

The Savior's Solace

Mark 14:32-42

It is tempting and easy to reduce the Gospel to neatly packaged sound bites, but the watching world can't make sense of this because in the end, it isn't real.

LA Times – OP-Ed – Tim Rutten:

“How many times can we really stomach another politician telling us... that their ‘prayers’ are with the victims of that day’s gun-inflicted atrocity? Prayers won’t bring the dead back or make the living safer.”

Now I don't agree – but I do understand formulaic platitudes may sound good, but they don't work in a broken world.

Jesus lived a terribly difficult life as far as we know – Isaiah (‘man of sorrows and familiar with suffering’). In a sense Jesus represents a human life, that in and of itself, is marked with disappointment and suffering. Remember, He embodied all that is broken in a fallen world. – ‘Identification’

But He isn't miserable because His Relationship with His Father wasn't ‘second prize’ – it was everything.

When we look at life formulaically then we are tempted to say that Jesus found solace in His prayer life – and then we build a ‘system’ of how to pray and how to find solace in what we do. But Jesus found solace – in His Father.

Do you know what I think happens?

I think that when all is said and done, the formulae are usually indicators of one of two things:

1. Mistrust (no room for God to disappoint us)
2. Fear & Denial (no room to revisit painful realities in our lives)

What I have found is that for every serious Christ-follower there are very real terrifying and painful moments on the path that we can't avoid or handle, apart from something very real... Relationship.

Who do you flee to? Or are your prayers, exercises in religious expression? Do you pray your heart or do you pray properly?

If my prayers can be measured in terms of correctness that they probably aren't very deep and they probably aren't very real.

If my prayers aren't somewhat messy (not artificially so), then they are probably too sterile for a Father who wants me as I am.

The Gospel teaches that it is not in systems or categories, or recipes – but in Relationship – that God is known and makes Himself known.

Relationship is hard – because it is Real.

Our troubles...

- More Relational than Financial
- More Relational than Sexual
- More Relational than Chemical
- More Relational than Intellectual
- More Relational than Religious

Romans 8:15 – “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”

Galatians 4:6 – “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’”