



### Lenten Reflection for Good Friday, April 15th

Missy Trull

You can listen to the reading and reflection by clicking [here](#).

#### Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12

*See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals— so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.*

*Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.*

*Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

By his bruises we are healed.

This is the line that stuck with me/agitated me/confused me/soothed me when I read this text using the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina, a practice we have been doing on Wednesday mornings with Mother Kimberlee. The first time I read the text, I kept imagining this person being described by the text—marred in appearance, despised, rejected, like a root out of dry ground. These are some devastating descriptions, and yet this person was not too difficult for me to imagine. The transient people living underneath the bridge by my apartment, some of my patients at the psychiatric hospital, the faces of Ukrainians exiling from their homes or littered on the streets after war has destroyed their village, and Jesus today, on Good Friday, beaten, dirty, alone. And with these images and faces in mind, as I prayed, God highlighted for me the line, *By his bruises we are healed*. And I became really, really uncomfortable. I do not want to heal through others' suffering. I don't want others to suffer in order for me to heal. That, to me, feels very messed up and uncomfortable. But this is the line God asked me to sit with in my prayer. So I sat with it longer and the question came to me...*When have you known healing through another's bruise?* And I thought of my dear friend, Lindsey.

In November of 2021 Lindsey found out she was pregnant. We were elated, to put it lightly. Then, in December of 2021, I found out that I was also pregnant. We were elated again! Moved to our very bones with joy! We were both in tears on the phone imagining our life together as mothers, learning and growing together. Sisters in motherhood. At the end of January Lindsey found out that she wasn't growing a healthy baby. The doctor explained that she would need to induce a miscarriage. She was devastated. Her husband was devastated. I was devastated. We were all devastated. Shocked, enraged, lost. And then, two weeks later, I received similar news. I miscarried in February. Matt, my husband, and I are still devastated.

Lindsey and I were both pregnant, ready, thrilled, full of joy and dreams. And then the little lives inside our bodies stopped growing, they died. And we both carried this death inside our bodies. The grief I felt and feel is profound, a heartbreak I didn't know possible. I am certainly not healed from this loss, but she, Lindsey, is foundational to my healing. Her bruise, her loss, heartbreak and pain are a part of my healing; just as my bruise, loss, heartbreak and pain are a part of hers. Our losses drew a bond of comfort and understanding between us, that helped us to hold the grief, understand it, express it. Our losses, held out and opened to each other, have somehow provided a sanctuary for each other to survive the loss. And there is a paradox or a mystery here because I don't really, totally understand how this happens, how humans can experience solace and healing through the shared experience of suffering, but it does.

It is Good Friday today, and I don't think God had to die. God didn't have to bruise. But just as love is a choice, I think God chose to enter into risk and suffering and loss and turmoil, and even death, so to befriend us, understand us, provide a cosmic bruise for us to know healing through. The spiritual reality that the central force of the universe wants to be a part of my grief over this little life shakes me.

I don't believe in glossing over suffering with silver linings of purpose or 'it happened for a reason.' But I do believe it is creating purpose out of suffering, demanding it, through meaningful relationships, sharing, compassion, empathy, connection. That our bruises can become sources of healing—and that doesn't make the bruise worthwhile or okay—but it makes it a part of a greater story. So today, Good Friday, as the light of the universe, the source of love, Jesus, dies, I am going to try and let into my heart that God understands my loss, or at least a part of it, and I do believe this truth is healing.



*Missy Trull has been joyfully attending Holy Apostles for 2.5 years now with her husband Matt and dog Chauncey! She is a hospital Chaplain, lover of jogging and walking in Prospect Park, and is recently learning how to sew (any advice welcomed!).*