

Gospel Reflections for Holy Week (Monday 6 April 2020)

John 12: 1 - 11

In another life, when there is sport, I love to watch Australian cricketer Steve Smith bat. The older he gets, the less conventional his style but the more effective his stroke play and scoring. As an observer it might be reasonable to question his technique and think he has no idea what he's doing but he just keeps scoring runs. It's like he's on another plane from the rest of us mortals. It might look wrong but is, oh so right!



As a Jesus watcher, I am also astonished at how unconventional he was. Consider just a few of the things Jesus says and does (just to name a few);

- born in a stable
- water into wine
- first shall be last
- stills a storm
- be born again
- washes feet
- rides a donkey



Jesus tips conventional thinking, not to mention traditions and the laws of physics, on its head time after time.

In the reading for Monday of Holy Week, we hear that the disciples, particularly Judas, are incredulous at Mary for 'wasting' the expensive perfume she pours on Jesus. Hard to be too critical of this, as the price for the perfume is reckoned to be worth about a year's salary! The logical thinking is the perfume could rather have been sold and the money used to feed and clothe many poor people. Surely Judas has a good point.

And yet Jesus says, *"Let her alone. She's anticipating and honouring the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you. You don't always have me."* (v 7-8)

Jesus' head and heart are in another place completely. He knows what the days ahead hold for him and honours Mary's act of love for exactly what it is.

In these 2020 days of increased uncertainty, I wonder what the conventional thinking is for the months and years ahead of us – fear, unrest, financial collapse? Perhaps increased gratefulness, kindness and compassion for each other, if you want to look at the upside. But perhaps God has another outcome planned altogether that we just cannot see with our human eyes.

Just days after Mary's act of love, Jesus is murdered, buried in a tomb and then... gloriously resurrected. No one saw that coming. One man's brutal death on a cross brings life to a broken world. What seemed wrong in every way was so, so right. Talk about tipping convention on its head!

God's plans for me are often hard to see and I am impatient and quick to grumble, complain and tell God what I think he should do. Thankfully his head and heart are in a different place to mine. He loves me and has done since... well... forever. Let us pray and wait in patience and great hope for what God has in store. As we begin this 2020 Holy Week, once again walk with Jesus and see anew the unfolding of God's long-planned salvation for the people he loves so much.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27

Blessings,

Mark