

One Palm Sunday many years ago, I was pretty ready to give up on being a Christian when I heard a sermon about Jesus staying on the cross. It's so different than how we humans would do it. If I was running the show, I probably would've jumped in and rescued Jesus. If I had been there, I'm sure I would've been holding my breath, waiting for Jesus to rescue himself. Waiting for a miracle.

So many times before this, Jesus' followers were afraid, and he kept telling them: Don't worry. It's OK. I got this. Calming the storm, walking on water, feeding the crowds, healing the sick, and now? It seems perhaps Jesus has at last run out of miracles. But he hasn't. This is the biggest miracle yet: That Jesus didn't come down off the cross. **The miracle is that God isn't willing to watch us suffer alone.**

I still don't know why evil and suffering exist. I still don't know why Jesus had to die.

Sure, I could give a sound theological explanation of it, but I somehow feel like an all-knowing, all-loving God could've come up with a simpler way to save all of humanity. In my heart of hearts, I don't get it.

What I get is that we're in it together. It's not God in comfort and humans in agony. It's Jesus, God himself, feeling our pain, entering our hell, crying out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And that's a God I can believe in. That's the only kind of God I can believe in. God is mysterious and strange and confusing. And God has compassion, a word which comes from the Latin "compati:" To suffer with. God suffers with us.

When things are going badly for someone I love, I'm tempted to try to fix everything, and it's often harder to sit in the dark times with them, to walk alongside, to have compassion, to suffer with. But sometimes, just sitting in that darkness with someone for a while is the best thing I can do for them. When I'm in dark times, often what I most want is just to have someone with me.

It's Good Friday. We're sitting in darkness, and maybe we're asking: What do we do now?

We wait. We pray. We love. And we trust that we're not doing it alone.