My Good Friday Baby
By Ashley Coates Higgins
April 2019

How do you celebrate a first birthday that lands on Good Friday? And why is it called "good" anyway?

In three days our Molly Goose turns one year old and the thought sort of takes my breath away. When we found out we were pregnant we were anxious but hopeful. We thought the hope of new life would bring, well, life. Often times though, it just felt really dark. And so, we sort of just held on, those in the little world around her. But Molly, she grew and grew (despite the sickness in my body) and there was life… even when on the outside it felt really dark.

And there was life in there… even when on the outside it felt really dark.

That's the thing about Good Friday. Jesus was in the tomb and, in some ways, there was no life in it. Yet, still something we couldn't dare fathom was about to be born.

There was life in there.

We saw darkness and we felt helpless when in fact, God was up to something we could never have even imagined. The story did not end with the darkness because there is always life. The tomb held darkness but it did not hold Death. We only thought that from the outside. And just when we believed the story might be written, life burst forth more full than it had ever been.

Turns out darkness and life can coexist. That is the Easter story.

Molly Girl, you are a good Friday sort of baby. I felt like my body held only darkness. Silly me. Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined what God was about to birth through me and in me, both the day you were born and in the season to come. You and God taught me that lesson. Not in the moment, no not in the moment. In the moment, we all just sort of held on. But in the season that has followed, I am as aware of life and hope as I have ever been.

Good Friday comes and when it does, it reminds us who God is and who God has been all along. Good Friday brings us to our knees and often times those are the moments where we realize we are least alone. Only Good Friday could orient us toward Easter the way God most meant for it to.

I occupy a permanent seat at the Table of Dark Conversations. I'm a card-carrying member of the club and rarely miss the opportunity to take a deep dive into the dark crevices of life.

Not this year. This year my seat is vacant, my card left on the dresser at home.

How do you celebrate a first birthday that lands on Good Friday? This year we'll celebrate with a big freaking party. We'll eat pancakes because they are your favorite. We will sing and give you dessert for the first time because it's your day. We will tell stories about you because you amaze us. And at naptime (yes, even on your first birthday you must nap) I will hold you much longer than I should because I adore you and I am so proud of you and me and am so grateful to God for all of it. This Good Friday we will celebrate life because, this year more than ever in my life, I am confident that Good Friday might be the tiniest bit Good afterall.

Easter is coming. It has been all along. And when it does, it brings with it life more full than it has ever been before. That's who God is and always will be.

Here's to life, to joy, to knowing we are not alone, and to resisting the urge to skip Good Friday because, if we can bear it (especially when we think maybe we cannot), Easter never seemed so miraculous. And here's to the people who will speak that for you in seasons when you cannot speak it for yourself.

Happy Birthday, Molly Goose.

