

Charles St-Onge
Easter B
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It's Friday, But Sunday's Coming

TEXT: Mark 16:1-8

¹ When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ² Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³ and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶ "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" ⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

IT MAY SEEM LIKE FRIDAY, BUT WE HAVE REAL HOPE SUNDAY'S COMING

I. It Often Seems Like Friday in our Life

A) In My Life

I can't speak for you, but for me too many days are Good Friday

Mondays are Fridays / Tuesday and Wednesdays are Fridays
Far too often, I'm sorry to admit, Sundays are Fridays too.

I wake up in the morning, I work through the day, I hit the bed at night,
And I'll I can think of is, "Just another Friday – and tomorrow will be Friday, too."

I preach, I teach, I counsel, I visit
And none of it seems to matter
Sometimes it the Word of God just makes things worse.

Friday's when the sky turns black.
Friday's when the earth shakes, and the stars fall
When gods die on crosses and nothing goes right.
And sometimes every day is Friday.

B) In Your Life

How about you?

How many of your days are Fridays?

Days when nothing goes right,
and everything goes wrong?

Days when you're sure evil is winning,
and good's getting its butt kicked?

The day you find out your daughter's moved out
And moved in with the thirty year old high school drop out

The day you find out your losing your job, again
And you've got enough money for two, maybe three weeks

The day you find out your cancer is back,
Or you feel that pain your chest,
Or you find out your mother or father's in ICU.

Whoever coined the phrase "Thank God It's Friday"
Wasn't there that Good Friday.
They didn't see the sky turn back
They didn't hear the Devil dance with delight

They weren't crying out, "My God, my God,
Why have you forsaken me?"

II. But Good Friday Led to Easter Sunday

A) Things Looked Black on Friday

Jesus had a really bad Friday:

His friends fled

His chief apostles denied ever knowing him

His own people called out for his crucifixion

And his governor wiped his hands of the whole affair

We think we've had bad days – THAT was a BAD FRIDAY.

B) But Looked Up On Sunday

But then SUNDAY CAME,

A defeat was not a defeat at all

The cross was exactly what Jesus said it would be:

Payment for sins,

Atonement with God for our evil

And the path to eternal life

Jesus was very much alive!

Imagine you go the grave of a loved one

Three days after their burial

And find the tombstone knocked over,

A big hole in the ground,

An open and empty coffin,

And a figure so bright you can hardly look at him saying,

“You’re looking for John or Jean or James, right?”

Heh! They’ve risen – they’re not here. See for yourself.”

How would YOU feel?

I know how I'd feel.

It was Friday – but SUNDAY's COME!

TRANS: In the midst of the worst Fridays of our lives,

The proof that Jesus is alive and rules over all

Is real hope to keep us going,

A reason to remain faithful,

And news worth sharing with others on their Fridays

III. There Are Lots of False “Sunday Promises in the World”

Of course, not any Sunday will do to get you through Friday.

There are lots of people out there selling False Sundays.

They SOUND GREAT.

Most LIES do.

A) Jesus is Alive in our Hearts

You’ve got the folks who believe Jesus didn’t REALLY rise

He’s just alive in our thoughts and hearts

If you’re a good person, Jesus is alive in you.

The TIME MAGAZINE Jesus, the DISCOVER CHANNEL Jesus

And when you die, then what?

When your Tuesday or Thursday turns into Friday and crucifixion, then what?

You might as well have an imaginary friend named Ben or Julie

They’ll be about as much help to you then as that Jesus is going to be

B) Good Time Jesus

What about Good-Time Jesus, our most popular TV Jesus?

The Jesus who promises every day will be Easter

If only you think the right positive thoughts?

ILLUS: A member of St. Mark’s once told me that stopped listening to Mr. Good Time Jesus himself, Joel Osteen after one particular day. He heard Joel tell him to think positive thoughts about the day, so he did, and it ended up being the worst day he’d ever had.

B) All Religions Are True

You’ve got folks who believe EVERY religion will get you through your Fridays

Sure, they all claim too.

But where’s the PROOF?

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

SHOW ME AN EMPTY TOMB!

What can **Islam** show you,

But a book demanding obedience to some God

In the hope he might be nice to you?

Sure you get 70 virgins when you die

Where are they? Have YOU seen them?

No one has seen paradise except Muhammad

Paul says more than 500 people saw Jesus alive

Who do YOU want to trust to get you through Friday?

How about Buddhism?

Works for Richard Gere
Just be nice to everybody.
Of, you're dying of cancer? You must have screwed up.
"Yah, I know I've screwed up. Now what?"
"Start praying real hard, maybe you'll get better."
"Any proof of that?"
"No, but it can't hurt, can it?"

How about the American Civil Religion

The one most Americans, even the ones who go to church, believe?
That when you die, you become an angel and watch over your loved ones?
DO YOU HAVE ANY PROOF?
Have you ever SEEN these angels? Ever touched one, or no someone who did?

IV. But Only the Real Sunday Can Give Hope for our Fridays

I know a man who died on a cross on a really bad Friday,
Who explained why he had to die for us,
Why if it wasn't for our own sin there wouldn't BE any bad days,

Someone who promised to rise again,
And showed up in front of Mary, and Salome,
And Peter, and John, and James, and Thomas,
And Paul and 500 other of your Christian ancestors.

If you don't believe the Bible's the Word of God
At least believe 500 people can't all be crazy at the same time.

Our Lord was dead, but now he's alive
And he will come to judge the living and the dead

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. If you're thirsty, he'll give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. The one who does not bow down to the values and cultures and gods of this world will inherit his life. He will be their God and they will be his sons and daughters. The cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. But his church will be called the bride, the wife of Jesus, the Lamb of God. (Paraphrase Rev 21:7-9).

That's not a vague hope.
It's a historical guarantee and promise.

Conclusion

The great convert to Christianity and author of the Chronicles of Narnia, C.S. Lewis, once had this to say about the effect of Easter Sunday on our lives. He wrote,

“I am trying to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about [Jesus]: ‘I’m ready to accept him as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That’s the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman, or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let’s not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He hasn’t left that option open to us. And he didn’t intend to.”

If you go home today with Jesus as your great moral teacher and guide,
your Fridays will stay black
And you will have to invent some story to give yourself hope.
Maybe you will live on after death.
Since you have no evidence of that, I’d be safer to stay you won’t
But who am I to judge someone else’s religion?

But I wouldn’t make it through five minutes of a day if that were the truth
I’d be forced to admit this life is a farce,
I might as well beg, rob and steal and murder and make the best of it,
Because tomorrow I might be dead and gone.

I get up each morning and try my best to pastor this little flock with the Word of God
Because I believe Paul.
I believe Mary Magdalene.
I believe James, Jude and John and all the rest.
I believe I will one day stand before my risen Lord,
And that because I have trusted in him,
My name will be found in the book of life.
My body will rise,
My Fridays will End,
And it will only be Easter, from then on, forever.

Alleluia! Jesus the Nazarene is not dead, but risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Amen.