

Carol's reflection – March 21. 2021

Oh how I would like to have a time-turner.

A time turner that could make some moments last – and others pass quickly.

I would like to extend time when I am rushing – more time to finish an outdoor project before the weather changes. More time to enjoy the sunshine before the darkness arrives. More time to bring all the dishes of a meal together so that everything is hot. More time to linger in conversation with friends. More time, more time, more time...

And, I would like to shorten time too. I would like to shorten the scary moments or the anxious ones. I would like to speed through unpleasantness. I would like to jump to the end of this pandemic. I would like to rush ahead to the time when we can be together again. I would like to rush ahead to the days when I want to turn the time slowly again.

I would like a time turner.

I suspect that I am not alone in that.

In the Gospel story today, Jesus talks about how time has turned. And yet, he does not turn away from the time.

We are back reading in John's Gospel. It's a pivotal point in the story. It is the moment where the time turns from 'the hour has not yet come' to 'the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified'. This is the point at which Jesus will now be with his disciples for long teaching passages and then the story takes us through the trials to the crucifixion and resurrection.

Scholars call the end of the Gospel of John – the Book of Glory as it describes the 'glorification of Jesus and his return to God'. And it is all set up in the context of this passage, and the reference to the grain of wheat.

'unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.'

Seeds bring forth life. Seeds bring forth fruit. And seeds bring forth seeds. But in order to do those things, seeds do not stay as seeds. They are transformed.

As Jesus draws a parallel for life, it is counsel for us to live life generously, rather than tightly grasping what is ours.

For Jesus, when the hour arrives, and it is clear that the path is set to death, he calls us to live fully.

To live life in the way of Jesus is to care for others with abandon. It is to hold the needs of others and the care of our world as paramount. It is, as Jesus will say later in the

Gospel, when he gives the commandment to love one another.

'This is my commandment that you love one another as I love you...'

The closer we come to Easter, the more uncomfortable our faith story becomes. We often want to jump right over the suffering parts of Jesus' life and get right to resurrection.

But Jesus does not invite us to jump ahead in the story. We are not given a time turner to take away pain and suffering any more than he is. We are invited into the story that includes all of these things.

We are given the reassurance of a voice from heaven – 'I have glorified it and will glorify it again', but that is not to say that we will not encounter pain and suffering.

The promise of our faith is that God is with us in all things – it is not that we are insulated or protected from all things.

We will know joy. We will know delight. We will know pain. We will all meet death. And in all things God will be with us.

One of our favourite lines from a hymn was written almost 300 years ago. It's in the hymn Love Divine, and it says:

Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,

This glory is to know that we are a part of God.

And to be changed from glory into glory is to say that we are already a part of God and we will be changed into a part of God. It is a holy mystery.

We are like a seed that will bear much fruit, we will be changed and yet our essence will be the same. God that is within us, will continue to be with us.

There is no need for a time turner to rush us through the difficult days for we are with God. There is no need for a time turner to extend the time in God's love for nothing will ever take that from us.

*Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder love and praise.*

Thanks be to God.
Amen