

## The Need to Forgive

**Matthew 27:15-18, 22** - Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he realized it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. And they said, "Barabbas." And what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah? Let him be crucified!

Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent but even with all of Pilate's power he was intimidated by a small crowd who demanded that Barabbas be released. So he released Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified. Then Pilate took some water and washed his hands saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood." And the disciples were so terrified of the activity regarding the arrest of Jesus that they ran for their lives. And Jesus was left to suffer great humiliation and injustices.

Jesus was calm, dignified and powerful even while he was being arrested. Alone in the garden, Jesus allowed his enemies to tie him up and lead him away to face a long night of cruelty. And yet, as he is bound with ropes, we come to know that the only thing that really bound him was his love for each of us and his determination and commitment to carrying out his Father's will.

There was a time in my faith journey that I wondered why Jesus went through this trial and torture when he could have easily used his great powers and escaped? Now I am just so very thankful for the magnitude of his love for us, for his grace and his forgiveness. And each year the season of Lent clearly calls me to walk to the cross with Christ so that I can begin to understand the miracle of Easter and the power of love and forgiveness.

So join me this week as we participate in Ash Wednesday with the disposition of ashes and begin our walk to the cross with Jesus. We can only understand the miracle of Easter if we understand the sacrifice and pain of Good Friday.

**Prayer:** Gracious and loving Jesus, your love is beyond comprehension to us. Most times we lack the ability to remain calm, dignified and loving in difficult circumstances. We get consumed by anger, hurt and pride. We want to defend ourselves and blame others. In this season of Lent fill our hearts and our spirits with agape love, forgiveness and grace and then give us the strength and the opportunity to pass it on to others. Help us to be the change in our lives and world that you want us to be. Amen