

Introduction1
 Jesus Goes It Alone: Gethsemane.....2
 Jesus’ Arrest.....4
 Jesus Goes It Alone: Gabbatha, Part One5
 The Six Trials of Jesus.....5
 Jesus Goes It Alone: Gabbatha, Continued8
 Jesus Goes It Alone: Golgotha.....10
 The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus.....11
 Why is it *Good*?13
 Conclusion17

Why is Good Friday *Good*? (John 19:30)

Pastor Gene Giguere

Introduction

- 1) As I say each year when we arrive at Good Friday, tonight is not about being clever or novel.

This night is about *remembering*.

This night is about death, not life.

It’s about defeat, not victory.

It's about sin, betrayal, corruption, lies, darkness, and evil.

Tonight, folly will reign, and it will seem as though fools have won the day.

In the short time we have together this evening, I want to walk through some of what our Lord experienced on Good Friday and close by considering the question, “Why is it *good*.”

- 2) Earlier in the evening, Jesus celebrated a Last Supper with His disciples and then retreated to the Garden of Gethsemane where He suffered greatly and was eventually arrested.

The days previous to this had been marked by difficulty and opposition.

In three days, Jesus will have risen from the dead to demonstrate that He'd once and for all conquered our greatest enemy, death.

But, O, what a difficult road it was that led to Resurrection Sunday!

From this point on, *Jesus will go it alone.*

First, the disciples would fail Him, being unable to even stay awake and 'watch' with Him in prayer.

Then, they'd run away all together.

Matthew 26:56 tells us that, at our Lord's arrest, "*all* the disciples left him and fled."

All of them.

Jesus Goes It Alone: Gethsemane

- 1) In the hours after the Last Supper, Jesus encountered extreme opposition on three fronts.

First, our Lord would go it alone against the supernatural forces of the kingdom of darkness in an enclosed orchard called Gethsemane.

There He faced the full gale force of satanic and demonic opposition.

These are the legions of rulers, and authorities, and cosmic powers which Paul describes in **Ephesians 6:12**.

What he calls the "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

At Gethsemane, Jesus looked into the Abyss and saw clearly what all of this was going to mean – and what He saw *shocked* Him.

Mark 14:33-34 says:

“[H]e took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.”

The Greek word translated “distressed” means to be *moved to an intense emotional state because of something that has caused great surprise*.¹
The word translated “troubled” means to be *overwhelmed with grief*.²

³⁴ And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.³ Remain here and watch.”⁴

As Mark describes it, it’s as though our Lord’s very *soul* was groaning.

2) Of course, Peter, John and James, the three disciples of Jesus’ inner circle, fell asleep.

Luke tells us that their hearts were *heavy with sorrow* (**Luke 22:45**).

And so, Jesus suffered *alone*.

Luke tells us that, “being in agony [He] prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (**Luke 22:44**).

The word ‘Gethsemane’ means *olive press*.

And there, in that small enclosed orchard, our Lord was pressed with satanic pressure beyond measure.

¹ “Distressed” translates the present passive infinitive of **ἐκθαμβέω**, *to be moved to an intense emotional state because of something that’s caused great surprise or perplexity*. Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 303.

² “Troubled” translates the present active infinitive of **ἀδημονέω**, a word that means *to be overwhelmed with sorrow, deeply grieved or vexed*. Zodhiates, Spiros, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000) on **ἀδημονέω**.

³ “Sorrowful” is **περίλυπος**, a word that means to be “very sad” or “deeply grieved.” *Op. cit.*, Arndt, Danker, Bauer, and Gingrich, *Lexicon*, p. 802.

⁴ Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest translates it: “He began to be thoroughly alarmed and distressed. And He says to them, ‘My soul is encompassed with grief even to the point of death. Abide here and be watching.’” Wuest, Kenneth S., *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), Mark 14:33-34.

Jesus' Arrest

- 1) When they came to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, He confronted them with their hypocrisy (**Luke 22:52-53**):

Jesus asked them why they hadn't arrested Him during the day when He'd been teaching openly in the Temple.⁵

The answer was obvious: they feared *the people*, not *the God of the people* (**Luke 19:48; 20:19; 22:2**).

- 2) The garden experience must have ended by about 2:30 A.M.

Jesus was dragged down a steep, arduous path that led from the Garden of Gethsemane and then back up to the Temple complex.

There, He was shuffled back and forth between religious and political leaders all throughout the early hours of the morning.

Jesus would be on the cross by 9:00 A.M.

- 3) It's no wonder then that Jesus told the arresting party, "*This is your hour—and the power of darkness*" (**Luke 22:53**).

They'd come out under *the cover* of darkness as agents of *the kingdom* of darkness, conspiring to murder the Lord of glory.

- 4) Gethsemane was over; Jesus was arrested.

The garden experience must have ended by about 2:30 A.M.

Jesus would now go it alone at Gabbatha.

⁵ The arrest in the garden was illegal according to Jewish law for at least two reasons. It (1) was accomplished at night and it (2) was accomplished on the testimony of a hired accuser. But God's plan to atone for the sins of the world had been set into motion, and things would move very quickly from this point on.

Jesus Goes It Alone: Gabbatha, Part One

- 1) After His arrest, Jesus would stand before the greatest governmental powers in the world, both *religious* and *political*.

And so, *the Jews* and *the Romans*.

I gather these together thematically as Jesus ‘going it alone’ at *Gabbatha* – the place where He was finally condemned by Pilate.

First, Jesus would face the full fury of the *religious hierarchy of Israel* – they were relentless in their accusations, calling for His death.

Now, in our study of John we’ve seen that this was already a forgone conclusion.

The Jews had already found Jesus guilty *in absentia* after the raising of Lazarus from the dead (**John 11:47-53**).

So, His ‘trials’ before the Jews were show trials only, good theater.

After these mock trials, Jesus would have to face opposition from the *world’s greatest political force* of the time, the Roman government.

The Six Trials of Jesus

Harmonizing the four Gospels, we see that Jesus faced *six* trials through the night and early morning:

Three before *Jewish* officials, and

Three before *Roman* officials.

Together, these trials number the number of man (**Rev. 13:18**)

1.
Anna

- 1) Jesus was first taken into the house of the former High Priest, Annas, Caiaphas’ still-influential predecessor and father-in-law (**John 18:13**).

2) Next, Jesus was brought to Caiaphas, the sitting High Priest.

2.
Caiaphas

There, Jesus was mistreated by the men who were supposed to be guarding Him.

They mocked Him and they beat Him.

Blindfolding Him, they said, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?” (**Matthew 26:68**)

3) Then Jesus was brought before the council of the Jewish elders (**Luke 22:66-71, Matthew 26:59-66; Mark 14:55-64; John 18:19-24**).

The council, or the *Sanhedrin*, met in the Hall of Hewn Stone.

3. Hall
of
Hewn
Stone

This was the Jewish nation’s official judicial body – the supreme court, its final court of appeals.

If the council found Jesus guilty, that would be the *last word*.

They met at daybreak, since it was illegal for them to assemble at night.

The council wanted to know if Jesus was truly presenting Himself as the Messiah.

Jesus affirmed His authority as Messiah – the One who, after His death, resurrection, and Ascension, would be seated at the right hand of the mighty God, the place of highest honor.

He also plainly testified that He is indeed the Son of God.

The council decided that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy, a crime punishable by death.

But, while the council *could render a guilty verdict*, the Jews at that time were *not allowed to impose the death penalty*.

Only Rome could sentence a person to death.

- 4) And so, in order to affect a death penalty, they brought Jesus before Pilate, the Roman procurator at the time (**Luke 23:1-7, Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; John 18:28-38**).

They falsely charged Him:

Luke 23:2: “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.”

4.
Pilate

First, they said He opposed paying taxes to Caesar, but Jesus had said just the opposite (**20:25**).

Second, they worded the blasphemy charge to sound as if Jesus was an insurrectionist —He claims to be “a king.”

Pilate saw right through it and stated clearly that Jesus was innocent (**23:4**).

But, since the Jewish leaders kept insisting that Jesus was guilty, Pilate devised a workaround: he’d send Him to Herod Antipas, the “tetrarch of Galilee” (**3:1**).

- 5) So, Jesus was brought before Herod Antipas (**Luke 23:8-12**).

While Jesus had spoken to Pilate about who He was, He repeatedly refused to answer even the simplest question from Herod.

5.
Herod

Herod Antipas was a perverse clown of a man who wanted to use Jesus for sport.

This is the same Herod who’d been responsible for the death of Jesus’ half-cousin, John the Baptizer, the greatest prophet born of a woman.

And now *Jesus Himself* had to stand before him.

Herod, for his part, “was very glad” to meet Jesus.

Luke tells us, he’d “long desired to see Him, because he had heard about Him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by Him” (**Luke 23:8**).

Herod “questioned Him at some length, but [Jesus] made no answer” (**Luke 23:9**).

Our Lord wouldn’t dignify this clown *with a single word*.

After mocking Him and dressing Him up as a false king, he returned Him to Pilate, without passing any judgment on the case.

This was Jesus’ fifth trial.

- 6) And so, Jesus was brought before Pilate a second time for His final trial (**Luke 23:13-25, Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; John 18:39-19:16**).

6.
Pilate

Pilate told the people that he could do nothing but punish Jesus and release Him because he found no basis for the charges against Him.

Jesus had clearly done *nothing* to deserve death.

Pilate tried to resolve the case by offering the people a choice of either releasing Barabbas – a known urban terrorist and murderer – or Jesus.

He certainly assumed they’d choose to have Jesus released, but *shockingly* they cried out for Barabbas.

Pilate desperately wanted to release Jesus, affirming His innocence for yet a third time!

But weak sister that he was, he eventually caved to the demands of the crowd and surrendered Jesus to their will.

Jesus Goes It Alone: Gabbatha, Continued

- 1) And so, imagine it! The King of all kings had to:

Stand before liars and religious hypocrites;

Endure mock trials,

Listen to the false testimonies of paid witnesses,

Stand before John the Baptist's murderer and;

Finally, be judged by a *cowardly* Roman procurator – who (1) knew Jesus was innocent, (2) desperately wanted to release Him, but (3) lacked the political courage to do so!

And that wasn't all.

At Gabbatha, Jesus also had to endure the hatred of the crowd – the very people who'd welcomed Him with "Hosanna" just a few days earlier.

So, Pilate asked them: "*What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?*"

They replied: "*Let him be crucified!*"

He asked, "*Why? What evil has he done?*"

They shouted all the more, "*Let him be crucified!*"

Pilate said, "*I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.*"

And "ALL the people" answered: "*His blood be on us and on our children!*" (**Matthew 27:22-25**).

- 2) Now, by the time our Lord reached the Stone Pavement, He was completely relaxed in His Spirit – so much so that it utterly unnerved Pilate (**Jn. 19:1-15**).

Pilate asked Him: "*Where are you from?*" But Jesus gave him no answer (**John 19:9**).

So, Pilate said to Him, "*You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?*" (**John 19:10**)

Jesus answered him, "*You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above*" (**John 19:11a**).

And then the next verse says, “From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar” (**John 19:12**).

“So, when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called, The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha” (**John 19:12b-13**).

And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” (**John 19:14**)

They cried out, “*Away with him, away with him, crucify him!*”

Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?”

The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.”

So, he delivered him over to them to be crucified (**John 19:15-16**).

And there you have it, Gethsemane and Gabbatha.

But the fiercest opposition Jesus would face still lay ahead.

Jesus Goes It Alone: Golgotha

1) That would come at Golgotha, the Place of the Skull.

There, Jesus would go it alone before the wrath of God the Father as He offered Himself for our sins.

At the cross, in a supernatural darkness – a blackness like pitch that fell over the whole land at noon – the perfect righteousness of God the Father attached a perfectly-righteous penalty to each and every sin of each and every sinner from Adam to the Great White Throne judgement and thrust them upon His Son Jesus.

At Golgotha, the full force of the Father's fury fell upon His own Son as He bore the sins of the entire world.

Jesus was repelled by the idea of being associated with sin, although He was always obedient to His Father's will.

In **Luke 12:50**, He said: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and *how great is my distress until it is accomplished!*"

As an archer nails a target to a tree and unloads the full power of the bow into that target, so the Father nailed His Son to a tree, pulled back the bow of His perfect justice, and let it fly into the target.

And Jesus felt it all keenly.

Matthew 27:45-46: From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

2 Corinthians 5:21 summarizes all of this by saying, "For our sake He [God the Father] made Him [Jesus, the God-Man] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him [Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God."

It's exhausting to think about such things!

Even reviewing it with you is exhausting!

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

- 1) Well, as we know, Jesus was scourged and then forced to carry His own cross to Golgotha, the place of the skull.

Exhausted and weakened by such intense suffering, He fell under the weight of it.

The Lord was crucified between two criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

From the cross, He interceded on behalf of His tormentors: He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The soldiers at the foot of the cross cast lots, gambling over His garments **(Luke 23:34)**.

The people stood by, watching.

The Jewish leaders scoffed at Him as He suffered, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ of God, His Chosen One” **(Luke 23:35)**!

The soldiers mocked Him too, offering Him sour wine, saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself” **(Luke 23:36-37)**!

Then, at about the sixth hour, high noon, a supernatural darkness covered the whole land until the ninth hour, 3 p.m.

A terrifying inky blackness with the sun at its zenith!

As Luke tells it, “The sun’s light failed” **(Luke 23:44-45)**.

The curtain of the Temple that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was torn in two - *from the top to the bottom* **(Matthew 27:51)**.

Finally, Jesus said: “It is finished!” and cried out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”

Having said this, He breathed his last.

2) So, this is what the “hour” and the “power of darkness” looks like **(Luke 22:52-53)**:

Shrouded in injustice, lying, cheating, conniving, bribery, scapegoating and murder.

And while the darkness was advancing, the believers were fast asleep, or busy denying Jesus with their words or actions.

Tonight, we need to think about this.

And we need to think about our own age as well, where the darkness continues to advance.

And where believers, like the first believers, are often denying Jesus with their words or actions.

Why is it *Good*?

1) So, Good Friday. Why was Good Friday *good*?

I think the answer to that comes down to the power of one word: **τετέλεσται**.

Tetelestai (**τετέλεσται**), as I'm sure most of us know, is the Greek word translated "It is finished" which Jesus spoke from the cross (**John 19:30**).

It is the perfect passive indicative of the verb teleō (**τελέω**), which means *to bring something to its end, to accomplish it*.

The *perfect tense* here is significant because it indicates an action completed in the past whose results continue into the present.

And so, I think answering the *what was finished* question also tells us *why Good Friday was good*.

And we don't have to reach far to see what was "finished" on Good Friday; the Bible makes these things clear.

I'll only share a few and we'll close.

2) First, Good Friday was *good* because on that day the way to Heaven was finally opened to sinners.

This was shown symbolically by the torn veil of the Temple.

When Jesus died, the veil was torn from the top to the bottom indicating that *Jesus* had torn open the way to Heaven for sinners.

And He did so through His great suffering.

Hebrews 2:9-10 says that Jesus "through suffering" was "bringing many sons to glory."

And so, when Jesus ascended into Heaven, the Bible tells us that He took a multitude of people with Him!

What people?

All of the Old Testament saints who had been waiting for the blood to be presented in the Temple in Heaven – the sinless blood that would once-and-for-all satisfy the righteousness of the Father.

Ephesians tells us that, “When He ascended on high, He led a host of captives” – or “He led captivity captive” (**Ephesians 4:8**).

Abraham’s Bosom, the waiting room of the Old Testament saints, was finally emptied.

So, Good Friday was good because it opened Heaven to sinners.

Thanks to this most solemn of days, *there’s even a place waiting for me.*

3) Second, Good Friday was good because on that day the Law was fulfilled.

Every one of us had something hanging over our heads.

The Bible says sinners are “without excuse” (**Romans 1:20**)!

And that “the wrath [fury] of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness” (**Romans 1:18**).

When Jesus came, He made it clear that He hadn’t come to *abolish* the Law.

The Law establishes the righteous demands of God!

And so, in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (**Matthew 5:17**).

And on the cross, that’s precisely what He did!

Jesus fulfilled all of the righteous requirements of the Law for us!

That's why **Romans 10:4** says "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

So, Paul writes in **Colossians 2:13-14**, that God has made us alive who were dead in our trespasses.

And, get this! He has "forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross."

You know what that "record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands" sounds like to me? It sounds like a wanted poster with my name and face on it!

But, here's the wonderful truth: when Jesus went to the cross, He took all the charges that were hanging over my head with Him and He nailed them to His cross.

So, Good Friday was good because on that day the Law *that was against us* was fulfilled.

- 4) Thirdly, Good Friday was good because on that day Satan was *tactically* defeated.

Oh, it may not seem like he's defeated, because he still runs free, *but he is!* Because of the cross the defeat of Satan was a done deal – we're merely witnessing the *denouement*.

Continuing in **Col. 2:13-15**, Paul writes, when Jesus nailed those things which were against us to His cross, He did something else too!

He "disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them ..." (**Colossians 2:15**).

The cross was Jesus' *tactical* victory over the devil. A *tactical* victory comes before a *strategic* victory. So ...

Satan was *tactically* defeated at the cross;

He will be *strategically* defeated at the Second Coming, and

He will be *ultimately* defeated at the very end of the Kingdom Age.

But don't miss this!

Just before retreating to the upper room to have His Last Supper with His disciples, He told them: “Now will the ruler of this world be cast out” (**John 12:31**).

Make no mistake about it, the “ruler of this world” (**John 12:31**), the “prince of the power of the air” (**Ephesians 2:2**), the “god of this age” (**2 Cor. 4:4**), the “evil one” (**Matthew 13:19, 1 John 5:19**) – Satan himself – was defeated on Good Friday!

Now, the devil's smart, but he's not omniscient.

I don't think he understood this on Friday, but he will certainly understand it on Sunday!

From this point on, his doom was assured.

It was, as they say, ‘all over but the crying.’

5) Oh, and one last thing: Good Friday was good because it dismantled the Fall!

Just as sin and death entered the world through one man, Adam, so forgiveness and life entered the world through the Second Adam, Jesus Christ.

As the Apostle Paul put it, if death reigned because of one man's trespass, much more will those who receive the “free gift of righteousness reign in life through the One Man Jesus Christ” (**Romans 5:17**).

The Apostle John wrote, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (**1 John 3:8**).

And the “works of the devil” reach all the way back to the lie he told Eve that brought about the Fall.

Indeed, “the Son of God appeared ... to destroy the works of the devil” (1 **John 3:8**). And that’s precisely what He did on Good Friday.

The death that Jesus died undid the death that Adam brought! In the death of Jesus, death died and the Fall fell!

Conclusion

Now these are glorious truths to consider to be sure. But now, in the felt darkness of the earth’s darkest day, all seems lost.

The Savior appears to have been defeated. Good Friday is about death the death of the One who is the Lord of life.

Walter Brueggemann writes that ‘danger is in the air on Good Friday.’⁶ He’s right. The threat is urgent and its very real. It’s palpable – real enough to feel.

Good Friday is a day of deep threat – *a day when death will do its worst.*⁷ The threat is real for Jesus, *and we should feel that with Him.* The disciples – even the three closest to Jesus – are fast asleep. And yet, death is on the move – it’s dangerous and it’s gaining ground.

Yes, this is about Jesus dying in our place, about the possibility of being saved and our sin being forgiven. But, in the larger picture, *Jesus has declared war on death itself.* And the battle will rage!

For now, it will appear that Jesus has lost that war.

Only on Sunday will we begin to realize the wonderful truth that life has conquered death by the resurrection of Jesus. Life will literally burst forth from death, and death will die! *Behold! The dead springing to life! Behold! The death of death!*

But it’s not Sunday yet.

⁶ Brueggemann, Walter, *The Collected Sermons of Walter Brueggemann*, Volume 1 (Westminster John Knox Press, 2011) 16. ‘Deep Waters,’ April 17, 1992 (Good Friday) on Psalm 69:2, 14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Brueggemann.

Deliverance will come, *but not right away*. For the disciples, the hours leading up to Sunday Morning would seem like an eternity.

Tomorrow, *all day*, our Lord's body will lie in the tomb, dead.

It will be a glorious morning when He rises – that morning when life at last breaks into the world.

But it's only Friday, and Sunday is a very long way away.