

St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Tallebudgera QLD

3rd April 2026 – Good Friday

Isaiah 53:3-12

OUR LIFE THROUGH HIS DEATH

If we each had to make a list of things we would rather not talk about, I am sure that for many of us death would be right at the top of that list. But death is a part of life. It's final, it's confronting, it's unavoidable. Nothing disrupts life like death. Many of us can probably remember the first time we experienced death in some way. Chances are that when you were young you experienced the death of a pet, something which would have saddened you and introduced you to death's finality, but perhaps didn't fully prepare you for the gut wrenching, heart-breaking, all-consuming grief which comes with the loss of someone you love. You may have also heard of the death of a celebrity or other famous person; and it always interests me how so many people go through a kind of vicarious grieving for someone who they don't really know but just know of. It's as if we all have some grief inside of us that has to be let out, and here is a chance to do that. Death is a part of life, we know that, it's unavoidable but not something we can just easily accept.

Good Friday brings us face to face with death again - the death of Jesus Himself. We stand at the foot of His cross, and we see death up close. And yet, unlike every other death we have known, this death does not leave us empty. This death brings life. Death is an enemy. It tears, it isolates, it frightens. But today we remember that Jesus has stepped into death for us. He has entered the darkness so that we would not remain there.

Around 500 years before Good Friday, Isaiah described the picture the Gospels give us of Jesus' death with astonishing clarity. He describes a Servant who would willingly take our place: "He was condemned to death without a fair trial... His life was taken away because of the sinful things my people had done." (v. 8) Isaiah shows us a Saviour who does not avoid suffering but embraces it for our sake: "He was wounded and crushed because of our sins; by taking our punishment, he made us completely well." (v. 5) This is the heart of Good Friday: Jesus suffers not because He is guilty,

but because we are. He dies not because He must, but because He chooses to. He carries not His own burden, but ours. Isaiah's words tell us why Jesus was born, and why He had to die for us. Why Jesus was rejected, despised, pierced, crushed, but remained silent, obedient, and faithful to the very end.

Throughout the whole of Jesus' life, from His birth to His death, and on to His rising again, we are reminded that God comes into our world and our lives. Even though His birth was announced by angels, He grew up with a pretty normal childhood with parents who loved and cared for Him. Parents who protected Him in any way that they could. He came to be Immanuel, God with Us. In His three years of public ministry, the part of His life we know the most about, as well as giving inspirational teachings and performing astounding miracles, we know He also lived, in a very real way, the existence we live. He cried at the death of a friend. He ate and spent time with friends and family. He got tired and had to rest, afraid and had to talk to His Father, and had incidents which made Him angry and moved Him to action. Now, as we move from looking at the manger, to looking at the cross, we remember again that He is Immanuel, God with Us. He is with us in grief, in fear, in death. He knows what it is to be betrayed. He knows what it is to be abandoned. He knows what it is to hurt. He knows what it is to die. Our Suffering Servant does not watch from a distance. He steps into our world, our pain, our death.

Jesus' death is unlike any other. Every other death ends a life, it is confronting, it is final. Jesus' death gives life. When Jesus cries from the cross, "It is finished," He is not announcing defeat but completion. The debt is paid. The punishment is borne. The separation is healed and the relationship restored. The grave is opened. Good Friday is not "good" because suffering is good. It is good because Jesus transforms suffering. It is good because Jesus transforms death. Paul's triumphant words are words we have in our funeral service, where all seems to be final and complete, but in Jesus we can know it is a new beginning: "Death has lost the battle! Where is its victory? Where is its sting?" (1 Cor 15:54-55) Death still touches us, but it no longer owns us. Death still wounds us, but it cannot keep us. Death still comes close, but Jesus comes closer.

Today we stand at the foot of the cross—not as spectators, but as people for whom this death was endured. We bring our grief. We bring our guilt. We bring our questions. We bring our brokenness. And Jesus takes it all. He carries our sorrows. He bears our sins. He shoulders our death. He gives us His life. Good Friday is not the end of the story—but it is the turning point of the world. The Servant suffers. The Lamb is slain. The Son is given. And because of Him, everything is changed.

We leave this day perhaps in sorrowful thanks for what was done for us, but we do not leave in despair. We leave with the weight of the cross, but also with the promise of the empty tomb. Jesus' death is not the final word. It is the doorway to new life with Him. Jesus dying for us is only the first half of the story. Easter is coming. Life is coming. Hope is coming. But today we focus on the cross, on how great the Father's love is to send His only Son to die for us, how great the Son's obedience is to suffer and die for us in this way. Today we remember. Today we give thanks. For through His death, we receive life. Amen.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION/REFLECTION

- Take some time to think about the events of Good Friday. If you can, have a read of Isaiah 53:3-12. Reflect on how what Isaiah had prophesied came true in Jesus; use His description to picture for yourself the crucifixion scene we are given in the Gospels.
- Jesus came to take our punishment, to die the death which should have been ours. Spend some time reflecting on and praying for God's forgiveness for your sins. Pray for those you know you need to stop doing but feel unable to do so.
- Through His death, Jesus has brought us life. What does this mean to you? How does it change your life now?

Pray: thank God for the great sacrifice He made in sending Jesus to die for our sins. Ask God to help you to always remember His forgiveness and to lead you to live as one of His people.

*Pastor Andrew R. Koehler
07.04.2023*