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**Lincoln Methodist Circuit**

**Holy Week Meditations - Monday 6th April 2020**

**led by Revd David Lawton**

**StF 274 Once again** (Mat Redman)

**Introduction**

Welcome to this short act of worship for Holy Week, led by members from the Lincoln Methodist Circuit. It’s lovely to be able to share together, even in these times, and in this way. So, feel very welcome, to this time.

We began our worship today by listening to, and joining in a hymn by Matt Redman called: ‘Once Again’. It’s a lovely hymn which speaks about Christ’s sacrifice for us. I hope it helped to set the tone for this time together.

As we move on, I want to share a reading with you from Mark’s gospel; then I want to share a short meditation; and then a closing prayer. So the reading is from Mark’s gospel, Chapter 11, verses 15-19.

**Reading: Mark 11:15-19**

Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He was teaching and saying, ‘Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations”? But you have made it a den of robbers.’ And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

HE WAS ANGRY

**Meditation:** He was angry, more angry than I’ve ever seen him, more angry than I dreamt he could be. It was so unlike him, that’s what surprised me, so different from everything we’d come to expect.

The model of gentleness he’d been up till then, always willing to see the best, ready to make allowances where others rushed in to condemn. Goodness knows, there’d been provocation enough, the way the Pharisees goaded him, the scribes heckled,

the Sadducees found fault, but despite everything they threw at him - the insults,

the lies, the accusations – he never let it get to him, somehow keeping his cool when all around him were losing theirs. But not this time.

I could sense it the moment he set foot in the temple – not just anger, but outrage, seething within him before finally boiling over in an explosion of fury. We were stunned by the way he acted, not quite sure what to do with ourselves. I mean, words are one thing, but to create a scene like that – it just wasn’t done.

But here was a face of Jesus we hadn’t seen before, disturbing yet challenging.

He saw God’s house turned into a market-place, a centre of extortion, injustice and corruption, and suddenly the frustration he’d bottled up for so long came pouring out – his sorrow and disappointment at a world hell-bent on destroying itself, when salvation was so nearly in its grasp.

It sealed his fate, that day, the writing on the wall after such a blatant act of defiance,

and the funny thing is I think he knew it, almost, you might say, timed it to happen that way. Did he want to die? I’m not sure of that for he loved life as much as any of us. But what he saw there in the temple seemed to convince him there was no other way, no other course open to him than to tackle evil head on, however awful the consequences, however great the price. No wonder he was angry.

**Prayer**

Lord, we are not good at showing anger;

at least, not as it is meant to be shown.

We are ready enough to show our temper,

easily riled by the most innocuous of things

and capable, at our worst, of destructive fits of rage,

but such anger is rarely justified,

almost always serving merely to give vent to our own feelings

at the cost of someone else’s.

Your anger is so very different,

for it is not about your hurt but ours.

You see injustice and exploitation,

and your blood boils for the oppressed.

You see the peddling of drugs and the sale of pornography,

and your heart burns within you at the innocent led astray.

You see hatred, violence, cruelty,

and your spirit seethes for those caught up in its wake.

Whatever destroys hope, denies love or despoils life

arouses wrath within you. Teach us to share that anger and to channel it in your service, committing ourselves to do all in our power to fight against evil and to strive for your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

*Nick Fawcett, No Ordinary Man Book 2, 2000*

Our closing hymn today will be again from Singing the Faith, number 285 ‘Were you there when they crucified my Lord. Just before we sing that I’m going to give you the closing blessing now, so you can hear the hymn – and this short act of worship will close. And so our blessing before the hymn:

**Closing Blessing**

Our worship has not ended – it has only just begun- for God is with us every moment of every day!

Go then, and offer the worship he desires –

to do justice,

to love kindness,

and to walk humbly with him,

every step of the way.

**Amen**

**StF 285 – Were you there when they crucified my Lord?** (American African Traditional Song)