

Passion Week 2026-Part 2

“Good Friday”

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
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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. And 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...

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—even though many skeptics (like the theological liberals who embrace Shoenfeld’s “Passover Plot”) and those who are militant atheists believe this about Jesus. You see, 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!

Of course, 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 declaration 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.”*

And just what was the work the Father sent His Son to do?—

Luke 19:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

John 12:32–33 (NKJV)

³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth [on the cross], 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 (NLT)

¹³ You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. ¹⁴ He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

What is Paul referring to when he talks about the *“...the record that contained the charges against us.”*

It means— *“the bill, the record of our 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—something Jesus taught us to pray in what we call the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:

Matthew 6:9–12 (NKJV)

⁹ ...Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

So, when the Bible talks about the sins we commit, it’s talking about the debt we owe God for violating His commandments—a debt that must 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, nailing 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 that all of Paul’s readers would have immediately understood. 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'*—which he carried on his person as 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 as crimes against the Holy God of the universe and—nailed it to His cross.

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

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.

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 valid 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 should result in a sentence of years in prison—why? 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).

Because of it, 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 must be punished.”*

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 and I believe He’ll be fair and let me into heaven.”

The old Baptist preacher J. Vernon McGee put it well when he said—

“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 were pronounced guilty by God—proven by the curse God placed upon the family of Adam.

The Bible says that—*“In Adam all die” (1 Corinthians 15:22)*—because all of Adam’s descendants bear Adam’s guilt and therefore every human being was born with *original sin* on their soul—the sin of Adam. 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, not necessarily because so does the devil and his demons believe in Jesus—but they’re not going to heaven.

→ **Listen for:** ‘*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.

Now again, those who have put their faith in 'religion' to make them righteous (get them into heaven) at this point would no doubt say,

- *"Yes, I've broken God's commandments, I admit I'm not perfect—but I still believe I can 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 paying for their sins and earning 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!**"—not "***It's almost finished...***"

Listen to the words of Isaiah the prophet on the subject:

Isaiah 53:5–6 (NLT)

⁵ But He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. ⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on Him [Jesus] the sins 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!"

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 human beings define *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!

And 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 today! You see, when you accept Jesus as your Savior—that statement of victory, ‘**It is finished**’ applies to your life right now!

- “**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.

1 Peter 1:3–4 (NLT)

³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, ⁴ and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.

2 Corinthians 4:17–18 (NLT)

¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! ¹⁸ So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

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.

These are all problems of earth, that only affect our time on earth in this life—but will eventually pass away when we pass away in death. 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 on earth—we tend to focus on our *physical* problems and needs more than the spiritual (which many don’t even think about they’re so wrapped up in the cares of this life). 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 if we as Christians walk away from Him).

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 wind up killing us.

But God also created our inner person (soul) 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.

So to get our attention, God will allow pain in our lives not to hurt us but to help us—to help us come to Jesus and receive the gift of heaven and eternal life!

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 out His hands (those nail scared hands) 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 do that tonight, this won’t just be a ‘good Friday’—it will be the best Friday of your 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](#).

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