

Rev. Chris Christy
Good Friday – Sermon
Isaiah 52:13-53: 12
Psalm 22:1-11
Hebrews 10:16-25
John 18:1-19: 42

What's So “Good” about Good Friday?

As I have traveled through this Holy Week, with all of you, my thoughts have focused on what could Jesus be thinking and feeling during this last week of his life. He knew what was about to happen, but he continued to teach those around him right up to his last breath. As we just heard, in our Passion reading from John, Holy Week reminds us of the last 5 processions of Jesus' mortal life.

I cannot imagine what Jesus was thinking as he processed into Jerusalem with the crowds laying blankets and palms before him knowing this was the beginning of the end. You see the cheering crowds did not know what was about to happen, but Jesus did which could only be tearing his at his soul.

The procession that followed left Jesus' followers filled with anxiety and confusion as to what was happening. They witnessed their revered Messiah bound and falsely accused of blasphemy by Pilate. Jesus' followers were left full of questions and became caught up in the drama of the jeering crowd. His followers had seen him perform miracles and desperately wanted Jesus to save himself.

Instead, Jesus' followers witnessed the procession of him being led to a cross meant for the convicted and watched as he was flogged and nailed to the cross. I wonder how many of his followers began to question their beliefs. What they did not understand was how Jesus was continuing to teach them about their faith in God the Father.

The procession of Jesus carrying his cross to Golgotha had to be filled with excruciating pain and heartbreak hearing the jeering crowd as he was led through the streets. Reaching the hill Jesus and his cross were raised and sat between two criminals. As Jesus hung on the cross, he continued to show grace and love for mankind. He called out to his Father saying, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”, this showed his love and forgiveness for the sins of man.

God the Father sent his dearly loved Son into dangerous territory. He allowed his Son to be treated cruelly. He stood by and watched his innocent Son be nailed to a cross and to hang there in agony. He could have rescued him and cursed those who were treating him so brutally and maliciously. He allowed his Son to carry the sin of all humanity. I do not think we can fully appreciate what it meant for the Father to abandon the Son and let him die at the hands of evil people. When Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why

have you forsaken me?" we sense something of the terror of bearing the weight of the sin of all humanity.

Jesus' announcement "It is Finished" is clear and simple. Jesus had completed his task. The "why" he came as a human had been fulfilled. He came so that you and I can have forgiveness and salvation. He came to ensure that we would enter his kingdom and live forever. So, what was Jesus tasked with that he accomplished through his death?

Reconciliation was finished. The word reconciliation has been used a lot in connection with the relationship between the aboriginal people of our country and the rest of the community. The terrible things that happened in the past have caused a rift between black and white people. Efforts have been made to heal the differences, to close the gap caused by past actions, to restore friendship, to be reconciled.

A terrible gap had come between God and all humanity caused by sin and evil. Our offences, our disobedience, the hurt we have caused God and others have destroyed our relationship with God.

Sin has a devastating effect on our relationship with God. Sin separates us from God and if we want to have any hope of going to heaven to be with God, then someone had to deal with sin and restore our relationship with God. So God sent his Son into the world for this very purpose.

Jesus died on the cross to get rid of the power of sin to condemn us. His death bridged the deep gulf between God and us. "Salvation is finished", Jesus cried. The restoration of the friendship between God and humanity has been finished. The task for which God's Son came to earth has been completed.

- He has won forgiveness for all people.
- Nothing else needs to be done.
- Salvation is complete. "It is finished".

The final procession was the procession to the tomb where finally the body of Jesus was handled with care and reverence.

So why is Good Friday called "Good"? How can a day that is remembered for an act of injustice which ended in a bloody, violent death be known as "good"? Good Friday is good because it was necessary to our salvation.

God did all this for us. He did all this because of his love for us. Paul writes, "God has shown us how much he loves us – it was while we were still sinners that Christ did for us"!

We spend this day reflecting on the outrageous outpouring of love on us by our God who was willing to dwell among us, and who allowed himself to be treated as we treat each other. He emptied himself, not clinging to godliness but poured out his life in love.

Salvation and love is the message of the Crucifixion. For the forgiveness of all sins, the sacrificial Lamb of God was given. Because of Christ's misery, we can share with him a life of eternity. As stated in Psalm 91, "Though our flesh will wither, our soul will rest in God's presence with everlasting joy". Good Friday remembers the anguish day of Christ yet at the same time reminds us of the greatest love lavished on us selflessly.

Let us Pray;

Loving God,

What you have done for us in Jesus's death on the cross is far more than we deserve. His death has made us friends with you again. His death has given us forgiveness and the hope of life forever. Everything is complete. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Amen