

Good Friday Sermon – The Question of Worth

Once, during a retreat day, someone asked me a simple but disarming question: “If Jesus suddenly appeared here, what would you ask Him?”

People around me gave beautiful, theological, even poetic answers. But when it came to me, I found myself saying something much simpler, almost childlike:

“Lord... am I really that valuable?”

Not: What is the meaning of life?

Not: Why is there suffering?

But this: Am I really that valuable?

On this Good Friday, as we stand beneath the Cross according to the Passion of John, we begin to realize something unsettling and yet deeply consoling:

This question is not answered with words. It is answered with an event.

The Gospel does not give us a philosophical argument about human dignity. Instead, it shows us Jesus betrayed, bound, judged, mocked, and finally lifted up on the Cross.

And there, in silence, something is being said more powerfully than any speech.

There is a profound insight, often associated with the Hungarian pastor Endre Gyökössi, who expressed the mystery of the Cross in a deeply personal way:

Everything that happens here happens for me, because of me, and instead of me.

- For me - because the Cross is not an abstract symbol, it is directed toward my life, my salvation.
- Because of me - because sin is not just a concept “out there”, it runs through my own heart, my own choices, my own failures to love.
- Instead of me - because what Christ bears, I could not bear, what He takes upon Himself, I could not redeem.

This is the scandal and the beauty of Good Friday.

When we hear the Passion, it is tempting to stand at a safe distance. We may identify the villains: Judas, Pilate, the crowd. We may think: If I had been there, I would have acted differently.

But the Gospel quietly dismantles that illusion.

We are in the story.

We are in the fearful silence of Peter.

In the wavering of Pilate, who knows the truth but chooses safety.

And in the crowd that can be swayed, that can shout one day “Hosanna” and another day “Crucify.”

And yet this is not the final word.

Because the Cross does not merely reveal human failure, it reveals divine love.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus is not simply a victim of events. He says, “No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”

This means:

The Cross is not an accident. It is a decision.

A decision of love.

And that changes everything.

So let us return to that question:

“Am I really that valuable?”

Good Friday dares to give an answer that is almost too much to accept:

You are worth the Cross.

Not because you are perfect.

Not because you have earned it.

Not because you are always faithful.

But because God loves you with a love that does not calculate, does not withdraw, does not give up.

And here is something important for us to carry home:

Many of us live as if our worth depends on something fragile—
our success,
our relationships,
our moral performance,
our ability to hold everything together.

But Good Friday says:

Your worth was decided long before your achievements—and it was decided on
a Cross.

That means:

- When you fail, your value does not collapse.
- When you are forgotten, you are not unseen.
- When you feel unworthy, you are not unloved.

Because the measure of your worth is not your self-perception, but His
self-giving.

And yet, there is also a quiet call hidden here.

If all this happened for me, because of me, and instead of me, then I cannot
remain a distant observer.

The Cross invites a response:

- To take sin seriously—but not despairingly.
- To take grace seriously—but not cheaply.
- To live in gratitude, not guilt.

It invites us to entrust ourselves to this love, even when we do not fully
understand it.

Let me end where we began.

“If Jesus stood here today, what would I ask Him?”

Perhaps I would still ask the same question:

“Lord... am I really that valuable?”

But now, standing beneath the Cross, I realize something:

He has already answered.

Not in words,
but in wounds.

Not in explanation,
but in self-giving love.

And the answer is this:

Yes.

You are that valuable.

Amen.