



HOLY WEEK MEDITATIONS: **Tuesday**

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 71:1-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; John 12:20-36

What if we had an actual interview of Jesus during passion week? In today's reading from John we have just that amazing, improbable thing. John in 12:20-36 records that some "Greeks" came to Philip, wanting to meet the person that had just caused the crowds to cast a carpet of palm branches and cheer. They were likely Gentile converts from the same area as Philip, who took them to his friend Andrew, and between the two of them they had the courage to go to Jesus, who agreed to meet these Greeks.

Messianic pretenders were crazily common during this period, and the Greeks must have expected a political plan. How would Jesus handle the Romans? Jesus' reply was from another world entirely: he says that he is about to be "glorified" *and* that he needs to lose, even "hate" his life to be honored by the Father. This Messiah openly admits he is troubled in heart, and right on camera you see him appear to waver: should he pull the ripcord and get out before things get ugly? No. His mission from the Father, a mission he's known at least since he was twelve, was at its final hour and he had to walk purposely into torture, humiliation and death.

Did you expect Jesus to be troubled at the end? Augustine sure doesn't: "What does this mean? How can you [Jesus] ask my soul to follow you when I see your own in so much turmoil? How can I endure when even a strength as great as yours feels it is a heavy burden? What kind of foundation am I left with when the Rock is giving way?"

He continues, "But the Lord is already forming the answer inside my own head, saying: You shall follow me that much better, because it is to strengthen your own endurance that I included this... I supply strength when you need to run without slowing you down, but I take on myself whatever makes you afraid, *paving the way for you to continue your march.*"

Jesus says *all* who want to save their lives must lose them and, as Augustine says, Jesus *paved the way* for us. This Holy Week some are losing their lives, and we are each praying, hoping we and our loved ones will be spared. Be comforted: Jesus walked ahead of us and cleared the path. Have courage and sleep easy tonight; as it says in Hebrews 7:34; Romans 8:34, even today the one who went ahead prays for you.

-Tim Collins