

*Preached by Mark Reid
Churches Together in Felixstowe Service
The Triange, Felixstowe
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What's so Good about Friday?

John 19:28-37



It's pretty gory stuff – the crucifixion of Christ. If you've seen Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ* you'll have had it in all its stomach churning detail. It's the sort of thing we don't like our children to see. It's the sort of thing that's only broadcast after the 9 o'clock watershed. It's a horrible story. A man is dragged up on false charges, given a sham of a trial and sentenced to death. He's then beaten up, whipped until his blood flows and then he's made to drag a heavy wooden through crowds of people, shouting, sneering, spitting and kicking him and then he's nailed to it and left to die – a process that took a few hours. That was Jesus. We heard part of that story during the morning. It almost doesn't bear thinking about does it? Horrible.

And what do we Christians do each Good Friday – we come here and have what amounts to a public party to commemorate the day. Maybe if you don't have much to do with religion and you're listening on, you may think it sounds all just a bit weird. A guy gets a sham trial, is tortured and then given an agonising death and we're celebrating it!

Even worse, we call it Good Friday. Good Friday? What's good about revelling in someone's agonising death? Shouldn't it be called Bad Friday?

What's so good about Friday? This Friday. One clue is in the last word Jesus said on the cross. It was read to us earlier. In English it's actually 3 words "It is finished" but in the NT which was written originally in Greek, it comes out as one word – *Tetelestai*. It was a word that was commonly used in markets in those days. These days we shake hands when we do deals.. Or we sign documents. In those days they exchanged a word "*Tetelestai*". All it means is that the deal is done; the price has been paid!

Paid? What price did Jesus pay? It was the personal cost to Him of giving his life in exchange for ours. The most amazing thing about God is that he loves us so much – the human race – that he was prepared to open a way for us to reach Him. Why did He need to make a way? Because we, the human race have separated ourselves from God by doing things that displease Him and wanting to do things our way. The Bible calls that sin and it keeps us apart from God and

there's nothing we can do, however good to know God. If you're standing here this morning, thinking – hey, I don't know God" - then what I've said should be self-evident to you.

The amazing thing is that God wanted to know us and in Jesus, He Himself paid the price of our sin so that He's able to offer us a relationship with Him, an eternity of knowing Him, and a life here of knowing His presence in our lives. Maybe you know you have something missing in your life this morning, maybe you have lots of problems and pressures in your life – problems with health, families, friendships, money - and you don't know which way to turn. Maybe you're looking at the prospect of death and wondering what's after. God wants to be part of your life – a relationship with Jesus does make a difference.

There's something else that's good about that particular Friday – it was followed after Saturday by Sunday. And on Sunday we're going to remember that Jesus rose again from death. One of the reasons why we celebrate this morning isn't some weird party for a dead guy – but a celebration for someone who came back to life and can be known by people today – that's you and me.

How do I get to know Jesus? Sounds all a bit, kind of, religious doesn't it? Actually you've heard people pray this morning and there's going to be some more soon. Jesus is just a prayer away. Speak to Him. Tell Him that you're sorry that you've been ignoring Him, that there have been things in your life that you know aren't right before God, that you want to know Him as part of your life, to follow Him.

If you find that you've prayed that prayer or would like to, then speak to one of us here. Perhaps you need prayer for a difficult situation in life; with your health, with your family whatever, then ask someone to pray for you.

If you're curious and want to know more – then come to a church near you and find out more – we're all open this Sunday.

Thank you and have a blessed Easter.