

INI-SDG

In the Name of Jesus – To God Alone the Glory

4.10.2009 Good Friday – St. Stephen Lutheran (West Bay) Mountain View, CA – Pastor N. Radichel

Hello again,

First of all my friend, I'm glad I get the chance to write to you once again! This may not come across very well in a letter, but I would only like a minute or two of your time. I know that, like me, you have a lot going on in your life right now and that you're going through some very serious problems. But to write to you a bit about what is so apparent from God's Word should be said to you no matter what challenges you have going on in your life.

A child I know asked... "Why do people wear all black when going to a funeral?" The usual response is because they're in mourning. I'm sure you yourself have probably dressed the same at memorial services you've attended in your own life. But in thinking a lot more about that question I'm writing to ask you a question. Have you ever attended a service where YOU... were the one responsible for the death of the individual being mourned? I am sad to say, I have.

Even though I wasn't there at His death, I took part in it. I am grieved to say that I am partly responsible for the death of my good Friend. That I now know. So I wear black at what different people might call a funeral, memorial, or victory service to mourn someone's death. As His friend, I will often reread the reports of why He was in that situation and what really happened there. In doing so, I hope you would agree with me that really the whole world ought to say on remembering the death of this Friend, of sinners, that...

(WE) WILL LOOK ON HIM WHO (WE) PIERCED. [John 19:36,37]

Like the crowd that was physically there at the death of my Friend Jesus, you and I also ought to go away beating our breasts and return to our homes understanding that we put to death an innocent man with our own sinful thoughts and actions. But not just a man, we put to death our Lord God! As sad as I personally am about that, I understand that mourning His death IS however bittersweet... just like in mourning the death of a Christian who died trusting in the Savior. A death of a friend or loved one is sad, but we know the outcome of the one who dies with faith in Christ is a victory because of what this Friend of ours (Jesus Christ) did on that first Good Friday. I can tell you confidently, He HAS forgiven me, even though I... had a hand in His death. There isn't a greater love and forgiveness that could be shown or ever seen in this world than from Him.

So for you, my friend, when the anniversary of that dreadful and wonderful evening comes around... I might wear all black out of my sadness for the crimes I committed against my very best Friend, Jesus. But I want to tell you just how happy and unbelievably thankful I am to know that His death was in order to save YOU and me. The Lord go with you always my friend.

Very sincerely... yours and His,
Neal Radichel

PS – I'd also like to write to ask you if you have any other friends that might need to hear this same bittersweet message. If so, the Lord go with you in sharing it with them also.