

Ever since I was some 8 years of age, when I had the measles, I have had to wear glasses. Without these glasses the world is a hazy blur. While I am thankful that I can at least see, I cannot make out faces, TV or computer screen, the details of a landscape. Put on the glasses and the same faces, screens, landscapes become clear. It is not that the faces or the landscape have changed; rather the glasses enable me to see them as they are.

We read tonight as our lesson St John's account of the crucifixion. It was an ugly business that first Good Friday. Jesus, before Pilate, sacrificed to the demands of the mob. Humiliated by the soldiers, scourged and paraded through the streets of Jerusalem, carrying his own cross out of the city to Golgotha. Then after three hours the cry goes up, 'It is finished'.

Viewed through the eyes of the world, this was the ignominious end of a pretender to the throne of God. The High Priest's estimate of him seems to have been vindicated; Judas' betrayal of him gains a veneer of respectability and the disciples left as fools who followed a fool. Well, as Jesus said, 'It is finished.'

Why, then, are we here some 2000 years later? Why have men and women down through the ages proclaimed the faith, lived the faith and died for the faith?

Here is where my allusion to spectacles comes into play. As I say, viewed through the eyes of the world the cross is a mess, a victory of hate, of ugliness over love. Viewed through the spectacles of faith, it is God acting in power. Through the spectacles of faith we see it as it really is.

John, in the way he presents the story in his Gospel, brings this out more forcibly than any of the other Gospel writers. He speaks of the Cross and the glorification of Jesus as one and the same thing. This paradox comes out in these dying words; 'It is finished'. It means not just it is finished, it is over but also it is accomplished, the job is done, the task is complete.

It is at this point that my weakness meets Christ's power. The sin of man meets the love of God and it is broken in body of Christ on the Cross.

My glasses enable me to see the world around me as it really is. May God grant to us all the insight to see the Cross as it really is, God in Christ in his broken and crucified body healing and redeeming his broken creation. Recognising his love for me, may I give myself to him in love and service.

Awake my soul and sing  
of him who died for thee,  
and hail him as thy matchless King  
through all eternity.