannot reach.

As Jesus breathes his last and gives up his spirit, at his most vulnerable and powerless here is love stripped bare, here is what love will do.

For as Christians we believe that God in Jesus enters into our pain, entered into infirmities and bore within him the reality of what it means to be human, to heal us and renew us in love.

This love is for others is the last and final word, a word that lives on.

The only hope for us is a suffering God who reaches out to us and says that we are not alone, that each of us are welcome and loved and can be made whole.

For whom are you looking? - a vulnerable God, a loving God, a God who is with us in suffering, in all our brokenness and betrayals. Here is God in love poured out in dying Here is

God with us beyond it all to the completion of all things and the hope that somehow in some way all things shall be well.

He has carried our diseases and yet by his bruises we are healed.

This is a God who is with us. I am God for you, I am the one who walks beside you, even in the darkest times and who brings you new life and hope.

Our God is here now, opening his arms, holding us up, giving strength to the weary and worn and sad.

For whom are you looking this Good Friday?

How does Jesus meet you this day? And what in your heart do you wish to lay down at his feet.

What bruises need healing, what fears need soothing what weight are you carrying?

Know that as you see the cross this day that hope and meaning and life and hope can be found in God.

My prayer for you this day is that you can set down some of your burdens at his feet and know that you are loved.

The one for whom we are looking is found in vulnerable love that is offered freely to us.

All we need to do is to say yes, to trust in the one who gave all for us in love, a love that lives on, in the one who can bring new life to us if we but trust it.

For whom are you looking? I am he says Jesus. I am he.