



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Why Call Good Friday Good

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This being Easter week, I thought it would be a good time to look at some Scriptures we first studied in the legislature back in 2005.

Christians call the Friday before Easter “Good Friday”. Those who don’t understand the significance of this day could not possibly understand why anyone would call a day good when their religious leader died a cruel death. What could be good about a good man dying? Let me suggest there are probably many people who call themselves Christians, who also don’t understand why this day is called “good”. In fact, they probably never gave it much thought; it’s just the Friday before the one Sunday a year they go to church and sometimes they get part of the day off work.

THE BAD BEFORE THE GOOD

If you have studied the Book of Romans, you will first saw the bad news. Being a moral person won’t make a person right with God. Being a religious person won’t make a person right with God. Why? The Apostle Paul tells us, **“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)**. We are all sinners, not because we have sinned, but we all have sinned because we are all sinners. David tells us **“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5)**. The problem every person has is a problem intrinsic in human beings. God speaks through the prophet Isaiah with these words, **“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6)**.

He then goes on to say, **“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2)**.

That is bad news. God chooses not to hear the prayers of sinners. So how do we get through to God? To find out we must consider what happened on that Friday some 2000 years ago. This was a ‘Good Friday’ that began a weekend that has never since, nor will ever again be duplicated.

To understand it more fully, we need to start in the beginning. In Genesis, the Book of beginnings, we are told of the first human’s fall in the Garden of Eden. Just after Adam and Eve eat of the forbidden fruit, they notice their nakedness, and for the first time they experience shame. This is certainly not the first time they noticed their nakedness. Note **Genesis 2:25 - The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.** – no shame. But then note **Genesis 3:7 - Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made**

coverings for themselves. – obvious shame. They sewed fig leaves together. How long do you think they lasted? God probably laughed at their feeble attempt to cover their shame. But He didn’t laugh at His solution – **Genesis 3:21 - The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.**

Here we have the first look at the extreme payment required for sin – the shedding of blood. Animals were sacrificed to provide the skins that clothed Adam and Eve. I believe, although I can’t support it with a passage of Scripture, that God made the requirement of a sacrifice evident to Adam and Eve and they taught it to Cain and Abel. Cain just chose to ignore it and do things his way. The penalty was severe - **Genesis 4:13 - Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear., vs. 16 - So Cain went out from the Lord's presence**

A SEVERE PENALTY

God’s justice demands that our sin be paid for. His law has been broken and there is a consequence, a severe consequence – eternal separation from God. An eternal separation to a place the Bible calls hell. This is a place of aloneness, a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth¹....where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched². – **Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death,**

FORGIVENESS AT THE CROSS

Sin is grievous to God. The penalty is severe. The cost is blood. - **Hebrews 9:22 -and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**

But animal sacrifice just covered sin for a time. Forgiveness that was complete and total had yet to come; and here the good news begins. Because even though God is perfectly holy and just, He is also loving and merciful.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). This is such a familiar verse. We take it for granted without thinking about all that it entails. God, as the Son of the trinity, left the glory and comforts of heaven, became a human being, suffered every temptation that has ever been experienced by a human, and then submits to a cruel death on a cross to pay the debt for the sin of every person who believes. There was no other way.

Thus, the **cross**, and a day called **“Good Friday”**.

BIBLE STUDIES

MONDAYS @ 5-6 P.M., ROOM 1425-PIZZA 1200 CT
MONDAYS @ NOON, CHAPEL

NORTH CAROLINA

Why Call Good Friday Good

On that day Jesus fulfilled His purpose. He became the lamb slain for the sins of all who believe. His blood was shed to appease the wrath of God. The fire of God's wrath fell on Him.

There is a story told of a wagon train of people traveling westward to settle in a new land. As they were moving over the prairie there appeared before them in the distance a severe prairie fire that was sure to consume them. A strong wind was rapidly blowing the fire towards them. The little daughter of the wagon master looked up at her daddy and ask, "Daddy, are we going to die?" he replied, "No sweetheart, because Daddy has a plan." With that, he gathered the wagons together and set a fire behind them so that the wind would blow it away from them and burn the prairie ahead of them where they had yet to go. As the fire moved away the wagon master led the wagons onto the burned prairie and waited. The little girl looked up at her Daddy and said, "Now are we going to die?" He again said "No sweetheart, because we are standing where the fire has already been."

Where are you standing today? Have you come to the cross where the fire has already been? Are you certain your sins are forgiven? Are you certain you are right with God?

Let's call upon Paul one more time to help us fully understand what happened on that Friday.

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. – 2 Corinthians 5:21

God made Him who had no sin – the sacrifice had to be perfect. Only Christ qualified. He lived 33 years of perfect righteousness. He never sinned.

To be sin for us – Jesus took on Himself the sin of every human being who has ever or will ever believe in Him. When God looked at Jesus on that cross, for that moment of time when Jesus said "My God, My God why have You forsaken me?", God saw you & me on that cross, and His wrath was satisfied.

But then comes the really great part, **that we (who believe) might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

When we confess "Jesus is Lord," believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, we are saved. (*Romans 10:9*)

At the moment sincere confession is made, God imputes to the believer the righteousness of Christ.

When God looks upon the cross He sees all the sinners and their sins, when He looks at the believer, He sees him as though he had never sinned.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- [9] not by works, so that no one can boast.

FORGIVENESS AT THE CROSS

Now, knowing that I am forgiven, what should be my response? _____

The idea of forgiving others is of primary importance to God. God knows that in some situations, forgiveness is very hard. He knows it takes a lot of spiritual muscle, and without dependence on Him it may not be possible. But forgiveness is the soul of our life together as believers. We are forgiven to forgive.

Let me suggest that the forgiveness God calls us too requires the letting go of anger that we have the right to hold on to.

But think about it – is it not perfectly fitting for those who have been forgiven to keep the momentum going by forgiving others. When you and I absorb evil without passing it on, then we are glorifying God? This is absolutely necessary for the health and well-being of a people serving together, whether in their church, community, job, or serving in the legislature.

Consider with me a familiar passage of Script. – Lord's Prayer. "Forgive us our debts as we...."

If we are in tune with God's will for our lives, every time we pray that prayer we are saying "O God, forgive me, just as I have, this very moment, forgiven my neighbor, seatmate, person who didn't support my bill....."

How many times a year do you pray this prayer?

The idea here is that we can't ask forgiveness and expect to get it while at the same time refusing to give it to others. Every time we pray this prayer we are declaring the slate clean. Everyone in my life is forgiven. I may not feel like it, still may not like the person, but that is not the point. Forgiveness is not a feeling, it is an act. It is something we have been commanded to do.

If you begin to exercise forgiveness everywhere you know it needs to take place, you will be shocked at the result. Channels of communication will open up. Tasks will begin to get done that seem impossibly stalled. And you will sleep much better at night. But more important than that, God will be glorified and He will honor your choice to walk in obedience to Him.

1. Matthew 8:12
2. Mark 9:48