

Suffering. God. Part 1—Still

Text: Luke 23:44-56

Warming Up

Questions:

1. *What is your favorite hymn?*
2. *What do you hope would be true of you in a difficult situation?*

Digging In

Read **Luke 23:44-49**.

In the account of Jesus' death, we are given some important details. The sun stopped shining. Darkness came over the whole land. The curtain in the temple, that covered the Holy of Holies, where God was said to dwell in a special way, was torn in two. Scripture tells us both what happened then, and what happens now. The details are meant to both paint a picture of what happened then, and what happens in and around us now.

Questions:

1. *Tell about a time when it felt like the sun stopped shining, like you had been torn in two.*
2. *Why do you think it matters that Jesus, as God incarnate, suffered?*
3. *Why do you think it matters that Jesus, as God incarnate, suffered unjustly (in the words of the Roman centurion)?*

Read **Luke 23:50-54**.

I want to invite us to think about *why* Jesus waited to be resurrected. We are told that Jesus was crucified on Preparation Day, the day before Sabbath. We are later told that Jesus is resurrected on Sunday, the first day of their work week, the day *after* Sabbath. On the Sabbath, Jesus is quiet in the tomb.

Questions:

1. *Why do you think Jesus didn't resurrect, conquer death, immediately?*
2. *What might be significant about Jesus remaining in the tomb on the Sabbath?*

Read **Luke 23:55-56**.

Questions:

1. *What must have that Sabbath day been like for Jesus' disciples when he was quiet in the tomb?*
2. *What must have been extra difficult about resting "on the Sabbath in obedience" for these women?*

Sending Out

In the Good News story of salvation, we often talk about the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus: Good Friday and Easter Sunday. But sometimes Easter Saturday gets skipped over. But it is a vital part of the story, too. In the drama of salvation, there is sacrifice and raising to life *and also stillness and waiting*. Jesus waits with us in our suffering. This part cannot be skipped over or short circuited. The first Christians practiced this stillness with each other as the women did on that Sabbath day when Jesus was in the tomb.

Read **Romans 12:15**.

Questions:

1. *When someone close to you is suffering, how do you tend to react?*
2. *When you are suffering, how do you want those around you to act?*
3. *Has anyone ever been unhelpful to you by trying to console you with good intentioned words?*
4. *Why do you think it is important to quietly wait with someone in their grief or suffering?*
5. *Why might it be important to be patient with yourself when you are grieving or suffering?*

Closing

Take a moment in silence to come before God and ask the question, *“What word or phrase or idea or moment does God want me to remember from this morning and carry with me this week?”*

Close with prayer.