

HOMILY
April 14, 2006
GOOD FRIDAY

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What seemed to the disciples as one of the worst days in their lives is, to us, a very special and sacred day. We call this day *Good Friday*, even though the most innocent person who has ever lived was cruelly tortured and put to death. No one called it *Good Friday* then. In fact, the term *Good Friday* does not appear in the Bible. It was only much later than Christians began to see the full significance of what had happened on Calvary.

Friday is still a significant day. Many of you know the saying that is associated with Friday: "T.G.I.F. -- Thank God It's Friday." After a busy week of problems and pressure on the job or at school, after hassles and headaches, Friday is a welcome day because it means a break.

Today, we can thank God it's Friday – not just because we're looking to the weekend and we can leave our place of work or school and forget about it – but we can thank God for all that this Friday stands for. Today, we thank God it's Friday for we can once again see *HOW DEEP IS GOD'S LOVE*.

This morning, while driving on Communion calls, I heard a song on the radio, an oldie but goodie by the Bee-Gees entitled *How Deep Is Your Love?* Lovers have pondered that same question for ages. Husbands and wives have reflected on it. Love that is not very deep presents problems in a lot of human relationships.

Maybe you saw a letter the other day in *The Flint Journal*:

Dear Ann,
My boyfriend left me for another girl. How can I get him back?
Signed, Lonely

Dear Lonely,
Are you sure you want him back? You may be better off without him.

Shallow love is common. It's like a person who offers to help but never shows up. It's a person who vows "You can count on me!" then finds a hundred excuses. Having a deep love for anything means that you are willing to give of yourself to sacrifice for it. Whatever it takes, whatever the cost, you are willing to do it or to pay it. The night

before he died Jesus said, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” Today we see how deep the love of God is. God’s love is deep enough to come from the highest heaven to reach the lowliest of sinners. Today we thank God it’s Friday for we see how wide is God’s love. God’s love is universal, worldwide, spanning time and generations. No one is excluded.

How we need to learn. We draw circles to keep people out; God’s love draws a larger circle to bring everyone in. Many of us are choosy when it comes to loving others. Our loving just doesn’t reach very far. Many of us have problem with inclusiveness. We talk about extending the Kingdom of God, but when it comes right down to it, we are uneasy about extending it to people that we feel are different than we are. Jesus says, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?” For even sinners love those who love them.

Some say that it is easier to love people in general terms than in person. It’s like the man who had just finished pouring and smoothing fresh concrete in his driveway. A neighbor girl running home wasn’t watching were she was going and tracked several steps in the fresh concrete. The man became infuriated and angrily scolded the girl. A friend who witnessed it said to him a little while afterwards, “I thought you liked children?” The owner of the driveway said, “I do, but not in the concrete.”

That’s the way it is. It is much easier to love people in general and not in the concrete.