

It's an emotional day of worship. Probably the most emotionally complex day in the life of the church. Significant yet confusing. Beautiful yet devastating. Uncomfortable and vulnerable. The end and the beginning. And for thousands of year, the church has returned to this day, in spite of and because of its complexity. Not because it's easy. Certainly not because we fully understand what happened on that day over 2,000 years ago. But always because it's good.

I say this because I know of no sermon or commentary or study or theologian who has ever adequately been able to crack the full depths of this day. And I won't pretend to be the first. But every time we come to this day, we hope and we pray for ears to hear it, for eyes to see, for hearts to be broken and mended and healed again, for our lives to be transformed by its power. Because it changes us every time we experience it.

And maybe it's one of those days where doctrine and theological understanding and all of the things that we are convinced are so central to our faith, are set aside. Not because good theology doesn't matter, but because sometimes we're challenged to move beyond the way we think things should be, and simply experience it for what it is, to simply come and be in the presence of God.

Which is why I want to invite you back. Back to that day, with all of its complexity and varying emotions. Back to the day when it all seemed like sin and death had won, only to learn that it was sin and death that were dying. I want to invite you back to the day when the hopes of thousands of generations were finally realized. When the promises of God have begun to be fulfilled. I want to invite you back to the day when the love of God was poured out for the whole world.

Because this day really is all about love. Real love. Hard love. The kind of love we long for. The love that aches in the depths of your soul. The love that leaves you feeling exposed, and yet, because it's love, you don't care about the vulnerabilities of it all. Because it's the love that sees you for who you are. It's the love that says you don't need to hide any longer. It's the love that frees us from guilt and shame rather than heaping it on. It's the incomprehensible, patient, resilient, persistent, love God has for the world.

Today, we remember that grace is sufficient. We remember that God is faithful. We remember that life matters. Yours, mine, and that of the whole world. We remember on this day that love is greater than all. We remember that the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the peace of the Spirit hold us and keep us this day and always. Welcome, my friends in Christ. This is Good Friday. Amen.