

**Sermon Draft for April 18, 2025, Good Friday**  
**Text: Genesis 5**

We call this day Good Friday. It's the day we remember that Jesus went to a cross on Calvary for you and for me so that we might have life even though we die. He didn't have to go; no one forced him to go, and no power could have kept him there against his will. He went for us. He sacrificed himself for us. He shed his blood so that we might be forgiven for all we have ever done wrong. We come to hear of the Savior whose royal blood fell on the ground for you and for me. We come to see his conquering of sin, death, and the devil for us and for our salvation. We come to Calvary's holy mountain.

The Word of the Lord for the strengthening of our faith and the living of our lives on this Good Friday is from the book of Genesis, chapter 5: **“This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. . . . [And] all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died. . . . [And] all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died. . . .**

**[And] all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died. . . . [And] all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him”** (Genesis 5:1, 5, 8, 11, 23–24).

Good Friday, this is the day of Calvary, the day we remember the death of Christ. This is the day of the cross, the day that gives the cross meaning. This is the anniversary of the day when sin was crucified, and death defeated. As God’s people, we assemble here to celebrate, yes, celebrate the crucifixion and death of Christ. We assemble here to praise him who died and rejoice that in his death we find our life.

This is the good news of Good Friday. On this Good Friday, as we journey along the stream of life toward death, we ponder the Good Friday Gospel. This we must do, for life makes sense only when it’s related to Christ’s death, and death makes sense only when it is related to his life.

“He Died!”

The fifth chapter of the first book of the Bible traces the history of the human race from Adam to Noah, ten generations of longevity. For instance, Jared lived to the ripe old age of 962, and Methuselah outlived him by seven years. It tells that these men were born, that they lived their span of years, and that they had sons and daughters, and then in all but one case the record closes with the simple words, “he died.” This is the refrain that goes on throughout this chapter.

This is the type of chapter that Bible readers often skip over. The Hebrew names are tough. And besides, there’s nothing in it anyway, people think. But there is something in it. This is the way it is with all the sons of Adam down through the centuries to you and me. It’s monotonous, yes, until it finally lists our name. But even with your name and mine, the record is the same, we were born, we lived our span of years, we had sons and daughters, and we died. It’s the chain of death from which we cannot set ourselves free.

Take any translation of the Bible, and they all say it the same way: “he died.” The obituary notices don’t say it any better. We might try to soften it a bit by saying, “He passed away,” or “He departed this life.” But the fact remains: he died. He breathes no more; he thinks no more; he works no more; he buys or sells no more. He’s finished. All that’s left is a headstone that marks his grave and perhaps a family of sons and daughters who fight over what he’s left. Death applies to all people born on this earth.

Above everything else, we must confess that we have sinned. It’s a hard thing to do. We easily enough admit that we aren’t perfect, but then we try to lighten the load of sin by saying that ours aren’t the big kind of sins others commit. But sin is sin, and it snuffs out life. It not only wrecks homes and breaks up families, but it also writes this sentence on our tomb: “He died.” The peoples of this earth form one vast chain of death.

So, we read of the generations of Adam, and like a broken record, it's repeated: "He died. . . . He died. . . . He died. . . ." But then the chain is broken. There's an exception. We read in Genesis 4:24:

***"Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."*** In the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 11:5, we read: ***"By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him."*** The chain of death can be broken. Death can be overcome if God will overcome it. Life need not end if God will intervene.

And that's where Christ comes in, and Calvary, and Good Friday. That's why Jesus came and walked the road to the cross. God intervened. That's what the cross means, the end of death through Jesus, who is the Lord of life. The death we remember today was not a stroke of fate. Rather, it was the completion of God's plan for life, eternal life in heaven. This was God's wonderful way of redeeming people from death for life, everlasting life.

On the first Good Friday Jesus died. He died our death, suffered our hell, to end the death march of humanity and break the chain of death. ***“For our sake he [God] made him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”*** (2 Corinthians 5:21).

On the first Good Friday Jesus died. He died for us. He took our place and suffered our penalty that we might have forgiveness of sins and eternal life in heaven. This he did not because we forced him to do it; this he did out of undeserved love for us. Out of love he took our sins, bore our guilt, suffered our punishment. ***“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”*** (Ephesians 1:7). ***“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself [Jesus] likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil”*** (Hebrews 2:14). ***“And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.***

***Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life”*** (1 John 5:11–13). Christ’s death transforms death into life.

Death, life. Good Friday, Easter Sunday. We can’t speak about Good Friday without speaking about Easter Sunday. Jesus died for sin, but sin and death could not hold him in the grave. He battled with the powers of hell, but the powers of hell could not seal him in the tomb. He rose from the dead, the living Conqueror of sin, the devil, and death. Jesus had, through his perfect life, managed to defeat sin; through his resistance of temptation he frustrated the devil; through his sacrifice on the cross he had defeated death. This living Christ is here with us and for us today. He defeated death for you and for me, and as a result we have the assurance of eternal life.

“He died.” Without Christ we live in darkness. Every day is spent in the shadow of death’s threat. We live a dying life. The peoples of the earth form one long chain, which proceeds its way to the cemeteries, where each in turn must occupy a narrow house, the grave. Without Christ we live in fear, the fear that sooner than we think this life of ours will end.

Without Christ we live in the chain of death, bound forever, and everything we have, everything about us, is worthless. Without Christ our life is nothing more than a sentence that ends with the period of death. But with Christ this final period becomes a comma. With Christ we live. ***“If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. . . . For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive”*** (1 Corinthians 15:19–20, 22).



Death does not end all. Death is not annihilation. By his death on Calvary's cross, Christ has conquered sin and therefore robbed death of its sting, and his resurrection is a sure pledge of our resurrection. Jesus tells us, ***"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live"*** (John 11:25).

Unless Jesus returns during our lifetime, death will visit our door one day. When it does, with Jesus by our side, we will be ready to face it. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, death cannot enchain us forever. For with Christ, it cannot be said of us today or any day: "He died, and that's the end!" No, Jesus lives, and because he lives, we, too, will live! Christ has broken the chain of death.

Death has been swallowed up in Christ's victory. **"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"**

(1 Corinthians 15:57)!

Amen