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Saturday 11 April, 2020

## REFLECTION

**Tears blur our vision!** *Duh! We know that Kalyan! Don't you have anything more meaningful to say?*

Easter is rich and full of meaning! I don't think I can add any more meaning to what God has done.

We know we can never love and rejoice as God does, nor can we mourn, or feel pain and sorrow as He does, but the three days, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday are times when human emotions and God's emotions mingle.

I have often considered "Holy Saturday" as the day of tears, a day when we can rightly imagine the first disciples reliving the precious last hours and moments of Jesus' crucifixion and death wondering, *What just happened?* and, *What will become of us? What does the future hold for us?*

The three synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke describe the scene at the crucifixion where Jesus' friends including women who had come from Galilee, *stood at a distance.*<sup>1</sup> The mood was sombre and the air was filled with sorrow and the smell of tears would have permeated the air. Luke says, *when the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw that Jesus was dead, they went home in deep sorrow.*

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<sup>1</sup> Matt 27:55; Mark 15:40-41; Luke 23:48-49

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John provides a detail of personal, human interest. Mary stood at a distance with the others<sup>2</sup>, and at some time may have wanted to get closer to her Son. Her wish was granted. John, accompanied by her sister Mary (wife of Clopas) and Mary Magdalene, were *Standing near the cross..*<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, none of the Gospel writers took liberty to describe the emotional state of family, friends and disciples, who watched every excruciating detail of Jesus crucifixion (makes you wonder if “British Reserve” and the “stiff upper lip” existed well before Britain!). Reading these accounts year after year, it strikes me that the Gospel writers felt, as I do, emotions are very personal and should not be made public.

Many of us have experienced the emotions of losing a loved one. It is humanly not possible for us to leave our tears and sorrow at the grave side and walk away with happy memories. Tears will continue to flow and blur our vision. We cannot see clearly, our emotions are in overdrive, we cannot multi-task; our lives feel rudder-less and direction-less.

The day after Jesus’ crucifixion was such a day. The raw emotions of the previous day would have continued to pour out, and the emotionally strong would have comforted the emotionally weak.

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<sup>2</sup> Mark 15:40, also implied by Matthew and Luke

<sup>3</sup> John 19:25

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Writing his gospel account about 60 years after the event, John remembers clearly, one very tender moment, most likely because he was a part of it. He records this conversation:

*When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside me, His close friend, He said to her, “He is your son.” And to me He said, “She is your mother!”<sup>4</sup>*

Think of the emotions building to that moment. Mary might well have been sobbing until that point, but would have, at that very moment, completely broken down, uncontrolled tears pouring down her face, as she watched her Son die and hear Him utter those words, each word spoken through physical pain and agony, that His final concern was for her well being in the future, and entrusted her to His best friend!

When we say, the ultimate expression of love is the cross, where the Son of God gave His life for me, we miss an equally personal and powerful expression of love spoken by a Son to His mother.

I have often been unable to sing the first stanza of the hymn written by Charles Wesley in 1738 and put to music by Thomas Campbell in 1825. I imagine Mary in later years, singing the last two lines, as her precious memory of the words spoken by her Son with His dying breath!

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<sup>4</sup> John 19:25-27 (The Living Bible)

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And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour's blood  
Died He for me, who caused His pain  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be?  
That Thou, my God, should'st die for me?  
Amazing love! How can it be?  
That Thou, my **Lord**, should'st **care** for me?

**Tears do blur our vision!** Let the tears flow, and let it blur your vision of yesterday and today, until tomorrow morning, when we commemorate the defeat of death, and each and everyone of us walks out of a dark burial cave, into the bright light of eternity with God, leaving behind our burial cloth neatly folded, *rejoicing greatly in the LORD! My soul will exult in my God, for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness. As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, as a bride adorns herself with her jewels, so will I be clothed with my Lord's Garment of Salvation.*<sup>5</sup>

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*He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain, for the old things have disappeared. (Revelation 21:4)*

**AMEN.**

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<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 61:10