

For Reflection:

“The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my shield, my stronghold, my salvation,” professes the Psalm writer (18:2). In God we have provision, protection, acceptance, everything we need. But do we? Are we always safe? We try to be good disciples. Why do bad things happen?

This week, continuing with Mark as our base text, we will reflect on Jesus’ response to the cataclysmic events that transpire for him. We will also prayerfully examine the actions and reactions of the people who are either at the forefront of these events or find themselves caught up in the situation by virtue of their relationship with Jesus.

Jesus is a stumbling block for those, like the Sanhedrin, who think that God’s love can be earned and is only for certain people (see Rom. 9:33 and Isa. 28). The writer of Mark wants his suffering readers to understand the backwards ways things are in God’s kingdom.

Let’s look for examples that we can imitate of the ways Jesus handles “trials”. And since Lent is a time of introspection and repentance let’s look for habits and mindsets that separate us (or cause us to desert) from God’s love and desires for us.

(More Below)

Today's Scripture:

Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. The men seized Jesus and arrested him. (Mark 14:45b-46 NIV).

The Holy can be either a Hiding Place or a Boulder blocking your way...

Many of them are going to run into that Rock and get their bones broken...(Isaiah 8:14; The Message).

Question to Ponder:

It is easy to see how other people cause suffering, even their own. How much of my suffering is self-imposed? How do I exacerbate suffering, mine and others, through attempting to control/fix things in my own power and limited understanding?

Prayer:

God my Rock, help me see the ways I cause trouble for myself, for others. When my suffering is not my fault, show me how to learn about and lean on you as my strong foundation.

(More Below)

Practice: Fasting

To let go of an appetite in order to seek God on matters of deep concern for others, myself and the world. A fast is the self-denial of normal necessities in order to

intentionally attend to God in prayer. Bringing attachments and cravings to the surface opens a place for prayer. This physical awareness of emptiness is the reminder to turn to Jesus who alone can satisfy.

Today, try abstaining from food, drink, shopping, desserts, chocolate and so on to intentionally be with God. Keep company with Jesus in relinquishment.
(adapted from *The Spiritual Discipline Handbook*, Adele Ahlberg Calhoun/Fasting)

