

Good Friday

Redemption Hill Church | Simon Murphy

Friday 10th April 2009

1 Peter 3.18: "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God"

When we look at the history of this day, it's quite incredible that it would be called Good Friday. Maybe gory Friday, infamous Friday, death Friday, or dark Friday.

In many ways it wasn't a good day at all. It was a day of the **murder of an innocent, perfect, righteous man**. But it is far far worse than just some injustice! It's a day when man killed God. John says that the light came into the world and we tried to snuff it out. It says that the author of life came into the world and we tried to kill it. God came into the world and we refused to worship him, submit to him, recognize him or love him. So we killed him. **Yet we call it good Friday.**

For those of us who have **lost a loved one, the anniversary** of their passing is remembered with mourning, and yet we call today 'Good Friday'. This is the day we **celebrate** the gruesome crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made flesh who is our Lord and our Saviour.

Crucifixion took place from 500BC until about 300AD (about 800 years). It was the most horrendous mode of death, so much so that no word could be found to explain the pain it caused, and a new word was invented, '**excruciating**' which literally means 'from the cross'. **The pain** of the crucifixion would cause the victims to **soil themselves**, which would add to the horror and embarrassment of the moment.

Cicero the Roman statesman said that no good Roman should ever speak of the cross because it was too horrifying for decent citizens to even contemplate. The Jews agreed, saying that "cursed is every man who hangs on a tree".

Crucifixion was the product of a sick, depraved culture. People were **crucified in the equivalent of malls** to humiliate them, and while they hung there people would come past and **mock them and jeer at them, teasing them** as they died.

Crucifixion was such a terrible thing that when they sometimes **crucified women** they would turn them around because even in that barbaric culture no one wanted to see the face of a crucified woman.

Those who were being crucified would try and hasten their **death by slouching to suffocate themselves**, to end the agony as soon as possible, but their murderers would put seats under them to prevent the slouching and thereby cause their death to drag out.

This mode of death is surely one of most gruesome, horrific ever invented.

Yet the cross has become the most popular religious symbol in the world! The symbol of the cross won the place for the symbol of the Christian faith. **A bloody instrument of death won the right to be known as the symbol of Christianity, synonymous with love, joy and peace!** Christians wear it, tattoo it, it's even a fashion statement which rock stars and celebrities alike wear.

How can we call this murder of God our Good News, and remember it by naming a day 'Good Friday' and gather here today to remember with joy that someone was tortured on this instrument of death?

The good news is not because Christ died, but **because he died in our place!**

This was God's plan, a plan to save the world by making his Son pay the penalty on our behalf. It was not a spur of the moment idea, but a calculated, promised plan which he had announced for thousands of years before but most clearly through Isaiah the prophet 700 years before Jesus came. **Isaiah 53**

1. **(Verse 6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way**

Example of scattering.

This is the problem, the reason Jesus had to come.

The way we are running is death! We continually run away from God, picture running away from LIFE towards death. The fruit of that is death. **That act of defiance has caused** something to die in us, and the logical outworking of that is eventual death.

This is true of every one of us. None of us have longed after God, loved him, honored him, worshipped him! ***Maybe we have wondered, accused him, cried out to help us in our own little worlds, but never bowed low in worship. We've all sinned and fallen short.. there is no difference..***

We refuse to bow to his rule and reign so we put ourselves on our own thrones, and we live for ourselves, in rebellion to God and the scripture says that the wages of sin is death! **The result of running away from life, is death!**

2. **(Verse 5, 6) 'wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our sins, upon him punishment that brought us peace, and by his stripes we are healed'**

This is in OUR place.. for OUR sin.

This isn't a millionaire paying for a mans \$10 ticket out of his pocket change! Firstly, the debt it is much more It's the equivalent of 200 000 years wages! The entire taxes for Judea, Idumea, and Samaria for 4BC was 600 talents, and this was 10000! Secondly, it wasn't out of his bounty – this is crushed, beaten, crucified. Taken our place. That's why ***grace is amazing*** and we can't abuse it, because God died for it.

This is how **seriously God takes our sin** and rebellion towards him, that he is willing to kill his Son over it. Some say 'God loves me too much, he'll never punish me for my sin' yet God watched his Son die over sin – trust me he has the courage and hatred for sin to watch you die too, **but we don't have to, because the punishment..**

The fact that he **willingly laid down** his life. (John 10.18 'No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down of my own accord'. **THIS PROVES THE LOVE OF GOD.**

3. **(Verse 11) 'out of the anguish of his soul he will see and be satisfied'**

What will He see? 'For the Joy set before Him, he endured the cross, scorning it's shame. (Heb 12) **The joy set before him was God's glory as we come back and worship Him!**

Jesus didn't **die for fountains in churches and pretty buildings, for pastors to have good jobs** or status in society, he didn't die for us to meet regularly, to put fish on our cars, or buy holy anointed oil from some televangelist or Christian bric-a-brac or for carol services and books on the rapture... ***He died, the righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God!***

Do we KNOW God? Has he become **our** God, our Lord, to know him, love him, worship him and walk with Him.

My question to you today, is did Jesus die in vain? Are we living in the fullness of his death? His arms hang out open inviting you back to the Father.

4. **(Verse 10) The Lords good plan will prosper in his (Jesus') hand.**

He is saying that **God's good plan** for us to return to him is found in Jesus, in HIS hand.

You don't know what's best for your life! Come back to the author of it!!

Jesus is the **cornerstone of history**, the stumbling block that people can't get around. In this day and age everyone believes in God, even demons do, but do we believe in Jesus and his work, and entrust our lives to him.

For those who are not believers, God's will and plan for your life begins when you entrust it to Jesus, when you place your life in Jesus' hands, you find God's plan and you are reconciled to him, by bowing your knee and believing in His Son.

For those who are believers, I want to remind you of **1 Cor 6.19**: **"You are not your own, you were bought with a price"** The precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ who hung on the cross. We are his! **Let's surrender our lives** to Him afresh today, this great Father who loves us and has his plans and purposes for us.

Friends today we have a choice to make, do we say "Amen" to Jesus? To my fellow Christian brothers and sisters, it's an amen of surrender of your life to Jesus, his Lordship and rule in your lives. It'll mean giving away our time, money, things, living for God!

For those who haven't believed in Jesus, who haven't loved God and confessed their sin and had him forgive it, what do you do today? I encourage you to stop running from God and start running towards Him. Run to Jesus, take your sins and your grief's to him, allow him to forgive you and wash you clean.

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