



BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



Powerful Perspective on Seeing Good in Bad Fridays

We live in a time full of despair. For many, it can even seem hopeless. It is much like the cold solemnness that overtook the world on the Friday afternoon when God died. We call it Good Friday; but from the surface, there wasn't anything good about it.

Jesus, the Son of God, who was both God and man, was dead. (Mark 15:15) Jesus, who had taught like no other teacher. Jesus, who had cleared the fog of controversy concerning the question of the ages, What must I do to inherit eternal life? (Matthew 19:29) Jesus, who had demonstrated what it meant to keep the most important commandments — to love God, then our neighbor — while destroying the facades of the Sanhedrin's fake religion. Jesus, who had healed the sick woman with the issue of blood when she touched the hem of His robe. (Matthew 9:20) Jesus, who had given full vision to Bartimaeus, the man who had been blind his entire life. (Mark 10:46) This Jesus was dead. It was a bad Friday.

This bad Friday marked the tragic end of an otherwise-remarkable life.

For some of Jesus' followers, life carried on. Simon Peter returned to his fishing, along with several others. (John 21:3) Others wrestled with grief. Mary Magdalene wept as she stood outside the sepulchre. (John 20:11) These followers knew nothing more than the fact Jesus, the one they had believed to be the Savior, was dead. Their hope had died with Him.

But everything changed on Sunday.

From the tomb that once held Jesus, two angels proclaimed the good news, "He is not here, but is risen. . . ." (Luke 24:6) This was a game changer that provided encouragement and hope — liv-

ing hope. This hope inspired Peter to trade in his fishing net for a pen and write, "He [God] has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3) With the Resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday, hope was reborn, turning a bad Friday into Good Friday!

If you find yourself overshadowed by hopeless feelings in the midst of a "bad Friday" season in your life, remember that Sunday is coming! Because our once-dead Savior rose again, we can find hope in Him no matter our situation. As noted in [Zach Williams' song](#), when you find yourself in Fridays of despair, know that you can trust in the power of the Resurrection because Sunday is coming!

If you would like to know this Savior, please [click this link](#) to learn how to begin a relationship with Him today.

- Dr. L.W. Edwards



How to Discount Distractions and Focus on What Really Matters

Critics and scoffers have been trying to silence the message of the empty tomb for years. They have tried to deny it, rationalize it away and even categorize it as just a nice story. None will so nearly succeed in suppressing the truth as Christ's own followers . . . when we are distracted. Like a machine gunner in the heat of battle who turns his back on the approaching enemy to shoot at a passing goose, a believer distracted from the resurrection of Jesus Christ is ineffective at best and deadly at worst.

Choose Your Battles Wisely

One of the telltale signs of distracted Christians is the nature of their conflict. In 2018, the world-famous Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Israel, [closed its doors to the public](#) to protest \$185 million dollars'-worth of municipal taxes for its properties. For three days, thousands of Christians and Catholics were unable to enter the church. No footsteps of tourists were heard echoing through its hallowed halls. Most importantly, no prayers or worship were offered there. The church's decision to close sent a shockwave around the world.

Now, \$185 million is a hefty sum of money. You'd probably be in shock, too, if you found such a bill in your mailbox. Taxes on religious-owned properties had been nonexistent in Jerusalem up to this point. (Places of worship are still exempt from taxation, but the city's new tax plan will apply taxes to church-owned properties.)

The Jerusalem Municipality implemented the tax in an effort to curtail abuses by those who rented out the property purchased from the church. The church, on the other hand, felt the government was singling it out and attempting to marginalize its influence in the city. As a result, the church fought back by closing its doors.

Forgetting the Main Thing

Although we understand the position taken by the church, unfortunately for those three days, it was unable to carry out its main goal, which was providing a place of prayer and worship to God.

In response to the conflict, one of the Jerusalem council members commented, "We see this as a very cynical move from the church. . . . Jerusalem

is the only city in the Middle East where there is true freedom of religion and true freedom of worship, and they choose instead of protesting the millions of people, the Christians getting slaughtered around the Middle East, instead of worrying about that, they are worrying about something affecting only their pockets."

The government of Jerusalem finally backed down. City officials suspended taxes planned for church properties and the church reopened — but not without cost. Fallout from the church's response to the misunderstanding was a damaged relationship with the city and mixed signals to the world about its purpose.

Our Battles Reveal Our Values

The point of this story is not to take one side or the other but to remind believers how the issues we often fight about affect the way others perceive our mission. Conflict reveals what we value most. Someone once said, "Be sure your feet are planted in the right place before you decide to stand firm."

When others question our motives, we want our emphasis to reflect a vision of the bigger picture: to bring honor to the name of Jesus Christ. After all, He is the Reason the Church exists in the first place. It was His death that paid for our sins. It was His Resurrection — Easter — that secured our eternal home in Heaven. How our conflicts would be reduced and our relationships improved if only we lived as if this were true!

A Matter of Perspective

The sun is 109 times larger than Earth. But hold a quarter in front of your eye, and it will block the sun, even appearing larger in scale. The wrong perspective can easily distort reality. It is the same with the truths concerning God and the gospel and the day-to-day challenges of life. Everything in life is but a quarter when compared to the sun of God's eternal character and the gospel message.

May this Easter be the first day of a lifetime of valuing those things which matter most, because He lives — and that really matters.

- Cam Edwards

