

GOOD FRIDAY: THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 27:32-66

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- Do you have opportunities to reflect on the events of Holy Week? What are they and what do they mean to you? In your experience, is it easy to rush past Good Friday to Easter?
- Have you ever felt abandoned by God and those around you? How would you describe that experience?

The cross is a very prominent symbol of the Christian faith. But have you ever given much thought to what it means, what it symbolizes, or how an ancient means of shameful, public death became the iconic symbol of Christianity? This Good Friday, let's stop and dwell on the cross together, studying the events as Matthew describes them, and allowing him to focus our hearts and minds on the powerful spiritual and theological meaning of the cross. Join us as we marvel at the profound sacrifice of Jesus Christ and remember why something so awful is indeed "good" news for us.

Listen: [Good Friday: The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- In his book, *And the Angels Were Silent*, Max Lucado explores the meaning of Jesus' cry from the cross "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:42). Translating forsaken as "abandoned," Lucado writes as if he's conversing with God, "*Abandonment. That is the punishment for a criminal. Abandonment. That is the suffering borne by the most evil. Abandonment. That's for the vile—not for you...*" (179). What reaction does this stir in you?
- In segment 2, hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee discuss what Jesus meant when he cried out from the cross in Matthew 27:42 that God had forsaken, or abandoned, him. Why do you think it's a valuable exercise for us to try to understand what Jesus meant in that moment? What impact does studying Jesus' cry of abandonment from the cross have on your faith and your understanding of Jesus' sacrifice for your salvation?
- When Dave reflects on the meaning of the Temple curtain being torn from top to bottom at the moment of Jesus' death, he says that through the crucifixion, "Jesus...has brought his blood into the very presence of God; and so, the curtain [separating the holy of holies from God's people] is removed. We have easy access now through Christ to the Father." Why do you need this reminder today?
- In 1 Corinthians 1:23-24, Paul calls the crucifixion, not the resurrection, a stumbling block for those who do not believe. Why do you think it's his *death*, not his miraculous return from death that is more difficult for people to understand and accept? Why then does Paul say that to those who have the gift of faith ("those whom God has called"), Christ's crucifixion is the power and wisdom of God?

Related Passages

- Mark 15:21-47
- Luke 23:26-56
- John 19:17-42
- Deuteronomy 21:22-23
- Galatians 3:10-14
- 1 Corinthians 1:23-24
- Hebrews 2:14-18

Conclusion

Take a moment to contemplate your sins. Write them down. Think about what Good Friday means for you. Close your eyes and picture your sins as heavy weights, weighing you down as you try to walk. Picture Jesus meeting you on your way. Watch him as he willingly takes each weight from you, willingly placing your load upon himself. See him cursed on the cross instead of you, *for* you. Then consider and respond to these two observations:

Fleming Rutledge in her book, *The Undoing of Death*:

"The opening of the tombs takes place, not on the morning of the Resurrection, but at the moment of Jesus' last struggle for breath. Matthew is telling us that "the powers of death have done their worst" and they cannot contain him" (192).

Scott's closing remark:

"If God was involved in the cursedness of the cross, if Jesus really did bear that curse for us, if God was active on that cross, then God is active inside that tomb, and nothing, but nothing will ever keep Jesus in there."

Why is it important for you to dwell at rather than rush past the cross? How does dwelling at the cross benefit your faith?

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