

Hope in Uncertain Times by Nigel Coles Part 3: Good Friday

I was out walking around here (by the Chew Valley Lake) the other day and I met a guy walking his dogs and casually said 'hi good morning, great day isn't it?' and immediately wondered: *should I have said that?* He might be paralysed with fear and this jerk (that's me) comes along and says 'great day isn't it?'

We call today Good Friday.

I never gave it a thought growing up, but some time, after I became a Christian, I began to think; this is odd; why 'good'?

Can any day be good, never mind great, in the midst of the storm we're in right now? We're all somewhere in the big picture of the pandemic, we all have our personal encounters with Covid-19, whether directly ourselves, or indirectly though those we know suffering, struggling, fearful, or vulnerable.

Listen with me to Luke's account, remember Luke was a doctor, of Jesus' crucifixion and listen for way he highlights the darkest moment and the most hopeful moment together. May you sense the hope of God can be yours, however dark it appears to be.

(Luke 23)

³² Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One.'

³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷ and said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.'

³⁸ There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews.

³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!'

⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.'

⁴² Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'^[d]

⁴³ Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last.

Desmund Tutu said: Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

At the time of crucifixion 'darkness came over the whole land'.
'Father into your hands I commit my spirit' and then, the very darkest, bleakest moment: Jesus 'breathed his last'.

That was the moment when hope for those closest to him, looking on, powerless, gave up.

Yet in that moment Luke, with surgical precision notices the light, breaking through. He simply says: 'and the curtain of the Temple was torn in two'.

It was in that moment, at the death of Jesus Christ, the crucified son of God;
that my hope was born.

The Temple curtain referred to is the one, which separated what was known as 'the holy of holies' from the rest.

No one was allowed beyond the curtain, into the holy of holies, except for the High Priest – just once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

I'm yet to receive my letter, from the Prime Minister, telling me our situation is going to get worse before it gets better. That is true and sadly he, himself, is in Intensive Care as I speak.
For those present at the crucifixion, when Jesus breathed his last, it couldn't get any worse.
Yet in that very moment the hope of the world was born, that's my hope and I pray yours too.

Jesus came so people like you and I and anyone who allows him to become the centre of their lives would have no barriers between us and our creator God.

That's why it's called Good Friday.

Jesus came so people like you and I could find a savior to bridge the gulf between us.
That's why I call it Good Friday.

My prayer for everyone watching, is if you have not so far staked your whole life on the hope of God to be discovered in Jesus Christ you will do so today.

If you'd like to know more check out the website www.christianity.org.uk or make contact with your local church.

To watch the video, go to: <https://www.thefuelcast.com/>

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