



## **“Good Friday” and the Glory of God in Christ**

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**“Good Friday” as it has** been called commemorates the day Jesus died on the cross. Much could be rightly said about this day and all the “good” that took place in the death of Christ. But ultimately, Jesus’ death—like everything else in his life, and everything period!—was and is about the glory of God the Father in and through the Christ.

Listen to how Jesus himself speaks of his own death in the Gospel of John:

*“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.”*

John makes crystal clear, more than any other Gospel writer the presence and role of God the Father in Jesus’ life. As Jesus’ own soul was troubled pondering his impending death, he makes clear that it was for this purpose he has now come to this point. So what will help him press on? What will be his one prayer request.

### **He says to his Father in heaven, “Father, glorify Your name.”**

The glory of God the Father was uppermost in his own affections. Jesus existed to glorify His Father. From all eternity past, throughout his entire earthly life, and even in his death on the cruel cross, there was one ultimate, final end Jesus pursued: the glory of His Father.

Overstatement? Misguided? Unnecessary?

Not in the slightest. The glory of God the Father is absolutely what makes this Friday “good.” We know this because of the Father’s own response to Jesus’ prayer. Will the Father take the modest route, “No my beloved Son, you be glorified. I’ve had my time of glory. Now it’s your turn.” Or, “No, my son, that would be arrogant of me, don’t you think? Self-exalting? You go ahead and take the glory.” What will the Father’s response be to Jesus’ prayer?

### **“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”**

Far from playing the modesty card, the Father affirms Jesus’ pursuit of His glory and joins the glorification party! The Father exults in and exalts himself by speaking both in regards to the past, “I HAVE GLORIFIED it...” and also speaks to what He will do in the future “...and I will glorify it again” in the death of his Son.

Far from shying away from pursuing His own glory, the Father emphasizes this supreme goal of His and Jesus would have it no other way. All of eternity could be summed up in these words of self-glorification, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again” and at times, it is puzzling and hard for us to understand since for us, self-exaltation is certainly NOT a good thing, let alone, the supreme goal for us to pursue. More on that in a minute...

How in the world does Jesus understand the glory of His Father to be the primary and ultimate motivator for everything He did? Later on He explains:

*“When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.’”*

This was certainly the hour of the Father’s glory. But it wasn’t as though Jesus was completely unconcerned about himself. The glory of the Father was and is the final goal of all existence, but His glory is an eternal glory shared with the Christ, His one and only Son.

God the Father was to be glorified in and through Jesus. Jesus is the divine “Son of Man” and contrary to its seemingly “human” title, this favorite name of Christ points to his deity, not his humanity.

Jesus knows that God the Father is at work in and

through him even as Jesus' own name bears this truth: God is salvation. God the Father is at work saving those on whom he has mercy in and through His Son and there is a glory partnership in this great work that includes the sharing of glory. But not before the pain and suffering would take place and be endured. As we know from the writer of Hebrews, Jesus...

"who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

The cross was no cake-walk. Jesus did not go merrily skipping up the hill of the Skull, Golgotha.

### **The cross was endured, not enjoyed.**

The excruciating death of Christ on the cross for sins, dying in the place of sinners, being made sin, though not ever having committed a single sin of his own, so that those who trusted in Him would show forth the righteousness of God, becoming a curse for them so that they might go free, bearing their sin on his body on the tree so that his people would die to sin and live to righteousness to the glory of God the Father.

But there was a joy that moved His feet each and every step. Jesus pursued the glory of His Father because he knew that He would soon share in His Father's glory, ruling and reigning on the throne with Him, even as he did before time began.

Even in Gethsemane as Jesus prayed and sweat great drops of blood in agony over what was to come, but one ultimate aim still urged Him on.

*"When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."*

What would Jesus do now that he was even closer to the cross? Though He would wrestle like never before with what he knew the Father's will was and even asked if there is another way to accomplish His divine plan rather than to have to drink the cup of God's wrath, Jesus was fully and finally committed to the Father's

glory. His prayer in the garden could be summed up in these words:

### **"Father...glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You..."**

Jesus defined His own glory in terms of accomplishing the glory of another, namely His Father. It was no slight for Jesus to pursue His Father's glory, to obey His Father's voice, to speak His Father's words, to accomplish His Father's work, to do His Father's will. It was Jesus' delight to make much of His Father! It was the satisfaction of Jesus' soul to exalt God His Father!

The love that the Father has for His Son and that the Son has for His Father is absolutely sublime. Even in all the mystery and wonder of why the salvation of God had to be accomplished via the cross and the death of His Son, there is clarity—absolute and eternal clarity—as to what was the final goal: the glory of God the Father shown in and through His Son.

Paul learned this as well when he says to the Philippians:

*"And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

In the humility of Christ, to the point of death on a cruel and humiliating and confusing cross was a final and ultimate goal. His own exaltation as Lord over all things—made so by God the Father—with every knee bowing at His name—the name given to Him by His Father—with every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord was for one, majestic, magnificent end: the glory of God the Father.

Even in His death, Jesus was lifted up to die, yes for our salvation, for He came to save "His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). There are many things that make remembering this Friday as "good" because of the sacrificial and substitutionary death on the cross. But nothing could make this day better than the pursuit and accomplishment of the Father's glory.

This is what the Father has done from the beginning. He is glorifying His name in the present in and through Jesus. And He will continue to do so throughout all

eternity, in and through His Son, even sharing His glory with all those who are trusting in His provision of salvation in the Lamb that was slain.

**The glory of God the Father in and through Jesus Christ is the ultimate end and final "good" of all "goods."**

*If the Father's glory was the ultimate aim and final end of what Jesus pursued, even through His own exaltation to and through the cross, should it not also be ours as well?*

*What ways can I pursue the Father's glory in Jesus today? What work has the Father given me to accomplish today for His glory in Christ?*

*Are there things that I will need to lay aside as Christ did, in order to humble myself in the service of others and ultimately for the sake of God's name?*

*What things must I endure today for the sake of a greater joy on the other side that leads to God's glory?*

*Am I satisfied in the exaltation of God in Christ or will I be tempted to exalt myself and find that it is ultimately not satisfying in the end?*

*Where do I need to grow in understanding that the Father's glory shown in and through Jesus Christ is the ultimate aim and final end of all things?*

May God our Father grant us grace in and through His Son and in and by His Spirit to live for His eternally "good" glory, not just on this "Good Friday" but on every "good" day!