

Weekly Bible Study group – March 11, 2009

This week's reading assignment: Matthew 27-28

Reflection by Bob Zurinsky, SPU Center for Worship

When I look back on my life of theological reflection, a couple big themes begin to emerge. This week I realized that, probably more than anything else, the last five (or so) years of my life have been defined by my struggle to understand these two things: the **cross** and **resurrection** of Jesus Christ. This week at group we read Matthew 27-28, the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus. A thousand pages of "group Bible studies" could not contain the significance of these events, so instead of trying to explain all my thoughts here, I simply invite you to a lifetime journey of your own pondering. To get us started, a couple quotes. The first quote is from Jesus, the second is from Paul.



"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

---*Jesus of Nazareth* (Matthew 27:46)

Bob's thoughts: A lot of people think they already know the meaning of the cross. But I have a hunch that we don't understand as much as we think we do. I've grown up in a tradition that assures me that the answers are simple – so simple, in fact, that they can be explained in a 200-word tract that we hand out on the street. But do me a favor. Before you close the book on the "meaning of the cross," I invite you to listen to how Jesus Christ himself interpreted what was happening there. His last words were "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And you can't just analyze that question alone to interpret it well. Did you know that this wasn't an original Jesus quote? *He was reciting the first line of a song.* A song called "Psalm 22." By reciting this first line, he is indicating that his last statement before breathing his last breath is **PSALM 22**. Read that Psalm this week. This is how Jesus interprets his own cross.



"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a human being. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive... Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."

---*Paul of Tarsus* (1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 51-52)

Bob's thoughts: I've got nothing. Paul said it.