

Laurie's Message for Friday April 10, 2020



Greetings to All on this Good Friday.

I pray that everyone is healthy and safe in their homes while we continue to endure the coronavirus pandemic. There have been so many deaths due to the Coronavirus or the complications resulting from the virus over the past few weeks. And they continue. It is difficult for me at times to accept the reality of the numbers of lives that have been affected by this terrible virus worldwide.

There is also another death on my mind today. It is a death that happened on this day many, many years ago that also had a tremendous effect on our lives. Good Friday is the day we commemorate the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. Thanks to many Sunday School lessons as a child and scripture readings and sermons as an adult, I have no problem believing in and accepting the reason for Jesus's death (unlike my struggle with the coronavirus deaths). I typically think of this day as very solemn. Jesus was flogged, mocked and ordered to carry the cross on which he would be nailed and crucified. So, that begs the question of why is the day known as "Good" Friday? I decided to do some research on this and thought that you might be interested in my findings.

1. Some linguists suggest that the word "good" used to mean "holy". I looked up the definition of "good" in the lexico.com on-line dictionary powered by Oxford. It provided the following definition for "good" when used as a noun, *that which is morally right; righteousness.*

From this definition, one can conclude that Good Friday is good, because it led to the resurrection of Jesus and his victory over death and sin. The result of Jesus' suffering and dying for the sins of all mankind was holy. Morally right, righteous.

The Oxford English Dictionary states that adjective "good" in religious context refers to "a day or season observed as holy by the church", hence the greeting "good tide" at Christmas.

Good Friday is a crucial day in the Christian faith as it commemorates part of a most momentous weekend in the church year. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is a decisive turning point for all creation. On Good Friday, Jesus willingly suffered and died by crucifixion as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. It is followed by Easter; the glorious celebration of the day Jesus was raised from the dead.

2. A second theory is that the Good in Good Friday derives from God or "God's Friday". Wikipedia cites an entry in The Catholic Encyclopedia (first published in 1907) that some use to back this theory up. The Catholic Encyclopedia states that the term's origins are not clear. It says some sources see its origins in the term "God's Friday" or *Gottes Freitag*, while others maintain that it is from the German *Gute Freitag*. The Catholic Encyclopedia notes that the day was called Long Friday by the Anglo-Saxons and is still referred to as such in modern Danish. Finally, it says that the day is known as "the Holy and Great Friday" in the Greek liturgy, "Holy Friday" in Romance Languages and *Karfreitag* (Sorrowful Friday) in German.

Regardless of the origin, some say the name Good Friday is entirely appropriate because the suffering and death of Jesus, as terrible as it was, marked the dramatic culmination of God's plan to save his people from their sins. As terrible as the day was, it had to happen for us to receive the joy of Easter. Jesus endured the cross on Good Friday, knowing it led to his resurrection, our salvation, and the beginning of God's reign of righteousness and peace.

Jesus was fully God, but he was also fully human. He felt the pain and endured the suffering as the perfect sacrificial substitute for all sinners. He loved us that much! How hard that must have been! His love for us and his faith was so strong that even during unthinkable pain, he was consistent in his message to the end. He accepted the wrath of God's punishment against sin for forgiveness and salvation to be given to the nations. Would any of us today be able to endure pain and suffering and give up our lives to fulfill God's gospel? Is our love for others and belief and faith in God that strong?

The seven words Jesus spoke while on the cross are very powerful and have far reaching significance. They once again remind us that Jesus death was the supreme sacrifice that secured our salvation. If time permits, I recommend that you take a few moments to read the scripture passages before and after those cited.

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34)

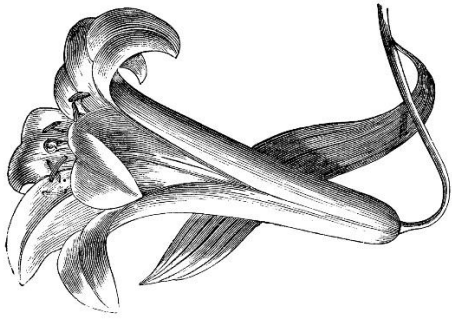
Even while experiencing horrible pain, Jesus was praying for the very people who caused his suffering!

2. "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43)
Not only did Jesus forgive those who crucified him, he also forgave one of the thieves crucified next to him.
3. "Woman, behold your Son" (John 19:26)
Although suffering, his mind was on others. Jesus entrusted the care of his mother to John.
4. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
Jesus was suffering the pain and separation that we deserve from God. For God to make everything in the universe that had been affected by sin right; God had to forsake Jesus and punish him on our behalf.
5. "I thirst" (John 19:28)
Jesus lived as a man and suffered as a man in order that he could identify with suffering humanity.
6. "It is finished" (John 19:30)
A cry of victory! He finished the job that God gave him to do. He fulfilled prophecy, and his suffering was over.
7. "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46)
Jesus's final statement indicates everything had been completed and he was dismissing his spirit.

Before closing, I want to share a few lighthearted Easter tidbits.

In Medieval Europe, eggs were forbidden during Lent. Eggs laid during this time were often boiled or otherwise preserved as to not go to waste. As a result, eggs were a mainstay of Easter meals, and a prized Easter gift for children and servants. Over time, many traditions and practices formed around Easter eggs!

Hares and rabbits have long been symbols of fertility. The inclusion of the hare into Easter customs appears to have originated in Germany, where tales were told of an "Easter hare" who laid eggs for children to find. Many Germans immigrated to America (particularly to Pennsylvania) and brought this tradition with them, and it spread to a wider public. They also baked cakes for Easter in the shape of hares and are said to have pioneered the practice of making chocolate bunnies and eggs!



Easter Lily – Easter lilies are native to a few islands south of Japan. They were brought to England in 1777 and later Bermuda, where they were produced on a large scale and earned their first nickname, the Bermuda lily.

The Bermuda lily is highly regarded as a joyful symbol of elegance, beauty, spirituality, hope and life. In Christendom, the lily has come to symbolize the resurrection of Jesus. The flower retells the resurrection story with its life cycle. These snow-white flowers symbolize new life and hope. The bulb of the flowers buried in the ground represents the tomb of Jesus and the glorious white trumpet-like fragrant flower which grows from the bulb symbolizes Jesus' life after death. The white color stands for the purity of the Savior and the joy of resurrection while the trumpet shape signifies Gabriel's trumpet call to rebirth and new life.

Dear God,

We remember today the pain and suffering of the cross, and all that Jesus was willing to endure, so we could be set free. He paid the price, such a great sacrifice, to offer us the gift of eternal life. Help us to never take for granted this huge gift of love on our behalf. Help us to be reminded of the cost of it all. Forgive us for being too busy, or distracted by other things, for not fully recognizing what you freely gave, what you have done for us.

Thank you, Lord, that by your wounds we are healed. Thank you that because of your huge sacrifice we can live free. Thank you that sin and death have been conquered, and that your Power is everlasting. Thank you that we can say with great hope, "It is finished..." For we know; what's still to come. And death has lost its sting. We praise you, for you are making all things new.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen.*

Blessings to you throughout this holy weekend. Stay safe and healthy!

Laurie