

"CELEBRATING THE CROSS"

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GOOD FRIDAY

at Kessid Church

Everyone has an inner problem with the cross.

- **Question:** Maybe this is why are we in such a hurry to rush Jesus up to Heaven on Easter? Is it because the Cross doesn't fit into our picture of how things ought to be?
- It didn't fit into anyone's picture back then, either...

(Vs) Matthew 16:21-25 – From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

It's actually this specific idea within Good Friday that causes so much concern within us.

- The Idea: "That true power and wisdom often lead to sacrifice and suffering for others."
- The picture of Jesus hanging on the Cross of Calvary appears to be an almost total contrast and a brutal denial of everything He had done before.
- Those who had seen His power wondered why He seemed powerless at His greatest need.
- Those who saw His intelligence wondered how someone so smart could miscalculate so badly.
- This is because both sides missed what Jesus and His Father were saying...

(Vs) John 12:24 – "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

- It's not just His words, it's His very life that is a parable.

People still miss this TODAY!

- Religious-minded people want miracles and power.
- Intellectually minded people want wisdom and truth.
- Awaken to what you have been shown!

“For Jesus, it was both His power and wisdom that led Him to the Cross for you!”

This is why, what God offers us all, is first the Cross of Christ.

- The earliest believers called the Cross “the wisdom of God and power of God.”

(Vs) 1st Cor. 1:23-24 – ... but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

As Christians, missing this can still be a stumbling block for us today.

- We prefer not to dwell on such things... After all, who respects suffering?
- Proof? When is the last time you boasted in your own suffering for God? And yet, it's right here that God is so highly glorified!

“Things are always darkest just before they go pitch black. And then, in the blackness of the truth—the truth that our own power or smarts are never enough—we discover that we need to rely solely on the promise of the Father.”

Truly celebrating Good Friday represents the beginning of this understanding.

- Good Friday provides the opportunity to proclaim, “I’ve been to the Cross, and now everything has changed.”
- Yes, the Cross both changed and changes everything.
- Stumbling blocks and foolishness turn into power and wisdom.
- Lost are Found.
- Bondage is Broken.
- In this sense, if nothing is changing in your life, maybe you haven’t been to the Cross...

Easter is indeed about the empty tomb. But first, it’s about the Cross.

- Truth: “Friday Dying is the road to Sunday Living!”
- As it was the road for Jesus; it is the road for us!

How?

1. **Recognize:** The Cross wasn't suffered for someone else.
2. **Realize:** How personal the message of The Cross actually is.
3. **Feel:** The Cross's value washing over all aspects of your being.

(Vs) Isaiah 53 "Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ²For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. ⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ⁹And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see¹¹ and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors."