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What Is So Good About Good Friday?



SHARON KOH

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Matthew 26:36-46

What is so good about Good Friday?

As I linger on the passion of Jesus Christ and his road to the cross, the events at Gethsemane don't appear "good" at all—at least, not at first glance. Jesus' soul is burdened with sorrow

—sorrow that he describes as feeling like “the point of death.” So he gathers his closest friends and asks them to wait with him while he prays.

A few days ago, I asked the International Ministries home office staff, “What is Lent—the season of 40 days before Easter—really all about?”

“Waiting.”

“Anticipation.”

“Preparation.”

“Watching and waiting.”

I nudged them a little harder. “What do you think people are waiting for?”

On Good Friday, we have the sobering reminder that when Jesus asked Peter, James and John to wait with him, they did not: “Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. ‘Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?’” (Matthew 26:40)

On Good Friday, we remember that Jesus, at the lowest point of his time on earth, prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.” (Matthew 26:39)

On Good Friday, we remember that Jesus prayed, “Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:39) And then he bore the burden of death on a cross.

What is so good about Good Friday?

On Good Friday, we remember that Jesus Christ understood the human condition completely. He understood what it is to wait. He understood what it is to bear the burden of sin. He bore the weight of his own flesh and blood. Jesus “humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:8)

On Good Friday, we embrace the invitation to know that Jesus Christ understood what it means to wait.