



**TO DESTROY THAT WHICH WE WERE GIVEN
IN TRUST: HOW WILL WE BEAR IT?**

+ WENDELL BERRY

**GOOD FRIDAY
APRIL 3, 2026
6:30 P.M.**

Order of Worship

Good Friday

April 3, 2025 † 6:30 p.m.

Tonight, we gather for a Service of Lament. As the shadows deepen and the sanctuary slowly darkens, we will listen, together, to words from scripture and poetry that speak to sorrow, suffering, and silence. On this night, we stand with Jesus at the edge of death, in the uncertain space of grief and waiting, trusting that God meets us in these places of fear, confusion, and loss. Though we do not remain in those places when we remain open to the quiet promise of what is yet to come, holding space for both the cross and the hope of an empty tomb.

Gather (in silence)

On this day, we gather at the foot of the cross. The story unfolds in shadows of betrayal, denial, suffering, and death.

We come to remember. We come to lament.

In the passion of Christ we see the weight of the world's violence and brokenness laid bare.

We see what we have done. We see what we have become.

As Wendell Berry writes, *"it is the destruction of the world in our own lives that drives us half insane..."*

We confess the ways we have taken what was given in trust and turned it toward harm.

We bring the grief we carry, the suffering of the world, and the suffering within ourselves.

We do not turn away. We stand in the shadows of the cross.

Here, Christ enters fully into our sorrow. Here, even in death, God is present.

We wait. We watch. We trust.

Let us pray: God of the cross,

on this day of sorrow, we gather in the shadow of suffering and death. We confess the brokenness of the world and the ways we have shared in it, the harm we have done, the love we have withheld, the trust we have failed to keep. As we hear again the story of Christ's passion, keep us present to its weight and its truth. Let us not rush past the pain, but remain here long enough to feel the depth of your love poured out for the world. Hold us in this holy lament, and meet us in the darkness with your quiet, steadfast grace. Amen.

Confession & Forgiveness

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. God of the cross, **we confess that we have taken part in the brokenness of this world. We have turned away from what was given in trust, from your creation, from one another, even from our own hearts. We confess the ways we have chosen greed over care, haste over patience, and indifference over love. Like those who stood at the cross, we have looked away from suffering, or remained silent when we should have spoken. We have helped bring about the destruction we now grieve, and we do not know how to bear it.**

In the silence of this moment, we bring before God the burdens we carry, the harm we have done, and the grief we cannot name.

Even here, at the cross, in the depth of sorrow and the weight of all that is broken, God does not turn away. In Jesus, God enters fully into our suffering, into the destruction of the world and of our lives, and bears it in love.

And so I declare to you: your sins are forgiven. Not because the world is unbroken, but because Christ has entered its brokenness and will not abandon it. You are held in mercy. You are met in your grief. You are not alone. **Thanks be to God.**

The First Word From the Cross—Luke 23:33-34

³³*When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots to divide his clothing.*

“Were You There?”

(hymn) 353

¹Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Extinguishing of the First Candle and time for silent reflection.

The Second Word From the Cross—Luke 23:39-43

³⁹*One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, ‘Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!’ ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.’ ⁴²Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ ⁴³He replied, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’*

²Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Extinguishing of the Second Candle and time for silent reflection.

The Third Word From the Cross—John 19:26-27

²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.'²⁷Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'
And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

³Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Extinguishing of the Third Candle and time for silent reflection.

The Fourth Word From the Cross—Matthew 27:45-46

⁴⁵From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.
⁴⁶And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?'
that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

⁴Lord, Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Extinguishing of the Fourth Candle and time for silent reflection.

The Fifth Word From the Cross—John 19:28-29

²⁸After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.'²⁹A 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.

Let the scene come into focus.

You are standing at the foot of the cross. The sky is dim. The air is heavy.
You can hear the labored breathing of Jesus. Then he speaks: *"I am thirsty."*

Notice the simplicity of the words. The humanity in them.

He who turned water into wine...He who offered living water to the thirsty...now thirsts.

What kind of thirst is this? Physical, yes, but perhaps more.

A thirst for mercy in a merciless moment. A thirst for love in the face of rejection.

A thirst for a world made whole again. As you stand there, notice your own thirst.

The soldiers lift a sponge to his lips. Even here, even now, there is a small act of response.

Christ is present in thirst, his, and yours.

Extinguishing of the Fifth Candle and time for silent reflection.

The Sixth Word From the Cross—Luke 23:44-46

⁴⁴*It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon,* ⁴⁵*while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.*

⁴⁶*Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.'*
Having said this, he breathed his last.

The darkness deepens. The world feels as though it is holding its breath.

Jesus cries out: *"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."*

Hear the trust in those words. Even now. Even here.

This is not the cry of despair alone, it is surrender.

Imagine what it means to release everything, control, certainty, even life itself,
into the hands of God. Hands that formed the world. Hands that hold what we cannot.

What are you still holding tightly? What feels too heavy to carry?

Gently place it into God's hands. No need for perfect faith.

Just the smallest movement of trust.

Extinguishing of the Sixth Candle and time for silent reflection.

The Final Word From the Cross—John 19:30

³⁰*When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.'* *Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

Let those words settle. Not rushed. Not defeated. But complete.
The work of love carried all the way through.
The long road of suffering brought to its end.
Notice what happens next. He bows his head. He breathes his last.

Silence follows

This is the space of Sabbath, the pause between death and resurrection.
Nothing more to be done. Nothing left to prove. Only stillness.
Only the quiet mystery that God is still at work, even here.
In the ending. In the silence.
Now trust, that though you cannot yet see it, this is not the end.

Extinguishing of the Seventh Candle and time for silent reflection.

Offering

Offering Music

Offering Prayer

God of mercy and love,

even in the shadow of the cross, you call us to generosity. Take these gifts, small though they may seem, and use them to bring hope, healing, and life to a world in need. May they be a sign of our trust in you and our care for others. Amen.

Blessing

The God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, make you complete in everything good so that you may do God's will, working among you that which is well-pleasing in God's sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. **Amen.**

Closing Song

"All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night"

(hymn) 565

¹All praise to thee, my God, this night for all the blessings of the light.
Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings, beneath thine own almighty wings.

²Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son, the ill that I this day have done;
that with the world, myself, and thee, I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

³Teach me to live, that I may dread the grave as little as my bed.
Teach me to die, that so I may rise glorious at the awesome day.

⁴Oh, may my soul in thee repose, and may sweet sleep mine eyelids close,
sleep that shall me more vig'rous make to serve my God when I awake!

⁵Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

We leave in silence tonight.

Please join us on Easter Sunday morning as we rejoice.

Our festive service will begin at 9:00 a.m.



Wendell Berry, "It Is the Destruction of the World" (1988)

from This Day: Collected and New Sabbath Poems, II

*It is the destruction of the world
in our own lives that drives us
half insane, and more than half.
To destroy that which we were given
in trust: how will we bear it?*

*It is our own bodies that we give
to be broken, our bodies
existing before and after us
in clod and cloud, worm and tree,
that we, driving or driven, despise
in our greed to live, our haste to die.*

*To have lost, wantonly,
the ancient forests, the vast grasslands,
is our madness, the presence
in our very bodies of our grief.*

**ST. PAUL LUTHERAN
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