

Good Friday reflection on John 18 and 19 3rd April 2026

After hearing the words from John's gospel of the painful journey, flogging and immense suffering Jesus endured as he was crucified, we might wonder why we call this day "good" Friday and not ghastly Friday.

If you google why is Good Friday good, AI sums it up well...

Good Friday is called "good" because it commemorates the day Christians believe Jesus willingly died on the cross as the ultimate, redeeming sacrifice for humanity's sins, offering salvation and eternal life. In this context, "good" historically signifies "holy," "sacred," or a "good day" of atonement, despite the solemn, sorrowful nature of the events.

AI expounds on their summary with this;

Key Reasons for the Name:

- **A Holy/Sacred Day:** According to [BBC](#) and [Wikipedia](#), "good" in this context is an older, often obsolete, use of the word meaning "holy," "pious," or a day designated by the church as sacred, similar to "the Good Book" for the Bible.
- **The Ultimate Sacrifice:** Christians believe Jesus, as the Son of God, sacrificed himself to take on the sins of the world. This profound act of love is considered "good" because it bridges the gap between humanity and God, bringing salvation, says [the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore](#).
- **Hope for Salvation:** While the day commemorates the crucifixion, it is considered "good" because of the positive result: Jesus's victory over sin and death, culminating in the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Truly it is a good day for all those reasons.

It got me thinking about the word good. As an adjective one of the dictionary descriptions included...

having the required qualities; of a high standard.

And as a noun...

that which is morally right; righteousness.

If we apply these meanings to Jesus, we see Jesus as the only righteous one with the required qualities to be the perfect sacrifice to die on the cross in our place that we might be forgiven and reconciled to God.

In the gospels we read a story of Jesus telling a rich young ruler who comes to him and calls him “good teacher” that no-one is good except God alone. He points to the absolute moral perfection of God.

Did the rich young ruler pick up on the fact that Jesus was in fact pointing to himself as God. The good one. The one perfect righteous one. The one who was totally obedient to his father, following his will, which meant going to the cross to die for us as we remember especially on Good Friday.

Jesus invited the rich young ruler to sell all his possessions and follow him, but the man went away sad, Jesus’ invitation too hard for him.

We find it hard to fully submit ourselves to following Jesus and to God’s will. *Our* will so often gets in the way. But not Jesus, though even he found it hard; we read in Matthew 26 him saying as much to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee in the garden of Gethsemane... *“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”*

³⁹ *Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”*

⁴⁰ *Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. ⁴¹ “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

⁴² *He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”*

⁴³ *When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.*

The disciples couldn’t even *will* themselves to stay awake. Jesus however submitted fully to the Father’s will; he drank from the cup. The cup of death for him, the cup of salvation for us. Earlier in the evening when he shared Passover with his friends, he had shared bread with them, breaking it and saying eat this, this is my body. Then he took a cup and he told them to drink from it, the wine in the cup symbolizing his blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. He knew he had to drink the cup, to suffer and die for those he loved.

What was this cup? Even worse than the physical agony he was to endure through flogging that ripped his skin and tissue, even worse than the nails being driven into his hands and the hanging of his body on the cross – was the cup of wrath he was to drink. The wrath for the sins of the whole world, past, present and future. He drank it all and, in that moment experienced abandonment from God. That is the cup he had to drink for us.

Which is why on the cross, he calls out “*My God, My God why have you forsaken me?*”

But he is fully *good*, he doesn’t give in to the taunts and temptations to save himself. His love for us keeps him focused and obedient and, as the writer of Hebrews says; it was *for the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame,*”

He placed himself fully in his Father’s hands, in Luke 23, Jesus says, *Father into your hands I commit my spirit*, trusting in God’s plan of salvation for the whole world. He felt the pain, the sorrow, but he scorned the shame, and for the joy to come, he died. For in his death, he defeated death and sin that we might be forgiven, and on Sunday we will celebrate his resurrection.

The *good* on Friday will be further realised as we are amazed and grateful and so joyful that Jesus has risen, his death and resurrection offering us new life for today and all eternity.

Just before he died Jesus calls out *It is finished!* The reason God sent him to earth was over, mission complete, to rescue us from sin and death.

The one ‘*good*’ holy righteous one, the only one with the *required qualities*, the one perfect sacrifice, had died in our place. This is good news; this is what we remember on Good Friday.

Let’s pray: Thank you Jesus, you alone are good, may we seek to follow your example of obedience and love. May we submit our wills to yours; may we love as you love us, being prepared to surrender everything and lay down our lives to follow you.