

The True Meaning of Good Friday & Easter *Topical Message*

Topic: The gospel
Subject: Easter weekend shows us the gospel
Complement: so that we may come to know God personally
Purpose: The listeners will accept Christ as Savior

Introduction

(Following a drama on the crucifixion and resurrection...)

1. Arouse Interest: I trust this drama has answered some of your questions about the term "Good Friday." When you take just the term itself, it sounds strange, like "rush hour" refers to the times of day when traffic moves the most slowly. Why is this Friday so "good"?
 - a. What's so good about an innocent man getting betrayed by a trusted friend?
 - b. What's so good about an innocent man getting framed and enduring six illegal trials?
 - c. What's so good about an innocent man getting mocked, beaten, and killed?
2. I think one of the most amazing things about how Jesus endured all this was the great confidence which He showed.
 - a. When betrayed, He showed no surprise and spoke a word which even knocked his captors to the ground.
 - b. During His unfair trials He kept His cool and confidently offered no defense to save Himself.
 - c. Even while agonizing on the cross He prayed for His torturers and even asked one of His friends to care for His mother!
3. How could Jesus have such confidence even while looking at death itself? It's because He was confident of knowing where He was going after death.
4. Touch Need: Wouldn't you like to live with this kind of confidence now on earth—even in much less severe circumstances?
 - a. Aren't you amazed how your Christian friends live with joy in the midst of exams?
 - b. Wouldn't you like the confidence of knowing that the best friend in the universe is right with you wherever you go?
 - c. Most of all, wouldn't be great to know for sure where you will go after death itself? Do you know for sure where you are going after death?
5. Subject: Has anyone ever shown you how you can know for sure if you are going to heaven after you die? This is what I want to do in the next few minutes: explain how you can know for sure that you will go to heaven when you die.
6. The Bible tells us both bad news and good news. The bad news relates to you. The good news relates to God. Let's first look at the bad news...

I. The bad news relates to you and sin.

- A. You are a sinner.
 1. Romans 3:23 says that every person has fallen short of God's standards.
 2. Think for a moment how much you've sinned (3 sins/day, see Homiletics, 200)
 3. We may not all be as bad, but we're all as bad off (non-swimmers, cf. Homiletics, 200).

(The bad news even gets worse...)

- B. The penalty for sin is death.
1. Romans 6:23 is that death is the payment we all get for our bad deeds.
 2. When I entered the CBD during rush hour I deserved the \$70 fine (see Homiletics, 200).
 3. Judge: Part 1 (A judge saw that his son had committed a crime, see Homiletics, 201)

(This is bad news! We've all sinned and we see the results of death all around us! Now think of what it must have been like for Jesus' friends. They too knew they had sinned and they were putting their hope in Jesus. But just when they thought things were going great, bad news—He was arrested, put on trial, and crucified.)

Cue tape for singing "I've Just Seen Jesus" (then sing the solo)

(I told you the Bible has both bad news and good news. Now here's the good news.)

II. The good news relates to you and God.

- A. Christ died to pay the penalty for sin.
1. Romans 5:8 says that Christ paid for our sin even though we were His enemies.
 2. Judge: Part 2 (The judge paid the fine for his son's crime, Homiletics, 201)
 3. Cancer (substituting bad cells for good ones, Homiletics, 201)

(Just as the bad news got worse, so the good news gets better...)

- B. Your penalty for sin will be paid by Christ simply by trusting Him.
1. Ephesians 2:8-9 says we come to God by trusting Him, not our good works.
 2. Doctor (trusted without knowing all about him, Homiletics, 202)
 3. Niagara (faith is commitment, not intellectual assent, Homiletics, 202)
 4. The resurrection allows us to know Christ personally (you can't know a dead man).

Conclusion

- m.i.1. Easter weekend is about the good news that we can know God personally.
2. Anticipating Objections: Can you think of any good reason why you wouldn't want to receive Christ right now?
 - a. If you're worried about what your *Christian friends* who brought you would think, remember that this is why they brought you!
 - b. If you're worried about what your *non-Christian friends* will think, ask yourself, "Am I going to let them make all my most important decisions in life?"
 - c. If you're concerned about what your *parents* might think, why not accept God's free gift now and then trust that they will accept Christ too!
 - d. If you think you're *not good enough*, you're right! You don't have to be *good* enough, only *bad* enough—and you all qualify!
 3. Would you like to pray right now to tell God that you're trusting Christ alone as Savior?
 4. Here's a suggested prayer: "Dear God, I know that I'm a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and arose. I trust Him now as my Savior. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Amen."
 5. Assurance: Review truths of 1 John 5:11-13 or Revelation 3:20