

Sites of Witness

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Matthew 21:1-11

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Matthew 21:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” The crowd answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Matthew 23:37

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.”

Matthew 20:18-19 ESV

“See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

“The more you try to erase me, the more I appear. The more you try to erase me, there is nothing: only I remain.”

- Michel Foucault

We reduce each other to some small aspect of their humanity, but God knows how to free us to be all he created us to be in Jesus Christ—to become a new creation human being, not in spite our weaknesses or differences, but through them as sites of witness.

Romans 8:20-21

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

Galatians 3:8

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Jeremiah 5:21 NKJV

Hear this now, O foolish people, without understanding,
Who have eyes and see not, and who have *ears* and *hear* not.

Isaiah 6:10

Make the heart of this people dull,
And their *ears* heavy, and shut their *eyes*;
Lest they see with their *eyes*, and hear with their *ears*,
And understand with their heart, and return and be healed.

Mark 8:17-18

Do you have such hard hearts? Having *eyes*, do you not see? Having *ears*, do you not *hear*? And do you not remember?

Matthew 13:15-18 NKJV

For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their *ears* are hard of hearing, and their *eyes* they have closed,
Lest they should see with their *eyes* and *hear* with their *ears*,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.

Ezekiel 12:2

They have *eyes* to see but do not see and *ears* to *hear* but do not *hear*, for they are a rebellious people.

Romans 2:12-15

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Philippians 3:8-9

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.



"A month after he died, I found a recording of the incident, and his last words were 'love over rules.' When I received the opportunity to create a public art installation, I thought about him and how his last words could inspire people everyday, reminding them to be generous...Love is a verb of action. Its meaning goes beyond the romantic idea of it. Love is an invitation to people to stand up and be generous every day of their lives. It is not an action of receiving, but rather an action of giving. My question is what you do to give love? How love is breaking the rules you have in your life?"

- Hank Willis Thomas

"What the heart loves, the will chooses, and the mind justifies. The mind doesn't [ultimately] direct the will. The mind is actually captive to what the will wants, and the will itself, in turn, is captive to what the heart wants."

- Ashley Null on Thomas Cranmer

“The trouble with human nature is that we are born with a heart that loves ourselves over and above everything else in this world, including God. In short, we are born slaves to the lust for self-gratification, i.e., concupiscence. That’s why, if left to ourselves, we will always love those things that make us feel good about ourselves, even as we depart more and more from God and his ways. Therefore, God must intervene in our lives in order to bring salvation.”

- Ashley Null on Thomas Cranmer



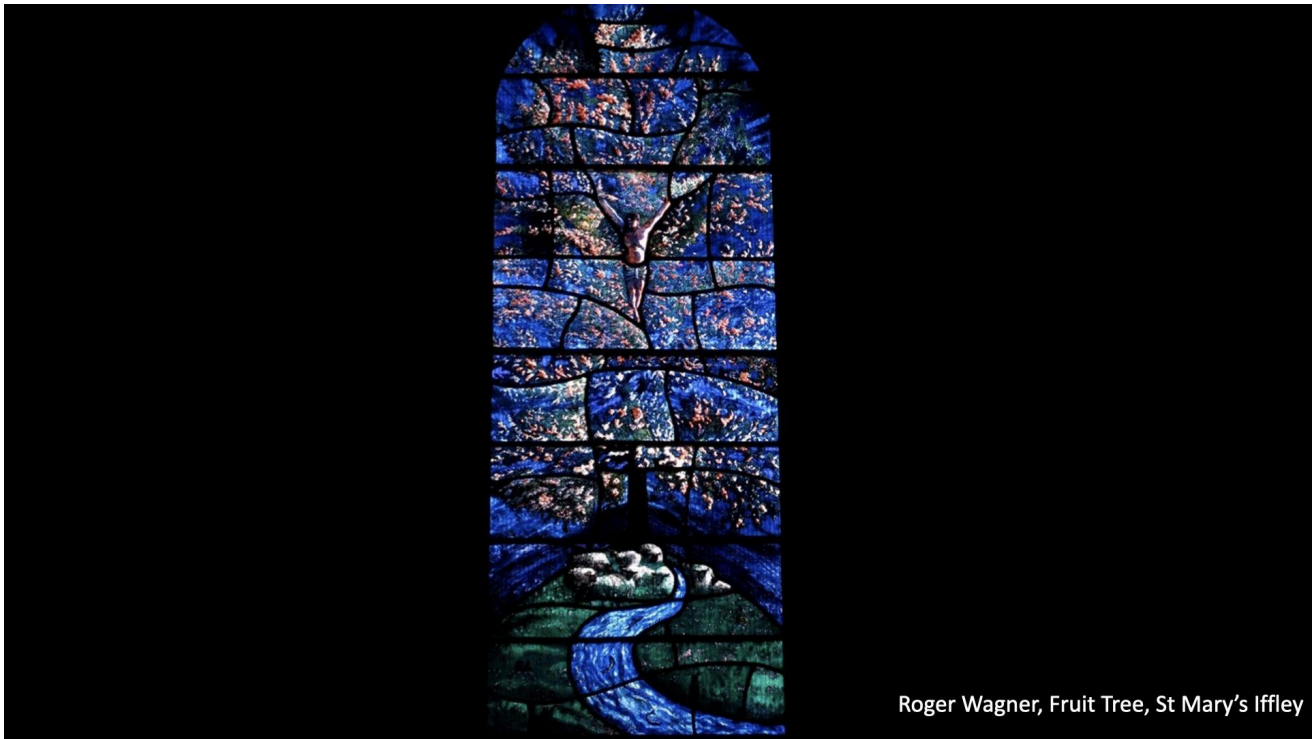
A recalibration around the lordship of Jesus. We demote our other identities under the lordship of Jesus so they can become dignified as site of witness to his Gospel. The way toward this holy calibration is through humility.

Matthew 16:24-25

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

"Descend that you may ascend, and ascend to God. For you have fallen by ascending against Him. Tell them this, that they may weep in the valley of tears, and so draw them with you to God, because it is by His Spirit that you speak thus unto them, if you speak burning with the fire of love.”

- St. Augustine, *Confessions*



Roger Wagner, Fruit Tree, St Mary's Iffley

A man, a river, and a tree
Enamelled with the flowers of May.
Good Friday sky as blue as sea
A hill as green as Easter day.
A tree, a river, and a man
Who hangs from branches thick with flowers.
A love which flowed since time began
Is measured here in three long hours.
A man, a tree, a river flows
Down to the font and origin
Where man, tree, river all disclose
The Easter where our lives begin.

- *The Flowering Tree* by Roger Wagner

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.