**Good Friday 10th April**

Isaiah 53: 4-6

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
    stricken by him, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
    he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
    and by his wounds we are healed.  
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,

 each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
    the iniquity of us all.

There is a sickness that is more serious than Coronavirus, more contagious, more deadly, more grievous and widespread in its effects. That is soul-sickness. Its symptoms are everything that is wrong, that goes against God and his ways, that separates us from him. It is something for which we are all in the vulnerable group even though some don’t even realise they’ve got the illness. This is a virus that affects every person on the face of the earth. It’s a virus for which there is no immunisation, no medicine, no cure, from which every person is dying. The Good News that we remember on Good Friday is that Jesus has dealt with it. No wonder we call this day Good!  God was not content to leave us without hope. He did something about it – He sent Jesus. Jesus was the only person who didn’t pick up this disease despite being in close proximity to others who had it. In order to make an antidote Jesus chose to become infected - gave his own life so that everyone who goes to Him, who applies that healing antidote of the cross to themselves could be cured. ‘he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed’.

So powerful was his love that even taking the lethal dose on himself couldn’t keep him down! Watch what happens on Sunday!

*Jesus, how can we thank you enough! All of eternity is not long enough to sing your praises. All the gifts we could bring will never repay you. You saw us in our sin and brokenness, and, though you were without sin, you became sin for us so that we can be healed, set free and experience life in all its fullness with you! Thank you, thank you. Today we offer you our lives afresh. Forgive us for all the times we have gone our own way instead of yours. Cleanse us and make us new. On this Good Friday, cause us to wonder more deeply at your gift of love in Jesus. Amen*

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