

My Soul is...

by Rev Dan Balsdon | March 2021 | read online at www.revdanbalsdon.com

John 12:20-33

In John 12, after being approached by Andrew, who has been approach by Phillip, who has been approach by Greeks wanting to come to the Passover festival (are you still with me!?), Jesus begins to talk about his coming death. Or at least, we know that he was talking about his coming death. The author of the gospel of John knew. The disciples, the Greeks, the crowd? Perhaps not so much.

In a moment which, in the text, takes us from a conversation with those around him to a conversation with his Father, Jesus says 'Now my soul is troubled'.

(John 12:27)

Though troubled is perhaps an understatement and under-interpretation of the truth of Jesus' feeling here. A more literal interpretation of the Greek might be agitated, or more crudely, in shock, turmoil or distress.

Jesus wasn't troubled in a trite and simplistic way. it wasn't simply that the shopping delivery had arrived and they had swapped your beloved smokey bacon for your less favoured unsmoked.

Jesus was feeling turmoil and anguish in the depths of his soul because of what was looming on the very near horizon. He was soon to be glorified – which to the Author of the gospel, Jesus' being glorified was the being 'lifted up' - the cross.

As Christians we talk of glory, often, as a good thing – 'To God be the glory, great things he has done!' goes the popular hymn. But Jesus was not feeling good – despite knowing what was to be gained through this moment.

Jesus has already talked about how useless a single grain is unless it falls into the earth and dies, to then come forth and bear much fruit. (John 12:24)

Jesus seems to know here, what needs to happen – but his feeling - his feeling was pain. His feeling was turmoil. His feeling was fear. His feeling was urging him to say to his Father '*save me from this hour, this time that I know is at hand*' John 12:27.

In a moment of pain and fear, Jesus was honest with God about how he felt, despite what he knew was to come.

Friends, when was the last time you told God how you feel? How you really feel? Asked **'where are you God?'** when you're struggling to feel God with you, despite knowing that God is there?

Jesus' experience shows us that it is ok to be feeling something that is contrary to what we know, or think we should be feeling. We can't deny the truth. Can't suppress the reality of our feeling – if we do, we start to be dishonest with God, and dishonest with ourselves.

Friends, be honest with God today, just as Jesus was, because through being honest with God about how we feel, we are honest with ourselves.

Reflect: how does your experience of 'feeling' through the pandemic echo with or conflict with what you believe or know to be true of God?