

The Mother

A LENTEN REFLECTION

Have you ever thought that God got it wrong?

Have you ever had something all worked out ... you would do this, and then God would do that and it would all come together ... only it didn't? You had in your mind how life would look, but it ended up very differently. You were left wondering what on earth God was doing.

I imagine that's how Mary felt as she quietly observed from a distance, the execution of her son.

She'd come with other women. Among them, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and John, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. They followed Jesus the 100km from Galilee. Why? To care for his needs.

They must have been exhausted.

They must have been traumatised by what they'd seen.

They must have been fearful of being arrested themselves because of their association with Jesus.

Yet they stayed to the end to care for Jesus' needs.

I LOVE the example of these women.

I notice that at this point, most of the men had disappeared! But we see that these devoted women, despite what they must have been feeling, stayed until the end.

I hope I could be a little like them,

just quietly caring,
just in the background,
tending to people's needs,
not quitting when the circumstances seem bleak,
being loyal to the end.

What flooded Mary's mind as she took in the ghastly scene of the crucifixion?

Perhaps her mind flashed back to meals that they'd shared,
to Jesus playing with his brothers and sisters in the street,
to His grazed knees and splintered fingers,
to how cute He sounded when He was learning to talk.

Perhaps she remembered some really strange words. They'd been said to her when Jesus was just eight days old. She and Joseph had taken Jesus to the temple, and an old man named Simeon had said something most odd. It was about a sword that would **pierce her own soul (Luke 2:35)**. Those haunting words often troubled her and now she wondered if this was what he meant. Was this unbearable pain in her heart what Simeon had predicted?

In those moments did she remember the night of Jesus' birth? His birth was ordinary. He entered the world like anyone else, undignified and seemingly helpless,
the same way he left it.

Did she remember the tears that rolled down her cheeks when her little boy was first placed in her arms?
Tears of relief from a first time mum.
Tears of joy at the miracle of life,
but now, they were tears of grief and despair.

How could it all end like this?
How did it go so wrong?

She knew what the angel had told her. Of course there were many who never believed her. Most people thought she was insane or a liar, yet she was certain. Her memory was vivid. That angel told her that the precious baby she was going to have was going to sit on the throne of David.

But now, 33 short years later, his life was over. What had gone wrong? She had a picture in her head of how things should look and **it wasn't this**. This wasn't what was supposed to happen.

How could this be the end?

Mary didn't know what was going to happen a few days later. God would keep his word.

It just wasn't going to be in the way Mary had imagined.

That day things seemed incredibly bleak to Mary, but they wouldn't stay that way.

God wasn't finished yet.

It wasn't the end.

Maybe when we think God got it wrong it's because we presume things are finished,

but they're not.

Carla Lindsey, *the long weekend: reflections on the crucifixion of Christ*, Hamilton: Maruki Books, 2011.

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