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If Jesus lived in the US, in the 21st century he would be put to death by lethal injection or the electric chair.

Jesus stands before the high priest in the Jewish court system. The high priest listens to witnesses then confronts Jesus – *Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?* Jesus responds, *you have said so*. The high priest is shocked. No further evidence is needed. Jesus has blasphemed hence, deserves death.

The next morning the assembly reconvenes. This time Jesus is brought to trial before Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate asks, *are you the King of the Jews?* Jesus responds, *you say so*. Pilate is perplexed. Seeing that a riot might erupt he gives in to the crowd. Jesus is condemned to death by capital punishment of the Roman mode, hanging on a cross. Jesus becomes a dead man walking.

Justice systems around the world to this day depend on the system of *Talion, Tally* in English. This transactional principle developed in early Babylonian law and is present in both biblical and early Roman law – that criminals should receive as punishment precisely the injuries and damages they inflicted upon their victims. Such systems keep score and tally, they retaliate, they practice *an eye for an eye*. Sometimes the punishment got out of hand so in the biblical narrative an *eye for an eye* is a law of limitation – the punishment should never exceed the crime.

It was the crowd that demanded Jesus' death. It was a bloodthirsty mob, stirred by the jealousy and the calculated politics of the high priests, who worried about their position and power, who gave false

testimony and encouraged others to do so. His death was unjust and excruciatingly painful.

We often forget this part of the story. We forget that Jesus' death was UNJUST. We have sanitized Jesus' unjust death as sacrificial love. Yes, sacrificial love is part of the story but is not the whole story.

We need to remember that Jesus' death was unjust and still happens today in George Floyd, in hate crimes and mass murders—the Atlanta murders with anti-Asian racism, the mass shooting in a King Sooper store in Boulder, Colorado. We see Jesus' unjust death in every senseless, unjust act of violence, abuse and bloodshed... For all violence is senseless. All violence is unjust as it disregards the life and humanity of another by violating them, as is all abuse and bloodshed. Bill Wallace puts it in the following words:

Almost all the crosses I have ever seen, seem much the same despite their differing size, shape, texture. Some are empty, others bear cosmetic Christs, but few if any present the crosses of our world, crosses of plants and animals under the threat of extinction, crosses of people suffering unjust imprisonment, starvation, torture, personal and institutional violence.

Sometimes I wish I could place real bodies upon these crosses, bodies of dead whales, dead native birds and trees, bodies of dead, dying, emaciated and mutilated people. For at the intersection of the horizontal and vertical elements of life, there is always a body, and in the body of Christ I see all the bodies of this world.