

# Good Friday

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## The Roman Cross — Good Friday

This brutal method of punishment was only ever implemented in extreme cases. A criminal, a slave, or an anti-Roman revolutionary would be hoisted up and put on display for all to see.

It was a means to say, *"Look at him! Look at her! Look at where they ended up! Don't do what they did, or you'll end up like them too!"* The Roman Cross wasn't just a means to punish criminals... it was used to control — through fear and intimidation — and to suppress uprisings against the Roman Empire.

The day where millions of Christians gather all around the world to commemorate a King's death on a Criminal's Cross — and ***we call it "Good Friday."***

If the early followers of Jesus had heard then that centuries later millions of people around the world would refer to this day as "Good Friday," they would be dumbfounded and probably appalled at the title.

- To them, there was nothing good about this day. On that day, their friend, leader, shepherd, teacher, their Rabbi — one who brought such hope, life, comfort, peace, and joy to their world was betrayed, denied, interrogated, tortured, mocked, and murdered in the most humiliating fashion one could endure.

### Matthew 27:45-50

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to Him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him." And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit.

***Why did Jesus do it this way? And why did the Father forsake Jesus on the cross?***

- All throughout the gospels in many different ways, Jesus was constantly telling people who He was... *"Before Abraham was, I am" John 8:58. "I am the way, the truth and the life," "I and the Father are one."*
- Jesus was constantly claiming to be God in human flesh... and He knew where these claims would lead Him. In fact, Jesus even says this in John 10:

### John 10:18

*No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord.*

- He was already preparing the disciples for the reality that He would lay His life down.

### ***But WHY?***

The beginning of that answer is to recognize that everything Jesus did and everything Jesus said, was intentional. It was purposeful... all the way up to His death.

What's incredible is not just that Jesus cried out from the cross... but *what* He cried out. Most of us just think, "This is raw emotion, He's exhausted, He's nearing the end..."

While that's partially true... what's so amazing about Jesus is, after all the suffering He'd endured up to this point — He's quoting Scripture. He's SHOUTING the Scriptures!

- He still had His faculties about Him. He was laser focused. To cry out loudly, while hanging on a cross designed to suffocate, would have been excruciatingly painful. But He's determined to complete the purpose for which He had come.

### **Psalm 22:1, 6-8, 14-18**

My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from saving Me, from the words of My groaning? But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. **All who see Me mock Me; they make mouths at Me; they wag their heads;** "He trusts in the Lord; let Him deliver Him; let Him rescue Him, for He delights in Him!" I am poured out like water, and all My bones are **out of joint**; My heart is like wax; it is melted within My breast; My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and **My tongue sticks to My jaws**; You lay Me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass Me; a company of evildoers encircles Me; they have **pierced My hands and feet** — I can count all My bones — they stare and gloat over me; they **divide My garments** among them, and for My clothing they **cast lots**.

- While King David wrote this Psalm — this Psalm is describing an execution. However, that never happened to David. David's hands were never pierced. His garments weren't divided up by casting lots... his bones were never dislocated — but every one of these things was true of the Messiah.

- **"All who see me mock me."**

#### **Mark 15:29-30**

And those who passed by **derided Him, wagging their heads** and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, **save Yourself**, and come down from the cross!"

- **"Bones out of joint."** Often a person's muscles would get so weak that eventually their shoulders would dislocate.
- **"My tongue sticks to my jaws."** On the cross, Jesus cried out, "I thirst."
- **"His hands and feet were pierced."**
- **"Divided my garments by casting lots..."**

#### **Matthew 27:35**

And when they had crucified Him, they **divided his garments** among them by **casting lots**

What's fascinating is, moreover, in so many of David's psalms, there's confession of sin, there's acknowledgment of his own brokenness, or his own contributions to terrible circumstances in his life. Or David is always begging God to bring retribution on His enemies.

- and yet in the entirety of Psalm 22, **there's not a single confession of sin**, not a single acknowledgment of any wrongdoing, and **not a single moment where King David curses his enemies**.

***Why? Because God spoke through King David to point people to the Messiah***, the sinless, Son of God who takes away the sin of the world. The One who doesn't curse His enemies but prays for their forgiveness.

This psalm is estimated to be written in 1044 B.C... over 1000 years before the birth of Jesus... and LONG before Rome had occupied Israel and leveraged a cross as their primary means of capital punishment.

**INTERESTING:** Now, when someone is being wrongfully punished for something, depending on the severity of the punishment, there is something in a human being that eventually — given the length and severity of the punishment — begins to consider, *“Maybe I should just admit to something... anything that will make this more bearable. If I just bite the bullet and own something... maybe this doesn't have to be so difficult, so painful.”*

And yet, here is Jesus is at the point of death... and He pushes up with His pierced feet, pulls up with pierced hands — and cries out Psalm 22!!

- Do you realize what He's doing? He's nearing death on the cross for claiming to be God... and yet with what little strength He has left... He doesn't back away from that claim! He leans into it even more!!
- *Jesus is saying, “1,000 years ago, King David was writing about Me! He was pointing to Me! You mock Me, but I AM the King of the Jews! You laugh, but I am God in human flesh! The Creator of Heaven and Earth, the One in whom and through whom all things have been Created and held together. And I pray that My Father in heaven will forgive you, for you know not what you've done.”*

### **Luke 24:44**

***“...everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”***

And Jesus fulfilled the Law, the prophets, and even the psalms. And upon His. Death... v51.

### **Matthew 27:51, 54**

***And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”***

- The Son died, the earth shook, and the veil was torn — giving all of humanity access to the very presence of God.

**Why did Jesus do it?** Why did He let God forsake him? Why did He put himself in a position where all this could happen?

**In one sense, Jesus Christ was doing it for the glory of God.** He did all this to glorify His Father. That's true. But think about the fact that for all eternity, Jesus already had been glorifying His Father. He didn't need to leave heaven, come down here and live a sinless life, and be crucified to just do that. He was already glorifying God.

**What did He gain as a result of coming down to Earth that He didn't have before?**

### **Hebrew 12:2**

...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the **joy** that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Why did He come down to suffer?** What did He get by coming to earth that He didn't have before? What was the joy set before him? **It was you.** He came down for us.

**He took the punishment for the curse of sin that we deserved... and God in Jesus Christ has given us all the blessings He deserved.**

From the broken bread, the poured-out cup... from His wounded hands and His pierced side we see so clearly that He was forsaken so we wouldn't have to be. He was put in shackles so we could go free! **He was hoisted up on an instrument of death, so you and I could receive ETERNAL LIFE.**

**It's not called Good Friday because of what Jesus suffered. It's called Good Friday because of what Jesus accomplished through His suffering.**

### **1 Peter 2:24**

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

### **2 Corinthians 5:21**

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

### **Romans 6:23**

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The cross brought pain, and yet it also brought healing. It is the point at which justice and mercy meet. Where every wrong thing, every heinous act, all selfishness, and every sin against one another, and against our Creator — is paid for and dealt with once and for all.

This is what Jesus declared. And this is what He meant when He said...

**John 19:30** "It is finished."