

**Good and Holy:
April 3, 2026**

I know I've told you...
That I hate going to the dentist. **[1 Dentist]**
Our dentist is great.
I really like her.
It's not personal.

It's just...
I've had dental trauma...
Which informs every single visit...
To the dental office.

So. I'm sitting in the lobby... last week...
Waiting for them to call my name...
So I can take the long walk...
Back to the dental chair...
And have holes drilled in my teeth.

I'm sitting there.
Breathing.
Striving for inner peace.
When a song comes on...
The overhead speakers.

A song that was popular...
Way back in the 1900's... 1981...
But this is one of the songs... burned onto...
My mental hard drive.

Here it is.
[VIDEO - Lord I hope this day is good] [2 Good Day]

And it hit me.
The lyrics.
The familiar music.

I don't know why...
It hit me so hard...
Sitting there in the dentist office.
I wasn't really afraid of the dentist.
And I didn't have a sense of inner dread.

But I really did hope... and prayed...
That the day would be good.

Maybe it hit me because...
Life is hard sometimes.
And everybody is going through something...
If not now... sooner or later...

Maybe it's because...

I'm a rotten person sometimes.
And I know who I am...
And how I fall short.
How I contribute to the overall quality of the day.

Maybe it's because...
I let myself get overwhelmed...
By the evil in the world.
News. War. Hate. Confusion.
Bleck.

But whatever the reason...
I think the song is actually... a faithful prayer...
Asking for God's presence...
In the face of feeling empty...
And misunderstood...

I think we all need to know...
And be reassured...
That God is here... now.

And that God will take this life...
Will take my life...
And transform it...
Into something good.

So... here we are again... **[3 Good Friday]**
On Good Friday.
And Lord...
After hearing the story...
And reliving what you have gone through...
Lord... I hope this day is good.

I hope that I am worth it.

I hope that my sin...
That caused you...
To walk to Jerusalem...
To confront the religious establishment...

My sin that caused you...
To do all the hard things...
You did.

I hope that my sin...
That held you to the cross...
Was worth it.

It was worth it to me.
And I thank you.
For all you have done.

But Lord... I hope this day is good.

Maybe it would help today...
If we took a minute...
To define good. **[4 Theo of Golden]**

Lola McDonald...
Gave me a book...
And Gwen Wilhelm...
Was going to give it to me too.
They both talked about...
How powerful the book was.

It's called "Theo of Golden"...
I'm not done yet.
But I've already...
Had to wipe tears from my eyes... several times.

And there was this one part... on page 119...
That is relevant for today.

It takes place when Theo...
The main character of the book...
Asks a local artist... if his art is... good.

And the artist had a really hard time...
Either admitting...
Or facing the fact...
Or defining what it meant...
To be a good artist. **[5 Good]**

And then Theo says...
I have thought about it.
In fact. I've thought about it a great deal.
And I've asked others about it.
But I don't know if...
I have a good answer either.

Other than this.
It might not make a lot of sense...
But for anything to be good, truly good...
There must be love in it.

I'm not even sure I know..
Fully what that means...
But the older I get...
The more I believe it.

There must be love for the gift itself...
Love for the subject being depicted...
Or the story being told...
And love for the audience.

Whether the art is sculpture, farming, teaching...
Lawmaking, medicine, music, or raising a child,
If love is not in it... at the very heart of it.
It might be skillful, marketable, popular,
But I doubt it is truly good.
Nothing is what it's supposed to be...
If love is not at the core.

That sounds right to me.
The only way something is ever good...
Is if love is at the core of it.
If love is mixed into it.

Like even if the moment is evil... or hard... or sad...
If love is mixed into that moment...
If love and sorrow mingle down...
Then somehow it gives us hope...
And strength... to keep moving forward.
Through the hard things.

And in addition... we know... **[6 God is Love]**
That God is love.
Then that means...
The only way something is ever good...
Is if God is at the core of it.

And there can be no doubt.
That God is at the core of today.
This Good Friday.

The crucifixion is God's love revealed
God's will accomplished.
God... lifted up.
God... with us.
Right there... for us to see.

I know I've told you this story before...
But I took our two oldest daughters... **[7 The Passion]**
To see the Passion of the Christ...
When it first came out.

We went with a church group.
Rented the whole theater...
And all that.

If you have seen the movie...
You know... that it is hard to watch.
It is brutal.

No one spoke...
As they left the theater.
I've never seen that happen before.
We were all silent... and we made our way to the car.

When we shut the door...
Katie needed to talk about...
What she had just seen...

So she asked a million questions...
And made a million comments...
And was sincerely wanting to know...
What this meant for her.

But her older sister Liz...
Was in a very different place.
She was overwhelmed...
By the love and sacrifice...
Of Jesus... in that moment...

So... she yelled... at her sister...
Can we just be quiet...

See... she needed to sit...
In the silence of the moment.
She needed to process... and feel...
The holiness... of his sacrifice... that was made... for her.

That is part of what makes today good too.
It's because we know...
That this act of sacrifice...
That this extreme love...
Was not just a good man...
Doing a good thing.

This goes way beyond that.
It was holy.
It was sacred.
It was a fulfillment of God's plan.

So it was... good and holy.
The good part is made good...
By having God involved...

The holy part is made holy...
Because we know...
On this day...
Jesus chose us.
Above himself.

It was a sacred act of love.
It was a scared act of God.

If God had not been involved...
With the crucifixion...
And the death of Jesus.

Then... it would have just been a brutal act...
With no good attached to it.

No hope beyond it. No life in it.

But. Since God was at work...
In and through the crucifixion...
Then we know...
The end result...
The reconciliation...
The forgiveness of sin...
All that.. rolled up in one...
Was accomplished.

That's what Jesus meant... **[8 Finished.]**
When he said...
It is finished.

The greek word for finished... is τελέω...
Which means... complete.
Accomplished.
Done.

God's work in Jesus...
Is done.
Our battle with sin...
Is done.
Our freedom and new life...
Is done.
On that cross.

And again...
When we say...
God so loved the world...

This is what God's love...
Looks like.

It looks like payment.
That Jesus did not owe.

It looks like pain.
That Jesus bore...
On our behalf.

It looks like death.
Which we had coming...
Which we deserve...
And he did not.

So on the surface...
This is a very hard day.
It's hard to watch.
It's hard to witness.
It's hard to embrace...

And yet... it was completely necessary.
We needed Jesus to do this.
Like it or not.
We needed this.

But... in the face of this great loss...
Please don't misunderstand..
What this means.

Don't you doubt for a second...
That God is here.
Love is here.
Hope is here.
Good is here.

And don't you doubt...
For a single second...
That all this...
Was done...
For you.

Thanks be to God.
Amen.