



Blackburn Baptist Church
Good Friday Virtual Service, 10 April 2020



Welcome

Welcome to today's Good Friday service. Please prepare a small cup of wine or juice and a piece of bread in order to share in communion later.

Song: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

(If you're online, click [here](#) to listen, or just read the words)

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ my God
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to his blood

See from his head, his hands, his feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were an offering far too small
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

Opening Prayer

St Paul says to the church, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice!... Do not worry about anything but, in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all your understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.' So, Lord God our Father, we come to you this day in prayer, trusting in your mercy and grace. We acknowledge that we have not been as you would have us be, we have failed you in thought, word and deed, and in not being whole-hearted in our love and service for you. Please forgive us all that is past and, on this day above all days, may we, by the power of your Holy Spirit, be renewed and empowered to live lives of true faith in you, not counting the cost or heeding others, that we may be of service to you and others in this needy world. So, please inspire, challenge and strengthen us in this hour together, and speak to us, we pray. Amen.

Song: *The Power of the Cross*

(If you're online, click [here](#) to listen, or just read the words)

Oh, to see the dawn of the darkest day,
Christ on the road to Calvary.
Tried by sinful men,
Torn and beaten, then
Nailed to a cross of wood.

This, the power of the cross,
Christ became sin for us
Took the blame, bore the wrath
We stand forgiven at the cross.

Oh, to see the pain written on your face,
Bearing the awesome weight of sin.
Every bitter thought, every evil deed
Crowning your bloodstained brow.
Now the daylight flees
Now the ground beneath
Quakes as its maker bows his head.
Curtain torn in two, dead are raised to life,
"Finished!" the victory cry.

Oh, to see my name
Written in the wounds,
For through your suffering I am free~
Death is crushed to death
Life is mine to live,
Won through Your selfless love.
This, the power of the cross
Son of God slain for us
What a love! What a cost!
We stand forgiven at the cross.

"The Power of the Cross" words & music by Keith Getty & Stuart Townend. © 2005 Thankyou Music. CCLI License No. 5664

Bible Reading: *Matthew 27: 22-31 (From 'The Living Bible')*

What shall I do with Jesus, your Messiah?" Pilate asked. And they shouted, "Crucify him!" "Why?" Pilate demanded. "What has he done wrong?" But they kept shouting, "Crucify! Crucify!" When Pilate saw that he wasn't getting anywhere and that a riot was developing, he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this good man. The responsibility is yours!"

Then Pilate released Barabbas to them. And after he had whipped Jesus, he gave him to the Roman soldiers to be taken away and crucified. But first they took him into the armoury and called out the entire contingent. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and made a crown from long thorns and put it on his head, and placed a stick in his right hand as a sceptre and knelt before him in mockery. "Hail, King of the Jews," they yelled. And they spat on him and grabbed the stick and beat him on the head with it. After the mockery, they took off the robe and put his own garment on him again and took him out to crucify him.

Sermon: *Hand Washing*



PREVENTION IS KEY.

Prevent the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)



WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN with soap & water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



AVOID TOUCHING your eyes, nose, & mouth with unwashed hands.
AVOID CLOSE CONTACT with people who are sick.



STAY HOME if you are sick.
CLEAN & DISINFECT frequently touched objects & surfaces.



COVER YOUR MOUTH & NOSE with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.

The UK, along with many countries in our world at this time, is in the middle of a coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. As I write this message (7 April 2020) there are now nearly 1.4 million confirmed cases of coronavirus in 184 countries and more than 75,000 people have died. The true figure for the number of people is thought to be much higher as many of those with milder symptoms have not been tested and counted. In the UK there have been more than 52,000 confirmed cases and nearly 5,400 deaths; many of us will know individuals who have contracted or even died from this virus. Even our Prime Minister has just been admitted into an intensive care unit. Presently there is a steep rise in cases and deaths, but slowing infection rates are raising hopes that the lockdown, social distancing and personal sanitising measures (regular thorough handwashing) are curbing the spread of the virus. We all pray this may continue to be so.

Today we are reminded of a particular public handwashing incident from our reading in Matthew 27. On Thursday evening, Jesus having been betrayed was arrested. He was tried first by Annas and later by Caiaphas and other religious leaders. Early the next morning (Friday) Jesus was tried by the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod Antipas and then sent back to Pilate again where we see this incident. Pilate (and his wife who has been troubled by a dream about him) didn't want to deal with or decide on this matter, so Pilate referencing OT law (Deuteronomy chapter 21) attempts to abdicate his responsibility for deciding on Jesus death by washing his hands over Jesus, while at the same time he passes Jesus over to the soldiers to be crucified to death.

Have you ever wondered why we call today 'Good Friday'? Surely this is a misnomer? How can a day be a good day on which we see such betrayal, false witnesses, God's appointed leaders getting it so wrong, an unjust trial resulting in Jesus (the promised Messiah) being flogged and killed? What is good about it?

In Mark 10 v 17,18 we read about a rich young man who ran up to Jesus, knelt before him and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” and Jesus said to him “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.” Hundreds of years ago this day was also known as God’s Friday, Sacred Friday or Holy Friday. But, in the light of Jesus’ words and meaning in this passage, let’s look briefly at why this is a Good Day, because it’s what Good Friday points to that makes it so good. It points to a **good person**, it points to a **good plan** and it points to a **good purpose**.

First of all, it points to a **good person**. Peter said in Acts 10 v 38: ‘Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.’ Nathanael said, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth” and Philip replied, “Come and see.” Nathanael came and was convinced, and we can also see by reading the gospels that Jesus’ life was full of all that is good.

In John chapter 10 Jesus said, “The thief/devil comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” So Good Friday points to the only good person and how he came to offer his life for us, in stark contrast to the devil who comes only to take away and destroy.

In Romans 3 v 22, 23, Paul says that Jesus is truly good by stating he has the righteousness of God, and contrasts him with all of us, by saying we have all sinned.

So Good Friday points to Jesus a **good person**. Secondly it points to a **good plan**. In Acts 10 v 39 Peter, speaking to Cornelius, says, “And we are witnesses of all that he (Jesus) did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree.” God’s good plan was to substitute Jesus Christ, the only good person, for all of us sinful people. That was his plan; it’s a good plan. Jesus was the only good person who ever lived; he lived a sinless life so that he could take our place. What place is that? Paul says in Romans 6 v 23, ‘The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

In other words, Jesus is taking our place in order that we may take his place. Peter put it this way (in 1 Peter 3 v18): ‘For Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.’ The just for the unjust, the righteous for the unrighteous, the sinless for the sinful. It’s the beautiful Christian doctrine we call substitutional atonement.

2 Corinthians 5 v 21 puts it like this: ‘For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.’ In other words, God the Father decided to treat Jesus as though Jesus were guilty of every sin ever committed by every person, treating Jesus like we deserve to be treated, so that God could treat us like Jesus deserves to be treated.

This is God’s **good plan**. So Good Friday, why is it good? It points to a good person, it points to a **good plan**, and finally, it’s good because it points to a

good purpose. Peter says in Acts 10 v 40-43: 'But God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives *forgiveness of sins* through his name.' Forgiveness – that's God's purpose.

God's **person** is Jesus, God's **plan** is Substitution, God's **purpose** is Forgiveness. When you look to, when you follow, when you believe this Jesus, his promise is you can receive forgiveness of sin.

Today we focus on Jesus being put on the cross. You remember the first statement he made on that cross: "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing." *Forgive them! forgive them!* The very first statement out of his mouth; it's an astonishing statement. This crowd was shouting for his blood: "*Crucify him! crucify him!*" and yet he is pleading for their forgiveness. It's not natural, it's not normal to pray forgive them.

When you are shopping and someone jumps the queue in front of you to get the last sales item you had wanted, or when you are driving to an appointment, running late and someone speeds past only to cut in in front of you, what's your immediate reaction? I pray for them when that happens, but I don't say, "Father, forgive them." My prayer is more like, "Father make sure they get pulled up for that!" We want justice, but this is not Jesus' way, not this good person; he says, "Father forgive them." Why? Because that is our greatest need, forgiveness. Not judgement, but forgiveness. That's why he came to die. Today his death is not the end of the story, his death is the theme of the story. Only through his death can he offer us forgiveness that brings new life.

Today we see Jesus is God's only **good person**, God's only son, come to earth not to show us 'this is how it's done' or 'this is how you should live', but to bring this good news to all. Today we see God's **good plan**, today is not the end of God's only good son, but today is a fulfilment of his life, in that he is prepared to take our place, to take the punishment for all our sin and wrongdoing, to take our death in order that we may receive all that is due to him. Today we see God's **good purpose.** In Acts 10 v 43 Peter concludes the good news he has brought to Cornelius by saying: "All the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sin through his name."

I began by highlighting handwashing. During the Covid-19 pandemic we need to constantly wash our hands to prevent infection and the spread of coronavirus which has brought death to so many. Of more importance though we need to be reminded today that, in washing our hands of Jesus Christ (just like Pilate), we are not absolved from the consequences of this rejection. Pilate may have thought Jesus was a good person undeserving of death, but he would not stand beside him because of the influence of those around him. I pray that we may

all know and share the truth of Jesus Christ, his plan and purpose for us. As Kate Winslet says: 'like your life depends on it'.

Song: *Behold the Lamb (Communion Hymn)*

(If you're online, click [here](#) to listen, or just read the words)

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away,
Slain for us: and we remember:
The promise made
That all who come in faith
Find forgiveness at the cross.

Chorus:

So we share in this bread of life,
And we drink of his sacrifice,
As a sign of our bonds of peace
Around the table of the King.

The body of our Saviour, Jesus Christ,
Torn for you: eat and remember
The wounds that heal
The death that brings us life,
Paid the price to make us one.

Chorus:

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin,
Shed for you: drink and remember
He drained death's cup that all may enter in
To receive the life of God.

Chorus:

And so with thankfulness and faith
We rise to respond: and to remember
Our call to follow in the steps of Christ
As his body here on earth.
As we share in his suffering,
We proclaim: Christ will come again!
And we'll join in the feast of heaven
Around the table of the King

"Behold the Lamb (Communion Hymn)" words & music by Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend. © 2007 Thankyou Music. CCLI License No. 5664

Communion

Let us share communion together. As we come now to eat and drink in remembrance and obedience to Jesus Christ, who gave his life that we should live, we are reminded in Luke's Gospel that Jesus earnestly desired to eat this meal with his disciples before he suffered. He took the bread in his hands, blessed it, broke it and offered it to each, with the words, "Take, this is my body which is given for you." In the same way, he took the cup of wine, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." This new covenant was promised in Jeremiah 31 verses 31 to 34. The old covenant was sealed with the blood of lambs to bring freedom from the captivity and slavery of Egypt. And we know that the new covenant has brought forgiveness and freedom from sin once and for all, that, through it, God writes his law on our hearts, so that, from the least to the greatest, we can know him.

So we give thanks for the bread of life, torn and broken, and for the wine poured out that we might have forgiveness of sin and new life through his blood. We come not because we must, but because we may; not because we are strong, but because we are weak; not because any goodness of our own gives us a right to come, but because we need mercy and help. We come because we love the Lord a little and would like to love him more. We come because he loved us and gave himself for us. So, let us come, and meet the risen Christ.

Now let us take and eat the bread in remembrance of him. And let us drink the wine which represents the new covenant in his blood. Then give thanks for these signs of Jesus' transforming love and pray that God would send his Holy Spirit upon us that we may be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Communion Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, as we come to you in prayer, wherever we are today, we are confused, perplexed, concerned, frightened, at the recent turn of events here and worldwide. We may even feel that we can echo Christ's cry on the cross of: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Yet you, God, do not forsake us, you are with us always, through the good times and the bad.

We come to you in prayer after sharing a symbolic 'virtual' meal together, just as your son shared a meal with his friends on his last evening on earth. He asked us to remember him as we share together, and we do and have again this morning.

We come to you now, many of us with heavy hearts, as a world in turmoil. We are in the realms of the unknown, and some are aware of our own frailties and weaknesses as never before. We ask for you to be with us in this time of crisis, as we rely on you for comfort, knowing that your love is beyond understanding.

We may know individuals who are being physically and mentally affected by the virus, some of whom are themselves ill and suffering, some bereaved as those they know and love have lost their lives. We ask that all of those may know your loving arms around them, supporting them as their lives are turned upside down.

We ask that this whole experience will, eventually, lead to a brighter future, whether that be shown in a renewed feeling of community, a greater dependence and reliance on you, or a reminder that faith hope and love do, and always will, abide.

We look forward to that glorious day when your kingdom will come on earth, when 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.'

In the meantime, help us, Father, when things are at their worst, to hold onto the truth that in Christ, you are in the situation with us. Whisper to us again that firm land lies beyond the quagmire, light beyond the darkness and rejoicing beyond the despair. Amen.

Song: *And Can It Be?*

(If you're online, click [here](#) to listen, or just read the words)

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused his pain
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all: th'immortal dies:
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left his Father's throne above
So free, so infinite his grace
Emptied himself of all but love,

And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine;
Alive in him, my living head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
And claim the crown
Through Christ my own.

Song: *Benediction*

(If you're online, click [here](#) to listen, or just read the words)

May the Lord bless you and keep you,
May the Lord smile on you,
Shine his light upon you.
May the Lord lift you,
Turn his face towards you,
Give you his peace,
Give you his peace.

May the Lord bless us and keep us,
May the Lord smile on us,
Shine his light upon us.
May the Lord lift us,
Turn his face towards us,
Give us his peace,
Give us his peace.

Blessed we came to this place today,
And blessed now we will go,
In the name of the Father,
The Spirit and the Son.

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