

# Is Good Friday good?

*"But I have a baptism to undergo,  
and what constraint I am under until it is completed!"*

*Luke 12:50 (NIV)*

*"Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.  
Stay here and keep watch with me.'"*

*Matthew 26:38 (NIV)*

**W**e have just finished marking the occasion of our Lord's death on the cross by acts of gathering with God's people for worship and praise. Sermons have been preached and in many churches meals have been served.

Because the day we celebrate as "Good Friday" is the day Jesus died, why call it good? Such a question is puzzling in view of the horrors our Lord endured on this day. Certainly for Him, it was the worst day of His life as our verses today indicate.

Have any of my readers said words to the effect, "This situation is killing me."? What we mean to say by such a comment is that we do not think we can live any longer with this burden. Life is too much for us to manage.

But in the case of our

Lord's suffering incredible good came to His people from His suffering on the cross. We deserved to die for our sins but Christ substituted for us and bore the full penalty of our sins. So for us the day He died is a good day as enormous blessings have flowed from the cross to us. Yes, blessings that shall endure for eternity came to us through Jesus' death on the cross.

Good Friday is truly good for repentant sinners yet it was the most dreadful day of Christ's time on earth. John Newton the author of the hymn Amazing Grace put it well when he wrote the following verse:

Thus, while His death my sin displays,  
In all its blackest hue,  
Such is the mystery of grace,  
It seals my pardon too.

With pleasing grief, and mournful joy,  
My spirit now is fill'd,

That I should such a life destroy,  
Yet live by Him I kill'd!

Surely we mourn joyfully as Newton so beautifully puts it as we "celebrate" Good Friday. May the remarkable news of full pardon for sin fill your heart with thanksgiving, even as you grieve for the fact that your sins caused inexpressible suffering for Jesus.

Stop doubting that Jesus loves you because you have suffering also in this life. We are called to suffer for the sake of Jesus (1 Peter 4:12-19). Suffering any time is unwelcome and prayer for its release is good (Matthew 26:36-41). However, when the cup is still there after we prayed for it to pass we must drink it and honour the Lord by humble submission to His will.

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