

Coffee to Go | Holy Saturday

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SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. So the question we ask is, "Where are we this week?" and we are at the end of Holy Week. It is called Holy Saturday. And it's the day on which we hold vigil or intentional time of waiting in quiet, that comes between the death of Jesus on Good Friday, and the resurrection on Easter Sunday. So Holy Saturday is a time to be reflective, and to kind of still yourself or quiet yourself from the surrounding noise and busyness of your life. And in doing so you spend time considering the way and the cost of what it really means to follow Jesus. So following the death of Jesus on Holy Saturday, we are waiting and watching those who are taking the body of Jesus down from the cross and carrying him to a burial place where they begin preparations. So Blake...

Blake Smith 01:49

All right. Well, our passage today we pick up in the Gospel According to John, where we left off yesterday on Good Friday. And this is the 19th chapter. And it is the 38th through the 42nd verse.

After these things, Joseph of Aramathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one, because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission. So he came and removed the body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about 100 pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices and linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified. And in the garden, there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. So why does this matter? I think it's important for us in this passage, to pick up who the actors are, because it says something to us about the anti-semitism that typically is taken out of this story. It helps us kind of face a very necessary commentary as a matter of fact about anti-semitism, because we have so much violence and hatred, about race issues in our nation, in our world, across boundaries, and borders. And so it's just something I think that as we look forward to the resurrection, and all that we are called to do as disciples of Jesus, it's important for us to pause a minute and think about this because Jews, and I say Jews, as a category of people did not kill Jesus. It was angry and vengeful religious leaders, who were in fact Jewish, and they were threatened by Jesus and plotted his arrest. But there are others who played roles in that who are also Jewish. Caiaphas, who was the high priest, he allowed him to be turned over to Pilate, and required or requested that he

be crucified. He was among the Jewish leaders that were calling for Jesus to be crucified, who passed up the opportunity to have him released when Pilate offered. So, the crowd that was gathered, most likely most of them were Jews, and they cried out for his blood. Absolutely, there were Jewish people involved in this story who called for Jesus's death. However, however, we need to remember that the disciples were also Jews. The crowds who followed Jesus day in and day out, were Jews. They welcomed, and begged for healings. They were part of the everyday ministry of Jesus, and they were Jews. The followers who funded the mission and message of Jesus, many of whom, by the way, were women were Jews. Jesus' mother was a Jew. Jesus himself was a Jew. And so, here in this passage, we have Joseph of Aramathea, and Nicodemus, who were prominent religious folks in the Jewish community, and they are there to ask for Jesus's body. They care for it, they give it a burial place. And so we have to be careful, we have to be careful. And this is such good evidence of that. Not to default to an "all Jews" are bad, all Jews are villains, all Jews killed Jesus, because that just simply wasn't the case.

Karin Peter 05:59

That's a good lesson in this particular scripture. I mean, it narrates what happened, obviously, after Jesus died, but the whole idea of who, as you said, is acting in this story, helps us kind of reframe what has become traditionally racial hatred in many Christian communities towards Jews and in Community of Christ, we simply don't think that way. We are ecumenical and interfaith members, value people of faith, regardless of tradition.

Blake Smith 06:35

Absolutely. So it then leads to some questions that we might ask ourselves on this Holy Saturday, and even into this week as we continue beyond Easter. In what ways do I exhibit racial bias? In what ways do I exhibit racial bias? And if your reaction immediately is, "I don't," pause and think again. Because it might be really, really subtle. But it's a question we need to ask ourselves. Also, we might ask, when have I allowed racial identity to dictate how I treated someone?

Karin Peter 07:17

Ewww! That's a very complex question.

Blake Smith 07:20

Yes. And one we would probably prefer to avoid, but very important in the middle of this time. Finally, I would ask how are racial hatred and violence affecting my community? And how do I act with an ethical integrity in the face of that hatred and violence?

Karin Peter 07:44

You know, we heard that in the closing blessing from Good Friday, you know, help us to stand up, even if we're the only person standing against a crowd that is calling for something that is unjust. Yeah. This is a interesting time Holy Saturday to reflect on something that's really critical in our communities. So today, on Holy Saturday, make it make a commitment that somehow this week, you will take an opportunity to learn about the ethnic makeup of your community, and even maybe learn about something you didn't know of another culture or another race or religion, to better inform yourself. Watch a movie that's subtitled and learn about the culture as you watch or try a new food or read a

book about another culture or another world religion. And you can make this a family experience that you can then talk about around the table, or even in the car, as you're shuttling kids to and fro their activities.

Blake Smith 08:59

Our blessing today comes from "For Us to Be Radicalized," and it's written by Terry Stokes.

Oh, Holy Spirit, the fire shut up in our bones, awaken us. Let the cries of our siblings blood rise from the earth in a whirlwind, catching us up in divine fury, reveal to us and divest us from the deeply evil narratives and systems which underpin our collective life. Let thy word filter the ideas, images, and experiences through which we are destabilized, re-educated and re-formed, as those ready to be led in a radical Exodus by our Lord Jesus Christ, who reigns with Thee, our Creator, one God in power made perfect by love. Amen. [Amen.] Amen.

So thanks for being with us today on this Holy Saturday. We invite you to join us again tomorrow for Easter Sunday coffee to go and every week as we continue on this journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.