



Matthew 21: 1-11
Philippians 2: 5-11

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“So Much Hope”

A Danish Pastor and playwright named Kaj Munk drew the attention of the Gestapo during World War II. He was outspoken in his opposition to the persecution of the Jews in Denmark. His unwillingness to go along with what he saw as incompatible with the teachings of Jesus and basic human decency led to his arrest.

He was executed by the Gestapo in January of 1944.

Found next to him was his bible and in his bible, was this set of questions and convictions. Munk was living in prison because he - unlike so many of his neighbors who pretended that what the Nazis were doing didn't concern him - Munk could not silently allow people to be persecuted because of their faith and ethnicity. In the paper found after his death Munk asked:

“What is, therefore, our task today? Shall I answer ‘Faith, hope and love?’ That sounds beautiful.

But I would say courage. But no, even that is not challenging enough to be the whole truth.

Our task today is recklessness. For what we Christians lack is not psychology or literature... we lack a holy rage - the recklessness which comes from the knowledge of God and humanity.

The ability to rage when justice lies prostrate on the streets, and when the lie rages across the face of the earth ... a holy anger about the things that are wrong in the world. To rage against the ravaging of God's earth, and the destruction of God's world.

To rage when little children must die of hunger, when the tables of the rich are sagging with food. To rage at the senseless killing of so many, and against the madness of militaries. To rage against complacency. To restlessly seek that recklessness that will challenge and seek to change human history until it conforms to the norms of the kingdom of God.

And remember: the signs of the Christian Church have been the Lion, the Lamb, the Dove, and the Fish...

but never the chameleon.” (As found in *Irresistible Revolution*, Shane Claiborn, pg. 294)

Our task is recklessness.

Jesus of Nazareth was a Jewish carpenter.

He was born in the poverty and stark want of a cow stall. He was raised in a home where the teachings of faith were more than mere words; they were ethical framework for living.

Jesus was baptized in the communal swirl of the Jordon River and he spent three years teaching and healing and praying and teaching and saying things like:

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Whatsoever you do unto the least of these you do unto me.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Let your light shine!

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites! For you have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done.

Reckless! Jesus taught and lived in ways that sparked hope and imaged the kingdom of God made real on Earth and Jesus' teachings shook the civic elite because the hopeful might believe they were not created to live under the boot of Rome.

And Jesus' teachings shook the religious elite because he was calling them to actually give their heart to the scriptures they mouthed. Jesus called the religious elite to live the love for God and neighbor and to help those in their care live their love for God and neighbor and he challenged their authority.

And this reckless kind of belief that the teachings sprung from the heart of God were meant to be lived?

That kind of recklessness got Jesus executed.

Lest we miss the integrated way that Jesus lived his faith, he rode into the city that epitomized civic and religious power: Jerusalem. He rode into the city on the back of a borrowed donkey. His conveyance was a sign-act.

Jesus was reckless enough to refuse to embrace the posture and pomp of the powerful.

Jesus was reckless enough to refuse to be silent when the religious and civic elite lived in comfort at the expense of the poor.

Jesus was reckless enough to believe that the heart of God and the teachings of God are antidote to the broken hearts and systems of the world.

Jesus was reckless.

Today marks the entry into Holy Week.

Jesus knew well what the stakes were. He sought to open hearts and souls to the intimate and powerful presence of a God who loves us enough to help us heal from hatred and violence. He

taught his disciples to kneel at the feet of their friends. He taught us to believe in God's power more than the power of hatred and fear.

Those wildly reckless things Jesus taught and we so want to live them, don't we?

On this Sunday, in the midst of news of bombs and nerve gas and starvation and political intractability, we know the way of rage, do we not?

What I ask of us all this Holy Week is this:

Be present to your rage and your fear and your grief and your questions and to all that is.

And, be present to the ways that Jesus walks this world of ours yet and is crucified yet.

Allow your heart to feel the rage of the not-yet of God's kingdom being lived here on earth.

And, hold fast, in the midst of your honest rage, to the words of Mother Teresa, lest the rage threaten to drown God-sparked hope:

"We can do no great things, only small things with great love. It is not how much you do but how much love you put into doing it."

We know how Jesus did it.

Recklessly.

Let us be his people in this time.

Reckless in love.

Amen