

Every year, we—or someone we know—may wonder again today: *Just what is it that is “good” about Good Friday?!*

We know from our own experience when someone we love has died...that the last thing we want to hear someone try to say, trying to comfort us with spiritual words, is why it is somehow actually *okay* that our beloved has died. Because we just know in our gut that *it is not okay*. Our beloved in all their unrepeatabe, distinctive, features and presence is gone. Our loss is unspeakable.

And so there is truly an unspeakable loss at the heart of this Friday in the gospel story: the desolating betrayal, rejection, torture, and death of Jesus. Absolutely no person in this part of the story is having an edifying spiritual experience.

So, at this point, it may be helpful to note that when we use the word “good” in Good Friday that the meaning of “good” is not our common understanding these days of “good”...that is, as something beneficial and pleasing. The use of “good” in Good Friday--as I understand it--actually goes back to an old English meaning of good as “holy”—as something set apart, of extreme gravity, touching upon God. “Good” Friday then is a day that should bring us to our knees.

We’ve heard enough and sung enough in church, of course, to know that there is *salvation in the cross*. But it is right to say that that is not obvious yet in this day, and it only becomes imaginable in the light of Easter. It is only in the light of Easter cast backwards upon the cross that we may see: that an evil was visited not only upon *Jesus*, but was perpetrated against *God*...that the crucified was not only a Son of Man, but the Son of God...and the crucifixion was not only an unjust capital punishment, but a blasphemy against the Father...who art in heaven.

This is not revealed to be the case today, but only later, on the Day of Resurrection. *And what is truly shocking* is that the Day of Resurrection was *not* a day of divine wrath in response to today, but something else completely:

Even though God’s gift in Christ was put to death, nevertheless, beyond all rational expectations, beyond our wildest dreams, *God gives the gift of Christ again.*

The *violence* of the cross was *disrupted* by the *grace* of God. The *desecration* of Jesus’ body was *transformed* by God’s resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The *meaninglessness* of such a death became the *meaningfulness* of Christ’s whole new life.

It is still right for us living now on the other side of the resurrection to resist any talk of how the deaths of our beloveds are somehow okay. Easter doesn’t reveal that Jesus’ death--or ours--are okay...but that they cry out for resurrection by God—and the renewal of what is lost and loved by God.

So, the light that Easter casts backward upon the cross actually ends up putting us in a place of *faithful disquietude* and *painful hopefulness*.

We are right to be restless in our desire that what has been stolen from us by evil and death will be restored.

We are right to hunger and thirst for righteousness in a world of cruelty and violence.

We are right to be restless until our hearts find their rest in God.