

Good Friday 2019 – It’s Personal

Good Friday is one of those times of the year that carries so much meaning and conveys so much emotion, it’s hard to express. And even harder to endure.

Especially so, because it’s *personal*. Good Friday is personal.

Jesus *endured* it for us, and it *affects* us. His death was our death, and it *affects* us. Not just positionally, in that our sins are forgiven and we are justified, declared righteous in his sight; but it affects us *emotionally*. At the deepest level of our soul. And if it doesn’t, something’s wrong.

If Good Friday doesn’t awaken or re-awaken feelings of remorse, or pain, or gratitude – something’s wrong.

Either you’re glossing over it in an effort to *avoid* such emotions, *avoid* such discomfort, or you’re not really saved.

So we’re going to focus on the *personal* aspects of Good Friday through some monologues, media, and worship. Culminating in Communion.

And I trust the he will use it *all*, to make Good Friday all the more *personal*.

I’m sorry. (Monologue by Grady)

It started when we left the Upper Room; and followed Jesus to the Mount of Olives. Because on the way he said, “*You will all fall away because of me this night.*” (Mt 26:31a) What an odd thing for Jesus to say after such a sweet time of worship. Fall away. Fall away? Never!

Then his countenance started to change from concern to deep anguish. As if the weight of the world was on his shoulders, and it would crush him. That affected me.

Then came his plea, “Please stay up while I pray. Keep watch with me through the night.” Of course. No problem. Anything for you, Lord.

But I didn’t. I didn’t stay up and I didn’t keep watch. I couldn’t help it! I struggled. Not like him of course. He agonized. So much that he asked the Father to take his burden away. “*My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*” (Mt 26:39b) Let this ordeal I’m facing be set aside. I didn’t get it.

Then he said something I’ll never forget. “*Not as I will, but as you will.*” (Mt 26:39b) Not as I will, but as you will. That’s amazing. Only I didn’t hear it because I fell asleep. 3 times no less.

When he needed me most, I wasn’t there. When he called, I failed. I fell away, just like he said. And for that, I’m sorry.

➤ (Rob) Jesus experienced intense anguish over the burden the Father placed on him. So much so he asked his inner circle to share it with him. And they failed. They literally fell asleep on the job.

Perhaps you’ve done the same. Perhaps you’re sleep walking as we speak, and need to wake up. Need to repent. Need to get going.

Or maybe you hate the thought of having done so in the *past*.

Maybe *you* abandoned Jesus when he called. Or hid when he sought. Ran when he led. Like the time when help was needed and you said no. Or your testimony was crucial, and you remained silent. Or your faithfulness was necessary and you failed.

Whatever the case, if you’ve ever fallen asleep on the job, let’s take a minute to confess it.

To say, “I’m sorry, Lord. I’m sorry. Please forgive me and find me faithful, loyal; whenever you call and whatever it is.”

Let’s do that now.

Song – Nothing Else

I ache. (Monologue by Garth)

I ache. Because there I was. Jesus was seized and taken to the council right before my eyes. And they were *mad*. I mean mad; out for blood.

And right in the middle of it all, Caiaphas, the High Priest, said, “*Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*” (Mk 14:61b) Are you the promised one of old and God in the flesh? It wasn’t an *honest* question, it was an accusation.

But Jesus *answered* honestly. “*I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.*” (Mk 14:62)

“I *am* the Christ,” he said. “I *am* the Messiah. I *am* the Promised One.”

“And you’ll see me ruling and reigning someday right next to the Father. And coming again to judge the world. Including you.”

Wow. Talk about truth. That’s bold.

And that’s when all hell broke loose. Literally.

The high priest ripped his garment, a sign of outrage on par with the demons.

The council began to spit on him and beat him.

The mob called for his death.

And I began to ache.

How could it be? How could he *go* through something like this? How could he be *treated* like that? With such contempt. Such hatred.

For the anointed one of God no less. Ruler and judge of the world. Compassionate healer. Savior of mankind. Redeemer of souls.

It makes me ache.

➤ (Rob) It’s quite the paradox, isn’t it? That Jesus is the perfect ruler and judge of the world, but suffers such injustice and abuse at the *hands* of the world.

It makes you ache. Especially when he could have stopped it just like that.

Could have called down angels, just like that. Could have spoken his abusers right out of existence. Just like that.

But he didn’t. He suffered. And we should never grow numb to that. Never grow calloused to the cruelty he endured. Never grow cold to the treatment he received.

Because he did it for *us*. Personally.

And that should make us ache. Mourn.

Whether we would have participated or not, the author of our faith, and creator of our world, and healer of our souls endured hostility and hatred for us.

It's not right. Wasn't then, isn't now. Do you ache?

Song – Via Delarosa

I'm forgiven. (Monologue by Jeni)

If you had told me ahead of time, I wouldn't have believed it.

But there he was, hanging on a cross. And a rugged one at that. Hastily thrown together from a couple of tree trunks, as the crowds cried, "Crucify him" just a few hours before. I didn't think it was *possible* at the time, but there he was. On a hill far away.

And he just hung there. Held by the nails . . . and my sin.

That's the *hardest* part. My *sin* held him there. *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.* (1 Pet 2:24)

Don't get me wrong. The *actual* nails did plenty of holding too.

Not like the pictures of course, the paintings. Nice, and clean, and sterile.

No, he was brutalized. Torn apart to within an inch of his life. Because that's what flogging does; 40 lashes minus one.

His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and His form beyond that of the children of mankind. (Is 52:14)

Honestly, I barely recognized him.

And then it hit me. The words of John the Baptist. "*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" (Jn 1:29) Talk about prophetic.

I was *witnessing* the fulfillment. He's the *one*. He's the *Lamb*. *Capital L*. The Lamb sent and given by God. Destined to die like *all* sacrificial lambs.

Because without the shedding of blood, there *is* no forgiveness of sins. (Heb 9:22b)

So there he was; dying right before my eyes, shedding his blood to take away the world of *my* sin, our sin.

Pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. (Is 53:5)

It was personal. He did it for me. And because of it, I'm forgiven.

➤ (Rob) Under the Old Covenant, *animals* were sacrificed for sins; repeatedly. Because *it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.* Heb 10:4.

So God sent the one and only *perfect* sacrifice. The one and only *sufficient* sacrifice.

The Lamb of God. A sacrifice *from* him, and *of* him.

So that our sins could be forgiven once and for all. Another sacrifice never again needed. Never repeated.

It's like that old chorus: "I'm forgiven, because you were forsaken. I'm accepted, you were condemned. I'm alive and well . . ." because you weren't.

It's that personal. Him for me.

How about you? Is it personal for *you*?

Do you believe in Jesus as *your* Lamb? Your perfect, once-for-all sacrifice?

Do you believe that he died in your place, for your sins, so you wouldn't have to?

If so, the Bible (**Col 1:13-14**) says that [God] *has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption* [the release from bondage; and], *the forgiveness of sins.*

If Jesus is your lamb, if he's that *personal* to you, you're a part of his kingdom, you're free from sin's grip, and you're forgiven.

If he's not, if he's not your Lamb, you're not. Make sure Good Friday is personal.

Make sure *the* Lamb is *your* Lamb.

Worship Song – Amazing Love, Man of Sorrows, God You're So Good

I remember. (Monologue by Jason)

I remember. Like it was yesterday. Because it was.

The table was set with parsley, salt, water, bitter herbs, an egg, and a beautifully roasted lamb. And those around the table began to read things like:

"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD." (Ex 12:14a)

And you shall observe this rite [of Passover] as a statute for you and for your sons forever . . . And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' [27] you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" (Ex 12:24-27)

And finally, "*Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place.*" (Ex 13:3)

Old hat. If I'd heard it once, I'd heard it *dozens* of times. Every year since I could remember. Telling, retelling, and remembering the great story of redemption when God delivered the Israelites from Egypt. It never grew old.

But then, Jesus picked up the *matzah* bread, and everything changed. For centuries the matzah was broken to recall how Isaac, Abraham's son, offered himself in obedience to the will of his father. But this year, Jesus changed it. Saying, "*This is my body, which is given for you.*" (Lk 22:19b) What? *Your* body? For *me*?

And then it got *really* weird. He picked up the cup, the Cup of Redemption, and said, "*Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*" (Mt 26:27b-28)

This is my blood of the covenant, for the forgiveness of sins.

And that's when it happened. That's when the scales fell from my eyes and I understood. He's the Messiah. The one we've been waiting for; *I've* been waiting for; personally. The Passover Lamb whose blood saves and redeems; me.

I remember.

➤ (Rob) Passover was established when God rescued his people from Egyptian slavery.
After 9 plagues failed to move Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, God sent one more – the death of all firstborn sons. And it worked.
But only if the blood of a spotless lamb was smeared on your doorpost, so *your* son wasn't killed; only if you believed God's *instructions* to that effect.

So every year was a time of remembrance – to look back and reflect on God's provision and protection to save his people and set them free.

But little did they know, that Passover *also* foreshadowed a time of even *greater* provision, greater protection, greater freedom.
When God would *eternally* save his people. From *spiritual* death, *ultimate* judgment. The very meaning that Jesus infused at the Last Supper.

So that now, the cup symbolizes *his* blood, for *our* salvation. Once again, making it personal.
Instead of remembering the *earthly* escape of our *forefathers*, we remember our *eternal* escape to *the* Father.
Instead of remembering the *houses* he passed over, we remember the *sin* he forgave.
Instead of remembering the *lambs* that were sacrificed to avoid *death*, we remember *the* Lamb's sacrifice, to have life.

So whatever you do on this Good Friday (**Summary**), make sure you don't short change your remorse. Make sure you don't minimize your ache.
Make sure you appreciate your forgiveness.
And make sure you remember as if you were there. Personally.

Pray – Father, we ache. And we're sorry. And yet we're incredibly thankful for your forgiveness because of Jesus. Impress all this on our heart, and help us to remember everything.

(Communion)
As we distribute the bread and cup in just a minute, make it personal.
Get right with God. Express your sorrow and remorse. Feel the ache. Thank him for your forgiveness.
And when the time comes, I'll lead us in eating and drinking.

➤ The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor 11:23 . . .
I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you.

Representing the pain he endured, *pierced for our transgressions* and *crushed for our iniquities*; not to mention the tearing of his soul from his Father in heaven . . .
Do this [he said] *in remembrance of me.* (Eat)

➤ [25] *In the same way also he took the cup* [the Cup of Redemption], *saying . . . "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* (Mt 26:27b-28)

This cup and what it contains, is symbolic of Christ's blood, that bought and guarantees the *covenant* of our salvation . . .
The promise of forgiveness, that the blood of bulls and goats could *never* accomplish. The eternal covenant, that's personal.
Do this [he said], *as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.* (Drink)

Pray – Lord, we ache at the thought of what you endured, and we're sorry. But we're grateful for the forgiveness, and amazed by the love. How can it be, that you my God would die for me? (**Good Friday**)

Close – Let's stand for the benediction. (Lk 23:48)
All the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts.

May God bless you as *you* return home.