

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our heavenly Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Isaiah 53:5 (EHV)

But it was because of our rebellion that he was pierced.
He was crushed for the guilt our sins deserved.
The punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.



Dear heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit on us so that we may rejoice in the healing we're offered through the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I wouldn't be surprised if you were punished or disciplined when you were younger.

For example, maybe you had your mouth washed with soap when you spoke dirty words. Maybe you were kept back in class when you didn't do your homework. Maybe you got a spanking for breaking a plate while being silly. Maybe you had to do extra jobs around the house or farm to make up for the mischief you got into. Maybe you had to go without dessert because you didn't eat your vegetables.

I also wouldn't be surprised if you also taught, or will teach, your children and grandchildren the same important lessons, after all it seems to be a law of human nature that every crime should be punished.

Crime and punishment.

It's what we learn. It's what we pass on. It's how we live with each other.

Therefore, when people hurt us, we want to see them suffer for what they've done. When we see how they hurt others, we want justice done. We want to see them pay. We want to see them punished. We want to stop them from hurting others.

However, even if they're punished, we don't feel much sense of peace or comfort. Even if they pay for what they've done, we don't always experience healing. Even if justice is served, we don't easily recover from the pain and hurt we've experienced.

So, while discipline and punishment may be appropriate to seek restitution, to warn others, to teach, or to stop them from being tempted again, it's not the answer to our pain and heartache. The enactment of punishment or justice never heals us or offers us peace.

You could argue God also operates by crime and punishment, but he executes it differently than we do.

For example, God tells us the wages of sin is death. Death is the punishment or compensation required for the crime of sin, no matter how big or small in our own eyes.

Therefore, every time we're not content with what God gives us, the penalty is death.

Every time we've damaged the reputation of others in our careless talk or not defended and explained their actions in a kind way when they weren't around, the penalty is death.

Every time we've taken what wasn't ours, or failed to return lent items in a reasonable timeframe, or we've been lazy in our work, or tried to make extra claims on our tax return that wasn't entirely true, the penalty is death.

Every time we've looked at pictures or movies of naked people with longing or lust, or wanted to be with someone who wasn't our spouse, or wanted the benefits of marriage without marrying according to God's design, the penalty is death.

Every time we've physically hurt our neighbour, or failed to help them when they needed our help, or hated someone in our heart, the penalty is death.

Every time we've been resentful toward our parents, or disrespected those in authority, or exasperated our own children, the penalty is death.

Every time we've neglected to worship with God's people, or failed to learn from God's Word, or switched off during a sermon, or we haven't prayed as regularly as we should, the penalty is death.

Every time we've made a hasty oath in God's name, or misused God's name, the penalty is death.

Every time we've feared, loved, desired, or trusted in someone or something apart from God himself, even for a moment, the penalty is death.

I think you get the picture! The penalty for falling short of God's high standards is always death because rebellion against God's requirements is always the crime.

We rebel because we want our name to be honoured instead of God's. We rebel because we want our kingdom to come instead of God's. We rebel because we want our will to be done in our way and in our time. We rebel because we want more than just what we need for today. We rebel because we fool ourselves into thinking we don't need God's forgiveness, and we definitely don't want to forgive others. We rebel because we seem to welcome temptation and keep on doing the evil we don't want to do.

Crime and punishment. We've done the crime. And God will punish every criminal!

But what if someone else took the punishment on your behalf? What if you were pinged for speeding, but your husband or wife said they'll pay the fine and demerit points. What if you were about to be decked by an angry person because you insulted them, but your mother steps in to take the hit for you? How would you feel if you've been charged with

an offence which leads to a prison sentence, but your child says they'll go to prison in your place?

Maybe at first you might be relieved because you don't have to be disciplined or go through any suffering, but then as you saw someone you loved and respected receive the punishment you deserved, well, maybe you'd think that just wouldn't be fair!

In the same way, what if the grudge you're holding against someone is taken on by someone else? Would you still hold that grudge knowing that an innocent person is being hurt by your resentment? Would you still try to avoid the person who hurt you if you knew the innocent person is the one you're really hurting?

This is how God enacts the age-old crime and punishment differently to us.

The good news of Good Friday is that Jesus was punished in your place. He was mocked for you. He was beaten for you. He was pierced for you. He was crushed for you. He was punished for you. He died the death penalty for you. Since the penalty of death for your sins have already been paid for, what more is there for you to pay?

Therefore, those times you weren't content with what God gave you? You're forgiven!

Those times you spoke carelessly about others? You're forgiven!

Those times you stole or cheated? You're forgiven!

Those times you disrespected God's gift of marriage? You're forgiven!

Those times you hurt others physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually? You're forgiven!

Those times you disrespected your parents, your boss, or your government? You're forgiven!

Those times you neglected God, his Word, or gathering with God's people in his Church? You're forgiven!

Those times you failed to call on God in prayer? You're forgiven!

Those times you placed your trust in yourself? You're forgiven!

All those times you rebelled against God by wanting things done your way and in your timing? You're forgiven by Jesus Christ because he took on and bore all your sins in his body on the tree of the cross and has paid the full price for all your sins!

You did the crime. He did the time. For you. For your forgiveness. For your peace. For your healing.

But that's not all!

The good news of Good Friday is that Jesus was also punished in the place of those who have hurt you. He was mocked for that person who hurt you. He was beaten for the person who hurt you. He was pierced for the person who hurt you. He was crushed for the person who hurt you. He was punished for the person who hurt you. He died the death penalty for the person who hurt you.

If you're still holding a grudge or seeking to punish the person who hurt you, and since Jesus died for the sins of that person as well, then who are you really seeking to hurt?

Also, you remember how I said that even if you punished those around you for the way they've hurt you that you still wouldn't receive healing through their punishment?

Well, Jesus was punished so that you would be healed.

You see, healing is never received through the law of crime and punishment. Healing never comes through vengeance. Healing comes through forgiveness.

Forgiveness leads to healing because you're comforted by the good news the complete punishment for your sins have been fully paid for. Your conscience is appeased and comforted because you believe God chooses to no longer remember or dwell on any of your sins. You have peace of mind and heart knowing you've been reconciled with God because your sin no longer separates you from him.

Jesus, the great physician, heals you through his wounds, his punishment, and his blood. He has healed you by bearing your sins so that you might die to sin and live for righteousness. He heals you with the healing balm of his forgiveness and blessings of peace. As you forgive others as you've indeed been forgiven by God, you may also be healed from the pain they caused you.

As the prophet Isaiah said many generations before Jesus came in the flesh to suffer and die for you:

He, (that is Jesus), was wounded for the wrong we did;
he was crushed for the evil we did.

The punishment, which made us well, was given to him,
and we are healed because of his wounds. ^(EXB)

It doesn't seem fair or just because it's not the way we normally expect the rules of crime and punishment to work, but this is God's answer to our rebellion. This makes the wounds, the suffering, the blood, and the death of Jesus a welcome relief and a comfort for us. This is why we celebrate today as 'Good' Friday.

Through Jesus' suffering, rejection, scars, and death, all your guilt and shame has been taken away. He has already received all the punishment you deserve, which means no

more needs to be paid. All that's required for your forgiveness, cleansing, and healing is finished and completed. You've been set free and are at peace with God the Father so that you may receive healing for your hearts, minds, bodies, and souls.

Therefore, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in the suffering and death of Christ Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Stuart Kleinig
South Burnett Lutheran Parish
Good Friday
18th April 2025