

GOOD FRIDAY

2020

A medical doctor describes the physical pain of crucifixion.

“As he slowly sags down on the nails in the wrists, excruciating pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain; the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes himself upward to avoid stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet. Again, he feels the agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of the feet. As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe. Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled. He fights to raise himself in order to get even one small breath. There are hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins: a deep crushing pain in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. It is now almost over; the loss of tissue fluids reaches a critical level; the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues; the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues. Finally, he can allow his body to die.”

The Bible records all this in these words: "And they crucified him."

There's no doubt that death by crucifixion is horrific.....and it is cruel fact that throughout history many,many people have suffered death by this means. Indeed, two other men, one on each side of him, suffered the same physical agony as Jesus himself did on that day.



So, what makes the suffering of Jesus any different from anybody else's?

And the answer to this question is a huge stumbling block to many people becoming Christians: because it doesn't matter how brainy and clever we are or how big our IQ is, none of us will ever have the brain capacity or the understanding to fully comprehend what Jesus accomplished through his death on that cross all those years ago!

This is where we enter the whole realm of faith!

We have to remember that our God is Trinitarian: three in one and one in three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For all eternity they had been united, whole, complete, never separated.....ever!

Our God is sinless. He cannot be in the presence of sin – it's impossible! But our God loves us completely and wants to be in close communion with us. We are sinners and so therefore can't have such a relationship with a holy God.

BIG problem.....one which we certainly couldnt fix but God did, through himself as Jesus via the cross.

As humans we so often concentrate on the physical.....what we see, what we feel.....and we can forget that the completeness of life isn't just about physical. During his life on earth Jesus continued to have that unity and connexion with his Father and the Holy Spirit but once he was nailed onto the cross that connection was severed....broken asunder.....no more. Jesus was completely alone. And this pain of separation was far worse than the physical pain for him.....the bereavement he felt must have been unbearable!

But, not only that, he took within himself the sins of the whole world.....past, present and future.....our sins along with everybody else's.....and carried the weight, the burden, the suffering, the punishment that should have been ours and everybody else's.



Then, after he finally died, he spent time defeating death and the devil in hell. Hard to get our heads around????? Definitely!

But if we put our faith in Jesus, trusting that, even though we know we'll never fully understand it or be able to rationalise it, he did actually do all this and he did it for us; so that when we stand before God on Judgement Day and the list of our sins is rolled out ready for us to receive our punishment, Jesus will be there saying, 'I took the punishment for this child. They can join us in eternity.'

That's why today is called 'GOOD' Friday. I wonder how many people have no clue about why it's called 'GOOD'.

As we consider all this afresh today and spend time meditating upon it, let's be filled with overwhelming love and gratitude for our incredible Saviour: and then look for opportunities in the days ahead to share the 'greatest' news ever- that, because of GOOD Friday, Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world!

GOOD FRIDAY Intercessions

Lord, we lift your name on high and praise you before all people. Jesus, for us and for our salvation, you were despised and rejected. May your passion turn our faltering hearts to the depth and breadth and height of your love.

Jesus, for us and for our salvation, you were crushed by a perversion of justice. Be with the oppressed and those rightly convicted. Turn our hearts in penitence for the sins that separate us from one another and from you.

Jesus, for us and for our salvation, you became a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity. As you take our pains and diseases upon yourself, so may we know your power to bring us to wholeness and peace.

Jesus, for us and for our salvation, you were laid in a borrowed tomb and dwelt in the place of silence. Lamb of God, gather to yourself all who have died.

In your cross, O Lord, we glory and we enthrone you on our praises. For you are the Holy One and in you alone we place our trust and hope. Amen.

