

*You Don't Know*

You don't know what you don't know. In other words, human beings have no comprehension of what lies outside their limited sphere of knowledge. We may fancy ourselves as having mastery of a subject, or we think we are aware of exactly what is happening in a situation. But there are always things we are oblivious to, things we don't know, things perhaps we simply cannot know.

Using any cultural reference in my preaching on Good Friday always feels somewhat sacrilegious to me. But I will use one tonight to one illustrate my point. NCIS and House are two popular television dramas these days. Both are formulaic to the degree that in every episode Special Agent Gibbs and his team are presented with a murder mystery, and Dr. House and his team are presented with a patient with an unusual disease. The first forty minutes or so of the program consists of them collecting clues and data, and invariably coming to several wrong conclusions, or chasing down multiple wrong theories. In the final twenty minutes of the show, they solve the mystery and arrest the culprit, or properly diagnosis the disease and cure the patient.

They jump to wrong conclusions because they don't have all the information. They base their decisions on what they know, but they don't know everything necessary to form a correct judgment. Early on in their search for truth, they don't even realize that there is more to be known than what they already know. They can't even imagine what else might be out there that would alter their perception of what's going on. And such knowledge only comes slowly and painfully. That is a common human predicament. We often find ourselves in that kind of situation, and the perpetrators and witnesses to the Crucifixion also found their selves in that predicament.

The chief priests and Pharisees believed they had defeated Jesus. Their only motivation was to protect the *status quo*, and preserve their status in the religious establishment. By killing Jesus, they seemed to have won. Jesus' supporters, Mary his mother and the other women, and the beloved disciple, who were at the cross, believed that Jesus had been defeated too. All their hopes and dreams of all the good Jesus could have done seemed to die with him. As they watched Jesus die, it seemed that all was lost.

In reality, Jesus was not killed. The scripture says that he gave up his spirit. No one took his life from him -- no one could -- Jesus commended his life into his Father's hands voluntarily. No human beings had power over him except whatever power he allowed them to hold temporarily in his game plan to bring greater glory to God. So those who celebrated the Crucifixion, and those who mourned Jesus' death, were both wrong because they didn't know what they didn't know. They could not see what was coming next. No one could have imagined it, except those with whom God shared his divine vision.

To all the world Jesus appeared to be just another common criminal killed by the Romans. What people did not know was that the cross was the throne from King Jesus reigned. They could not see that all our sin was crucified with him. No one understood that his death gave us life. As proof of this, on the third day, Jesus rose from the grave.

Often in our lives we think we may have been defeated. Or we may think we have conquered someone. But what don't we know? What surprise might God have in store for us? What reversal of fortunes might God have waiting up his sleeve? One thing we certainly don't know is God's timetable. When we see an episode of a TV program winding down to its final scheduled minutes, we know the resolution to the problem is coming soon. What we don't know in real life is if whether it's our salvation or our judgment that is coming soon. We might have to wait a long time for Jesus to cure whatever ails us. We might have to wait a long time for God's justice to be done. But

these things will happen, so be ready scripture says, so that day does not come upon you unawares like a thief in the night.

Tonight we are still lost in the wilderness of not knowing what we do not know. It is the hour of darkness. The evil Prince of this World appears to hold sway. That will not last. It cannot stand. God, in His time, will not let it be. The light of the Easter dawn will come, dispelling the darkness of our hearts and minds. But it is not yet. It is not now. And so we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus. Amen."