

Dear All,

The Study Service topic for Sunday at 7pm is A THEOLOGY FOR LENT? Lent, when we remember the road to the cross and Jesus' death on it, is one of the most important periods of the Christian year. Is there a theology for Lent?

One of the most significant features of the gospel accounts is their highlighting the disciples' forsaking of Jesus and his dying alone. Jesus himself knew from the Old Testament that it had to be that way, one man, the suffering servant of Isaiah, dying for the piled up, collective sin not just of Israel but of the whole world.

In this context, the passover meal is even more significant: for it was Jesus, before his death, binding the disciples to himself in an unbreakable covenant. It meant that he was including them in his death and that they died with him.

In retrospect we can see it had to be so, for the ultimate meaning of the cross, as Paul discovered (see Phil. 3), is that in our self-righteousness we must die with Christ on the cross. But it is only when the risen Christ comes to us *after the cross* that we can understand, as Paul did, that we have already been put to death and raised with Christ in order to receive & share in his risen life & righteousness.

If so, would it not make sense for Lenten reflection to follow the disciples and realise, in the light of the resurrection, that just as the disciples could not accompany Christ to the cross, so we should not attempt to either: but let him die for us in order to be brought to life with him in the joy of the resurrection. The heart of Lenten reflection would then be reading the passion story in a joyful *metanoia* (complete change of thinking) focused on the grace of God in Christ.

Preparatory / follow up reading:

Torrance, *Atonement*, pages 415-19 (esp. 416)

Readings:

Mark 14.17-31

Romans 6.1-11

Philippians 3.1-14

7-8.30 pm by Zoom meet - details on request (see Greyfriars Kirk website for more information & some edited transcripts)

Best wishes - Bob