



Message **Transcript**

Good Friday 2023 Christ On The Cross

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Pastor Jeff:

Father in heaven, we give you praise, glory, and honor for the gift of your son, Jesus Christ and your Holy Spirit who indwells all of us who believe. And we are here tonight to hear what you have to say to us directly from your word so that we could respond the way you want us to respond. We give you praise for the gift of Jesus who gave his very life so that we who are dead could live and we're here to celebrate him and to hear him speak to us tonight. And so now for all those who have gathered, who desire to hear Jesus speak directly to you, who will believe what he tells you and who will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly tonight by saying the word, amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

Amen. When it comes to Good Friday, what we're going to talk about tonight is Jesus Christ and the cross, Christ on the cross. Now I've had an opportunity as a human being, but also as a pastor to be at several different funerals, been to funerals of people that I've known really well. I've been to funerals of acquaintances. I've been to funerals of people that I've never even met before. But I can tell you this, I've never been to one funeral where I walked away and said, "That was a good funeral. Let's do that again." It's interesting that when it comes to the death burial of Jesus, that we refer to that day as Good Friday, we say Good Friday. And so every single year when

we gather on Good Friday, we have to answer the question, what makes Good Friday so good? Because for many of us, what we would say is we'd rather have Jesus still living right now, still being with us. Why is it good that he died?

But it's interesting because when you study the scriptures, that seems to be all the New Testament writers want to talk about. All they want to talk about is Jesus Christ, death, burial, and resurrection. The Apostle Paul claims in 1 Corinthians 2, "For I declared to know nothing among you when I was with you," except what? "Jesus Christ and him crucified," he tells the Corinthians this, he says, "For I delivered to you as of first importance, most importantly, that Christ died according to the scriptures and that he was buried and that he was raised according to the scriptures." Even if you studied the Book of Acts, every single sermon talks about the fact that Jesus Christ died. And oftentimes, when they're talking to the religious leaders of the day, they said, "You killed him". And he is now both Lord and Christ. Every New Testament author wants to talk about the death of Jesus Christ being good.

I want to tell you tonight, the death of Jesus Christ is good and I want to give you four reasons why the death of Jesus Christ is good. And to do that, I want to read from 1 Peter, chapter 3 in verse 18. We'll take a look at one verse tonight, 1 Peter, chapter 3, verse 18. And my hope is by the time you walk away from here tonight, you've heard the Lord speak and you've seen that the crucifixion of Jesus is actually good. 1 Peter 3, verse 18 says this, "For Christ also died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust so that he might bring us to God having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit." Let me read it again, "For Christ also died for sins, once for

all, the just for the unjust so that he might bring us to God having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit."

And so what Peter's going to tell us here in one short verse are four reasons why the crucifixion of Jesus is good. One reason why we can talk about this is Good Friday and the first is this, that the work of Jesus Christ on the cross was comprehensive and complete, was comprehensive and complete. Notice what he says, "For Christ also died for sins once and for all, once for all." Once for all, that means he died for all sin. That means he died for all people. That means he died for all time. Have you considered what that means? Think about how often we think that we need to help God with our sin. We tend to think, yeah, he died for my sin, but I'm going to try to work on it too and then together we'll have a partnership and we'll be cleansed together.

That's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that your best works are like filthy rags and there's nothing you can do to get right with God. Christ died once, for what? All your sin. Well, which ones? Every single one. Well, what about the ones that are so bad that I wouldn't even want to tell anybody else about them? He died for that too. His one death was complete for all sin that anyone who threw repentance in faith would come to him, can have not just some of their sin forgiven, not just a lot of their sin forgiven and then work on it but how many sins can be forgiven? All of them, through one death, he died once.

In the Old Testament, God had set up a sacrificial system and the sacrificial system was set up to foreshadow what the Messiah was going to do. But what

happened was when a person sinned under the covenant of the Old Testament, they had to offer a sacrifice for the sin. And when they offered the sacrifice, be it a pigeon or some sort of animal, and that blood was shed, it covered them. But here's what it didn't do. It didn't cleanse them. The blood of that animal couldn't take away their guilt. It couldn't take away anything permanently. It was just a foreshadowing for something that God's one and only son was going to have to come and do. And when Jesus Christ died, he died once for all. So we don't need to have more than that one sacrifice. That one sacrifice is sufficient for everything and it's completely comprehensive.

He also died for our sins once for all. Who's the all? All the world, that's why he could claim that he is the way, the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father except through him because he's the only God. He's the only one that can forgive sin. And why is that so important? Because your number one challenge in your life is your sin. Sin is not what you've done wrong, not that you've lied or cheated or stolen. That's a symptom of your sin. Your sin is the virus inside of you that causes you to lie, to cheat, and to steal, and there is nothing you can do about that and that sin separates you from God. So the way the Bible will describe you in your sin is dead. And if you die in your sin, you will go immediately to a place called hell where you will be without God and without good things forever and ever. That's what the Bible teaches.

So when Christ came, he came once for all. He came once for all the sin of the

world. He came once for all the people of the world and he came once and his sacrifice once was good for all eternity. Make no mistake about it. It was completely and totally comprehensive. If you're here tonight and you think, well, there's no way Jesus could forgive this, he can. It was comprehensive and it was complete. It was complete. There's no one that can come to Christ that he would turn away and say, "Oh, I didn't know you were going to do that. I didn't think about that kind of sin when I was dying." No, it's complete and that's why all of our made up earthly notions about what happens when we die are completely irrelevant. That's why there can't be a place called purgatory because for that to exist that would mean that Jesus Christ's death on the cross was completely inefficient and it was incomplete. Therefore, when I die, I've got to go work off my sins now.

Anybody that says his death was good, but there's a way I'm going to participate to make it complete, doesn't understand what the cross of Christ did. It was comprehensive and it was complete. That's why I like when we show pictures of the cross to not have Jesus on it anymore because he's not on it. He was taken down from it because his death on the cross was comprehensive and complete, which means this, every single sin you've ever sinned and the condition of your sin was completely paid for and atoned for on the cross. When Jesus said, "It is finished," in John 19:30, here's what he was saying, "I just paid it all in full and no one else can pay any of it. I'm the only perfect sacrifice that my father will ever accept. If you'll turn from your sin and trust me, you can go from death to life because I am the only one that could do it." That's good news, isn't it? That's good news.

So know this, that the work of Jesus Christ on the cross was comprehensive and complete. Hebrews 10:27 says, "For its appointed on demand to die once and after that face judgment, you will stand judgment for your sin." You will stand judgment for your sin and that should scare us a little bit unless we've repented of our sins and trusted Jesus, because then we can know that all of our sin comprehensively and completely was paid for. When you die, you will stand before Jesus and you will hear one of two things. You will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant," or you will hear, "Depart from me, you worker of iniquity for I never knew you, and you'll be cast into outer darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth." You will only hear one of those two things, and when you stand before Jesus, you have nothing to present to him.

The way into the kingdom is not, "I believed you died on the cross and I tried to live a really, really, really good life. Please let me in." Your answer is this, "I was dead, but I turned from my sin and trusted that you were the complete and comprehensive sacrifice and I banked my entire eternity on that grace alone." And if you have, you'll hear these words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter my rest." Make no mistake about it, the work of Jesus Christ on the cross was comprehensive and complete. But notice this, the work of Jesus Christ on the cross was also substitutionary and satisfying, substitutionary and satisfying. The text says for Christ also died for sins once for all. Then it says this, the just for the unjust or your text may read the righteous for the unrighteous. Well, who's the just? Who's the righteous?

That's Jesus Christ. Who did he die for? The unjust or the unrighteous? Who's

that? Me and you. He died once for all, for all the sin, the just for the unjust. And it was a substitution that took place. It means this, God is so serious about sin that he had to have a perfect sacrifice. So God, the Father, sent his son to be the savior of the world because he knew that you and your sin couldn't have your sin atoned for because even if you could make up a way to get it atoned for it doesn't take away your sin. Under the old covenant, sin was covered for a season, but do you remember what Jesus Christ cousin said, John the Baptist? When he saw Jesus coming to the Jordan to be baptized, what did he say? "Behold the lamb of God that does..." What? "He takes away the sin of the world."

What did Jesus Christ do? Make no mistake about it. When he went to the cross, he was taking your place. The punishment that you deserve for your sin, Jesus Christ stepped in the gap, in the middle, and took all the wrath of God for all your sin. How serious is God about sin? He was serious enough to see his son slaughtered on a cross to make things right. When people are cavalier about their sin, like, ah, it's not that big of a deal. I'm a better person than this person. You're not viewing it from God's perspective. You're not viewing a perfect holy, righteous God. You're not recognizing that sin can't enter into his presence and that you can't have a relationship. That's why Jesus came. That's why we know biblically and I know experientially, he can only be the only God of the universe. There are no others because there is no other God that has taken away the sin of the world.

And it doesn't matter what skin color you are, what nationality you are, where you come from or what your upbringing is, you need your sin forgiven and Jesus Christ

came to be your substitute. He came to take your place for all the punishment that your sin rightly deserves. He loved you so much he didn't want you to go to hell. He's just and knows that's what you deserve so he took your just punishment on himself. Some of you have served in the military, others of you have heard stories from the military of people that have laid down their lives so others could live. We live in our country today because several people have laid down their lives so that we can have the freedoms that we have.

We know stories of individuals that tell us stories about when they were in a foxhole and a grenade rolled in and their friend winked at them and jumped on the grenade and was blown up while they lived, and that friend can never stop talking about it because they know the only reason they're alive is because that person gave their life. Friends, the only way we can ever be alive is because Jesus Christ gave his life on the cross and he was our substitution for what we deserve. He died in your place. He's a substitution and it satisfied the Father. Why? Because the death of the cross wasn't just an example of love. It was a demonstration of Christ's righteousness. That even though he has a great love for the world, he can't have unrighteousness in his presence for all eternity, sin has to be paid for, wrong has to be righted.

Jesus said, "I'll be your substitution. I'll right the wrong. Pour out all the wrath on me. I'll take all the punishment you deserve and this will satisfy my dad." And it did and that's what makes a way. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that God made him who had no sin or knew no sin, meaning he experienced no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might

become the righteousness of God. No one is good. No one is righteous. It's Christ that's good. It's Christ that's righteous and his death on the cross, it was him stepping in your place for the wrath you were going to experience from God so that you would never have to experience it and it satisfied his father. Is that good news or what?

The work of Jesus on the cross, it was comprehensive and complete. It was substitutionary and satisfying. But notice this, the work of Jesus Christ on the cross was also redemptive and reconciling, like why did Jesus do all that? The text tells us, says, "For Christ also died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust," for what purpose? "So that he might bring you to God." So that he might bring you to God, it's redemptive. Redemption means to purchase or to buy back. What did he purchase you out of? What did he purchase you from? He purchased you from your slavery to sin. It means his death on the cross provided a way so you wouldn't have to stay in the sin that you're in. You were bought with a price. Therefore, you're called to honor God with your body. He bought you back. It means this. You can't say anymore, "Well, these are just the sins I struggle with. I guess I'll always struggle with them." No, Jesus Christ on the cross paid the penalty for that sin so you would no longer have to live in it anymore.

He redeemed you. He loved you. He purchased you. He bought you back. For what you couldn't do, he paid the price for, and like I said, he paid it in full. That means it's all been paid for. That's called grace. That means there's nothing you can do to get right with God. God did everything so that you could get right with him. You're redeemed. You've been purchased. You've been purchased out of the slavery you're

in. You say, "Well, I don't know that I feel like I'm in slavery." You are because you're dead in your trespasses and sins. The Bible says that's how we start. We are all born spiritually dead and we are dead in our trespasses and sins and we've all found very unique ways to live a sin stained life through choices we've made or through things that have been acted upon us, and Jesus came to purchase us back from that.

The book of Galatians is probably one of the best texts in the New Testament that talks about this, and I'll just read two verses from there. In Galatians, chapter 3 and verse 13, he says this, "Christ redeemed us," there's that word, "From the curse of the law having become a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." When Jesus died, he was a curse. He took the curse of death. He took the curse of sin. He took the curse of the wrath of God and he hung on a cross for the world to see, shameful and naked for six hours. Galatians 4:5 says it this way, here's why he did it, "So that he might redeem those who were under the law that we might receive adoption as sons." Now notice this. What's the purpose of redemption? It's redemption and reconciliation.

When Christ died on the cross on that Friday and he put to death sin, he wasn't just purchasing people so he could buy them back, he was also reconciling people to God. Reconciliation is relational. What's the whole purpose of the gospel? Not just so that you can go to heaven when you die. That's a byproduct of being in relationship with Jesus Christ. The purpose is so you can experience the very life of Christ now. For we were dead in our transgressions and sins, for we were once in the enemy's camp in darkness but he has transferred us into the kingdom of God's beloved son in

whom we have redemption in the forgiveness of sins.

Reconciliation is relationship. It's God saying more than, "I forgive you," it's God's saying more than, "I purchased you." It's God's saying, "I did all that so we could be together. I did all that so that you could be my sons. I did all that so you could be my daughters. I'm freeing you up from that sin so you can know what it's like to have nobility in your bloodline, so that you have royal blood, so that you can serve the God of the universe. I want to be with you." That's great news. That's more than just one day when I die, I guess I'll get to go to heaven. That's I'm forgiven because God welcomes me into his family and he welcomes me into his family right now. Amen.

It means no matter how far you think you are from God, you can be brought in a moment and be a family member. And because Christ is our life and through the Holy Spirit is deposited in our life, God looks at his son with the same favor that he looks at you because he looks at you. If you've repented and believed in Jesus, he looks at you through the lens of his son and every single way he sees his son is the exact way he sees you. He sees you as a son. He sees you as a daughter. He sees you as loved. He sees you as favor. He sees you as cherished. He sees you as a friend. He sees you in all these ways that are relational. He's reconciled you so that you can be in relationship with him and that can start right now.

Is that good news? It's good news to me. It's good news to me. It means you're not bound in your sin anymore, but you're freed up as a family member to know the living God of the universe and you have the privilege of coming boldly before the throne

of grace. When Jesus died on the cross, it was comprehensive and complete and substitutionary and satisfying. It was redemptive and reconciling but make no mistake about it, when Jesus Christ died on the cross was also violent yet victorious, it was violent yet victorious. Notice what it says. It says, "For Christ died for sin once for all, the just for the unjust so that he might bring us to God," what? Having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. Now, Jesus told his disciples, when they began to know who he was, when it was revealed by his father to Peter that he was the Christ, the son of the living God.

Jesus took his disciples aside and said, "Hey, listen, now that you know who I am, I'm going to go into Jerusalem. I'm going to suffer. I'm going to be killed, but don't worry, I'm going to rise three days later." And what does Peter do? Peter pulls him aside and says, "Never, Lord. I'm never going to let that happen." And what does Jesus say? "Get behind me, Satan. You don't have in mind the things of God but the things of men." Why was Jesus rebuking Peter? Because if he hadn't died, we'd have no relationship with God, because you can't get there on your own. And Jesus began to tell his disciples all the time, "I'm going to go suffer and I'm going to die. I'm going to go suffer. I'm going to die." They didn't get it. They didn't understand because they thought like many of us think, wouldn't it be better if Jesus was here today? Wouldn't he just be better if he was right here with us right now?

If he hadn't died, we wouldn't have a relationship with him but how he died was significant because Jesus died the most excruciating death that a person could have died in the first century. He was put on trial for claiming he was the son of God. He

claimed he was God. That's why he was put to death, but he was God. That's why he said he was because he always told the truth. And it was really interesting because when Jesus told the truth as to who he was, Pilate didn't want anything to do with it. Pilate's wife said, "Stay away from this guy. He's just going to cause his trouble." So Pilate didn't know what to do. So he brought out Barabbas, this criminal and brought out Jesus because it was a tradition to release a criminal every single Passover. And they said, "Well, who do you want me to release?" Thinking they would pick Jesus because he'd done nothing wrong. And what did they say?

The same people that were yelling a week earlier, "Hossana, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," they were saying, "Let Barabbas go." This murderer, this insurrectionist, "Let him go." He said, "Well, what should I do with Jesus?" And these same people that were praising him a week earlier, what were they yelling? "Crucify him. Crucify him." That's more than kill him. That's excruciating. Make him suffer. And that's when the punishment began. The Roman soldiers began to put a crown of thorns on his head. They blindfolded him. They punched him in the face. They smacked him. They said prophesy. In other words, "If you're God, I bet you can tell which one of us is punching you," and he is getting punched and smacked and beaten with sticks.

Then he was whipped and scourged and he was scourge with what's called the cat of nine tails. Many people died during a beating like that. You weren't allowed to give more than 39 lashes. Jesus was so exhausted even carrying his cross because nobody carried it for him that he collapsed. They had to find Simon out of the crowd to

come and carry the cross for him. And then when they got there, they drove nails into his hand and into his feet. And if you don't know much about Roman crucifixion, the way you die is not immediate. It's a long lingering bleeding out kind of death where you keep pushing yourself up against all your weight until you can no longer do it anymore and die of exhaustion where your lungs asphyxiate and you can't breathe. He hung for six hours and while he was hanging, was he getting any comfort? No. Everybody was walking by saying, "You say you can save the world. You say you can save others. You can't even save yourself. Why don't you come down off that cross?"

Could Jesus have come down off the cross? Jesus could've come down off the cross and turned everybody into a frog and said, "See, I told you." But had he not done that and had he not stayed there, we would never have had our sins atoned for, we'd never have a way back to God. So he took all the abuse, he took all of that. Isaiah, chapter 53, verse 5 says, "For he was pierced through for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. And by his stripes or his scourgings, we've been healed. It was through what he endured that we have life." But make no mistake about it, it was violent. It was a violent way. The Roman soldiers were experts in causing severe amounts of pain and making it as painful as they possibly could to show this person and to show the world here's what happens to a person that disagrees with us. And Jesus willingly went to the cross in a violent way, but know this, it was also victorious. It was victorious.

I know we say a lot of times in church it's Friday, but Sunday's coming. It's Friday, but Sunday's coming. But Friday was good too because even between the two

thieves, one that mocked him all the way to his death and the other one that in the middle of the day repented and said, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And what does Jesus say? "Truly, truly, I tell you today you'll be with me in paradise." Why? Because when he died and paid, breathe his last, he paid for all the sin of the world. It was done in that moment. It was done right then. Your sin was atoned for right then. Now, here's the question. Who gets their sin atoned for? Does that mean that every single person that's breathing gets that very life of Christ? No, they don't.

See, some people feel like they have to help God out with religion. Religion says there's things that you do to get right with God. The Bible says there's nothing you can do to get right with God. You can't work hard enough for it. You can't give enough good effort for it. You can't have enough good intentions for it. You can't be kind enough or generous enough or gracious enough or anything for it. The only way to have it is through repentance and faith. That means I'm willing to turn from my sin. I don't want to live in this slavery any longer that has a hold of me, and I want Jesus to be the Lord of my life. And here's what I know. I know there's a lot of people that come to church that think that they're saved, that think they have a relationship with God because the longer they come to church, the better person that they feel that they are but there's never been a moment in their life where they've turned from their sin and trusted Christ.

The Bible tells us tonight that Christ also died for sins, once for all, the just for the

unjust so that he might bring you to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but being made alive in the Spirit. He was put to death by humans, but the spirit of God three days later, breathe life right back into him. Jesus Christ is as alive as he's ever been. He already paid for the sin of the world but if you refuse the payment, if you refuse to repent and trust what He's done, your sin is not paid for. You're not born with your sin paid for. There must be a moment in your life where you turn from your sin and trust Christ in order for your sin to be paid for. Here's my question. Do you have a moment like that in your life?

I'm not asking you, when did you start coming to church? I'm not asking you when you decided to get religious, and I'm not asking you are you a good person because none of those things matter. I'm asking when was the time in your life that you said, "I'm done with me. I know I'm a sinner and I know I need Jesus and he's the only way out and I want him." Here's why Good Friday is so good because it reminds us of the fact that we can be reconciled to God not by any good thing we've done, but by what God's done for us. It's him extending a gift as he reached out his hand saying, "You can have my very life. You can go from death to life." Do you want that gift? If you don't have that gift, I want to pray with you right now. I'm going to let you receive that gift. Would you bow your heads with me?

Father in heaven, we give you praise, glory and honor for who you are and the gift of your son Jesus, who paid for the sins of the world on that cross some 2000 years ago. If you're here tonight and you would say, "I want a relationship with that God, I want to be reconciled by that God, I want to be forgiven by that God," you can

and here's how you can pray. You can tell the Lord, "Lord, I know I'm a sinner. I know I'm dead in my sins and I know that because I keep repeating the same ones over and over and they keep getting worse. But I believe that you came to the Earth on purpose to die for me, and that you rose from the dead. And right now, I want to turn from my sin because I don't know any other way out of it. And I want to confess you as my Lord and Savior, come into my life and be my Lord."

Father, I pray for all those who prayed that you'd filled them afresh with your Holy Spirit right now and they would never ever be the same. And now I also pray for all who have gathered, who would say, "I know I have that relationship and thank you, Jesus." Father, can we just tell you how grateful we are that we know that we have relationship with you now, we have relationship with you the day we breathe our last, we'll be more alive than we've ever been, and we have relationship with you for all eternity. Thank you, thank you, thank you for dying on that cross for all my sin. We give you praise and glory and honor in Jesus' name, amen. Amen.