

## **THE JOY OF GOOD FRIDAY**

- ✓ You might be wondering why we're talking about Good Friday on Easter Sunday. (Fair question. Traditionally, we do talk about the *Cross* on Good Friday, and the *Resurrection* on Easter Sunday.)
- ✓ Why are we breaking with tradition? Because I didn't preach on Friday, and I have something on my heart. (So, tradition's going to have to bend.) We're going to talk about the JOY of Good Friday.
- ✓ That's another thing that might seem out of place. We don't usually think of Good Friday as being terribly joyful. But the truth is, there WAS joy on Good Friday. We just don't notice it. (Which is why we're talking about this.)

### **Looking for Joy on Good Friday**

- ✓ If I were looking for joy on Good Friday, the first place I'd look would be among the *Pharisees*. (Honestly, they probably *\*were\** glad to get rid of Jesus. But you can't call what they were feeling "joy"! If anything, I'd call it "relief" or maybe "demonic happiness". That's not what I'm talking about!)
- ✓ There was legitimate Biblical joy on Good Friday. Where was it??? Obviously, not among the disciples! When Jesus was eight days old, Simeon prophesied that a sword would pierce through Mary's soul – (Lk. 2:35). That happened on Good Friday. So, *she* wasn't joyful!
- ✓ And none of the *disciples* were joyful on Good Friday. (Just look around!) Peter went off by himself and wept bitterly – (Luke 22:62). Judas went out and hung himself – (Matt. 2:3-5). And the rest of the disciples were heartbroken! There was no joy in *that* camp! So, where can we find joy on Good Friday? Where you'd probably least expect to find it. Among the Godhead!

### **Jesus Held On to Joy**

- ✓ You wouldn't think Jesus would be experiencing joy, as He faced the

next three days. The pressure in Gethsemane was so great that He sweat blood – (Luke 22:44). From there, He moved on to the whipping post! (If you know anything about *that*, it was brutal!)

- ✓ I'll spare you the details. But this is what Isaiah said about it:

Isa. 52:14 – "The people were shocked when they saw Him; His appearance was so damaged he did not look like a man." (NCV)

- ✓ From there, they'd nail Him to a Cross, the sin the whole world would be placed on Him, and the wrath of God would be poured out on Him. (How can I say He held onto joy? I say that because the Bible said it.)

Hebrews 12:2 – "Because of the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross ..." (ERV)

- ✓ How did Jesus endure all those things I just mentioned? There was something that He fixed His eyes on. Something that brought so much joy that the cross paled by comparison.

Hebrews 12:2 – "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame ..." (KJV)

- ✓ When we hear the word "despise", we think about "hating" something. But the Greek word means to "lightly regard". The joy before Him was so wonderful in His sight, that the Cross paled by comparison. What was the joy before Him? The joy of having YOU.

### **What About the Father?**

Isa. 53:4-6 – "Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ... All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Verse 10 – "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him ..."

- ✓ It *pleased* the Lord! Not because God liked to see Jesus suffer, but because God knew what it would do! (What was God looking at? The same thing as Jesus!)

Verse 11 – “My righteous servant **will make it possible for many to be counted righteous**, for he will bear their sins.”

- ✓ God and Jesus *both* had their eyes on you! (I don’t mean to down-play the Cross. Of *course*, the Cross was difficult! It was hard for Jesus to go through it, and it was hard for the Father to witness it.) But, even *that*, speaks volumes about what they thought about you! The Cross screamed, “I love you!”

## Four Facts About the Love of God

### 1.) God’s Love Moved Him to Pay the Highest Price \*Possible\* for Your Salvation

- ✓ When it came time to redeem you, God didn’t look around Heaven and say, “Who do we have up here that we don’t need?” He didn’t send some broken-down, rookie angel. He sent the Son of His love!
- ✓ How do you determine the worth of anything? By its price tag! **The love of God forever assessed your value as being worth the life of his Son.** Some might say, “Oh yeah. Maybe the whole world *together* was worth that much!” But no. It’s far more “individual” than that.

Gal. 2:20 – “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, **who loved ME**, and **gave himself for ME.**”

- ✓ If you’d been the only one on the *planet* who needed salvation, He’d have done it just for you! (John 17:23)

### 2.) God Loved You Before You Ever Did Anything to Please Him

- ✓ Before you got saved, there wasn’t a whole lot right with your life. The Great Physician gave His diagnosis in ...

Romans 3:13-18 – “Their throat is an open grave; with their tongues they have used deceit; the venom of vipers is under their lips: Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways, they litter the land with heartbreak and ruin: The way of peace they’ve not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Ephesians 2:4 – “But God, **who is rich in mercy**, because of **the intense love** he loved us with, **even when we were dead in sins** ...”

- ✓ He loved you *intensely* when you had done nothing to please Him. That tells us a few things: **You had God’s maximum love when you were at your worst.** That means: God’s love and His tender feelings for you are not related to your performance.
- ✓ He loved you when you weren’t trying! Certainly, He doesn’t stop loving you *now*, when you make a mistake! **What you *do* may not always *please* the Lord**, but you’ve always got His love.

### 3.) God’s Love For You Will Never Come to an End

Jer. 31:3 – “The Lord has appeared unto me of old, saying, Yea, I have loved you with **an everlasting love.**”

- ✓ Here’s a revelation for you! An “everlasting love” is a love that lasts forever. (God’s not going to run out of love for you.)

Isa. 54:10 – “For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but my faithful love won’t shift from you, and **my covenant of peace won’t be shaken**, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.”

### 4.) There’s No Thing, Person, or Circumstance That Can Separate You From God’s Love

Romans 8:33-39 – “Who shall bring an accusation against God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also

*makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*