

Good Friday

March 29, 2024

Why do we call this day good? It's a day of betrayal, lies, mob violence, exploitation, oppression, militant power and a brutal execution.

Well, it isn't really that the day is good. It is that God is good.

While the crucifixion anticipates the resurrection, this day moves our attention to suffering, pain, and weakness. This brings home the fundamental fact of Christian belief—God became human. Human. Our neighbor. And this is good.

There is a common tendency to rush ahead to thoughts of Resurrection, thus failing to recognize the depth of the agony and suffering required for Christ's mediation. Good Friday asks us not to let our joy at the risen Christ diminish our understanding of the price required for us to be made the friends of God.

After the resurrection, the cruel and inhumane character of his ordeal was erased by glory; but the degradation which is the very essence of the Passion is that Christ died as a common criminal.

The incarnation and the crucifixion focus our attention on **unlimited love**, something that we often are too quick to move past in our rush to a happy ending. But as Job tells us, "mortals die, and are laid low." Good Friday tells us that because of divine love the incarnated God did not seek to avoid this fundamental human experience.

This story of Jesus dead in a tomb is reason to believe in a God of love. The story of a God who becomes fully human, who lives a life in time subject to all things each human being is subject to, including suffering, pain, loss, tragedy, injustice, and death serves to drive the point deeper.

Good Friday reveals just how far the divine chooses to go with us—into the depths of despair and death.

It's simply awful.

And very good.

Ministers

Worship Leader

Reader

Preacher

Intercessor

Sound

Prelude

“Be Still, My Soul (The Waves and Wind Still Know),” Salt of the Sound.

“Diya Hai,” Arooj Aftab.

“Death, Be Not Proud,” Audrey Assad.

“Good Friday,” Josh Garrels.

Gather

We stand as we are comfortable.

We enter into a holy place through the new and living way
Jesus Christ has opened for us.

We come as a holy people—born of the grace of Jesus Christ,
delivered through his blood.

Confession

Lord Jesus Christ, we confess to you: like sheep, we all go astray.

Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

We betray you; we deny you; like sheep, we all go astray.

Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

We mock you; we scorn you; like sheep, we all go astray.

Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

We abandon you; we forsake you; like sheep, we all go astray.

Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

We condemn you; we crucify you; like sheep, we all go astray.

Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, have mercy on us,
**and by your grace, Lord Jesus Christ,
save us from our sin. Amen.**

Let us live in the full assurance of our faith,
with our hearts cleansed of all evil
and our bodies washed with living water.

This is the good news of Good Friday:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

**We stand near the cross, O God—
disturbed, distraught, discouraged.**

**Yet we gather here as disciples,
those whom Jesus loves.**

**On this day of great solemnity,
let us stand as witnesses to your great love for all the world,
revealed in the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

Scripture

We sit.

In the darkness of this hour, Lord, be our light.

By the breath of your Spirit,
whisper the Word of life that death cannot destroy:
Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

A reading from Mark.

Music

“Lord, Have Mercy,” Sandra McCracken.

Reproaches of the Cross

The cross that held the Savior of the world.

**Holy God,
holy and mighty,
holy immortal one,
have mercy on us.**

The cross that held the Savior of the world.

**Holy God,
holy and mighty,
holy immortal one,
have mercy on us.**

The cross that held the Savior of the world.

**Holy God,
holy and mighty,
holy immortal one,
have mercy on us.**

My people, my people,
why have you forsaken me?

Answer me!

I delivered you from captivity
through the water of baptism;
but you handed me over to my captors, giving me up to die;
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy.

I fed you in the wilderness with the bread of life from heaven;
but you are consumed with desire, biting and devouring one another;
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy.

I claimed you as my family, as branches of my vine;
but you cut off my chosen ones, spilling innocent blood;
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy.

I spoke to you my Word, the promise of my love for all;
but you silence my prophets, refusing to hear my voice;
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy.

I came to be your light, to overcome the darkness;
but you remain in the shadows,
hiding your light from the world;
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy.

I gave you the keys to my realm and welcomed you inside;
but you turn away strangers, closing the doors that I open;
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy.

I offered you my peace and clothed you with compassion;
but you divide my garments, tearing apart what I design;
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy.

I sent my Holy Spirit to empower you with grace;
but you trust your own devices, squandering my good gifts;
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy.

I came to dwell among you as the Word made flesh;
but you ignore neighbors in need, failing to recognize my face;
and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy.

Music

“Forgive Us,” The Many.

Intercessions

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered his prayers with loud cries and tears to the One who was able to save him from death.

On this day, we pray in Jesus' name: O Lord, do not be far away;
O God, come quickly to help us.

Remember your church. . . .

Keep us faithful to the gospel,
proclaiming the good news of salvation
even in the face of danger and death.

O Lord, do not be far away;

O God, come quickly to help us.

Remember your world. . . .

Rescue this perishing planet, condemned by human cruelty;
do not let it be destroyed forever.

O Lord, do not be far away;

O God, come quickly to help us.

Remember all nations. . . .

Break the sword and snap the spear; trample the high walls
and thorny fences that separate neighbors and nations.

O Lord, do not be far away;

O God, come quickly to help us.

Remember those who face death. . . .

Restore the lives of those who suffer,
give hope to those who are despairing,
and welcome the dying into your arms.

O Lord, do not be far away;

O God, come quickly to help us.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus,
your suffering servant, our only hope of salvation.

Amen.

Sending

Hold fast to your hope, for God is faithful.

Amen.

It is finished.

We leave in quiet.