

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Good Friday - April 3, 2026

“³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

- John 19:30 -

Darkness. Tears. Mourning. Silence. It seemed that all hope had been lost. Jesus had died. Just moments earlier the crowd had been yelling, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” The loud sounds of hammers beating down on the nails that secured our Lord to the cross were deafening. Screams of agony from the Savior’s mouth could be heard for miles. The wailing cries of his mother Mary and the other women and men, who had grown to love Jesus as their friend were heartbreaking. And as Jesus gave up his spirit, more chaos ensued. Darkness covered the earth, the earth shook, and the curtain was torn from top to bottom as the Heavenly Father’s grief cried out from the heavens above at the loss of his only begotten son. Eventually the silence came. Not the kind of silence that allows you to feel at peace. No, this was the kind of silence that left you wondering, “What now?” The kind of silence that leaves you feeling uncomfortable, like when something isn’t fully complete. The kind of silence that leaves you thinking all hope is lost.

When I was serving in South Dakota, we held a Tennebrae service on Good Friday. The church was dark and silent when everyone left. It was dark except for one light: the paschal candle. It served as a reminder that hope is never lost because Christ is always with us. Well, I enjoy talking to people, so to keep myself from being tempted to talk after the service, I would go into my dark office and stay there until most of congregants had left. One year when my son Henrik was about four or five, he was in the dark office with me. We were whispering quietly. I wanted to make sure Henrik wasn’t afraid since it was dark and quiet. I picked up Henrik and went to the window of my office, where outside, the bell tower with the cross could be seen since it had lights on it after dark. I pointed to the cross and said, “Henrik? Can you see the cross? It’s lit up outside.” Without missing a beat he responded, “Yes, Mom, but the cross is *always* lit.”

The cross is always lit. Henrik was absolutely right! We don’t have to live without hope because “it is finished.” Jesus defeated the devil. He defeated sin. And he defeated death. And he did it all because he loves us so much. The light of Christ is always with us, and that darkness will never overcome the earth again. The light of Christ is always on the cross; the cross is always lit.