

Good Friday Reflections
Old First Reformed United Church of Christ
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"Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

With his last words, his last breath, Jesus doesn't ask for forgiveness, he doesn't wish that he could have healed *one more person*. He doesn't even curse those who have accused him.

No, Jesus cries out because he's giving himself to God. "Take me Lord. I'm ready."

And he doesn't just whisper it; in Luke 23:46 we read, "Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.'"

Maybe Jesus cries out because he knows something wonderful is going to happen after he gives himself to God. He knows that Paradise is waiting! Jesus is certainly not afraid of death. He has been preparing his whole life to sit with the Father in Heaven.

We often hear the phrase—"you can't take it with you."

Just buy the new car, or go on that cruise. "You can't take the money with you when you die!" Is this why the idea of death is so scary, even though it's a natural part of life? Because we think we are going to lose everything we've worked so hard for?

What if we reinterpret the phrase?

You can't take it with you. What if the "it" isn't just material things? What if the "it" includes burdens, debts that haven't been repaid, or even regrets? We can't take those "its" with us any more than we can take material "its" with us.

Maybe Jesus cries out loudly not only because he knows that something wonderful is going to happen. Maybe he cries out as a message: to tell us that maybe it's not so bad if we can't take "it" with us. When you enter into

Heaven, you will be free of burdens, free of regret! This is not something to be afraid of. This is what we are promised in Heaven. When we give ourselves to God, this is what we have to look forward to.

Maybe not taking "it" with you isn't so bad after all!

When we confess our sins, when we help our brothers and sisters, when we give of ourselves, we are preparing to be with God. We are preparing to receive everything that has been promised to us when we get to Heaven. Our life on earth is preparation for eternal life in Paradise with God. "Take me Lord, I'm ready."

"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."