

GOOD FRIDAY

Hebrews 4:14-16 CEB

March 30, 2018 Good Friday

¹⁴ Also, let's hold on to the confession since we have a great high priest who passed through the heavens, who is Jesus, God's Son; ¹⁵ because we don't have a high priest who can't sympathize with our weaknesses but instead one who was tempted in every way that we are, except without sin. ¹⁶ Finally, let's draw near to the throne of favor with confidence so that we can receive mercy and find grace when we need help.

Good Friday, the day Jesus died on the cross. Jesus, our great high priest, made himself to be the sacrifice required to bring us into relationship with himself, with God, with the Holy Spirit. The High Priest of the Temple only once a year entered the Holy of Holies, entered God's Presence, to make atonement for Israel's sin. It was so terrifying that a rope was tied around him to pull him out if he became totally overwhelmed. And yet these verses tell us to hold on to our confession, our faith, and draw near to God's throne with confidence, since (or because) of what Jesus has done, and who he is. Not once a year, but daily, hourly, every minute of every day, we are called to His presence. He wants a deep, intimate relationship with us.

On this day that marks his death, we mourn, but with joy. The roots of the word joy trace back to the Latin *gaudere*, rejoice. We can mourn with rejoicing because we know that this is not the end. But we must go through this day, even as Jesus did. We must take into our hearts the sure knowledge that the human Jesus died: died for and because of me and my sin. That the human Jesus was tempted in every way, except that he did not sin, and so he passes through this life, knowing all that we know, feeling all we feel, experiencing all the needs, desires, disappointments, hurts, confusions, loneliness, everything. He passes through, and then he goes beyond. Easter will come, but not until we take into our hearts all of Good Friday.

Prayer: Gracious God we pray for you to be with us on this day of darkness. Bring hope and peace to our innermost being as we mourn the death of your Son. Amen

Jane Arnold, Capon Bridge UMC
jpasings@frontiernet.net