

Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12

Psalm 22

Hebrews 10:16-25

John 18:1 - 19:42

Growing up, I often wondered why it was called “Good Friday.” A simple reading of the Gospels tells us that Jesus was subjected to a sham trial, was the victim of a rush to judgment by the religious leaders who were afraid of Him, and railroaded by a clear case of mob incitement. With all of that, how can this be considered “good”?

This week, I saw a great cartoon on Facebook which summed it up very well. I believe it was one of the “BC” strips. The one character poses this question, why is it called Good Friday when Jesus died? The other character asked how he would feel if someone else paid the penalty for something he had done. The answer was “Good.” That’s our answer. It is a good day when someone else pays our fine, or penalty.

Obviously, this is a rather simplified version of the theological discussion many have had on this topic. However, simple can be best as it cuts to the heart of the matter. No one would ever say that crucifixion is a good way to die, but it was the punishment of the day for the Romans and even the Jewish leaders thought it would be a deterrent for anyone who might want to follow this man they feared. What they, and the Romans, failed to account for was the actions of God. Nothing they read in their scriptures would lead them to believe that the Messiah everyone was seeking would submit to death on a cross.

While there had to be some satisfaction on the part of the Jewish leadership when they were told Jesus had died, they also remembered what He had said and asked for a guard on the tomb. Even in what they thought was their victory, they feared the truth. Without the cross, there could be no resurrection and they were soon to realize that they had been used by God to carry out God’s plan. The empty tomb stood as a reminder that anything is possible for God.

That statement still holds true today - there is nothing impossible for God. When Jesus and the disciples were approaching Jerusalem the day after the cleansing of the Temple, Peter noticed the fig tree Jesus had cursed. It was then that Jesus told them that anything they asked with no doubt in their hearts would happen, even telling a mountain to be thrown into the sea. How great is our faith? Or better, what can we ask for not doubting God can make it happen? Jesus did not put any qualifiers on it except that we not doubt. It is we who would restrict God by our disbelief.

Let us remember why this is called “Good Friday” and trust God to supply all our needs.