29th March 2024

End

"Jesus said, 'It is finished.'"
Bible, *John 19:30*

Good Friday – John 18:1 – 19:42

This week is about people in the Holy Week narratives
in whom we might recognise ourselves.

Death isn't easy. I've been with people when a loved one has died and listened to them scream. I've held people, broken with sorrow, and heard, "This can't be happening. I don't believe it," over and over again. In the pain that this day contains, I hold on to whatever hope and meaning I can.

Not to believe

Not to believe that death is real – it is the worst of things;
not to accept the awful truth, the hellish pain it brings;
not to attend the bell that tolls, the mourning-chime that rings –
this is who I am.

Not to absorb the news of death, pretending it's a lie;
never to trust the messenger – "My loved one cannot die."
not to respond to careful words with frown or gentle sigh –
this is where I stand.

Not to betray that I have heard the truth your words reveal;
not to show signs of gratitude for love's attempt to heal;
not to accept the awfulness of what I now must feel –
this is what I know.

Yes, and until the truth takes hold, I'll wait and be aware;
and when the gates of hell burst wide, you'll ever find me there;
whatever storms of grief will rage, your brokenness I'll bear –
this is who I Am.

For when your curses rend the skies, with faithfulness I'll wait;
and when you rail against the truth, I'll not respond with hate;
when I believe in who you are, your pain I'll not negate –
this where I stand.

And when the grieving is too much, I'll hold what you've become;
when tears are ever flowing, then you'll know that we are one;
when awesome death has done its worst, love will not be outdone –
this you need to know.

Adapted from "Not to believe" from
'Welcoming Each Wonder' by Tom Gordon – www.ionabooks.com

A prayer for today

Then end? For now, it seems that way. But then …

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