

## Good Friday - April 2

*Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

*Matthew 26:36-45 (NRSV)*

I remember going on a first date with my husband, Josh, and telling him that I was afraid of death. If you think that it is not the best topic to talk about on a first date, I would agree. But the fact that I was telling Josh about one of my deepest fears, told me a lot about him. I am so thankful that I married him. Yes, I am a pastor and since when I was a teenager and had a mind-blowing realization that I was going to die someday, once in a while the anxiety about death tightens my chest and clouds my mind. But last spring something freeing happened to me. I was participating in a webcast based on a book by a theologian, N.T. Wright, called "Surprised by Hope." One particular night I decided to sit outside. There was something about sitting outside in the brisk air of early spring evening listening to the words of beauty and hope of N.T. Wright, listening to Larry, the lively discussion of the participants, and looking at the creation waking up from winter slumber into a new season of life. The trees started to bud, the grass was getting greener and the air was full of promise of warmer weather, blooming flowers, and countless hours spent outside. In that moment, like never before in my life, I trusted God. I trusted God with my whole life. More importantly, I trusted God even with my death. For the first time, there was such air of freedom and hope that filled my lungs to the full. I knew that death had no grip on me, that Jesus had conquered it and I did not have to worry and get anxious about that anymore. I caught a glimpse of the freedom that only Christ can give to us, as he went through the agony and fear and imminence of death himself, while he prayed in Gethsemane for God to take this cup from him.

Pastor Katya Brodbeck

**Prayer:** Holy God, we pray on this Holy Friday, that your suffering and dying on the cross may not be something that we hear and read about. May it touch our own suffering and fears. May it leave a trace on our hearts so deep, that it becomes for us a way to life, freedom, and love. In the name of the one who conquered death, we pray. Amen.