

## **Good Friday**

### **Prayer:**

Lord our God, we are gathered here on this day to consider how you have carried out your good, firm will for the world and for all of us, by allowing our Lord Jesus Christ, your dear Son, to be captured that we might be free; to be found guilty that we might be found innocent; to suffer that we might rejoice; and to be given over to death that we might live forever. Under our own power, we could only be lost. And we have not deserved such a rescue-no, not one of us. But in the inconceivable greatness of your mercy, you have shared in our sin and our poverty, in order to do such a great thing for us. How else could we thank you but to grasp, take up, and acknowledge this great thing? How else should this happen, but that the same living Savior who suffered for us, was crucified, died, was buried, and was also raised up, should now come into our midst, speak to our hearts and minds, open us to your love, and guide us to trust in it completely and to live by it and by it alone. So we ask you in all humility, but also in all confidence, that this happen in the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Karl Barth, *50 Prayers*

### **Reading:**

The meaning of the story is found in every detail, as well as in the broad narrative. The pain and tears of all the years were met together on Calvary. The sorrow of heaven joined with the anguish of earth; the forgiving love stored up in God's future was poured out into the present; the voices that echo in a million human hearts, crying for justice, longing for spirituality, eager for relationship, yearning for beauty, drew themselves together into a final scream of desolation. Nothing in all the history of paganism comes anywhere near this combination of event, intention, and meaning. Nothing in Judaism had prepared for it, except in puzzling, shadowy prophecy. The death of Jesus of Nazareth as the king of the Jews, the bearer of Israel's destiny, the fulfillment of God's promises to his people of old, is either the most stupid, senseless waste and misunderstanding the world has ever seen, or it is the fulcrum around which world history turns. Christianity is based on the belief that it was and is the latter.

N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian*