



Practice Resurrection

Lenten Reflections on the Seven Last Words of Jesus

~ February 24, 2021 ~

Truth

"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

~ Luke 23:43



*You are invited to light a candle as a sign that Jesus is present with you in Spirit.
You can print off the image on the last page for you or your children to colour.*

*Feel free to sing along with the songs.
Please read the **bold print**.*

WELCOME

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
the communion of the Holy Spirit,
and the fellowship of the saints be with you all.
be with you all.

GREETING PRAYER ~ *We Have Come*

We have come
To lift our voice,
To lift our hearts and pray.

—Cathy Hardy

SETTING THE TABLE

All of us experience pain and discomfort. Can you think of a time you were hurt?
Endured suffering?

Today's Gospel reading invites us to consider truth in the midst of pain. We are currently experiencing pains, such as social distancing due to COVID19. How do our own pains impact our ability to hear from God?

As you watch and listen to what is done and said, whose voice speaks loudest in your imagination? Is it the first person? The second? Or Jesus?

And don't just pick Jesus because it's the "correct" answer. Listen to what *really* resonates with you...

WORD OF GOD, WORD OF LIFE ~ LUKE 23:32, 39-43

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left...

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Pause your playback device and take a few quiet moments to let the Word of God sink in. Let the Spirit draw your attention to certain words, images, thoughts, and feelings.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

~ TRUTH ~

"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

Pause your playback device and try one of the following exercises today or sometime in the next week.

(You can give some or all of the others a try in the days to come if you have time and interest.)

1. Reflect on these two questions:
 - How do you think the man felt when he heard Jesus' promise that they would be together in paradise?
 - When you are feeling sick, or sad, who makes you feel betterWrite down what comes to mind in a journal, or discuss them with a friend or family member.
2. Take a few moments with your family or a friend to discuss the statement, "I imagine Paradise is _____."
3. When pain feels like that's all that's "true," how do you remember God's promises? What do you do (or don't do) that helps you to "hear God's voice," to be aware of God's presence? Are there people that come to mind who are struggling? How might you speak truth (with or without words) to them today? This week?
Follow through on what emerges.
4. Focus your attention on your lips. Touch them with your fingers. Pucker them as if to kiss. Can you feel your breath passing through them? With our lips we can smile, frown, whistle. Did you notice in the Bible story that lips were used to hurl insults, to defend the helpless, to ask questions, to confess, to speak kindly, and to bless? What would it look like for your lips to be truthful (see Proverbs 12:18-19) this next week?
Act on what the Spirit prompts you to do or be.



SONG FOR THE DAY ~ *Who Condemns You Now?*

Who condemns you now?
Neither they nor I.
Go and sin no more,
Go and sin no more.

—Steve Bell

CLOSING PRAYER *(based on Psalm 119:18, Ephesians 1:18, Matthew 5:8)*

**Merciful God,
You have brought us to this hour by our several ways.
Unfaithful as we have been, You have nevertheless kept faith with us.
Deliver us from the cowardice that dares not face new truth,
 the laziness that is content with half truth,
 the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth.
Open my mind and let me discover the wonders of your Love.
Enlighten my heart, that I may know the hope,
 and grasp the gloriously holy riches in this way of life,
 to which you have called me.
Open my eyes, that I might see you and walk ever more
 in the newness that is the Way, Truth, and Life.
Amen.**

BLESSING ~ *To Him Who is Able (Jude 24-25)*

To him who is able to keep you from falling
and to present you before his glorious presence
without fault, and with great joy,

To the only God, our Saviour
be glory, majesty, power and authority
through Jesus Christ, our Lord
before all ages, now and forevermore

Amen, Amen.

—Brian Moss

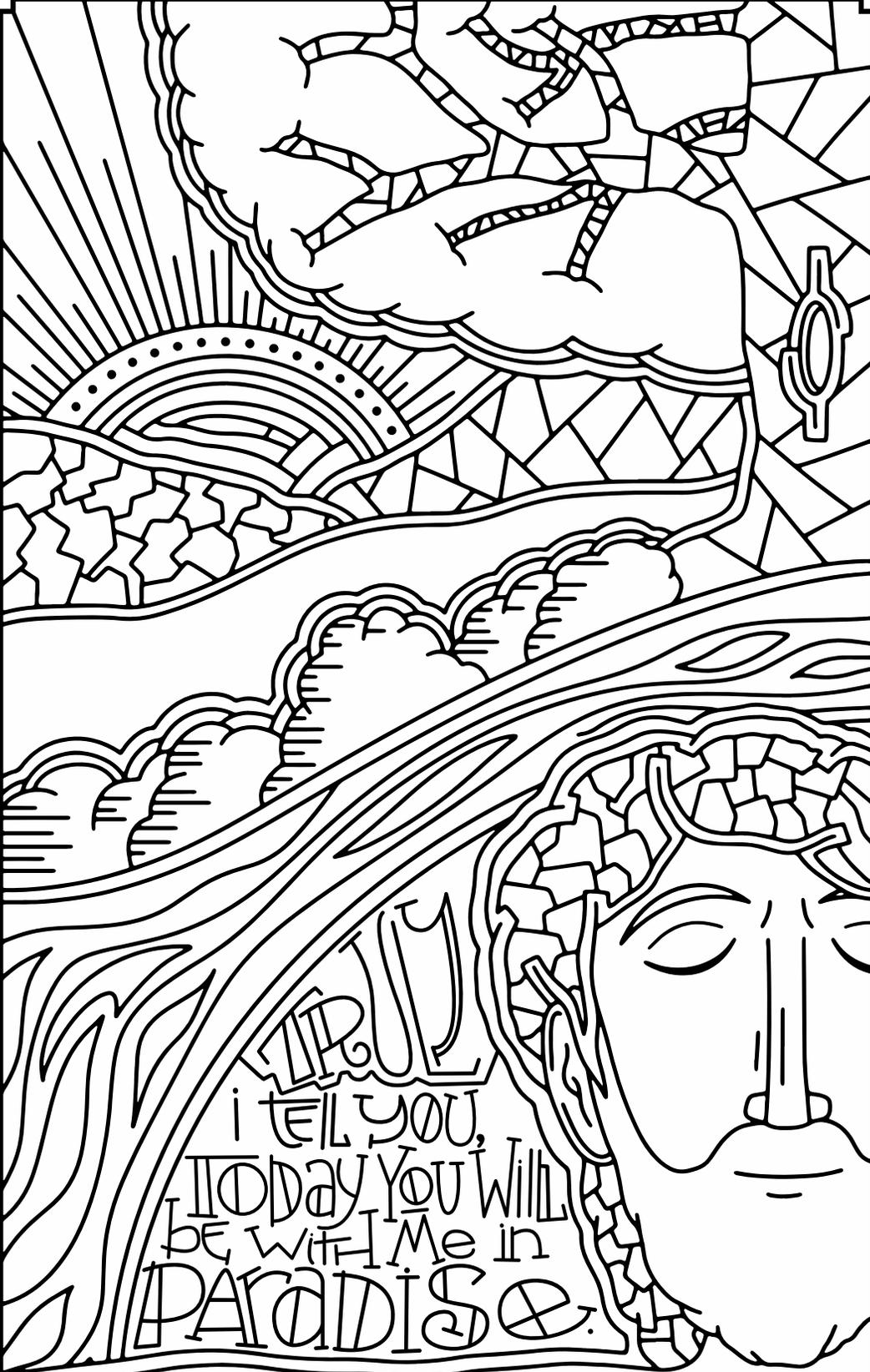


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GOD, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY

WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME? I AM THIRSTY. IT IS FINISHED. GO, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.



ARE DOING. TRUST I TELL YOU, TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE. HERE IS YOUR SON. HERE

DO NOT ASK WHY GOD, **TRUTH** IS YOUR MOTHER.