

Is Good Friday good?

“But I have a baptism to undergo,
and what constraint I am under until it is completed!”
Luke 12:50 (NIV)

“Then he said to them,
‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.
Stay here and keep watch with me.’”
Matthew 26:38 (NIV)

The day we celebrate as “Good Friday” is the day Jesus died, so why do we call it good?

This question is perplexing because of the horrors our Lord endured on this day.

For Him, it was the worst day of His life—as our verses today indicate.

Have you ever quoted the phrase: “This situation is killing me.”? If so, you likely meant that you felt you couldn’t live any longer with your burden. Sometimes life is too much for us to manage.

In the case of our Lord’s incredible suffering came incredible good—for His people.

We deserved to die for our sins, but Christ provided a substitution for us and bore our penalty in full. So, for us, the day He died is a good day.

Enormous blessings have flowed from the cross to us. Blessings that shall endure for eternity.

Yes, Good Friday is truly good for repentant sinners even though it was the most dreadful day of Christ’s time on earth.

John Newton, the author of the hymn Amazing Grace, put it well when he wrote the following verse:

Thus, while His death
my sin displays, In all its
blackest hue,
Such is the mystery of grace,
It seals my pardon too.

With pleasing grief,
and mournful joy,
My spirit now is fill’d,
That I should such
a life destroy,
Yet live by Him I kill’d!

Surely we mourn joyfully—as
Newton so beautifully puts

it—as we “celebrate” Good Friday.

May the remarkable news of full pardon for your sins fill your heart with thanksgiving—even as you grieve that those sins caused inexpressible suffering for Jesus.

Are you suffering today? If so, it’s not because Jesus doesn’t love you. As Christians, we’re called to suffer for the sake of Jesus (1 Peter 4:12-19).

Suffering at any time is unwelcome, and prayer for its release is good (Matthew 26:36-41). However, when the cup is still there after we’ve prayed for it to pass, we must drink it and honour the Lord by humble submission to His will.

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