

“O Lord, do not be far away;
O my help, come quickly to our aid.” AMEN!

What’s so “Good” about tonight?

It’s a thoughtful question that most
everyone of us have asked.

Why is Good Friday - Good?

It’s foolish to say, isn’t it?

The imagery of darkness surrounds this night.

We entered in darkness and we
will depart in the same way.

The text tell of a progression of wicked plots,
false testimony, torture,
betrayal, execution and then finally
the last breath of our Lord.

It all weighs upon us, yet this
is a night we call “Good.” (Pause)

The people here tonight and worshipping

from home will recall that word, “good,”
and how it was used at creation.

God said all these words at
the creation and called what was seen,
“good.”

God saw the light and said it was good.

God saw the land and the waters
gathered together and said it was good.

God set the sun, moon, and all the stars
and saw them and said it was good.

God created creatures of every kind -
birds, cattle, creeping things, fish and
even humankind and

God saw everything and said,
it was very good.

This makes sense to me when considering
the word - good.

But, Good Friday? How? (Pause)

Like most profound questions there are

rarely any distinct, or clear,
right or wrong answers.

There are really only stories to tell that
lead us, possibly,
to a modicum of understanding.

Like the days of anxiety and
emotional pain we experience.

These real life stories can
bring some understanding.

During a time like that in my life,
I considered what was missing and one of
the answers was a church community.

So, at a time of anxiety and emotional
pain in my life, I went back to church
and found there,
not a magical remedy, a quick fix,
nor automatic healing,

but an authentic people and a caring place.

Simple togetherness.

Something was happening there and

it had nothing to do with me, or
any single person, but

I knew it was good because
I looked forward to going back to
that place of imperfection.

An imperfect congregation that walked and
taught of a perfect kind of love.

A love that was not selfish or self-serving.

A sacrificial kind of love and it was found,
in all places, on Good Friday. (Pause)

Sacrificial love, active love, love as a verb.

Agape love and here was the
Son of God doing exactly that on
that dark night. (Pause)

So, I went back to that first chapter of Genesis,
during study this week for tonight's message,
to the beginning of the beginning
you might say.

I reread the way the heavens and earth are
newly created and we are told of

a “formless void and darkness covered
the face of the deep while a wind
from God swept over the waters.”

The Bible doesn't say specifically that
God saw these parts and said it was good,

it was only when light is introduced that
the word is used,

but without the darkness,
without the void,

there'd be no understanding of need for light.

Therefore, those things have to be “good,” too.

It's place to start in seeing the
“Good” on this Friday.

Not pretty, not easy, not something
we search out... but a part of life that
brings us closer to our real selves,
one another, and closer to this God.

We recognize the “Good” of this night
because it was God who comes to our
anxiety and emotional pain and

physical pain and loneliness pain
and whatever suffering pain

we are encountering and says to us,
“I get it. I felt it. I experience it. I am with you.”

And Jesus did it freely;
without any loss of control;
without a stumble, or mublin' word...
without taking the easy way out.

Jesus makes Good Friday - Good,
because God did an amazingly foolish thing.

The One who wrapped the heavens and earth
was wrapped in a purple
cloak and was mocked.

The One who hung the sun, moon, and stars
was hanged upon a cross.

The One who divided the land from the sea
had their earthly possessions divided
at the toss of dice.

The One who created humankind,
carried the cross of execution
for those who were created.

I mean, we are talking about foolishness
on a cosmic level here and the wonder of
God's foolish love is missed by
so many people because of
the temptation to only

want the light, to only want the resurrection, and
to only want the quick remedy. (Pause)

In the movie, "Superman II," there's a scene
where Clark Kent, played by Christopher Reeve,
enters a diner with Lois Lane,
played by Margot Kidder.

At this point in the movie,
Superman has given up his powers in
the name of love for Lois.

Clark Kent is just a normal everyday human being.

Well, the two enter a diner and
Clark and Lois encounter a stereotypical
misogynistic bully.

Bravely, the entirely human, Clark stands up
to him but is quickly beaten
to a pulp because he's

no long the “man of steel.”

I recall watching that scene as a child and thinking -
what a tragedy; what a fool Clark Kent was.

To become like one of us, and
feel pain and suffering.

To become like one of us and bleed and get tired.

He put down his ability to make
people love him, and to save the world.

Does that sound familiar? (Pause)

The wonder of the cross and
the wonder of divine foolishness
have this power of “Good”-ness.

We cannot be bored by them...
by those wonders

They fill us with awe...
down in dark Gethsemane there’s a garden.

Soil, seed, life, death...
there’s holy ground that’s good.

Tonight is “good” because we can
go there together and see
this foolishness for ourselves.

AMEN!