

One thing we ought to pay attention to on this day, on Good Friday, is that today is not about us. It's about Jesus and particularly about a love that went about as far as love can go.

But we are often tempted to make faith about ourselves. We like to hear our favorite hymns, some people say Jesus is their "personal savior." We have an opinion about most things and even get caught up in debates about unimportant matters all together. One congregation I knew, 20 years later still talked about their scars over a debate on whether the new lawn should be seeded or sodded. At times we behave as if Jesus is at our beck and call, stopping to hear our prayers when we decide we've got the time. Asking that God would fix our troubles, control the weather, stop the neighbour's dog from barking and teach our children about faith (oh, yes, and sex-ed please.)

After all, we're pretty busy. We've got a lot of important stuff on our minds, jobs to keep, friends we haven't snapchatted in the last 2 minutes, places to get to, and it would be really nice if we could just enjoy a few minutes of peace and quiet at the end of a long, hard day.

Yes, we make faith more about ourselves than about Jesus and sometimes we reduce it to the time we have left over when all else is finished.

Let's not make today, Good Friday, about us.

I concur with Rick Warren, who wrote the book "The Purpose Driven Life" sums up the whole of his book in its first 3 words: "It's not about you." And especially Good Friday is NOT about you.

Jesus is the one whom God sent, who was the embodied God themselves from long before, coming in the flesh just as any of us came and breathed our first breath. Human. We like this part about

God. How wonderful that God became one of us, talking to fishermen, staying late at the wedding reception, calling a picnic on a hillside, stopping to notice a bleeding woman, tardy to his friend Lazarus' funeral. How human indeed. The stories of the Bible describe a life that was in many ways completely what one might expect of a regular person – yet not – as each story draws us in with a twist to make us understand that something different is happening.

The Bible tells us about Jesus, whom God sent to love the world. Even though from the very beginning, in the great mythical story of Adam and Eve who got us all started off on the wrong foot, even though Herod tried to have him killed, even though one of us, Judas, of Jesus' own inner circle betrayed him, even though Peter denied knowing him, Jesus continued to reach out, forgive, welcome back, teach, feed and love.

All along the way, from Bethlehem to Golgotha, from birth cries to the anguish of death, it's all about Jesus and the unwavering, resolute, stubborn commitment to a holy love. Oh, we think we know love, we think we know what it means to be tested, but we know nothing about the depth of benevolence it takes to love us.

So, it's not about us, but about what Jesus did. Even in the face of rejection, by outsiders and insiders, by religious leaders, and Roman officials; even in the unspeakable pain, even though with a word he could have ended it all, he refused. How far would you go for the ones you love? Jesus came to change the world, and that meant an unprecedented commitment to a holy way.

The cross is all about a love that dare not give up or give in. Christ, determined to adhere to something larger than his humanity, let the wave of Palm-Sunday-joy turned to Good-Friday-frenzy carry him where it may, but Jesus knew that love (and only love) could ride out such misunderstanding, such misdirection, judgment and hate. So he accepted the shame, the beatings, the jeers. And then there was silence.

And there is nothing we could do to change that.  
That is grace. Undeserved, relentless grace. For the whole of creation.

That's why Good Friday is about Jesus.

One thing we ought to pay attention to on this day, on Good Friday is, this day has *everything* to do with us.

Love needs a receptacle, love needs a response, love is designed to exist *between*, not in isolation. The whole point is God loves us. Beyond flowers and chocolate, God has sent prophets and teachers, angels and strangers and every time we misunderstood, looked the other way or said "no," God figured out a new way, a different way, trying again to catch our attention and draw us back.

Every time we messed up our promises God would make a new covenant. Like a grand video game with endless lives we get multiple "do-overs." Every time we let go or give in God patiently waits for us to be ready to begin again.

Good Friday is about us, because we need a God like this. We need a holy One to call us back from the brink of death and destruction, to soften our hearts and deflate our egos. We need to watch and listen and learn to kneel at the feet of our friends, and enemies, pouring out water in abundance that we could never have the strength to do on our own. But with God beside us, it's different.

Good Friday is about us, as part of a wondrous creation, made to be loved and made to give love.

And love will not be silenced.