

Good Friday 2015 | The Day Death Died

Tyler Velin | April 3rd, 2015

It doesn't take a Ph.D in history to realize the irony of the name, "Good Friday." And how odd this title must seem to those in our increasingly post-Christian culture. Why is it that we as believers would gather annually to celebrate the brutal murder of our savior at the hands of a hate filled mob? If that is good, I don't want bad!

And the cross is bad. It cross is an awful, tragic scene. Why was the cry of the crowds silenced after the cross, why were the disciples scattered and in hiding after the cross, because all of them knew what had happened. Jesus had died. The idea of Easter Sunday was not present in their minds. For them the cross was not an expected event on the way to the assumed resurrection of Christ, for them the events of this Good Friday were the final blow to their hopes and aspirations. Jesus had died.

Last year on Good Friday I got up here and I said that I want to enlarge your hearts capacity for worship come Resurrection Sunday. This year I want to stand before you and declare the life transforming victory which has come from the death of Christ and I want you to be changed in order to fight.

In the events of Christ's death there is a sad and sobering portrait. That portrait is that Christ died for our sins. He didn't die for his own transgressions, his own lustful heart, his own hateful thoughts. Christ died for the sins which he never tasted. He died because we needed to. And in this portrait there is only good news.

First there is good news to all men because Christ has invited all men to himself. **John 12:32-33**. The cross of our Christ has been embedded across the centuries as the icon of the Christian faith because it stands as an invitation to all men to come to Christ. Humanity is born sinful. Paul in Colossians says that our sin carried with it a legal demand. Our sin brought with a debt which was only to be paid by our death. In the beginning pages of the scripture God offered Adam two options, wonderful obedience to God which will lead to life in his presence, or disobedience of God which will lead to death.

Adam chose death. This is the wound and want of our humanity. Paul says that since Adam sin death reigned. Since Adam we have been ruled by death, destined for death and doomed to death.

But on the cross the sinless Christ took on the sinful burdens of all who would come to him. He died your death. He paid your price. He drank your cup. And in so doing, **Col 1:22**. For those of you in here today who have not yet seen Christ as your savior this cross can mean two things: condemnation or invitation. Reject Christ and die on your own, or accept Christ's death as your own death and be freed from it.

The cross of Christ is first and foremost and invitation to all the earth to come and die with Christ. It is a message that salvation cannot be purchased by your effort or perfection but only by the blood of him who died in your place. This is good news.

The second facet of Good Friday good news is easily the one which is forgotten the most. For those of us who have been baptized, as Paul says, into the death of Christ you also participate in the victory of Christ's death. Pay attention to the words of **Hebrews 2:14-15**.

Here is the thing. We all know on Good Friday Christ died and was buried but on Easter Sunday he got up and walked out of that tomb. But you know what didn't come out with him: death. The good news of Good Friday is that it is the day death died.

Romans 6:6-7. James 1 says that sin is the cause of death and if Jesus came to bring sin to nothing on the cross then the cross is where death went to die. Let me illustrate this for you.

There is a group of people who live in the Andes Mountains in Argentina who have become immune to arsenic. For those of you who don't know arsenic is a naturally occurring poison which if encountered in large amounts, or untreated in small ones can lead to death. But this group of people have become immune to it. How? Because for thousands of years they have been drinking the ground water in this area which is laced with arsenic. In a sense they no longer are worried about the poison because they have already been exposed to it. For centuries the poisons produced early deaths in this group of people and through the years and generations the genetics of these people have become immune to the poison because they have already processed it.

What it took this people group thousands of years to overcome, we have overcome in an instant two thousand years ago. Because Christ died for sin, he killed sin. When we take Christ's death upon us we really died to sin. It's not a metaphor, it's not hyperbole, it's not a literary convention. In Christ we drank sin's poison, we have tasted it's lethal sting. **Heb 2:9.** And for those who have died to sin what more can sin do to you!

For those who are in Christ, death has died. In light of this, all who are drawn to the cross of Christ are you willing to fight for the victory of Christ?

So often we can feel the draw and pull of sin in our flesh but do not be deceived: it has no power on you. The tornado force winds of sin are nothing more than the dying gasps of an old economy consumed and brought to nothing by the weight and wonder of Calvary.

For those who are in Christ we fight in light of Christ's victory over death. In this life we still live in the ashes of this victory. The temptation to sin is still here, the hurt of death is still present. The pain of suffering, the depravity of the world, hate crimes, murder, rape, child prostitution, human slavery, disease and famine are all still present. But one day Christ will come back and he will remove the carcass of sin all together.

On the cross Christ beat death, in the resurrection he shamed it, and in his second coming he will remove it all together. **1 Cor. 15:24-26.** One day the work which Christ started on the cross will not only be true in the lives of his people, but will be fully applied to the world as a whole. The greatest hope for a world full of sin is that Christ is one day coming to finalize his already secured victory.

Like the great weight at the center of the tapestry of all that is evil, Christ has drawn all of it to himself and conquered it on the cross. So we as believers set our lives to live in light of victory personally, but we also set our hands to wage war against the sinful actions and oppression in our world because in so doing we are proclaiming the shadow of the truth that is yet to come.

The three fold news of Good Friday is this: Christ had died your death, come to him. Christ has killed your sin, fight with him. Christ is coming to finish what he started, hope and labor in him.

At the cross we worship the Christ who has paid our debt and set us free. At the cross we celebrate the victory of Christ and the death of death.

We are going to celebrate this death. In taking these elements we celebrate the flesh which was torn and the blood that was spilled in order to save us and kill death. This is part of what it means to be a Christian, we take communion together to celebrate our savior corporately. If you are not a Christian today, we ask that you refrain from taking this, but if you are not going to take the cup, take Christ.

We are going to do communion a little differently today. I am going to have the elders come up and monitor these stations, but when I am done you are free to come up and take the bread and the juice and return to your seat. Don't take them yet but as you are waiting for everyone to get it please take time and prepare your heart and when all have been served I will read a scripture and we will then take the elements together.