

Good Friday reading and reflection

Bible verses:

- Jesus prayed: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luke chapter 22, verses 42-44, NIV).
- “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John chapter 3, verse 16 NIV).
- “Jesus: I am the path, the truth, and the energy of life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John chapter 14, verse 6, The Voice).

Reflection:

Have you ever felt like all your hope was gone? It’s a dark and frightening feeling, isn’t it? Whether it’s because of a family crisis, financial struggle, natural disaster, battle with addiction or life-altering illness, there are times when we can feel utterly hopeless.

On Good Friday, Jesus’ followers felt like all hope was gone. They had believed Jesus had come to Earth to save them, but instead of becoming a conquering political hero, he had been killed on the cross. What they hadn’t yet realised was that he did come to save them – and his death was part of the plan.

At the beginning of the world, Adam and Eve (the first people God created) disobeyed him. Sin and sadness entered the world, and our relationship with God was broken.

In order to restore this relationship, a sacrifice was needed. In a way, it was the world’s biggest apology, and it was made on our behalf to restore our relationship with God. Jesus, God’s son, came into the world because God loves us and wants to be in a relationship with us.

So that brings us to Good Friday when Jesus died on the cross.

Jesus wants us to experience his hope, true joy, and the path that leads to life in its abundance, as he said in John chapter 14, verse 6. The Bible also says in John chapter 3, verse 16 that Jesus died on the cross because we are deeply loved. He carried the weight of our sins and burdens, and experienced rejection, humiliation and pain on the cross.

Before he was crucified, Jesus knew what lay ahead of him, and in his time of suffering and struggle, Jesus reached out to God for strength. (See the Bible verse from Luke chapter 22.) Through this action, Jesus set an example for us. In our times of trouble, when all seems most hopeless, we can reach out to God in prayer and find comfort and hope.

God’s love for us gives us strength for our lives on Earth, hope for eternity, and a hope we can hold on to – everyday.

Questions to reflect on:

What areas in your life (or troubles that you observe in the world) are weighing you down or making you feel hopeless?

Do you feel as though you can bring them to God in prayer? Why/ why not?

How does it make you feel to know that Jesus carries your burdens and offers you hope?

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus into the world to die on the cross. Thank you for caring about and carrying my pain and troubles. Please show me your hope and strength when life feels hard and confusing. Amen.

We encourage you to also spend some time handing your concerns identified in question one over to God in prayer.

