



April 3 – Good Friday

I some of you have heard this story before, but I want to begin with a catalyst in my call to ministry. This catalyst, or huge nudge, was because of a study of Malcolm X. I was studying a musical adaptation of his life story and there was a profound part near his martyrdom. He was aware that there would be assassination attempts on his life and those closest to him wanted to launch into a war to protect him. Malcolm X calmly stated that he had never been in favor of the violence, and if there was ever a time to stand against it, it was now. In the next scene, he is killed while speaking at a public event.

The truth is that anger is easier than empathy. Violence is easier than change. To see the other is to be vulnerable, it is to recognize that your truth is not the only truth. Non-violence is a commitment to highlight issues over symptoms, reconciliation over victory. It is difficult work. It is also the work that Jesus calls us into.

When Jesus said “Forgive them,” he was not only talking about those who were mocking him. It was Peter and the denial. It was Judas and the betrayal. It was the other disciples who ran off out of fear. It was Saul and his persecution of the church. It was the bloodshed in wars invoking the name of God. It was the Crusades. It was church leaders who place personalities above principles. It was you and me.

Today, from the cross, with the weight of the world on his shoulders, Jesus still announces forgiveness. Let that sink in. This is the moment when the love of God is proclaimed, from the heights of the cross. May we hear that forgiveness. May it be what empowers us to live a life of love in the world. May it empower us into acts of love. May it give us the courage and strength to enter into non-violent forms of accountability and protest when the messages of anger and hate surround us.

These Holy Three Days tell a story of love that has no parallel. May we be vulnerable enough to be changed by this truth. May our song, too, be love unknown. Amen.

Pastor Michael Schmidt