

## Good Friday Reflection 5

I stand here in need of God's mercy and grace. May I speak in the name of the God who is Father Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Three hours. For three hours Jesus is dying on the cross. His body already battered from the beatings and torture that came before the soldiers nailed his hands and feet to the wooden bars. Three hours of being stared at, naked and exposed. Three hours of being mocked and shamed. Betrayed, alone and abandoned he cries out:

**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**

Struggling to breathe, as his body nailed to the cross and in pain slowly loses the fight to live. Three hours. Three long hours.

And then he dies. Jesus, the Son of God dies. And nothing makes sense anymore. What was the point of it all? Why did he promise them all the coming of God's Kingdom? All those big signs and all the promises of hope, of a different kind of world, of justice, peace and freedom, of healing and an end of hunger and thirst. All those big signs and big promises mean absolutely nothing now. Jesus is dead. It seems it was all just a nice dream. And now all the dreams and hopes are shattered, broken like Jesus' body.

What's the point of it all? What now? Jesus' disciples put their lives on the line to follow Jesus. They left everything to follow him and learn from him. And as they shared life with him over the past three years, they have come to believe. Believe that he is truly the Son of God, that he is the real deal, that with him truly the Kingdom of God

has come and will come. They believed that Jesus would liberate the Jewish people from Roman occupation, that he would bring about a kingdom of peace and justice, where all would be safe and have enough of all they need to live and flourish.

But they were wrong. It was all just a pipe dream. Jesus is dead and all that is left are questions, shame, pain and the broken pieces of what could have been.

Good Friday is hard. Good Friday is uncomfortable. Good Friday asks of us to sit with the questions, the shame, pain and the broken pieces. Jesus is dead and this too is part of our story. This moment of utter despair, senselessness and hopelessness is part of our Christian story too.

Why can't we just skip to the good part? Why do we have to go through Good Friday as well? Personally, I am deeply grateful that Good Friday is part of our Christian story. Good Friday is uncomfortable and hard, full of questions, shame, pain and broken pieces. But so are we at times, these kinds of moments are part of our lives, of our world. At the core of the Christian faith is hope and that core compels us as Christians to find silver linings, to hold on to hope, to have faith that God will turn things around.

But I think sooner or later in life we all have at least one moment, when we experience Good Friday like the disciples did. Endless questions, no answers and all our hopes and dreams shattered. No silver linings, no signs of hope. And we do not have to pretend like there are. Sometimes we are just utterly broken by something that has happened in our lives and for a moment, we cannot possibly see how anything will ever be ok again.

That must have been how the brutal killing of Jesus and his absolute refusal to resist, felt to the disciples. But in these moments of complete brokenness and hopelessness in our lives, we can hold on to the truth that Good Friday is only part of our Christian story. It is not the whole story. Although hope, healing and resurrection looked absolutely impossible on Good Friday, it nonetheless came on Easter Morning.

Good Friday is part of the story of the God we choose to believe and trust in, but it is not the whole story and it is not the end of the story. And knowing that, we can hold on to hope in a God who goes through death and overcomes it. Where we can see no more way forward, we can hold on to hope in our God, who is able to create a new path forward, even in the face of utter defeat and death. We can trust that even in the Good Friday moments in our lives, God has the power to bring about Easter morning.

Amen.