

REV. TODD HOEFFS

Good Friday COVID 19 message for You Tube

Jesus remember me

April 2020

Luke 23

39 One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding[i] him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah?[j] Save yourself and us!" **40** But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? **41** And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." **42** Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into[k] your kingdom." **43** He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

We want to be remembered.

We want to feel as if we've been valued or made a good long lasting impression on another person.....that we are even worth remembering. Especially in these times of isolation.

Forcing us to get used to ourselves & our loved ones in a different, hopefully, more kind way.

I've ministered to many seniors isolated in nursing homes & private homes over my 20 years in parish ministry.

A few stand out in my mind who'd always conclude our visits with:

"please don't forget about me."

How heart breaking to hear that.

Now even more so in our COVID 19 health crisis.

I reassured them that I wouldn't forget them as they were

"unforgettable"....but better still...God would never ever forget about them!

God reassures us throughout the entire scriptures that he remains with us until the end of time.

The thief on the cross wants to be remembered. And asks this of Jesus!

I was always shocked that he actually had the nerve to ask something of Jesus.

I mean....aside from him being the messiah, well...he's kinda busy.

Think of your parents or boss. You wouldn't dream of bothering them with a favour if they were busy. I knew the best day & time & manner to ask my

grocery store manager years ago when I needed days off. A nicely written hand note with please & thank you...ask as if you expected not to get it. Always worked.

Gods not that way.

Even though this ask surprised me at the crucifixion it also made me so happy.

We can ask anything of Jesus any time any place any way.

The Gospels are filled with passages from Jesus inviting us to pray, call out to him, trust him, take his word...

So it's not so crazy that a thief hanging on a cross next to our dying Lord would ask a favour. He's got nothing to lose , nowhere to go, he's at the bottom. Dying a convicted felon,

Jesus, remember me.

Today.

You are with me in paradise.

Wow! Amazing grace

Its huge to know & believe that his inheritance of paradise wasn't transactional. That it's a reward for putting ye other thief in his place.

No.

Biblical Scholars often make a huge deal over what he says to Jesus.

Don't get me wrong, I love what he says.

He had courage. He had faith.

How, when, from whom? We don't know. Doesn't matter.

Maybe seeing these events play out in front of you from your position on nailed wood made an impact.

There's no atheists on war fronts right?

Imagine you seeing Jesus come up the hill to Calvary defeated half carrying the cross, then needing help from a perfect stranger in the crowd.

The bloodied sliced back, the thorny crown pushed down onto his head....the slow walk up...

The rough handling by soldiers.

Forcing down Jesus arms onto the wood beam. His sliced back peppered with dirt sweat & splinters from the beam. Then the pounding. Nails in flesh & muscle onto wood.

And then this Jesus forgives his killers & the entire world!

I'd like to think that would impress us too!?

The thieves saw this as they too got fixed to their own crosses.

We can look but not see

We can see but not observe
We can observe but our mind refuse to comprehend
One thief saw nothing, one saw everything
One tried to forget & get it over with,
One knows what he did wrong & what Jesus can do to help him.
Remember him.
We don't always see
Observing is an important skill. To see without judgement. To see without
our preconceived notions we think we know but really don't...
We like to forget at same time be remembered. Forget what's gotten us in
trouble but remember only our good.. which comes from Gods grace
anyways.
He makes all things new
Remember
If something is important it will be remembered
Meaning —That guy knew & believed Jesus is innocent. Undeserving of
this.
Humanity is guilty.
They get what's coming to them.
Stealing earns him the death penalty
Jesus self-sacrifice Giving removes the real death penalty
Giving himself
His perfect, innocent life, a body which has absorbed every single big &
little sin from Adam & Eve all the way to the very last person who'll ever be
born...,,all on him
On his shoulders
While hanging on nails
Suffering
Bleeding
Suffocating pain
And in this hour as all this is going on, as earth will feel the death of its
God, Jesus promises Paradise
With him
Today
It's already his
No transaction
No award for sticking up for Jesus
God doesn't work that way

It's all about you.
God is all about you.
Remembers you.
He remembers the day of your baptism
He remembers your faith even if you don't
He looks at you through the image of His Sons Cross....
Remembering His death & remembering His blood covers over you &
remembers your sin no more.
His remembering & forgiving Spirit helps you remember.
Remember how His grace & mercy is ours to emulate
How his mercy both shelters us & soothes us
That even as we can't come together to bask in the bittersweet sacrifice of
our Lord on this day,
That we can here in the church pews,
We are still loved
We are still valued
We still & always remembered
We in faith remember
We in holy friendship remember.
Until we are brought into Jesus Paradise,
Which is ours. Already remembered.
Today.
Amen