

## How Good Friday Is Good For Us Hebrews 10:16-25

### **Slide 1**

What's good about Good Friday? What's good about a day that commemorates Jesus' torture and subsequent execution on a Roman cross?

Yet, in some respects, Good Friday isn't a dark day. Because of Jesus' death, His resurrection on Easter Sunday paved the way for our relationship with God to be restored.

That's the Good News Jesus asked us to spread, but to understand the Good News, we must first understand the bad news.

The bad news is... we have a sinful, human nature. But once we see that we're slaves to sin, the good news of deliverance makes sense.

The book of Hebrews tells us to live by faith in God alone. Like the Jews, the father of our faith is Abraham. His faith in God made him "right" before God.

As a result of this righteousness, God protected Abraham's family as they grew into a nation. Moses, their first official leader, established, through God, their worship, culture, and laws.

God spoke, and Moses wrote down God's rules for His people, which included the Ten Commandments.

These rules were given and enforced to teach the Israelites how to live. These rules were put in place to protect them from walking away from God and destroying themselves.

Now, these instructions weren't designed to replace faith, but by the time Jesus came on the scene, these rules were more important than faith, mercy, or kindness.

In fact, they were more important than the people. So, God sent His only Son, not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it so that we, like Abraham, could be righteous through faith in God.

## **Slide 2**

The good news of salvation is the cornerstone of the joy of Easter, but, in order to appreciate this joy, we must appreciate what Jesus endured on that Good Friday.

Sin had to be punished. God's a just God Who hates sin, and, because He hates sin, someone had to pay the price for our sins.

Now, in Old Testament times, sins were paid for by sacrificing an animal, i.e. sheep, goat, bull, dove, etc., but not just any animal.

The animal had to be perfect in the eyes of the priests, which leads us to the marketplace in the temple where animals, that were deemed to be perfect for sacrifices, were available for sale.

After an unblemished animal was selected, the individual would take it to the Temple to be sacrificed.

During the sacrificial ceremony, a priest would lay his hands on the animal, symbolically transferring the sins of the individual to the animal.

So, when the animal was finally sacrificed, it's death symbolically cleansed the individual of their sins.

Unfortunately, there was a problem. These sacrifices had to be repeated every time someone sinned, and because the priests were human, they also had a sinful nature.

God understood this, so He wanted one ultimate sacrifice to complete His plan for our restoration.

The only perfect sacrifice that would fulfill His plan was Jesus Christ, Who was the perfect sacrifice because of His sinless nature.

This is why we should never underestimate the importance of what Jesus did for us on that cross. Before His death, we were separated from God.

For an Israelite, only the High Priest could approach God, and even then he could only enter the Holy of Holies portion of the Temple once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Jesus' death destroyed the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple.

Jesus' death removed the barriers for anyone who wanted to know and worship God, therefore we can now serve the Lord and abide in His presence without the need for an intercessor.

When we accept what Christ did for us on Good Friday, we can get out of the black hole of our sinful, earthly life; a struggle that we can't fight on our own.

### **Slide 3**

Other Christians are needed to fight alongside us. The writer of Hebrews tells us this in chapter 10.

Hebrews 10:24b-25, *“Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

Around Jesus was a close-knit group of believers, but those who believed in Jesus as Lord and Savior were shunned by non-believers.

The writer of Hebrews encouraged early believers by reminding them that God would never abandon them.

We, as believers today, can also be confident in our hope because God will never abandon us.

This is why it's important for believers to gather together on a regular basis to worship God. We weren't designed to "*go it alone.*"

Belonging to a church not only protects our fellowship with God, but it's a vital part of how God matures us and transforms us to His image.

Part of that transformation includes believing in Jesus by faith, especially in what He did for us on Good Friday.

There's also strength in numbers. Getting together with other Christians strengthens our faith and provokes us to do more for God.

When we get together with other Christians, we're not only able to encourage each other, but family members, friends, co-workers, casual acquaintances, or strangers as well.

When we get together with other Christians, we're able to encourage one another to keep going in times of difficulty.

This is why we need encouragement from fellow Christians, like Jesus encouraged His disciples and the early followers. True believers won't look the other way when we sin.

Belonging to a good church is beneficial for both individuals and families. That's why it's well worth the effort to find a God loving and caring church.

Jesus' sacrifice also meant that we don't have to live with guilt when we sin against God. He only asks that we confess our sin, ask for forgiveness, and sin no more.

A believer should seek a church where its leaders and members not only love God, believe and teach His Word, but are loving, accepting, and non-judgmental.

That's why God created the church and why many pastors are trying to bring the church back to its roots just like Jesus brought the church back to its roots by His sacrifice on the cross.

#### **Slide 4**

It's in a church like that, whose roots are based on Jesus' teachings, that a Christian thrives. It's in a church like that where the Christian fully realizes God's promises.

Which brings me to another reason that Good Friday is good for us. Good Friday reminds the believer that the Christian life is based on God's promises.

Now, these promises fall into two categories: unconditional and conditional promises.

An unconditional promise is a promise made without exceptions. A good example of this was the promise God made to Abraham to bless all the families on earth through him.

Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, fulfilled this promise because salvation is made available to all believers because of what He did on Good Friday.

A conditional promise is a promise that's subject to certain conditions.

A good example is the promise Jesus made to the disciples when He promised that the Holy Spirit would come to them if they waited in Jerusalem.

Conditional promises are the only type of promises that we, as humans, can make because we can't control every circumstance.

The truth of the cross is that God remembered every single sin that every believer had committed or will commit, no matter how small, and punished Jesus for each and every one of them as our substitute.

Jesus' righteousness was imparted to us so that we might stand before God completely spotless.

God has forgotten our sins because Jesus took them upon Himself for us. The penalty's been paid, and our sin debt has been forgiven.

God promised us in Hebrews 10 that He would forget our sins if we would just confess them and believe in Him in faith.

Hebrews 10:17-18, *"Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary."*

Real confession comes when believers get God's Word so deeply embedded in their hearts that their lives become aligned with His plans for their lives.

For example, believing in the forgiveness of sins calls on us to live our lives in a particular way.

When we live with God's forgiveness in our hearts, we're positive and hopeful. This hope of forgiveness comes from the pain suffered on Good Friday.

## Slide 5

### Conclusion

I want to close this message with a story about a little boy who was visiting his grandparents.

He was given a slingshot to play with out in the woods. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit the target. And getting a little discouraged; he headed back to dinner.

As he was walking back, he saw Grandma's pet duck. Just out of impulse, he took out his slingshot, put a stone in it and let it fly. As luck would have it, that stone hit the duck square in the head and killed it. The boy was shocked and grieved.

In a panic, he hid the dead duck in the woodpile, only to see his sister watching. Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.

After lunch that day, Grandmother said, "*Sally, let's wash the dishes.*" But Sally said, "*Grandma, Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today, didn't you, Johnny?*" And then she whispered to him, "*Remember, the duck?*" So, Johnny did the dishes.

Later Gramp's asked if the children wanted to go fishing, and Grandma said, "*I'm sorry, but I need Sally to help make supper.*" But Sally smiled and said, "*Well, that's all right because Johnny told me he wanted to help.*"

And she whispered again, "*Remember, the duck?*" So, Sally went fishing, and Johnny stayed.

After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's, he finally couldn't stand it any longer. He came to Grandma and confessed that he killed the duck.

She knelt down, gave him a hug and said, *"Sweetheart, I know. You see, I was standing at the window and I saw the whole thing, but, because I love you, I forgave you. I was just wondering how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."*

Jesus Christ is like that grandmother standing at the window. He sees all our sins, but because He made the ultimate sacrifice with His blood, we have forgiveness.

Christ is the sin eater Who has taken care of all our sins, and that's the real reason why Good Friday is good for us.

John 3:16-17, *"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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*