

Holy Week Sermon

Revd Canon Charles Jenkin – 2nd April 2021 – Good Friday

Isaiah 52.13-53.12; Psalm 22.1-11; Hebrews 10.15-25; John 18.1-19.42

There are many medical success stories of the pandemic. As well as the horrors. Chief among these continues to be dedication and sacrifices of medical practitioners and scientists. But two drug stories stand out. The first is of course the remarkable success of vaccines against Covid-19, including a whole new class of mRNA vaccines, developed at breakneck speed by normal standards.

Less well known is the story of how Dexamethadone, a long established drug with anti-inflammatory and immune-suppressant effects, came to be conclusively identified as highly effective against severe Covid. It has saved and continues to save, many lives. It is particularly an NHS success story, and it is interesting to read of the story of how it came to be known as the right medicine save countless lives from Covid19.

At a deeper level, the Cross is the right medicine for human sin.

One of the reasons that faith in God is rejected by many intelligent people today, is that they are put off by the idea that somehow God creates the universe it is, and humankind as we are, and then condemns us for how he has created it all, unless we give him our absolute allegiance. People think that this is just, well, not very nice.

Traditionally of course, religions have taught that originally God made everything perfect, but that somehow humans have spoiled everything. Bad, bad humans! That kind of worked as a satisfactory idea. Until we discovered, firstly, that the universe was like it is long before humans arrived on this particular little planet. And secondly, until we discovered that, in the universe that God has created, its nature is that if something can happen, it will. At this point, the idea of God who stands back and judges everyone, a God of guilt and judgement, is just no longer satisfactory.

The whole point of the Cross, however, is that through it, on it, God is saying, “Actually, I am not like that. At all. Never have been. You yourselves may think that I am like that, because it is you that rush to judge one another. You crucify yourselves with guilt. You may think that I am like that, because you find real forgiveness so very difficult. You scapegoat each other. You comfort yourselves with riches and privileges and power over others. But I, your God, do none of these things. I am not like you. I am not just a projection of your ego.

“Rather, I love you, with all my heart, unreservedly. And I have come to rescue you from your sin, and give you power to become my children, so that you can grow to reflect my nature, not just yours. I have come to share your suffering, to redeem your nature, to share my love. And actually, I created you in the hope that one day, I could do this for you.

In fact, I have planted so many good things within your human nature too that, when you let me save you, when you discover what I am really like, all sorts of wonderful things will

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blossom in your lives and in my creation. When you know that I love you so much, that I was willing to die on a cross.” Amen.

CJ. 2.4.21