

There are Bibles in front of you and a sermon outline in the bulletin if you want to take notes.

Let me pray for God's help before we begin. Let's pray...

Intro

If we were to do a quick survey of our world right now

We'd find a broken and evil world:

[PowerPoint 1a-Evil World]

- **Terrorist attacks** in the world in 2019 so far (Jan=264; Feb=202; Mar=170; Apr=63 so far)
- **Wars in the world** - 10 official wars and 8 military conflicts
- According to Open Doors - in 2019 - 1 in 9 **Christians are persecuted** for their faith - the 10 countries with most persecutions are: North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Pakistan, Sudan, Eritrea, Yemen, Iran and India
- Then there's **hatred and abuse based on religion, race and colour**

In Australia

- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 16 men have experienced **physical and/or sexual violence** by a current or previous partner
- 1 in 4 women have experienced **emotional abuse** by a current or previous partner
- 1 in 5 women have been **sexually assaulted** and/or threatened
- **Child abuse** in Australia is on the increase - in 2016 - there were over 300,000 notifications of abuse - and 60,000 of them resulted in charges

It seems like every week we hear of another **high-profile celebrity or clergy**
- being charged with **sexual abuse or child abuse**

Then there's the terrible effects of **drugs, alcohol and gambling** on families

And, even when the **perpetrators are arrested** and convicted

Someone else pops up to take their place

And now it seems even our **religious freedom** - to express our faith in Jesus -
and the Bible - is under threat [Israel Falou]

[PowerPoint 1b-Evil winning?]

We would be forgiven for **thinking that evil is winning** - And that the innocent,
the vulnerable and those trying to live a good honest life of faith - are the
victims of this evil - and that there's no answer to evil

(pause)

[PowerPoint 2-God]

However, the Bible says **God is the opposite to evil** - He is the source of love
and the source of all that is pure and perfect

In fact, God cannot look upon evil - He can't stand it

The Bible calls evil - sin against God and the Bible also says we all sin in some
way

And the Bible says - God has a punishment for sin

That punishment is - death and judgment on evil (Heb 9:27)

One day we all die and have to face God's judgment

And if we're not right with God - the destination is Hell - and separation from God forever!

Ultimately, evil cannot win

Yet - it does seem like evil is winning

(pause)

This is nothing new

[PowerPoint 3-Good Friday]

On that very first Good Friday

It seemed like evil was winning too

Jesus - God's Chosen One - God's Son - the perfect man - with amazing teaching from God - with a huge catalogue of miracles and healings - including raising His friend from Lazarus from the dead - stood falsely accused - by evil men

What a difference a week makes

Last week - we remembered Palm Sunday

King Jesus rode into Jerusalem

The people waved palm branches and sang *Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*

By the following Friday

The chants changed from *Hosanna - to crucify Him! Crucify Him!*

Jesus must be glorified in His death (John 12:23-24)

Yet we shouldn't be surprised by the events of that first Good Friday

[PowerPoint 4-Glorified]

Jesus predicted it would happen:

In John 12:23-24 - Jesus said:

"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

What Jesus was saying was two things:

1. He must die - to advance His cause - to bring people who are lost from God - back to God
2. And His death will not be a bad thing but a glorious thing!

So, Jesus Himself refers to that very first Good Friday

Not only as a good day - but a glorious day

A day He would be glorified

In our Bible reading from Matthew 27 today

We have the central theme of Jesus' Mission - The Cross!

Jesus' death on the Cross

There is Glory in the Cross ... Because (Matthew 27:11-54)

[PowerPoint 5a-Jesus didn't defend]

1. Jesus didn't defend Himself and willingly went to the Cross (v11-14)

1st - There is Glory in the Cross of Jesus - because Jesus didn't defend Himself against false charges but willingly went to the Cross - to rescue us from Hell in verses 11 to 14...

- Notice how Jesus responded to his interrogation under the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate
- Jesus only replied when the question had TRUTH in it
- Pilate asked "Are you king of the Jews?" - Jesus said "You have said so" (v11)
- Ironically Jesus is more than King of the Jews - He's King of kings and Lord of lords - and King of Heaven and Earth
- But when he was accused - falsely- by the chief priests and elders - he gave no answer (v12)
- Even when Pilate reminded Jesus - that the chief priests and elders' false testimony was harmful to Him - Jesus still made no response - in v13 & 14
- Jesus' silence and refusal to defend Himself - saved all who believe in Him - from Hell

(pause)

[PowerPoint 5b-Jesus took the place of guilty]

2. Innocent Jesus took the place of the Guilty (vv15-26)

2nd - There is Glory in the Cross of Jesus - because innocent Jesus took the place of the guilty (vv15-26)

- The custom at the Jewish Passover festival was for the Roman Governor (Pilate) to release a guilty prisoner whom the crowd asked for
- There happened to be a prisoner called Barabbas - a rebel, a murderer and basically a terrorist of the day
- Pilate gave the people a choice - to have Barabbas or Jesus released
- Barabbas the guilty one - or Jesus the innocent one (even Pilate's wife had warned her husband that Jesus was innocent)

- Unfortunately, the waiting crowd had been poisoned against Jesus the Messiah - by the chief priests and elders
- It was a kangaroo court
- The people made their choice - they asked for the release of Barabbas and demanded that Jesus be crucified
- Two compelling statements were also made by those involved:
 - Pilate washed his hands of any responsibility and said he was innocent of this man's blood! Not true! Pilate's in charge - not the people!
 - The people said - Jesus' blood was on them and their children. The truth is Jesus' blood is on all of us too. Our sins were put on Him when He died too. We're guilty for His death too!
- But, praise God, there's glory in the cross of Jesus - because His innocent blood was poured out so the guilty (including us) can go free - if we care to believe in His saving work on the cross
- How do we feel about our sins being dumped on Jesus - and Jesus taking our punishment? How do we feel?

(pause)

[PowerPoint 5c-King of Love]

3. He is the King of Love (vv27-31)

3rd - There is glory in the cross of Jesus - because Jesus is the King of Love - who showed there is no greater love than to lay down His life - not just for His friends - but even for His enemies - who still have time to repent and turn back to Him (vv27-31)

- The soldiers mocked Jesus and dressed Him up as a pretend King with a crown of thorns on his head - and a scarlet robe
- They spat on Him and beat Him
- They laughingly called him - King of the Jews -
- The irony is - He is the Glorious King of Love
- A King prepared to die for His subjects to be free

(pause)

[PowerPoint 5d-He saved others]

4. He Saved Others by not Saving Himself (vv32-44)

4th - There is glory in the cross of Jesus - because Jesus saved others by not saving Himself (vv32-44)

- On the cross Jesus was mocked with some *harsh words*
 - Words like - *You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days - save yourself - come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God*
 - The irony is - the temple is not a building - it's His body that will rise in 3 days
 - The irony is - He could have come down from the cross - but He didn't because God's plan was for Him to die to save us
 - The irony is - He is the Son of God - and He must do the Father's will
 - Words like - *He saved others but He can't save Himself*
 - Actually, He had to die to save others
 - Actually, He could have saved Himself but He chose not to - for the sake of others

- Words like - *He's the King of Israel*
 - Actually, He's the King of Heaven and Earth
- Words like - *Let Him come down from the cross and we will believe in Him*
 - Actually, He could have come down from the cross but that would not have saved anyone from the punishment for their sin
 - Actually, its belief in Jesus' death on the Cross that saves people - not Jesus coming down from the cross
 - Actually, He did better than come down from the cross - He came back from the grave 3 days later
- Words like - *He trusts God, Let God rescue Him now if He wants Him, for He said "I am the Son of God"*
 - Actually, God's rescue plan involved Jesus dying
 - Actually, God did rescue Jesus - not from the cross - but from the grave
 - Actually, Jesus is the Son of God and always does the will of the Father

[PowerPoint 5e-Completed]

5. He Completed the Father's will and the Father's rescue plan (vv45-54)

5th - There is glory in the cross of Jesus - because Jesus completed the Father's will and completed the Father's rescue plan (vv45-54)

- Jesus' words from the cross in v46 - "*my God, my God, why have you forsaken me*" - fulfilled the OT prophecy from Psalm 22

- At that moment - God's anger for the sin of the world - was put on Jesus instead of God's anger being on each sinner (including us)
- At that moment - the Father turned His back on the Son - and Jesus felt the whole weight of the sin of the world on Him. I have enough trouble bearing the weight of my own sin - but I deserve that weight. Jesus bore the sin of everyone - it was an excruciating burden on Him and rejection by His Father. What love - what obedience - what mercy - Jesus showed!
- But it was all part of God's plan to take away the punishment of sin
- Those evil men who crucified Jesus thought they had won - they thought evil could defeat the Son of God
- But it only seemed like evil was winning
- Because there's more
- V51 - the curtain of the temple was torn in two - a symbol that Jesus had purchased access to direct access to God -
- No more temple sacrifices for sin were required - Jesus sacrifice was a perfect and once and for all sacrifice
- We can now come to God - through Jesus - and be forgiven and have a fixed relationship with God -
- What those evil men meant for bad - God meant for good -for the good of each person who cares to come to Jesus and say sorry Jesus - please forgive me
- There's no need for High priests to make sacrifices for sin, no confessing sins to priests

- We can come to God directly - in the name of Jesus - and accept Jesus' rescue
- Jesus has completed God's rescue plan
- In John's Gospel - 19:30 - Jesus said from the cross - *it is finished* - what He meant was He had completed God's will and completed God's rescue plan

Response to the Glory of the Cross

So, what will our response be to the Glory of the Cross?

You see, Jesus not only fulfilled the Father's will and completed the Father's rescue plan on the Cross

[PowerPoint 6-Response]

In His own words from John 12:32-33 - when He predicted His death Jesus said this:

³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

Perhaps you're someone here this morning - who only comes and listens to God's Word - at Christmas and Easter?

Or perhaps you're someone here this morning - for the first time in a long time

Or perhaps you're someone standing at a distance from Jesus and His cross - doubting these events of Good Friday - or wanting a different kind of superhero - a superhero who doesn't die?

Or perhaps you come here each week

The message is still the same -

Jesus is the answer to this evil and broken world

Jesus was lifted up on the Cross for each one of us - to escape the punishment for our sins

For those of us who have already accepted Jesus' rescue - our job is to share this Good News

For those here this morning who haven't already accepted Jesus' rescue
There's no better day than today

Jesus is ***drawing each one of us here to Him*** - from His cross - to come and believe and be rescued from Hell

Can we join the Roman Centurion who witnessed all of this - and said "Surely Jesus was (and is) the Son of God"?

Good Friday does not have to be a sorrowful day - it's a glorious day!

Let's pray...