

What difference does it make that Jesus died?

John 18: 16b -30

Here on Good Friday, the light of Easter Sunday morning is still some way off; the dawn has not yet broken; the first soft calls of the wakening doves and pigeons, starlings, blackbirds, wrens, robins, thrushes, are not yet heard. Instead, there is the deafening silence of death, the empty void of nothingness, the utter bewilderment of the vanishing of love, friendship, a place to make our stand and to lay our heads. What has happened? Just now, in THIS place, before we know the end of the story, what difference does it make that Jesus died? Is there anything to be found here in the mess and muddle and pain and torture? What are we supposed to do? What are we supposed to hold on to when the sky has turned dark, when tremors and rumours of war shake the earth?

Good Friday is certainly upon us as we survey the land ravaged by overuse and greed.

Good Friday is certainly upon us as we hear the cries of hundreds of thousands of hungry and cold children living in poverty – far too many in a wealthy country.

Good Friday is certainly upon us as we gaze beyond our own shores to devastation, ruin and lives torn apart.

In our own Good Friday what difference does it make that Jesus died?

Jesus walked towards his Good Friday, setting his face toward Jerusalem, not without fear, not without the knowledge of all the violence that lurks in the hearts of humanity, but not in despair. Something kept him going, kept him true to his path, called to him and urged him on.

And even as he hung forsaken on the cross, he directed his forsakenness to his Father – calling out to God, calling out to love, calling out to hope and faith. Even as all love, faith and hope seemed dead, still he reached out for connection.

And as he breathed his last, as he 'gave up his spirit' – his very soul, his essence – in that very moment the fabric of everything shifted. The veil between worlds was lifted. The impossible became possible. Hate became love. Despair became hope. Dread became faith.

It is in giving up everything, in acknowledging both the fragility and preciousness of life itself and being willing to let it go, to be 'a feather on the breath of God' that we too will find the power to change the world – our worlds, the worlds of our loved ones, and our entire global home.

What difference does it make that Jesus died? It shows us a different way to be; that in our own Good Friday we might learn to let go, to trust that even in the middle of turmoil and confusion – before even the whisper of a happy ending – hope remains; that in abandonment we will find the very ground of our being; that even in suffering our feet may rest on solid ground; that Christ, the one who hung and suffered and gave up his spirit, knows our pain, knows, sees and holds our pain within his own being.

What difference does it make that Jesus died? The difference is that in our Good Friday we are no longer alone.