

# A GOOD FRIDAY MEDITATION

Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026 / 2:45 – 3:05 PM  
Port Edwards United Methodist Church

GATHERING WORDS *(based on Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and John 19)*

M: We gather in the shadow of the cross  
just before the 'ninth hour' when sorrow met love.

**P: We remember the One  
who was wounded by our human transgressions.**

M: He was despised by us and rejected by us –  
a Man of Sorrows, familiar with our grief.

**P: Yet by His wounds we are healed.**

M: From the cross, Jesus cried out,  
*"My God, my God, why have You forgotten about Me?"*

**P: We stay at the cross with Him,  
trusting a God who does not abandon.**

M: He picked up our burdens, He withstood our sin,  
and stretched out His arms in love.

**P: Behold the Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sin of the world!**

M: On this 'Good' Friday, we remember His suffering,  
honor His sacrifice,  
and stand in the mystery of redeeming love.

**ALL: Today we celebrate His act of salvation,  
and mourn our own willingness to kill it dead.**

PRAYER

**Almighty God, Your Son Jesus Christ stretched out His hands upon the cross so that He might draw the whole world to Himself.**

**Grant that we, whose salvation has benefited from His death, may also take up our 'daily cross' and follow Him as He called us to do; through Jesus Christ our Lord: AMEN!**

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS: *A Meditation*

- 1.) **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”**  
Even as nails pierce His hands, Jesus’ first instinct is to offer mercy, naming forgiveness even before anyone asks for it, teaching us that grace begins in God’s heart, not ours. *(Prayer)*
- 2.) **“Today, you will be with Me in paradise.”**  
To a criminal who has nothing left in life to offer but trust, Jesus gives him everything – companionship, dignity, and a future, for no one is ever too late for, or too far from, God. *(Prayer)*
- 3.) **“Mother, here is your son . . . John, here is your mother.”**  
Even in agony, Jesus knits together a new family. At the cross, love rearranges our relationships, creating ‘chosen families’ and making strangers into kin. *(Prayer)*
- 4.) **“My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?”**  
Now Jesus enters into the deepest human fear – abandonment. He prays as we pray when the world goes dark, reminding us that human emotions, even if misdirected, are real and palpable, but God meets us even in our stress and in the silent response. *(Prayer)*
- 5.) **“I am thirsty.”**  
The One who offered Living Water now feels the dryness of death upon Him. In His thirst, He shares our frailty, our human limitations, but sanctifies every human need. *(Prayer)*
- 6.) **“It is finished.”**  
Not a cry of defeat, but of completion. The Work of Love has reached its fullness: *“Perfect love casts out all fear”* (1 John 4:18). Nothing more needs to be added. *(Prayer)*
- 7.) **“Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.”**  
In the end, Jesus returns everything back to God – His breath, His suffering, His love, His life. And in that surrender, the world begins to change. *(Prayer)*

*(silence is kept)*

*Luke 23:44-45*

“It was now about noon [the sixth hour], and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon [the ninth hour], while the sun’s light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

*John 19:28-30*

When Jesus knew that all was now finished, He said, “*I am thirsty.*”  
(This fulfilled the scriptures.)

A jar full of sour wine was standing there.

So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to His mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, He said, “*It is finished.*”

Then He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

*(ringing of the church bell at 3:00 PM)*

*(silence)*

## THE PRAYER OF JESUS

**HYMN**

*Behold the Savior of Mankind*

**UMH 293**

(sung to the tune: *Amazing Grace*)

## DISMISSAL

May the God who does not turn away from suffering,  
hold you in the deep compassion that steadies the world.

May Christ, who bowed His head and gave up His life-force,  
surround you with the love that goes to the very end.

May the Holy Spirit, who breathes hope even when all seems  
lost and the world is descending into a handbasket,  
keep you in watchful courage until the dawn of Resurrection.

**ALL: We go in the mercy of the Creator,  
the love of the Redeemer,  
and the power of the Sustainer: AMEN!**

# A LABYRINTH PRAYER PATH

*(trace your finger along the pathway,  
praying as you go,  
and find Christ at the center)*



“God Almighty, Holy & Loving One, Eternal, Ever-Present One,  
Earth-Maker, Life-Giver, Pain-Bearer, Lover of Our Souls,  
through all the twists & turns of life, when clouds obscure the way ahead,  
when what once seemed so close now looks so far away,  
walk with us.

Light-Bringer, Faith-Builder, Justice-Bringer,  
we now walk the path that leads to the center of Your love: AMEN!”