

## Good grief, it's Good Friday again.

We've spent Lent thinking about finding hope in our suffering, and now we re-live the suffering of Jesus. **We wanted** a mighty King to end our suffering and fix the game in our favor. But Jesus **embraces** humility and suffering: he wore a crown of thorns, and marched not to a golden throne but to a humiliating death on a cross. Jesus even *arrived humbly* on a little donkey, showing us that we have to get off our high horses and drop our selfish ambitions, so that we can follow Jesus and be part of God's plan for a **different** kind of King.

We can't think about Jesus' suffering and death without *grief* bubbling up within us. We know grief. We grieve faded hopes, death of loved ones, relationships *we've* betrayed, people *we've* schemed to exploit. We grieve ways *we've* denied knowing the power of Jesus within us. We grieve the suffering that we cause Jesus to endure. In grief, we're tempted to withdraw, to nurse our wounds, to dwell in darkness. Grief holds power over us.

A story goes that a couple had enjoyed over 60 years of wonderful marriage when the husband died. That once outgoing, cheerful, friendly wife withdrew. Her neighbors saw a cold distant broken heart. They'd take baked goodies over to cheer her but she wouldn't answer the door. They'd leave the tray at the doorstep and the next day they'd see the untouched goodies in the trash. They'd call to check in and get no answer. They'd send cards that got returned unopened with handwritten scrawl, "Return to sender." Then one day little neighbor kid

Joey saw the wife walking in with bags of groceries. He raced over. A few hours later the whole neighborhood rejoiced, in stunned disbelief, to see the wife sitting on a rocking chair on her porch with Joey curled in her lap and they were smiling and wiping away tears. When he finally went home, his parents hugged him tightly and asked how did you get her to let you in? Joey answered, "I just helped her cry."

Grief holds power over us but when we allow others to share in our grief we learn a deeper, saving power. We are made more like Jesus, filled with the life-giving power of Jesus' love.

When we talk about God's power to bring a new Kingdom to change the world with his love, Good Friday is the anchor on which it all hangs. Jesus had to die so we could see the ultimate example of humble transforming love. Grief can lead us to be more like Jesus.

So, not Good ***grief***, it's Good ***Friday***, but **GOOD** grief, it's **GOOD** Friday. Through Jesus death, even grief and suffering become redemptive for God's love to transform the world.

**Amen.**