

# *JESUS DIED ON PURPOSE*

Pastor Anthony Ferguson



## **Introduction**

**Church family we have all suffered. Some of us have suffered more than others and some have suffered more intensively than others. Yet, we all have asked the question, “why.” We ask this question because it gives perspective to our suffering, and if we learn the answer to why we are suffering, we are guarded against unhelpful and even unhealthy thoughts.**

You see it is tempting on a Good Friday service to be overcome with sorrow so that we even begin to feel sorry for Jesus. It is tempting to become with grief so that we pity Jesus or even portray him as a helpless victim. We at times fixate on the gruesome details of the crucifixion – and the crucifixion was indeed awful – and it leads us to feel sorry for Jesus. Church family we need to remember that Jesus is not a helpless victim. Jesus is a willing victim. Jesus goes to the cross knowing what will happen. Jesus goes to the cross having the power to stop it. In fact, Jesus in council with the Father and the Holy Spirit ordained that the cross would happen before the beginning of time (Ephesians 1:10).

Church Family on this Good Friday service we should feel sorrow and we should mourn because our sin is an awful thing. Our sin is worth mourning over because it is awful, and Jesus died because of your sin and because of my sin. We should have sorrow on this Good Friday service. However, Jesus went to the cross on purpose, we shouldn't only have sorrow.

*"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."*  
*Ephesians 1:7-10 (ESV)*

In fact, the foundation of what we experience on this Good Friday service should not fundamentally be sorrow; rather, as we mourn over our sin and as we mourn over the fact that Jesus died for our sins, we should see that this was on purpose for the glory of God and for our joy. This purpose should transform our sorrow into joy. When we reflect on the purpose of the cross, our sorrow – although deep and profound – is transformed into a joy that is deeper than that sorrow.

I am reminded of Luke 7 where the woman comes to Jesus and wipes Jesus' feet with her hair and tears. The Pharisees scoff at this, but Jesus rebukes them by saying "the one who is forgiven much, loves much." Church family, today as we reflect on our sin and how we reflect on the fact that the cross is the payment for our sin, we should mourn. We should see more deeply how awful our sin really is. Yet, the purpose of this perspective is that we would love God more deeply. Our sin should be an arena whereby we come to love God more profoundly. So, on this Good Friday service, I want us to be fully aware of why Jesus went to the cross so that our sorrow over our sin can lead to profound joy and praise to our God. The main point of this sermon is that Jesus died on the cross on purpose. Jesus died on the cross on purpose.

*"Jesus died on the cross on purpose"*

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Church Family we are coming to near the end of Holy Week 2020. So, at the beginning of the service, I want to narrate the events of Holy Week, and specifically the events of Good Friday. Then, I'll give an interpretation of why Jesus died for the week.

## 1-Holy Week

On Sunday prior to the crucifixion, Jesus entered Jerusalem to shouts of joy. The people have rightly identified him as the King who comes in the name of the Lord (Luke 19:38). The crowd here is not merely quoting Psalm 118:26 since Psalm 118:26 says “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” The crowds understand Jesus not to be an ordinary Jewish pilgrim making the journey to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover; rather, Jesus is the long-awaited for King of God’s people. Anticipation is immense for the King is here (Luke 19:28-44). Jesus enters the city and then the temple, but it was already late so Jesus returned to Bethany (Mark 11:11).

*Jesus is recognized as the rightful king by fickle crowds who will soon denounce him on Sunday*



The next day (Monday), Jesus entered the temple again. This time, Jesus saw the Jewish pilgrims purchasing sacrificial lambs for the Passover. Purchasing these lambs to be sacrificed had the appearance of piety since God had commanded Israel to celebrate the Passover every year in memory of his deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12). Yet, this was flagrant disobedience. Turning the temple into a marketplace was not worship, but savvy business. In reality, the temple had become a den of robbers, not a house of prayer (Matt 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46). When Solomon built the first temple in the tenth century BC, he asked the Lord that the temple would be a place of prayer, a place for the nations to come and pray to God (1 Kings 8:41-43). Jesus is indeed seeing the nations flock to the temple on this Monday, but those who welcome them are not leading them to worship, rather the temple authorities are stealing from them. God's people have deformed the greatest celebration of salvation in the OT into a business. Because of this, Jesus cleanses the temple and drives out the money changers. This is the moment, Monday of Holy Week, where the Pharisees decide, "Jesus must die! (Mark 11:18)."

*Jesus is the rightful king who cleanses the temple from the religious elites' love of money on Monday*

*Monday*

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Tuesday is a busy day. On this day, Jews of all walks of life test Jesus because of his bold move act the prior day in chasing out the money changers. First, the chief priests, scribes, and elders attempted to trap Jesus. They ask by what authority does he chase out the money changers. This, however, is a trap, and Jesus knows it, so he questions them. The religious leaders are not willing to answer Jesus' question though – the nature of John the Baptist's baptism – so Jesus refuses to answer their question (Mark 11:27-33). Second, it is the Pharisees and Herodians' turn (Mark 12:13-17). They come sneakily asking about taxes and they leave marveling at Jesus' reply. Third, the Sadducees try, and it is a feeble attempt. They ask about marriage in the resurrection, and Jesus bluntly says their question is wrong in every way. God is the God of the living, not the dead (Mark 12:18-26). Fourth a scribe approaches, but he does not approach to test Jesus but to genuinely ask a question. Jesus lovingly answers his honest question about the greatest commandment (Mark 12:28-34). Jesus now decides to put an end to the testing. He asks the religious leaders a simple question, but they do not know the answer. If the Messiah is David's son, how it is that David calls him Lord (Mark 12:35-37). They have no answer. Tuesday is also the day of Jesus' famous sermon on the Mt. of Olives. This is where Jesus discusses the future destruction of the temple and his second coming.

*Jesus is the rightful king who teaches the people because he loves them while the religious elite teaches people because they love themselves. This is Tuesday.*

*Tuesday*

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Wednesday is a famous day for on Wednesday Mary anoints Jesus' body for burial by pouring an expensive bottle of perfume over Jesus' head (Mark 14:3-9). Judas scoffs at this act and pretends that he cares about the poor, but Jesus corrects him. God's people have plenty of time to care for the poor. The same is not true of Jesus during his earthly ministry. Indignant, Judas decides to betray Jesus. The decision happens on Wednesday (Mark 14:10-11). Thus, the religious leaders make their deadly decision on Monday, and Judas makes his on Wednesday.

*Jesus is the rightful king worshiped by Mary while Judas scorns Jesus' worth on Wednesday*

Thursday is the day before the crucifixion. On this day, Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:12-25; John 13:1-30), washes his disciples' feet (John 13:1-11), teaches them thoroughly (John 13-16), prays for them personally (John 17), and prays for himself boldly (Mark 14:32-42). After praying for God's will to be done in the Garden of Gethsemane which is located at the base of the Mt. of Olives just east of the city, Jesus is betrayed and handed over to the religious elite.

*Jesus is the rightful king-priest who brings the New Covenant to those who hate him and desert him. We learn about this on Thursday.*

*Wednesday & Thursday*

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## 2-Good Friday

First, let's consider the events of Good Friday. In the early morning, Jesus is tried by the high priests, scribes, and elders. They ask if he is the Christ. He quotes Daniel 7:13 and answers yes. This is their evidence; he has blasphemed and deserves death in their mind (Mark 14:53-65). He is then lead to Rome so that they can put Jesus to death. Rome did not allow other nations to carry out capital punishment. Pilate finds nothing wrong with him but sends him to Herod because Jesus is a Galilean – Herod has jurisdiction over Galilee. Herod is excited to see Jesus because he wants to see a “sign,” but Jesus will not give him one. Herod sends him back to Pilate. Pilate has him beaten to appease the crowds, but they still insist that Jesus die. Pilate permits this and so Jesus is beaten, mocked, and sent to Golgotha to be crucified. Jesus is crucified between two criminals: one mocks him while another repents. The crowds challenge him to save himself, and then, there is darkness from noon until 3 (Mark 15:33). At three (the ninth hour), Jesus cried out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” (Mark 15:34), and then finally, he said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Jesus, the son of God, died. A member of the Sanhedrin named Joseph of Arimathea, a believer, asked for Jesus' body, prepared it for burial, and laid him in a new tomb. A large stone was rolled over the entrance, and guards were set to guard his body.

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Second, let's now read the last moments of Jesus' life prior to his physical death from Mark 15:33-38:

33 And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 35

And some of the bystanders hearing it said,

"Behold, he is calling Elijah." 36 And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." 37

And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion,

who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

*Jesus is the rightful king who endured the cross for those who betrayed him, reviled him, despised him, mocked him, and humiliated him. This happens on Good Friday.*

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Third, let's consider the questions that the disciples are asking after Jesus' crucifixion. All seems lost. Despair is high. What happened? How is it that Jesus, the one who taught with authority, obeyed the law perfectly, and treated the weak in truly human ways- how is it that he died. Were the disciples mistaken about Jesus? Was he a sinner like the rest of them? How could their messiah be dead (Luke 24)?

Fourth, after Jesus' resurrection, God's people learn why the cross happened. They learn that the cross was not an accident. Certainly, Jesus had the power to stop the religious elite, the crowds, and the Roman government. The one who healed the blind, the lame, and the demon-possessed could certainly stop this act from happening. Certainly, Jesus knew this would happen. When Jesus rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday he laments that the Jews do not understand God's salvation (Luke 19:41-44). Jesus knew that the cross would happen, and he had the power to stop it.

*41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

*Luke 19:41-44*

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Yet, he did not stop the cross because it was on purpose! Let's read Galatians 3:10-14 to learn this purpose

**10** For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” **11** Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” **12** But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” **13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— **14** so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

These verses explain to us the purpose of Jesus dying. We learn in these verses that all of humanity has a major problem. According to verses 10-11, we are under a curse. Because we have thought sinful thoughts and done sinful deeds, and because our nature is sinful, we are under a curse. This is a dire problem that makes us in need of justified – we need to be made right with God.

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Paul tells us in verse 11 that people seek salvation based on their own works. Left to ourselves, we think we just do enough things or work hard enough, then we can be made right with God. Paul though tells us in verses 10-11 that if we rely on works of the law, then we have to abide by the entire law. Humanity, therefore, has a serious problem. We are under God's curse and the natural thing for us to do is to seek salvation based on our efforts and works. Earlier in Galatians, Paul calls this a false gospel (Galatians 1).

Paul tells us in verse 13 of another way. Although we naturally seek salvation based on our own works, there is another way. The other way is faith in Jesus Christ. Paul tells us "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" (13). Salvation comes by trusting the one who became a curse for us. Salvation does not come by hard work or ingenuity. Making better decisions is not the pathway to salvation. That leads to damnation. Because of the problem of sin, salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

The question then we are faced with is this: how does faith save us? Faith saves us, Church Family because our faith is in the one who became a curse for us. You see, when we sin against the eternal God, we get eternal death. When we say to God, "We do not want you; we want nothing to do with you," we do not get life because life comes from God. So, when we sin against the eternal God, we get an eternal death, and there is nothing we can now do about that. Because God is just and right, he will punish sin 100% of the time, and the wages of sin is death. When We give God sin, and we have all done it, then he gives us death, death. And even if from now on we are perfect, what about the past sins. What can we do to take those away? There is nothing we can do. We cannot blot out our former sins. So, the paradigm of trying to be saved by works is damnable.

There is no hope in this pathway of salvation by works, and yet, there is another way. Christ became a curse for us and provides another way! Christ was hung on a tree and took upon himself our curse so that when the eternal God dies the death that he did not deserve for us – the people who deserved that eternal hell – the reality of that event is that sinners can now have eternal life with God. You see, Christ had no sin. When he hung on that tree, he was not paying for his own sin. Notice what verse 13 says, “He became a curse.” Jesus was not cursed; he was not under the curse of sin; he was not due death, but he became a curse for you and me.

There is a purpose for the cross. That purpose is that Christ would defeat our curse so that we might be blessed with God. Verse 14 tells us that the cross, its purpose, “so that in Christ Jesus the blessings of Abraham (notice the contrast between our curse and the blessings) might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.” The purpose of the cross is so that you and I might be blessed to be in Abraham’s family. The blessings of Abraham are for you and me. Although you and I have sinned against the king of the universe, we can be blessed. God can bring us back. We can be brought back into God’s kingdom as his children. That curse that was due to you and me because of our sin can be gone. We can be blessed by being in God’s family because Jesus died for you and me.

*“There is a purpose for the cross. That purpose is that Christ would defeat our curse so that we might be blessed with God.”*

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The purpose of the cross is that we might be blessed. The purpose of the cross is that God's kingdom might be established on earth. When God's kingdom is established on earth – when sinners are redeemed – those sinners get immense joy because we know that we have been forgiven much. We, thus, love with greater profundity because of what we have been forgiven and we give immense glory because he not only created us, but he also redeemed us from the curse of the law. The cross is glorious. The worst event in human history – God dying – becomes the best event in human history.

The cross is on purpose. We should feel immense sorrow. Christ because of us, but Christ also died for the glory of God. Because of the glory of God, our sovereign King, yes, let's feel sorrow because our sin is heinous. That sorrow though should be a means whereby we love God more profoundly. What is going on at the cross? There is power. The purpose is the glory of God and our joy. On this Good Friday, as we learn that this was all on purpose, let's conceive of Christ as a helpless victim. He willingly went to the cross. Let's not fundamentally pity Jesus or feel sorrow for him; rather, let's cheer; let's rejoice; let's give thanks to God because the God who was not cursed became a curse for us so that God's kingdom might be established on earth for our joy and his glory. Church Family, we praise God this Good Friday because of the cross!

*Prayer – Oh, God, you are so good. You died on purpose and that purpose gives perspective to the cross. It gives us the right perspective, and thus, we are guarded against unhealthy thoughts. God, I pray for my Church Family that this Good Friday we would mourn indeed, but let our mourning be turned into joy and praise as we reflect on the purpose of the cross. This is for our joy and your glory. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.*

## Reflection

Friends, we have heard God's word preached today, we have read God's word, and we have prayed together. As we have done this, we category are you in. Right now, are you still under the curse attempting to be made right with God based on your own efforts. Are you like the crowds who follow God because he fills their stomachs? Are you like the religious elite whose god is their pocketbook? Are you like the Pharisees and the scribes who are quarrelers? Are you like Judas? Is the thought of anyone challenging you repulsive? What category are you in? If you have not trusted in Jesus, then you are still under the curse of the law. I call you right now not to respond like the religious elite, the crowds, or Judas but respond like Mary who fell down at the Lord's feet and worshiped. You have heard that our God died on purpose. He was in control and he died for us. Worship the king. That is the right response, so non-Christian friend, I ask that you turn from your sins today and trust in the King who became a curse for you. Would you worship that king today!

Christian Family, again today, as we leave this website together, although Good Friday has much sorrow, that sorrow must lead to praise. As we go, let's praise God; he became a curse for us!

*Jesus Died on Purpose*