

what's so good about this friday

today is the day that most of christianity celebrates or remembers in some way as "good friday." it is the day we remember as the day when Jesus was nailed to that old rugged cross about which we sing - there to bleed and die for "the sins of the world." what's so GOOD about such a day as that?"

the answer is that it this day is not good because of what was done TO Jesus, but we see this day as good because of what He willingly, deliberately and lovingly ALLOWED to be done - what He gave Himself to as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

the depravity of mankind, the nature of man to sin, is at both the most unpopular of the christian doctrines and also the most empirically verifiable. we have within us a basic sense of our desperate condition. we are aware, or are often reminded, that we are not quite what we were intended to be. something went wrong, something we want to see made right, but somehow find ourselves incapable of restoring.

the unbeliever will often insist sin and the fall of man are myths invented by superstitious people while a pagan in a remote jungle somewhere will feel the need to sacrifice a chicken on a makeshift altar. which man is closer to understanding the truth about his own true nature? one might agree that the pagan boy, however primitively, understood something the other did not. there is a need in our lives for atonement. there is a need for sacrifice.

when scriptures speak of Christ as the Lamb of God, it is easy to see the symbolism practiced by jews for centuries, portraying the ultimate sacrifice to be made by God Himself. it is easy to move through the text with an instantaneous recognition: the lamb is Christ. and that Lamb gave Himself for us on Good Friday.

when john describes his vision of heaven in the book of revelation, the Lamb is found in the center of a singing multitude. "then i saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders." rev. 5:6 this same Lamb who bore my sins, forever bears the scars of my atonement, even as He stands... alive forevermore, in heaven.

as the Lamb, Christ has met, fulfilled and satisfied a need we could not. He has become the sacrifice we could not give. He is the Lamb who was slain so that we could bow and sing in the presence of God. there is a hymn that declares the glory of Christ, the only one who is worthy:

behold the Lamb of God
into the sacred flood
of Thy most precious blood
my soul i cast
wash me and make me clean within
and keep me pure from every sin
till this life be past

behold the Lamb of God! the Lion of the tribe of judah, the Cornerstone, the Shepherd, our Advocate has bowed to death and overcome. the slain Lamb stands.

that's what makes this friday so GOOD!