

# Reflection on John 14:15-31

Dear friends,

This week I have been thinking about lamenting in worship, particularly about how do we lament and pray. How do we bring before God our grief, our pain, and our sorrows, and how do we see and express hope amid these feelings? It was with this kind of thinking that I approached the passage.

John 14 is one of the last conversations Jesus has with his disciples before his arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection. In the passages before we had Mary anointing Jesus in Bethany. We have had the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and Jesus has washed his disciple's feet. These are all passages that we will have read or heard sermons on in the weeks leading up to Easter and as we read the passages and heard the sermons, we knew the end destination. So did Jesus. In the passage Jesus is talking about returning to his father, the language used points not just to his death but his resurrection and ascension. I wonder how he felt during this conversation knowing what was coming. When describing Jesus Isaiah describes him as, "a man of sorrows acquainted with deepest grief." (Isaiah 53:3) Maybe at this time Jesus was mourning for the loss he was going to experience, knowing that it would not be long until he would no longer be spending this kind of time with the disciples.

As I read the scripture like this, Jesus's words to his disciples are as much to comfort them as they are to prepare them for what is coming. In these words of comfort Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. It is in this promise we find hope. Hope because God will never leave us or abandon us (verses 16,18). We find hope that through Jesus's death and resurrection we know that we live in a relationship with God. It is not a long-distance relationship where we communicate over the phone or see each other once a week or in a Zoom meeting. It is a relationship where Jesus, the Living God comes and lives in us, and never leaves us. In this relationship we can share the whole breadth of our experience with God. However, we must be willing to allow Jesus in, we cannot compartmentalise the relationship, by only singing praises when all is well and forgetting about God when we struggle or vice versa. When we fully allow Jesus in, he shares with us in the heights of our joy and the depths of our sorrows. Jesus not only shares in these experiences but feels them as we are feeling them and in doing so He invites us to join with His cry from the cross, "My God, My God why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 26:47). As we join in this cry we can know that we are not forsaken or as Jesus puts it, We are not abandoned as orphans, (John14:18) but we are children of God loved by our heavenly Father, and he has sent the Holy Spirit to live in us, so that His presence is always with us. It is in this love we can find all our hope.

God Bless

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