



April 10, 2022 – The Sunday of Passion: Palm Sunday

God that Jesus Reveals

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Really, what more is there left to say? We paraded in with our palms waving, happily singing songs of praise to Jesus, like our counterparts nearly 2000 years ago. And then before we knew it, we found ourselves in the midst of what can only be described as a mob-inspired execution, carried out by the Roman authorities.

Rather than casting judgment on those who made up the mob, instead we are invited to contemplate how we in our lives betray the Jesus we profess to follow. More than that, we are invited to see the kind of God we serve in Jesus. Remember, one of things that Christians trust about Jesus is that he is the face of God, who walked among us, showing us who God is, and how we are to live.

It is instructive to remember and reflect on a portion of the narrative we just heard from the Gospel of Luke. We heard that, as Jesus died, the “sun’s light failed, and the curtain was torn.”

The curtain in the Temple in Jerusalem hid the space where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, the sacred seat of the 10 Commandments, the very throne of God, the most holy place in all of Judaism. Only the high priest was permitted to enter the space, and only once per year. When the curtain is torn, we are given a vision into the very heart of God. The torn curtain represents a breakthrough—holy hiddenness giving way to brilliant clarity about the character of God. (Troeger, [Sermon Sparks](#), 105)

Fr. Gregory Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, the largest and most successful gang rehabilitation program on earth, writes about our God in his book [The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness](#). He writes that “nothing is more consequential in our lives than the notion of God we hold. Not God. The *notion* of God. ... Our idea of God will always call the shots. What matters in the end, is what kind of God we believe in.” ([Whole Language](#), 1)

Boyle calls God “The Tender One.” He writes that God never knows what we’re talking about, when we judge our own worthiness, or let ourselves get fixated on God’s deep ‘disappointment’...if our God makes us feel unworthy and in debt, wrong God. If God frightens us, wrong God. If God is endlessly disappointed in us, wrong God.” ([Whole Language](#), 4) The God that Jesus reveals is endlessly compassionate, inclusive, always drawing the circle wider, tender.

I wonder how many of dwell in the notion of an angry, disappointed God. Maybe what is being crucified is our notion of a punitive, punishing God. Because if Jesus is the face of God, that sure doesn’t work. The God that Jesus reveals loves us more than we can imagine, adores us, delights in us, more than we can imagine. I wonder what kind of world we would make, if we trusted in that God.

Amen.