
Freedom and Lament

Lent 2



Man on roadside Purba Medinipur, Photo by Alison Brown

READING - LUKE 13: 31-35

At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."

He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

REFLECT

Life is not as it should be. We are perplexed by all that is wrong in the world. This can make us anxious and sad. Sadness is an entirely appropriate response. In fact many of us, if we let ourselves can be overwhelmed by a sense of grief with what we see is going wrong in the world – wars, injustice, climate change and dislocation from old ways of life. Lament is an important part of spiritual life – it is an honest, albeit painful, response to a broken world. We see it in many of the Psalms which don't shy away from stating how awful things are and the terrible loss which is felt.

Jesus laments too over his beloved Jerusalem and all that it symbolises as the centre of God's love for his people Israel. Jesus expresses here the paradox that we live with as Christians. On the one hand God is working his purposes out, the healing and restoration go on but so too does the reality of rejection and loss. Jesus' response to the rejection he experienced was not to withdraw his love for Jerusalem or to seek revenge but to lament. His lament is achingly tender. It speaks of his longing for his people to allow him to bring them to himself as would a mother hen. He yearns to give them comfort and protection but they would not. The rejection of his love is deeply felt and causes his lament.

There is no easy resolution in this passage. Instead, it stays with the sadness and implies no quick fixes to the problems of the world. It is in this setting that CRS amongst many other organisations and individuals work to bring freedom to the most disadvantaged and overlooked. Lament can cause us to become stuck but it can also provide the impetus for us to become innovators, spurring us onto work for a better world. CRS is a good example of an organisation that has not become stultified or overwhelmed by the sense of lament. Instead, it has sought out ways to work creatively in the midst of seemingly impossible situations. The sadness the CRS staff feel over the living conditions of the poorest in Kolkata is evidence of their love being deepened. Lament gives fuel to their endeavours.

'There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried'

Oscar Romero

RESPOND

In the face of all that is wrong in our world, words can seem inadequate. So, sit in silence for a while and allow yourself to bring to God those things that trouble you the most.

PRAYER

Lord of life, we pray for fullness of life.

For ourselves.

For others.

For our world.

We resolve to live life in all its fullness.

We seek to enable others to live life in all its fullness too. Amen.

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