

Passion Week 2024-Part 2

“Good Friday”

John 19:17-18, 28-30

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(3/29/2024)

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Welcome to our Good Friday service—and Part 2 of our ‘Passion Week’ series.

Years ago, before our country became the secular nation it is today—companies always gave their employees Good Friday off. Because of it, many enjoyed the day off without appreciating the significance of Good Friday... (today many don’t know what this day means at all.)

John 19:17-18, 28-30 (NKJV)

¹⁷ And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place of a Skull*, which is called in Hebrew, *Golgotha*, ¹⁸ where they crucified Him...[at the end of six hours]...²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" ²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. ³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

“It is finished!”—it begs the question *“what was finished?”*

Was Jesus saying these words in the sense of a man lamenting that his life was over—cut down in its prime before his dreams could be realized... *“It’s finished! It’s over! What a bitter way for my life to end!”*

To think that is utter nonsense—but many skeptics and those who are militant atheists believe this about Jesus. They don’t believe that Jesus was the Son of God but simply a man who had a grandiose view of himself thinking he was someone great only to incur the wrath of the Roman government and wound up getting himself crucified!

For those of us who know Jesus we understand that the statement He spoke from the cross when He said, **“It is finished!”** was not a cry of bitter disappointment and defeat—it was a shout of victory!

In other words, He was saying—*“I have completed the work My Father gave Me to do—it is finished!”*

In fact, the Greek word for **“it is finished”** is *‘tetelestai’*—a word that a servant would use when reporting to his master, *“I have completed the work you assigned to me.”*

John 8:28–29 (NKJV)

²⁸ Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. ²⁹ And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”

John 12:32–33 (NKJV)

³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.” ³³ This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

But when it comes to us—to fully understand the power of what Jesus was saying when He said from the cross “*It is finished*” we need to read Paul the apostle’s comments in Colossians 2—

Colossians 2:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

What is Paul referring to when he talks about the “*handwriting of requirements that was against us*”?

It’s a term that means— “*the bill, the record of sins—in other words, the debt we owed God.*”

The Bible says that every sin that a person commits against God’s Law (think of the Ten Commandments) is a debt that he or she owes Him—a debt that has to be paid. Just like when a criminal finishes his time in prison we say, “*He has paid his debt to society.*”

The same goes for violations against God’s laws (Who by the way keeps meticulous records of every word, thought and action that violate His Law, His commandments).

Every sin is a crime against the holy, righteous God of the universe and is written in our ledger—and they must be paid for:

Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Jesus came to earth to pay our debt—

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Colossians 2:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, **nailed it to the cross.**

When Paul says in Colossians 2:14 that Jesus took our sins away, “*having nailed our debt to His cross*”—he is referring to a practice back then by which guilty criminals paid their debt to society.

In Paul’s day when a person was convicted of a crime or crimes the authorities would write those crimes on a piece of parchment and nail it to his dungeon door. When he finished paying for his crimes, they would take the parchment and write across the bottom “*tetelestai*” which meant “paid in full.” It was then given to him and became his ‘*receipt*’—his proof that his debt to society for the crimes he had committed had been paid for.

Paul is saying that Jesus took all the sins (crimes) we had ever or would ever commit against God’s laws, everything that would ever be written in our ledger and—nailed it to His cross.

Jesus, before He died, from the cross said, *“It is finished”* (tetelestai)—**“paid in full”**.¹

Now, if a person refuses to receive what Jesus Christ did on Calvary’s cross (His death which paid for all of their sins)—then they will have to stand before God someday and be sentenced to pay for their own crimes in hell.

The Bible is very clear that those who refuse to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, whose blood alone can pay their debt—they will spend eternity in hell paying for their crimes against God.

Now this causes many people to ask—*“Why does a person have to spend eternity in hell for sins they committed during their lifetime? It doesn’t seem fair that the sins committed over the course of 70 or 80 years would bring a sentence of eternity.”*

Okay, that’s a good question—let me try to answer it the best way I know how.

Let’s say a man broke into a house one night and brutally beat and raped a woman over the next 4 hours—if convicted, should he only get 4 hours in prison since that was the duration of the crime?

Of course not, a crime like that could (and should) carry with it a life sentence in prison because—we don’t punish people based on the *length* of their crime, we punish them based on the *heinousness* and *severity* of their crime.

God is infinitely holy and just—therefore any crime (sin) against Him is infinitely heinous and therefore carries with it an infinite penalty—eternity in hell. Now you don’t have to like it or even agree with it—but you’d better not ignore it!

You would be wise to accept it and do something about it right now while there’s still time. By that I mean—repent of your sins and receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Here’s the problem with most people today—they just don’t understand the holiness of God or the severity of their situation as a violator of His laws (again think of the Ten Commandments).

Here’s how most people think—

“I know I’m not perfect, but I believe I’m good enough to get into heaven because I believe I’ve done more good things in my life than bad. And so, because of it I believe my good deeds will outweigh and therefore cancel out the bad things I have done, and God will let me into heaven.”

That folks is a very common way of looking at the problem of sin today but understand that— that logic wouldn’t work in a court of law on earth with a flawed human judge presiding.

Let me illustrate what I’m talking about.

Imagine you kept the law in your town perfectly your whole life—you were never once in violation of it—you were a model citizen. But then one day you decided you were tired of being a ‘goody two-shoes’ and wanted to know what it was like to be a ‘bad-boy’ for a change—so you stole a car and went for a joy ride.

You were arrested and when you stood before the judge, here’s what you said in your defense—

“Your honor, I know I broke the law, but this was the only time I’ve ever broken it—surely all the times I kept the law should erase this one violation of the law!”

To which the judge responds, “*You don’t get any points for keeping the law—that’s what’s required of you! But if you break the law, you are guilty and worthy of punishment.*” You see that defense wouldn’t work in an earthly court with a human judge—how much less would it work in the Supreme Court of the universe with the Righteous Judge of all the earth presiding?

Yet that is the very defense many are planning to use when they stand before God someday—I’ve heard them say to me, “*I know I’m a good person (I’ve done more good than bad) and when I stand before God, I’ll plead my case and tell Him all the ‘good things’ I’ve done I believe He’ll be fair and let me into heaven.*”

J.Vernon McGee—

“Yes, my friend, you will be able to get a fair trial there. Your life is on tape, and Jesus Christ, the Judge happens to have the tape. I think He will have it on a television screen so that you can watch it, too (“This Was Your Life”). Do you think your life can stand the test? Are you willing to stand before God and have Him play the tape of your life? I do not know about you, but I could not make it. Thank God for His grace—“For by grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8).”

But besides that, you need to understand—your ‘case’ has already been decided—the verdict was pronounced in the Garden of Eden. Adam and all his descendants are guilty (proven by the curse God placed upon the family of Adam)—“*In Adam all die*” (1 Corinthians 15:22)—because all bear Adam’s guilt and thus we are born with *original sin*.

Then everyday people add to that guilt by continuing to break the commandments of God.

Jesus came to die for those who were already condemned—already pronounced guilty by God and sentenced to spend eternity in hell.

John 3:17–18 (NIV)

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

➤ “*But I do believe in Jesus—so I’m good right?*”

Well so does the devil and his demons believe in Jesus—but they’re not going to heaven.

(Listen: Talk about head knowledge faith and then saving faith rooted in the heart through a commitment to Christ)

But getting back to religious people—most people still believe they are *working* for heaven—that how they live their lives on the earth (how much good they do and how many commandments they keep) will determine if God will allow them into heaven. So, they try to keep God’s commandments thinking they can be good enough to earn heaven someday.

But when it comes to keeping God’s commandments so as to earn heaven—Paul said:

Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The word 'sin' is a Greek word that literally means "to miss the mark"—the mark being "the glory of God" or sinless perfection. So, in that regard we've all missed the mark and have fallen short of sinless perfection—and as Paul went on the say in Romans 6:23, the penalty for all sin is eternal punishment in hell.

Yet to say it again—there are those who have put their faith in 'religion' to make them righteous and they would no doubt say, "Yes, I've broken God's laws, but I can still make up for it by doing more 'good things' than the bad things I have done in the way of sin."

Folks, that is the lie of religion—that if I work really hard and do enough 'good', I can erase the bad (sin) I have done and be good enough to make it into heaven someday.

I grew up in the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) where we were taught that religious practices and observances like—going to mass, lighting candles, keeping holy days, praying the rosary, abstaining from certain foods during lent and other acts of 'piety'—would earn us a place in heaven.

For centuries the RCC has taught (and still teaches) that we must punish ourselves as a way of paying for our sins and lessening our time in purgatory (which does not exist). So faithful Catholics in some parts of the world during 'Passion Week' walk barefoot on roads containing sharp rocks while flagellating themselves with whips until their feet and backs are raw and bloody.

They do this as a way of earning God's favor and meriting a place in heaven—but this is an absolute blasphemy against the completed work of Jesus Christ Who said from the cross—"It is finished!"

Listen to the words of Isaiah on the subject:

Isaiah 53:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Paul makes a definitive statement on the subject when he said in Galatians 2:21—"*If human works, rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices etc. could save us—then Christ died in vain!*"

Yet when I ask people, "If you were to die tonight would God let you into heaven?"—they almost always tell me, "Yes!" And when I ask them to explain why they respond, "Because I'm a good person. I know I'm not perfect (morally speaking), but I still think I'm good enough to get into heaven."

Listen to what God's Word is saying—If you're *not* morally perfect you're *not good enough* to get into heaven! That's why Jesus said to the rich young ruler in Matthew 19 (a very moral and religious person)—"*No one is good but God*" because God defines "good" as moral perfection.

Fallen man defines *goodness* as simply being better than others—and since we can always find someone worse than we are to compare ourselves to—we think we're good!

But they aren't the standard—Jesus is the standard—and He's perfect!

You see, the bad news for religious folks (those trying to work to earn heaven)—is that God only lets perfect people into heaven!

The good news is that anyone who receives Jesus into their heart as Savior is pronounced perfect ('positionally') by God and given the gift of eternal life in heaven—because they are now 'in Christ' and God no longer sees them (or me and you), He sees only Jesus.

Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

²³ ...the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We've come 'full circle' in this message—

John 19:30

³⁰ **So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.**

As we said earlier—when Jesus said "**It is finished**" He was saying—"*I have completed the work My Father gave Me to do—it is finished!*" That work was the work of redemption (paying a price to set us free from slavery to Satan)—but it also included the victory He won over the power of sin and Satan as well.

When you accept Jesus into your heart as your Savior—His victory becomes your victory because you are now one with Him! The truth embodied in the words "**it is finished**" is not limited to what Jesus did on the cross 2000 years ago—it has great relevance practically speaking for every child of God living on earth right now!

When you accept Jesus as your Savior—

"It is finished." What is finished? A life of void of meaning and purpose.

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

[You are no accident—God made you on purpose for a purpose!]

"It is finished"—a life of bondage to alcohol, drugs, pornography and anything else you're hopelessly addicted to.

John 8:36 (NLT)

³⁶ ...if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.

"It is finished"—the old life of emptiness and despair.

John 10:10 (AMP)

¹⁰ ...I came that they may have *and* enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

"It is finished"—a life of bondage to the devil who has brought you to the point of hopelessness, depression, and for some even suicide.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

“It is finished”—a life with nothing to look forward to and no hope to cling to.

Psalms 31:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord.

Let me close with this—everything God wants for our lives—everything He wants to give us and do for us was made possible by the events of Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday. That’s because the greatest problem facing the human race isn’t Islamic fundamentalism; it isn’t global warming; it isn’t world hunger, or disease, or if we’re talking about America, it isn’t even the economy (those are temporal problems that will pass away at some point).

- The greatest problem facing the human race is and always has been the problem of sin—because sin has eternal consequences attached to it!
- That’s what Jesus came the first time to do—He came to save us from our sins. (Matthew 1:21) Yet because we live in the physical universe—we tend to *focus on our physical* problems and needs more than the spiritual.

So, people come to God wanting Him to fix their marriages, heal their bodies, supply their needs—focusing on the temporal and neglecting the eternal. While temporal, practical problems in our lives are not unimportant to God—they are not His primary concern either. God is far more concerned with our eternal good than our temporal comfort—and in fact will often allow physical problems and pain to drive us to Jesus, or back to Jesus.

God created our physical bodies with the ability to feel physical pain to warn us when something is wrong that we might seek out a doctor—because it might be something serious that if left undealt with might kill us. But God also created our inner person with the ability to feel emotional pain to drive us to the ‘Great Physician’ to heal us from the problem of sin which will (if not dealt with) kill us in hell forever!

Some temporary pain on earth is infinitely better than eternal pain in hell—remember as C.S. Lewis said, *“God whispers in our pleasures but shouts in our pain.”*

Everything God does in our lives is for our eternal good.

Understand that Jesus is holding His hands (those nail scarred hands) out to you right now and saying, *“Come to Me—it is finished—I paid the price—all the work is done—all I’m asking you to do is come to Me and receive Me into your heart by faith so I can give you the gift of eternal life.”*

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).