Grace and peace from God our Father and our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Why do we call this day that Jesus died on the cross Good Friday?

In today’s long narrative Jesus says “I am.” It is through Jesus that God reigns on the cross. The cross is not a symbol of torture or execution but rather symbolizes the glory of God in the middle of death and sorrow. This gift from God via the cross gives us the freedom to helps others as we believe in and follow Jesus.

Throughout Jesus ministry he turned everything on its head: the last becomes the first, blessed are the humble and meek who shall inherit the earth, blessed are the poor, those who are blind can now see and so forth. Power is designated through humility, not might. Jesus challenged the powerful in demonstrating the king who had triumphantly ridden into Jerusalem and became a criminal. Jesus was a perfect scapegoat. He was innocent - Pilate said he could find no charges against hi but he was killed anyway. He did not defend himself against charges. So Jesus becomes a suffering servant who was willing to die so we could live which is diametrically opposed to the religious leaders who thought I was best for one to die rather than to lose their power and temple.

The Gospel of John depicts the story of Jesus, how he was the fulfillment of scripture and prophecy and how he would bring all people into reconciliation with God’s very self. As we listened we heard how the journey to the cross accelerated with many details and ten ended when Jesus cried out from the cross and then announced “It is finished.” His passion and his suffering are done and there is completion in God’s promise of bringing a long-awaited Messiah. Since we cannot save ourselves God interceded on our behalf in a way contrary to human expectations. That is Jesus turning everything on its head.

We now look at the consequences in God’s sacrifice for our benefit as we proclaim the good news - the events on this day were not only necessary but were sufficient for our salvation. At the cross, our life of being slaves to sin is finished and now we begin our new life of discipleship. As you leave in silence think about how we can turn our life over to Christ and proclaim his name to the whole world, while having the freedom to serve others that are in need knowing regardless of what happens we will be okay.

Amen.