

# Forty Days

## **WHERE THE LIGHT ENDS**

### *Good Friday Video*

Clouds collide  
To come together  
Turning soft white into a dingy black  
To walk up the hill to the place of the skull  
Following soldiers  
And mockers  
And someone who carried a cross  
    For one unable to carry his own

He was left to our own devices  
To do with him as we wished  
    To tear him apart  
    Clothes of a king  
    Scraps of humanity scattered to the wind  
    Bits of flesh off the back  
    On this dark and dirty day  
        Painted in bruised purple  
Surely God had forsaken him  
    Left him here  
    Cast out of the womb  
        From the warm garden of birth  
        Taken from the mother's breast  
        And given to this humanity  
He no longer belonged to us, and we are no longer his  
    To a mother he said, "this is your son"  
    And to a son, "this is your mother"  
    At this point, each had went their own way

In this place I stood up  
    In the shadow of these figures  
        Pressed against the sky  
            Paper men cut out by scissors  
    I saw myself as them  
    In all the moments of rejection

As stones thrown out from the quarry  
Polished in the pain and suffering  
Where my own cross was too heavy to carry  
And the weight of my regret and loss pressed heavy on my chest  
The anxiety of wanting to make something more of myself  
Was almost too much to bear  
    All my work was of waste  
    All my dreams nailed up on a tree

But it was too much for this crucified king  
    Who was made a victim for all our crimes  
        A voice for a suffering  
        We emptied our guilt upon him  
        We made him a burden for our shame  
    Because we could not bare to take the blame  
Because we rejected God's gift of goodness

Looking up, Jesus cried out to God  
    To hear only deafening silence  
    Bashed and bloodied  
        But bones not broken  
    He spoke his final words  
    "It is finished,"  
    completed  
    It was all he could do for us  
    To pour out himself for people who made a mockery of his life  
        He hung his head

...

Entering into the tomb  
    Where the light ends and the nothingness begins  
        No longer in the land of the living  
            But another entrance  
            To be sealed shut,  
            East of the Eden

## Dissolving life

### *Questions for Reflection*

1. What might it mean that Jesus was “one unable to carry his own [cross]”? What does this say about who he was?
2. How is tearing Jesus apart actually tearing humanity apart as in the verse, “Scraps of humanity scattered to the wind”?
3. “Each had went their own way” is a reference to the disciples (mainly male disciples) leaving Jesus to die at the cross. In what ways have we abandoned God and sought our own way?
4. Experiences of death and suffering often *appear* to be experiences of God’s abandonment. Often the biblical writers would describe the crucifixion in the language of forsakenness. In what way did God “abandon” Jesus? In what way did God not abandon Jesus?
5. Jesus was the rejected stone, “thrown out from the quarry.” How might we identify with this experience of rejection?
6. How might “this crucified king” be “made a victim for all our crimes”? How was Jesus made a scapegoat, someone to blame for the problems of his society?
7. In the last stanza, “east of Eden” is a reference to the Garden and the lost of home. How is death a “lost of home”? Who “drove” Jesus out of the garden?

### *Practices of Lent*

“Good Friday” is not described as “good” because the world put an innocent person to death, nor is it good because God’s beautiful gift of life was violently beaten and crucified. It was “good” because out of the wreckage that was the crucifixion, God was able to bring life. Good Friday was not good because of the death of God. Nietzsche announced that “God is dead” as an accusation of the modern world. Good Friday was good that in this

death, God could show us God's love. This is the humble and solemn celebration of Good Friday.

Sometimes Christians are too quick to say something to the effect "God can make something good out of evil." This is true, but it should not be a justification of the evil that many people do in this world. The cross was not to condone evil and injustice; it was to condemn them. The year 2015 marks the seventieth year after the victims of the Holocaust were free from the death camps at Auschwitz. This violent part of our human history is not something that we celebrate but memorialize. It is a reminder never to be a part of this kind of violence, no matter how often history seems to repeat itself. In the same way we are reminded not to kill those who God has sent to us. God's only Son was the victim of the violence of humanity, but God's love was triumphant even in our hatred.

In what ways have we rejected God's love? In what ways have we abandoned the one who always pursued us, who never left us? The world killed its Savior because it feared what this love might do. Great love has a way of disrupting the status quo, throwing off the balance of power, persuading the hearts and minds of people. Great love is always a threat to those frightened and insecure. It is a threat because of the fear that it might change the world, or more importantly, it might change them. How might we embrace this beautiful gift that is making its way into our lives?

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