

SERIES: FOR YOU
PART 1: FOR YOU: HOW YOU BENEFIT FROM
CHRIST'S DEATH

Even though I was raised in a pastor's home, I didn't fully understand why Christians used the phrase GOOD FRIDAY for Christ's death. If you have seen Mel Gibson's movie, *The Passion*, you could easily walk away thinking there is nothing good that took place on that Friday. Some have called Good Friday, Terrible Friday. In fact in the German language Good Friday is known as Karfreitag, which means "Sorrowful Friday."

What happened to Jesus has never ever happened to any other human on this planet since creation. The pain, suffering, agony, humiliation, the lies, slander, and maliciousness that was spewed out on Him were beyond shocking. Isaiah 52:13-14; 53:2b-6, 10 predicts the terrible suffering that the coming Messiah will go through for us. What makes this passage so difficult is that down through history the sufferer has been the astonishment and the stumbling block of humanity. The ancient barbarians simply got rid of sufferers in their societies. More civilized people have dealt more kindly with them, but sufferers remain a problem for philosophers and a severe test of faith for the faith community. It is not natural for people to see any profit in suffering; rather humankind staggers over it, considering it a tragedy, a hindrance to progress, a fate to be avoided. This is why some cultures have referred to Good Friday as Terrible Friday or Sorrowful

Friday. But for the Christian the Scripture presents a far different view of the sufferer, and of suffering. In summary, the Bible states that it is the will of God that true believers suffer. This is not a popular teaching; it is not a truth that we remember or hold dear to our hearts. We hate suffering and try to avoid it. Nevertheless, Jesus says that the world hated Him, and if it hated Him, it will hate us as well. The Bible says that all who live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution in 2 Tim 3:12. Paul says in Philippians 1:29, not only do we have the privilege of trusting in Jesus, but also the privilege of suffering for Him. Hebrews 5:8 says, **“Even though Jesus was God’s Son, He learned obedience from the things He suffered.”**

What Jesus did on Good Friday was and is for your benefit. What Jesus did was what is called vicarious suffering for us. Vicarious means that He endured the cross by dying for our sins. He was our substitute. In doing so, Jesus demonstrated just how much He loved us and the sacrificial nature of true love. Please read along as I read how the Bible predicted what Jesus would do hundreds of years before He gave His life for you on Good Friday. **“52:13 See, My servant will prosper; He will be highly exalted. ¹⁴But many were amazed when they saw Him. His face was so disfigured He seemed hardly human, and from His appearance, one would scarcely know He was a man.... 53:2b There was nothing beautiful or majestic about His appearance, nothing to attract us to Him. ³He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way.**

He was despised, and we did not care. ⁴Yet it was our weaknesses He carried; it was our sorrows that weighed Him down. And we thought His troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for His own sins! ⁵But He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. ⁶All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on Him the sins of us all.... ¹⁰ But it was the Lord's good plan to crush Him and cause Him grief. Yet when His life is made an offering for sin, He will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, and the Lord's good plan will prosper in His hands." Isaiah 52:13-14; 53:2b-6, 10

The death benefits that Jesus has provided for you!...

I. Total forgiveness for my rebellion and sin against Him

Jesus came to earth so that you and I could experience God's complete forgiveness for our rebellion against Him and for everything we have done wrong in thought, feeling and action. This is one of the most powerful benefits of Jesus dying for our sins and taking our place on His cross. God has made it possible for you to live your life with a clear conscience and not carry the guilt, shame, regret and remorse all of your life. God doesn't want you to live feeling guilty all the time. The Father doesn't want you walking around feeling resentment, remorse, regret, and shame. One of the benefits Jesus Christ purchased for you when He came was to give

you total forgiveness of everything you've ever done wrong. Isaiah 52:13 says that God's servant Messiah, Jesus, will be highly exalted and that He will prosper. The purpose of these words mean that He will succeed because He will "deal wisely" and "prosper." Dr. Allan Ross an O. T. scholar writes, **"The verb to prosper means that he will live skillfully according to the plan of God that He may be prosperous and have good success. Vs. 14 demonstrates how the suffering Messiah will be successful 'His face was so disfigured He seemed hardly human and from His appearance, one would scarcely know He was a man.' The Hebrew term for disfigured describes a spoiling, a destruction, an appearance-changing affliction."** Loved ones, this drives home the point just how costly and just how devastating our own sin and rebellious natures are. For Jesus to atone for our sins He had to take our sin into Himself to destroy it. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, 21 says in the ESV, **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he/she is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.... ²¹For our sake He (God) made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."** Once you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and you turn your life over to Him, Paul argues that you are now in Christ and you become a new

creation, meaning that you have passed from death to life, from mortality to immortality.

The expression of being in Christ has many benefits. First it means you have a deep sense of security and confidence in God's love for you personally, because Jesus Christ took God's wrath for your sin on Himself. You are deeply accepted by God because of what His Son did on your behalf. You have this assurance and hope for your future because of Christ's resurrection. You have an anticipation of sharing in Christ's inheritance which you will share in because of your relationship with Jesus. You actually participate in the Divine nature of God because of Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:4 says, **“And because of His glory and excellence, He has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share His divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.”**

Vs. 21 in 2 Cor 5 is one of the most important in all of Scripture for understanding the meaning of the atonement and justification. Paul says that the One who knew no sin is Jesus Christ, in vs. 21, and that He, God, made Him, Christ, to be sin. This means that God the Father made Christ to be regarded and treated as “sin” even though Christ Himself never sinned (see Hebrews 4:15 and Galatians 3:13). Paul says that God did this for our sake, that is, God regarded and treated “our” sin (the sin of all who would believe in Christ) as if our sin belonged not to us but to Christ Himself. So Christ “died for all” in 2 Cor 5:14, and as 1 Peter 2:24 says, **“Jesus personally carried our sins in His body on the**

cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By His wounds you are healed.” Because of Good Friday, the first benefit that comes to you because of Jesus’ death is that your sin and rebellion that have kept you far from God and His love, acceptance, purpose and plan has been removed personally by Jesus and His death, sacrifice and redemptive work on the cross. Ephesians 1:7 says, **‘Father God is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins.’** The first benefit I receive when I surrender my life to Jesus is that He forgives me to the core of my being. His forgiveness creates a life of freedom that you cannot receive or experience in any other relationship than your relationship with Jesus Christ.

II. Healing power for my life

If you’re not aware of this fact, we all need healing in different areas of our lives. We all need healing. I’m not just talking about physical healing, because that’s not your deepest wound. The wounds in your life no one can see. We can see a disability or a defect but the deepest wounds we all have are hidden. Jesus came to not only forgive your sins, but to heal your deepest wounds. Isaiah 53:3-5 says, **“He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. ⁴Yet it was our weaknesses (grief) He carried; it was our sorrows that weighed Him down. And we thought His troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for**

His own sins! ⁵But He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.” Note the parallelism of verse 5. He was pierced for our rebellion, He was crushed for our sins. All of Christ’s suffering was for our sin. He was pierced, crushed, beaten, and whipped for our rebellion, our sins, and so we could be made whole and be healed. This is absolutely the greatest miracle ever. This is called redemptive suffering. Redemptive suffering means you suffer on the behalf of others. When you take on pain to prevent someone else having to have that pain, that’s called redemptive suffering. Loved ones, the Bible says Jesus was despised, rejected, well acquainted with sorrow and the deepest grief. The reason the Friday before Easter is called Good Friday is because God in His infinite wisdom knew that our sin and rebellion had created bitterness, hurt, woundedness, sorrow, despair, alienation, a sense of deep bondage, and powerlessness. Jesus went through all of that in His passion so that you could receive His healing power. 1 Peter 2:24-25 says, **“He personally carried our sins in His body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By His wounds you are healed. ²⁵Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.”** What is your deepest wound that you have struggled with for years? Friends, I am convinced that the most detrimental emotion in your life is bitterness. It’s resentment. It’s holding onto a grudge, holding onto a hurt. Why? Because when you hold onto a hurt, you’re not hurting that other person. You’re just hurting yourself. Regardless of

when you sustained your hurt and grief, you are now hurting yourself if you do not receive God's forgiveness and then extend forgiveness to the person who hurt you. Every time you relive the hurt, it hurts you again. As long as you hold on to your hurt, it's like drinking poison and hoping they die. It doesn't work. I have seen people healed of diseases and demonic influence broken over people's lives when they simply say, Father, I forgive my ex. I forgive the person who raped me. I forgive the person who molested me or betrayed me or whatever it is you believe they have done wrong to you. Based on the Scriptures we're studying today, the Bible is very clear, Jesus Christ went through horrific torture so that you could be saved, healed, reconciled to God and set free from your sin and self-defeating behavior. You will not be able to receive the healing power of Jesus Christ until you confess your sins to Him, and you ask Him for His love, power and acceptance, and you receive it. I believe today that, for many of us, the breakthrough you're praying for and expecting from God hinges around your willingness to let go of perceiving yourself as a victim, and you let go of your anger, unforgiveness, hatred and blame of others, and you let them go in Jesus' name. On Good Friday Jesus died so you could walk in the benefit of forgiveness in every area of your life, and that you would have total access to His healing power in every area of your life.

III. Power to break free from forces that control you

This is an incredibly powerful benefit of what Jesus did for you on His cross. The truth is we don't realize how much we

let ourselves be controlled by other things and other people. You do it all the time. So do I. We let all kinds of things control us. We let our moods control us, and so you do things because you feel like doing it or you don't feel like doing it. You're manipulated by your moods and you're controlled by your moods. Your moods aren't always right. We let the media control us. We let the approval of other people control us. You do that all the time, the way you walk, the way you talk, the way you act, what you say, what you smell like, and everything else. We let our past control us. Listen friends, your past is past. It can't control you anymore unless you let it. God wants you to learn from your past, but He doesn't want you living in the past. We let our memories control us. Bad memories or even good memories can control us one way or the other. We let culture control us. We let the weather control us. We let the devil influence us and we let money. We let our sexual drive control us. We get into all kinds of trouble because we don't develop and focus on developing self-control and self discipline. If you have surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, you have two competing forces wanting to influence your life. You have your old nature where everything is about you. This is where your focus is on you. How you feel. How you look. What you want. What is most comfortable for you. Our culture feeds this desire, and it is getting worse every day. Always do what is best for me. The middle letter of pride is the letter I. The middle letter of sin is I. It's all about me. If you have surrendered your life to Jesus Christ you have God's Holy Spirit who lives on the inside of you.

Galatians 5:13-18 demonstrates the power that Jesus has come to give us to break all forces that try to control us. **“For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. ¹⁴For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ¹⁵But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another. ¹⁶So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.”** The Holy Spirit has been given to you to give you new desires, new power, new direction, and a freedom that allows you to pursue all that God has for you. In your notes Romans 6:6-9, and 11 says, **“We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ when we died with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. ⁷For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. ⁸And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with Him. ⁹We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and He will never die again.... ¹¹So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and live to God through Christ Jesus.”**

Notice that Paul says our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ when we died with Christ. He goes on to say we were set free from the power of sin when we died with Him. When did we die with Him? When did we get buried with Christ? Paul argues that once you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and you ask Him to forgive you, and you pledge to submit your life to His purposes and plans, then you follow Him in water baptism. Vv. 4-5 says this, **“For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. ⁵Since we have been united with Him in His death, we will also be raised to life as He was.”**

How can I receive these benefits?

A. Put your faith in Jesus Christ

In John 1:11-13 the Bible says, **“He came to His own people, and even they rejected Him. ¹²But to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God. ¹³They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.**

B. Turn from your sin and turn your life over to Jesus

“So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and

Messiah!’ ³⁷Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what should we do?’ ³⁸Peter replied, ‘Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Acts 2:36-38

As we close today I want to give anyone here a chance today to say, “Scott, I want to receive these benefits from what Jesus did for me by taking my place on the cross. I am ready to put my faith in Jesus Christ, and I am ready to turn from my sin and turn my life over to Jesus.” Will you bow your heads and close your eyes, and please don’t look around. This is our way of creating a safe place for anyone who chooses today to step over the line of faith to experience all of the benefits that Jesus has for you. I want to lead us all in prayer now, but if you are willing to pray this prayer with me today and say, “I am turning my life over to Jesus Christ,” will you look at me and just put your hand up so I can recognize you, then you can put it down. Pray this prayer with me in your mind.

“Father God, I need and want Your total forgiveness. I need You to wipe out the charges against me. I need You to cancel the record on all the things in my life that were wrong. Thank You, Jesus Christ, for taking my sin, guilt and rebellion on Your body and nailing it to the cross. Thank You that because of what You did, my sins are paid for. I don’t understand it all, but I’m asking You and I’m accepting Your forgiveness not because I deserve it, but just because You’re a good God, and because of Your grace and the gift of forgiveness. Father, I need Your deep healing. You know the stuff that I am embarrassed about, and I have carried great shame and

humiliation for a long time. You know the things I carry that no one else can see. You know my anxieties and fears and the insecurities I have. You know the depression and the discouragement I battle with, Father God. I need and want healing in my relationships. I need Your healing in my emotions, finances and in my mind and body. Father, I want to experience real freedom. I don't have enough power in myself to heal myself. Thank You that You died to set me free, Jesus Christ, and so as much as I know how, as humble as I can, I say it now. I accept Your gift of salvation. I call on You and say I want to experience the death benefits that You, Jesus Christ, paid for with Your life. I say this as sincerely as I can. Jesus Christ, I want to learn to love You, trust You and follow You. It is in Your precious name I pray. Amen.”