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Well, today is Good Friday. It's the day that we traditionally set aside to think about and reflect upon the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

My daughter asked me just a couple of days ago a really good question and maybe it's a question you've had on your mind as well. She said, "Daddy, if this is the day that Jesus died, why do we call it good?" And that's a really, really great question.

See, this isn't a day that we necessarily celebrate the crucifixion of Jesus, but it is a day that we reflect upon and we remember the impact that his death, his burial, and his resurrection that is going to come on Sunday—what that does and what that means for us.

You know, Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians. He says that the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are far from God, to those who don't get it. But to those of us who are Christ followers it is the power of our salvation.

So, I want to talk a little bit about what the cross means. Like, why did Jesus have to die on a cross? There are really three reasons that I just want to mention for you today as you reflect upon this. Number one:

The cross of Jesus shows us the destructive nature of our sin.

Now, if you know anything at all about Roman crucifixion, then you know that it was excruciatingly painful. I'll save you all of the gory details, but the Romans knew how to maximize the highest threshold of pain before someone would die. And the Romans did it to kind of flex their power. So they would flog someone just within an inch of his life and where the nails would go was basically designed to suffocate him. It was an excruciating way to die.

And every now and then... I don't know if you saw the movie *The Passion of the Christ* that came out more than a decade ago, but it got an R rating and the reason why was because the cross was so brutal. And you might say, "Why? Why couldn't God just snap his fingers and forgive us. Why couldn't Jesus die a less painful death?" And I think one of the reasons for that is because the bloody cross of Jesus shows you and me the reality of our sin.

You know, at times, we have a tendency to downplay sin. It's not lying, it's just fibbing. You know, it's not adultery, it's an affair. We have these words in which we lessen the impact of our sin. Sin destroys relationships. Sin destroys your inner peace. Sin destroys your connection to God. The cross of Jesus shows us that in just gruesome detail.

The second reason, though, why the cross is so necessary is because:

Jesus wanted to demonstrate just how far he would go to show you his love.

I love what Jesus says in John's gospel. He says, "Nobody took my life. I laid it down." Jesus was in complete control the whole time. He knew what he was doing. And so Jesus, when he went to the cross, maybe you've heard it said before, that it wasn't the nails that kept him there, it was you. The thought of you, knowing that you and I would need this sacrifice in order to be reconciled to God.

And that brings me to the third reason:

The cross of Jesus was necessary so that we could be reconnected to God. You know, there are four biographies that talk about Jesus' life: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And they tell us what Jesus did. But Romans tells us why he did it. And in Romans it talks at great length—there are these three words that you should probably be somewhat familiar with.

They are the words: justice, and that basically means that you and I get what we deserve; and then there is the word mercy, that means that we can be forgiven from what we deserve; but then there is this third, powerful word that Romans introduces to us and it's grace. Grace is unmerited favor, it's way better than mercy, because you actually don't just get released or pardoned from your sins, but you actually get the gift of God, you get the promise of hope. And that all comes through Jesus Christ.

And so, this is a good Friday. It's good because of what Jesus did for us. It's good for what Jesus has demonstrated to us. And on the last night that Jesus was with the disciples, before his arrest and his beating and his crucifixion, Jesus would share a meal with the disciples. And at the time they really had no idea what was going on, but Jesus had some bread and he had some wine or some juice and he basically said, "This is my body that is broken for you and this is my blood that is shed for you."

And he said that: Through my broken body on a cross and through the blood that I would shed, you not only get mercy, you get grace. You can be reconciled to God once and for all because of Jesus' substitutionary atonement that he made for us on a cross 2000 years ago.

So, it is with that in mind that I just want to lead us in communion. Hopefully, you have some elements in your home that you can do this with. Just get some bread or some juice of any kind, really. And let's first of all take the bread, which represents Jesus' broken body for you and for me. Let's take and let's eat remembering the sacrifice he made. And then we're going to take the juice, which represents his shed blood for us on a cross. I'm so thankful, aren't you?

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you so much for this Good Friday. Thank you for the fact that you would send your Son to do for us what we could never do on our own. Jesus came to live the life that we were supposed to live, but we couldn't live because of our brokenness and imperfection. And he died the death that, really, we deserved to die, because we are guilty of sin.

But he took all of that guilt, he took all of that shame, he took all of that brokenness upon himself and he nailed it to a cross, declaring victory over it. Nobody took his life, he willingly laid it down so that we might know that we are loved, that we might remember how serious our sin is, and so that we could be reconciled to a holy God.

And so, Father, we take this bread and this juice, which represents your body and your blood, and we look ahead to this Sunday, on resurrection day, when Jesus would walk out of a grave so that we might have hope beyond our grave as well.

We thank you and we love you and we ask this in Jesus' name: Amen.