

**Joke:** After the moving van emptied his belongings into the parsonage on Wednesday morning, Pastor Olson walked downtown to get a haircut. He wanted to look his best on Sunday and was delighted to discover a barbershop only a few blocks from the church. The sign on the door even read “Lutheran Barbershop.”

Unfortunately the barber was not in. “I can give you a shave,” his wife said, “but I don’t cut hair.”

“Sure,” Pastor Olson said. “I can always use a good shave.”

Sure enough, the barber’s wife did an excellent job. Pastor Olson asked her how much he owed, and she said \$25. Shocked at the cost, the good pastor gave her the money not wanting to make a fuss in case she turned out to be a parishioner.

He woke on Thursday, and to his delight he did not need to shave. Maybe this wasn’t such a bad deal after all, he thought. On Friday, to his surprise, there was still no stubble.

On Saturday morning, his face was still as smooth as a baby’s behind. Confused, he walked back to the barber shop and introduced himself to the barber before inquiring about the excellent but expensive shave.

The barber chuckled. “So you met my wife Grace,” he said.

“Yes,” Pastor Olson replied. “How did she learn to give such a close shave?”

“I don’t know,” the barber said, “but once you’ve been shaved by Grace you never have to worry about being shaved again.”

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The Road to Good Friday - Was It Good?

**Show video - [www.skitguys.com](http://www.skitguys.com)**

In the video, Eddie states, “If you were there that Friday, I doubt you would call it ‘good.’” When we call it “good,” we mean holy. The idea is that God is working to make things good between us and Him.

Good Friday actually begins late Thursday night in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus has been praying with his disciples when Judas shows up with a small detachment of soldiers:

John 18:4–8 (NLT) - Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. “Who are you looking for?” he asked. 5 “Jesus the Nazarene,”\* they replied. “I Am he,”\* Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) 6 As Jesus said “I Am he,” they all drew back and fell to the ground! 7 Once more he asked them, “Who are you looking for?” And again they replied, “Jesus the Nazarene.” 8 “I told you that I Am he,” Jesus said. “And since I am the one you want, let these others go.”

Jumping to verse 12. . .

John 18:12–14 (NLT) - 12 So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. 13 First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time.\* 14 Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, “It’s better that one man should die for the people.”

There’s a few things in these verses that many pass over but are I think need to be pointed out. Like the fact that when Jesus said, “I am he.” they all fell to the ground!

Truth is when God in the flesh says, “I am,” you will take notice.

Another thing was that Jesus made sure they let the disciples go.

However, although interesting, that is not what I am talking about.

It seems the first one to call the death of Jesus “good” was actually one of the bad guys of the Bible! Caiaphas was the Jewish High Priest. His primary role was to be a mediator between God and his people.

It was his job to make the sacrifice for the people of Israel on the Day of Atonement.

However, in the gospels, we see that these religious figures had become more political than pious. At times, more hurtful than holy.

Isn't it amazing how God works? Here, we have this religious leader who opposes Jesus. This man is living in fear of what the rebel rabbi from Nazareth will do. Yet, he is the one God uses to speak the truth, "It would be good if one man died for the people."

That wasn't Caiaphas' immoral idea; that was God's perfect plan. And I for one thank God for his perfect plan because we desperately needed it.

The video refers to those who are hurting and hiding. Did you know that is one reason why God created this good plan? To relieve those hurting and to reveal those hiding?

While the story of Good Friday begins in the garden of Gethsemane, our hurting and hiding begins in the garden of Eden:

Genesis 3:6–8 (NIV) - When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

There it is. There is the root of our hurting and the first time we see ourselves hiding. Weeds that seemed to sprout up from the seeds of sin planted in a perfect garden.

A bad choice that would call for a good solution. So, let's look a little closer at the hurting and hiding we encounter.

The Hurting

The apostle Paul sheds light on the hurts of this life. He ties it into the story we see in the Garden of Eden, how we are found naked and ashamed in this life.

He tells the church at Corinth:

2 Corinthians 5:2–4 (NIV) - Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

What are these verses even talking about pastor? Great question glad you asked. Let me just briefly say, these verses convey the hope and anticipation of our, as believers, future resurrection and transformation. And they also remind us of our struggles in this life. But here's the good news we have the promise of a glorious future with God where we will be clothed in righteousness.

Truth is we tend to groan because we go through life trying to clothe ourselves with fig leaves. We look around and try to sew together whatever is available. We cover our hurts with a smiling face, a funny joke, or the substance of choice. We buy the next great gadget or the most popular clothes thinking they will satisfy.

Yet none of it works. Nothing truly covers up the hurts of going through life naked and ashamed. We long for something more.

Thankfully, Paul does not stop there. Verse five says:

2 Corinthians 5:5 (NIV) - Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

In the story of the fall of humankind, we see in Genesis 3:21 that God fashioned garments to clothe Adam and Eve. And here, Paul says that God is still in the business of clothing those who may be hurting.

In this case, as followers of Jesus, He clothes us with purpose. God reminds us that He has a plan. And He gives us the Holy Spirit as a deposit of what is to come.

It shows that he understands this life is filled with hurts, and if we're being honest many we have brought on ourselves, but still there is hope and a promise for something good to come.

But what about the Hiding?

In the story of the fall of humanity found in Genesis 3, we see Adam and Eve trying to hide from God. It's the first game of "hide and seek" that ever happened.

And just like a good father, God knew where His children were hiding. He called out to them, giving them the opportunity to confess to Him.

And we still tend to try and hide from God, don't we? We hide from him by avoiding Him. We choose not to talk to him. We choose not to associate with his followers. We choose to ignore him by staying too busy to spend time with him. We fill our lives so full of stuff in an attempt to hide under everything.

But the writer of Hebrews tells us:

Hebrews 4:13 (NLT) - Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

What's hidden from God? Nothing. He sees. He knows.

Our attempts to hide are just as futile as Adam and Eve's. And, just as he called out to them in Genesis 3:9, "Where are you?" he still calls out to us today. Calling us to our purpose, his plan.

Again the writer of Hebrews says:

Hebrews 3:7–8 (NLT) - That is why the Holy Spirit says, “Today when you hear his voice, 8 don’t harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested me in the wilderness.

God’s Holy Spirit is prompting us, reminding us to listen for the voice of the loving Father calling for his children to come out from hiding and to be seen and loved.

A father who knows where you’re hiding. Who sees what you hope he doesn’t see. The father you think sees you as bad, yet he called you good when he made you.

And here’s the good news God had a plan for dealing with the hurting and the hiding and it is found on a hill.

John 19:17–18 (NIV) - Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

As the old hymn states, “On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame.”

Jesus Christ took our suffering and our shame up a hill and paid the price for the debt we incurred in the Garden of Eden. That is the story of redemption.

This is the story of a loving God giving his only son to take what would cause us to hurt, to take what would cause us to hide, to take our nakedness and shame, to take what was bad, and to make it good.

Make no mistake, what happened that Friday was ugly, brutal, and painful. It was death. But it was good. Good in God’s eyes. Good for us. And Jesus knew it would be good.

Hebrews 12:1–3 (NIV) - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Look at that: For the joy set before him he endured the cross. What was so joyful. Jesus knowing that sin was forgiven once and for all, that those who will surrender their life to Him will be reconciled back to God.

And just hours before Good Friday, Jesus said to his disciples:

John 16:7 (NIV) - But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Jesus knew how ugly that day would be. He knew how painful that day would be.

However, Jesus understood something no one else could know. He knew he would need to endure the suffering and shame of that day to make it good.

He knew he would have to pay the price and make the way for “the Advocate”... the Holy Spirit to come.

And in Romans we read this. . .

Romans 8:10–11 (NLT) - 10 And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life\* because you have been made right with God. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

God deposits the same Holy Spirit in our lives and heart to help us endure this life of hurts and groaning—the same Holy Spirit who reminds us to respond to the God who calls us out of hiding.

Jesus said, in this life we will have trouble. But then he gave the better news because he continued with but take heart I have overcome the world.

So, now there is A New High Priest

Remember Caiaphas from earlier, who was the first person to call the death of Jesus “good”?

I'm not sure he realized that the death of this one man would mean the end of his job.

Matthew 27:50–51 (NIV) - And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. . .

The “curtain” mentioned here separated God’s presence on earth from his people. One time a year, the High Priest could go inside there and offer a sacrifice for all the people. However, on that fateful Friday, Jesus was the sacrifice of all sacrifices. The perfect lamb. In response to that, it seems that God ripped the curtain open from top to bottom, essentially saying, “All are welcome!”

Not only did Jesus pay the way for us to be in constant communion with God, but the writer of Hebrews says he took over the role of being our High Priest.

Hebrews 4:14–16 (NLT) - 14 So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. 15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Notice verse 16 so let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God.

No longer do we need to have the priest once a year enter the temple for the people and sacrifice an animal to push back their sins for another year. We now can go before our High Priest, Jesus for ourselves because the perfect lamb laid down His life on our behalf.

And that sweet and wonderful Savior who took our sin, nakedness and shame could sit back and demand us to live perfect lives in response to his sacrifice. But the good news is. . .he doesn't!

He empathizes with our weaknesses. He understands the challenges of our temptations. He sees why we hurt and why we tend to hide and through the Holy Spirit, calls us to come in and receive mercy and find grace in our time of need!



And tells us that his grace is sufficient

And also that. . .

Romans 8:1–2 (NIV) - Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Good Friday? I think we might want to start calling it Great Friday.