

Good Friday 2026
Offered Once,
Heb. 9:27-28

As we come to this Good Friday we are celebrating the death of the innocent person, none other than God in human flesh. There was no one who was more generous, good, loving, and innocent in life than Jesus Christ, but he was abused and maligned and killed in the most brutal way imaginable. So there are a couple of questions that the death of Jesus answers for us. One is why is it so good news? Why are there Christians who gathered all over the world to remember, and give thanks, and they praise God for the one who came and died in such a violent and really unjust manner? And nothing makes sense in your life and nothing makes sense about the life to come until you see the reason for the coming of Jesus, and the dying of Jesus.

The second question that is often asked the moment you speak of death is what happens after death? What happens the moment a person dies? And here is where many people speculate, they have a big “if” or “I think” this will happen or that will happen. They hope there is life after this life but they just do not know what lies on the other side of death. Many have speculated. Some say there is nothing. I think this is all that there is. We are nothing more than chemicals that keep firing from some sort of biological goo, but there is no heaven or after life. But it is incredible because there is still that nagging and uncertainty in their hearts. Every person seems to know intuitively that there is more than this life here. But the only question is what is it? Some say I think it is reincarnation. We will come back in some form until we are absorbed into the great nothingness. Boy there is a hope. But even in this group there is so much uncertainty. Then there are those who hope that if they just do their best in this life that if there is a God in heaven he will accept them and let them into his rest. But how good is good enough? But again they just do not know. They even say you cannot know.

But here is where Good Friday comes in because we deal with certainties, not uncertainties. We deal with what God has done through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We know the reason Jesus died. We are certain what happens to every person after they die. We understand even further than that, how one can appear before God just and accepted. So I want us to look at those realities tonight and celebrate all that Jesus truly is for us. I want us to see two realities, two certainties. And hopefully as you see these truths you will not only understand yourself better and the need in your own heart and life, but also understand why Christians are so thrilled that Christ not only chose to come but to die a death like none has ever died. So let us look at those two certainties that come after death.

1. The first certainty is that all who die will appear before the judgment of God. V. 27.

One of the things that is stunning is individuals give such little thought about the next life, which is amazing for a couple of reasons. One is that this life is limited. It will run out, we will all face death, and the next and we seem to know it, and even the Scriptures tell us is eternal. We put so much thought and effort wanting to experience or hang on to this life, and ignore the inevitable — death. Every single person in this room will die save the coming back of the Lord Jesus Christ. In twenty years from now, many of us will not be here. In forty or fifty years the vast majority will not be here. I am

well past the half way point. All of us have an hour glass of sand that represents our life and our time here. Some have more and some have less, but you cannot get that sand back, it is slowly and methodically falling down, and when it is finished — it is finished. And then comes the next life. And the first thing that happens after death is we stand before an all holy and glorious God.

And that is what the author of Hebrews discusses in this verse. He says, “**And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.**” Notice that word “appointed” here in the text. My wife and I usually put our medical appointments on the side of the fridge as a reminder that they are coming. Some are distant, some are close, but they all come. Here is an appointment that none of us know the day or hour, but there is a set date and time established by God that you and I can never change, and that specific appointment with death and with God can’t be altered, and you are closer than ever to that day.

But what can I expect on that day of death? And people speculate that they will see family and friends, but for believers we know exactly what will happen. God has told us. It is certain. God not only appoints when we will die but the judgment that follows. Notice the language here because there is no wiggle room, “**and after that comes judgment.**” After what? After death. And that is not my opinion or my speculation, that is what God has said in his holy Word. Some think that if they have not trusted Christ in this life, that they will be given a second chance, or those who have done things they should not have done, God will give them another opportunity to work off their sin. But there is no wiggle room, first death and then judgment. There is nothing in the middle. This is so sobering. This is certain.

And here is the amazing, you do not have to wonder of ignore the reality that there is not only a God who has made everything, but you will appear before him. He is the great judge. And I think people scoff at the idea of a coming judgment. They either say God is too loving to judge or that there is no judgment but open and free acceptance. But think of it, if God is all loving then he has to judge sin. You can imagine if you lived in a country where the government killed your loved ones unjustly, as they do in some countries, and you feel helpless. You know if God loves you then in the hereafter he has to settle that account. If someone hits my wife, in love I rise up to defend her. You would question my love if I didn’t. If God didn’t judge then he would not be all loving. He is the all loving God, who will judge and judge perfectly.

So, even if most people admit there is a judgment, they think they will be alright. They have no problem God judging Hitler or a child abuser or a murderer or whoever but not me. God is just! An eternity in hell-fire for those individuals? Yup! Sounds about right. We really don’t have a problem with God judging, but we just don’t think it applies to ourselves. We might conclude that there are divine scales in heaven and when they are measured, my good works and against my sin I will be alright. No worries. Or we might compare ourselves with others, and think we are better than most. Therefore nothing to worry about. But if judgment follows death, and this judgment is eternal you think we would be obsessed with finding out how we will fare in that judgment. What the scales actually are. He stays in the next chapter in Hebrews 10:30-31, “**For we know him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the**

living God.” These are words that most people do not consider when they think of God — he is vengeful, he will repay, he will judge. And this ought to be so sobering and something no person should shrug off, because he says, **“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”** And the whole context of that fear is God’s judgment and justice.

God in his love and righteousness does not judge on a curve. If he did then he would be unjust. No, sin is first and foremost against God who has given us life. It is done against his glory and character. And sin is so natural that many times we do not realize how much we sin. We lie, lust, get angry, covet, fail to forgive others, talk and slander others, and we want to make the rules of right and wrong and take God off the throne. And the scriptures say that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. You and I and everyone here can be called and labeled by this term — sinners. Therefore guilty. And we might think our sins are light and no big deal, but all sin is against the eternal glory of God. It deserves punishment. Just because you do not see the seriousness of your offences doesn’t mean they are not serious in God’s justice eyes. A murderer might think his taking of a life is not that big of a deal but it is to everyone around him, and it is to God. Your sin before a holy God is bigger than you could have ever imagined.

So here is the question, do you see anything that worries you about this coming judgment? This is a certainty. Everything that you have ever done in the open and secret, every fantasy and rage that took place in you will be revealed. There will be no place to hide. Are you worried? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. And maybe a better question when that sobering fear hits us is — is there any hope for a sinner like me? What can I do to be saved from this coming judgment? And that is where we come to the good news of Good Friday, because there is another thing that we can know for sure. There is another certainty.

2. The second certainty is Jesus came to die for sinners. 28.

The judgment of God that we can all anticipate is sobering and startling. We start to realize there is something desperately wrong with me. The assurances I gave myself have suddenly began to evaporate, but then we come to this reality of Good Friday, and how we can escape and be saved from that final judgment. And just like death happens to us all once, so it happen to Jesus Christ — only once. He came, lived, and died. But the difference with his death is that death could not hold him. The difference with his death is that he was totally innocent and without sin. We are not.

The language of this verse can be difficult unless you remember that he is talking to Jewish believers. Let’s read it again, **“so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many.”** Notice the language here. Look at the first word here — “so.” Just like death happened once and then judgment, so Jesus (and look how his death is spoken about because it is different than ours. Ours is because we are sinners, but his death is different) was offered once. The meaning of offer is truly Old Testament language. It is the language that the Priest would come and offer up a sacrifice for the sins of the people. This big idea was a penalty substitute. There had to be a punishment for sins. So the sin was confessed by the priest over the innocent

animal, and it was sacrifice. The animal stood in the place of the sinner. The animal took the penalty and judgment and punishment.

The only problem as we find in this paragraph is the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin, so these offerings were constant. Think of it, on Passover alone the Jewish historian Josephus records that there were 250,000 lambs that were offered. There were daily and weekly and monthly sacrifices made by the priests, and then there were the personal sacrifices made by the people. And there were constant activities and sacrifices. The one thing they never had in the Temple was a seat because their work was never accomplished. But listen to the language of our verse here, **“so Christ, having been offered once.”** This verse is amazing because Jesus throughout the book of Hebrews is looked upon as both Priest and offering. And there is one thing that qualifies Jesus to make this offering. And that is he is both like us and unlike us. He is like us in that he is human. He came and lived and functioned. The problem with the substitution of animals is they are unlike us. They are not rational beings who choose to sin against God. If we are going to be able to be delivered from the wrath of God we need someone who is willing, and someone who is able to take our punishment — God’s justice and wrath — on himself. Jesus is able to do this because he is part and parcel of our humanity. It has to be like for like.

But the other thing that qualifies Jesus is that he is so gloriously unlike us. He came in human flesh and he lived a life of perfect obedience, loyalty and love to his Father God. He is unlike us in that he is sinless, without any imperfection. We have to pay for the punishment of our own sin, but Christ had no sin, so listen to what he is able to do in Hebrews 2:17, **“Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”** The meaning of “make propitiation” is sacrificial language. He is able to give the appropriate sacrifice to appease the justice and righteous wrath of God. He as the High Priest offers himself up, he let’s himself be taken by cruel hands and he becomes that perfect sacrifice for — as the our verse says, **“to bear the sins of many.”**

So the next question — who are the many? If I am going to appear before God and be judged by God for my sins, I want this offering to be applied to my life and my sin. So who are the many? And here is the answer: to any and all who trust in him, The many realize their sin, and the offence before God. They realize there is nothing they can do because they have chosen freely to sin against God, so they look to Christ. When the Philippian jailor was before Paul and recognized the future judgment of God he asked the question, “What must I do to be saved?” And listen to the answer Paul gave in Acts 16:31, **“And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’”** This truth applies to the jailor but any and all that belong to his household. Believe and trust and you will be not only saved from the judgment but will also be welcomed into his heaven and into his presence. The “many” applies to any and all who place their faith in Christ. It can apply to you. If you will recognize your need and trust not in yourself, as we saw we are sinners, but trust in Christ, the promise is that the offering of Christ — the sacrifice of Christ is more than enough to pay the debt of sin you owe and I owe before a holy God.

You might ask a couple of questions. One is that you might say, you do not realize the evil and wicked things that I have done. Certainly it cannot cover and pay the penalty and punishment I deserve before a holy God. My sin is just too great. It may pay for part of it but not the whole. Is his sacrifice truly enough? Or you might wonder about the coming future in the here and now. I have so much pride and lust and anger in my heart. What about my future sin? And for both of these inquiries listen to our verse again, **“so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many.”** Notice the language here — “offered once.” There is no longer any sacrifice that is needed. Christ has done it all for all time. As one popular song puts it, **“My sin not in part but the whole was nailed to the cross and I own it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord Oh my souls.”** All the sins of the believer have been canceled out for the believer. No sin is too great because Jesus is of exhaustive value. Whether past or present or future. Jesus does not need to be offered up again because he has done it all, and done it once and for all.

So let me end with a couple of challenges. One if you never have trusted Christ, you can see why Good Friday is two things for those who are Christians. One is that it is somber. We realize the first truth here. We realize we deserve the wrath of God. In a day and age where everyone is told they are so good and so special, God comes with a message of who we really are, and what we deserve. At death I deserve the eternal judgment of God. God is righteous and loving. That is such a humbling truth. There are none with inflated egos and pushed out chests before God. But Good Friday, secondly, is also celebratory. It is so good. My Jesus, my God has acted on my behalf. The wrath of God is poured out on my substitute so that I can have life. Jesus suffered not because of his own sin and guilt but his death was the innocent offering for the guilty. And Jesus can be your loving sacrifice too. He can be your Saviour. All you need to do is recognize your need and trust in him. He will really change your life and the direction of your life, but more importantly your destiny. Death will come upon us all save the coming of Christ. Are you ready to face the judge? Your judgment is closer than ever. Today is the day to be saved. Imagine appearing before God and hearing those words — enter into my rest, because of the sacrifice of Christ. Imagine coming into his presence and knowing his loving sacrifice he has made but refusing to trust in Jesus. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. It is now time to come and trust in this gracious Saviour.

The second challenge is for those who are believers. The joy of this life is the certainty of the next life. This life with all its trappings and trials is temporary, and if we try to live as if this life is eternal it doesn't go well. Here is your joy, as certain as death and taxes are, as certain as the judgment of God, so is our salvation through the message of Good Friday. Jesus has done it all. It is incredible how different we live our lives knowing how limited this life is. It really is a vapour that is here for a little while but in the next life we get to be with our Lord and Saviour, the one who offered up his body once for all for all eternity. Meditating and drinking and thinking about this truth not only changes our destiny but changes our present. You want the joy of the Lord, you want to live in freedom and assurance. Jesus has purchased you through his once and for all sacrifice. The debt and penalty has been forever paid. Praise God for this hope. Let the Good Friday message change you.