



## Why Good Friday is Good News! JOHN 19:17-37

### Journey to the Cross - Jesus Crucified

#### Good Friday

John 19:16-37 - April 2nd 2021

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#### Why is it called Good Friday?

When you hear the words “Good Friday” what thoughts come to mind, I wonder?

Someone is bound to think, “Today is a good Friday, because it’s the First Friday we’ve been allowed to meet up with friends for ages! Hasn’t that been good!

When someone else hears the words, “Good Friday” they connect them to the remarkable peace agreement signed in 1998 which brought an end to so much violence in Northern Ireland.

But for other listeners, the words “Good Friday” are a mystery—why do Christians call the day Jesus died, “Good?” -especially since the death he suffered was such a terrible one: a Roman crucifixion!

How could such a death ever be conceived as something “Good?” Shouldn’t followers of Jesus want to forget that Friday altogether?! But instead of erasing the memory of that day, Christians talk about the death of Jesus all the time, and call that day “Good Friday.”

And that must seem strange to new folk!

Well, the key to understanding why we call the day of Jesus’ crucifixion “Good” is found in three words from John chapter 19. These three words were some of the last words Jesus spoke from the cross:

“It is finished”

And these three words explain why Good Friday really is Good News!

What Jesus meant when he spoke those three words explain why Good Friday is Good News.

#### (1) “My life is over”

At the simplest level, Jesus was saying that his earthly life was over, that he was about to expire and die:

“My life is over, my life is finished, It is finished.”

And the very fact that Jesus died, means that he was like us, for we too must die. Jesus was a real human being who understands human experiences - even the final experience of death. And that is good news because it means that God has sent a Saviour into the world who can sympathise with us even in the experience of dying. But “I am dying” isn’t the only meaning of “It is finished.” Jesus also meant...

## (2) ...“I am God.”

...because right after he said those words we read, “he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

When Jesus said “it is finished” he was deciding to die. He could have hung on for longer, or he could have expired earlier: Jesus determined the precise moment of his death, “My life is finished—right now”

Jesus died after about six hours on the cross. Most victims of Roman crucifixion took longer than that to die. The soldiers who checked on the Jesus and the two criminals at nightfall, crucified on either side of Jesus, were surprised that Jesus was already dead, because the other two victims were still alive.

Jesus decided the moment of his death, and in this way he demonstrated his divine and omnipotent power over life and death.

And that is Good News too! Because the Saviour God sent from heaven is not only a real human being who can understand our joys and sorrows, he is also the very Son of God, mighty to save and powerful to help.

But there’s a third meaning behind the words “It is finished,” and it is this meaning which most of all explains why Good Friday is Good News!

Yes Jesus meant “My earthly life is over” identifying himself as a real human being like us.

Yes he meant that he was the Son of God, in full control of the timing of his death

But Jesus meant, most of all,

## (3) “I have finished the work I came to do.”

“The great work I came into the world to accomplish has now been finished – it is finished!” You see Jesus came from heaven into this troubled world for a reason, he came to accomplish a task, he came on a rescue mission.

Whenever I hear rotor blades above me in Worcester I look up and 9/10 times I see one of those red and yellow ambulance helicopters on a rescue mission to someone whose life is in jeopardy.

Jesus came to this world on a rescue mission: to reconnect us, to reconcile us with God.

You see, our wrongdoing separates us from God. We don’t like to hear this part of the message, but the Bible says that all the wrong things we think and speak and do separate us from God, because God is holy and pure and spotless.

A simple drawing, we on one side of a canyon, God on the other with a great and unbridgeable chasm between us, illustrates the predicament we’re all in.

Our wrongdoing, our sin, is the abyss between us and God:

- our wrong thoughts
- the bad attitudes we may nurse
- the wrong words we have spoken
- And the evil deeds we have done

I remember listening to an interview with a music celebrity (I won't mention his name!) talking about how good he was. And then in the next sentence he spoke evil about someone! He could not see that hatred in our hearts is wrong.

All our wrongdoing, which the Bible calls sin, separates us from God....and worse than that, sin must be punished by God because he is the supreme and final Judge of the universe.

These things are not popular today, but they are and have been the universal teaching of Christians over time.

But—and here's the Good News! — in spite of our wrongdoing, God loved us and sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to restore that broken relationship with us.

How did he do that?

Jesus reconciled us to God by paying for our sins in full. When Jesus suffered and died on the cross he was being punished by God, not for his wrongdoing, but for ours. He was a substitute, standing in our place, bearing the punishment that should really come to us, so that we could be forgiven and restored to friendship with God!

This is the main reason Good Friday is Good News! Through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ we can be forgiven for our wrongdoing and reconciled to God!

When Jesus said "It is finished" he meant "the rescue work I have come to do has now been completed. I have finished paying for the sins of all who will trust in me, so they can be forgiven and have peace with God!"

*There is a green hill far away,  
outside a city wall,  
where the dear Lord was crucified,  
who died to save us all.*

*We may not know, we cannot tell,  
what pains he had to bear;  
but we believe it was for us  
he hung and suffered there*

*He died that we might be forgiv'n,  
he died to make us good,  
that we might go at last to heav'n,  
saved by his precious blood.*

*There was no other good enough  
to pay the price of sin;  
he only could unlock the gate  
of heav'n, and let us in.*

Good Friday is a Good day, because on this day Jesus paid for our sins so that we can have peace with God once more.

How should we respond to this good news?

If you are a believer, this is a day of solemn reflection mingled with great joy. This is a day to thank God for his sacrificial love in sending his Son into the world to take away all our sins. A day to rejoice in sins forgiven, forever and completely.

But if you are not yet a believer, this is a day to hear that God loves you, a day to know that you can be reconciled with God once more, and a day to turn to God and believe the Good News.