

Rowville Uniting Church
Good Friday – April 3rd 2026
Reflection by Russell Croxford

Bible passages: John 18 and 19 used throughout the service.

‘Why is Good Friday good?’

Throughout my whole Christian life, I have struggled to understand why Good Friday is called *Good* Friday. I’m not on my own. Most people – Christians or not, have had the same question! That first Good Friday, really was *not* good. When we read of the events of that day in John’s gospel, as we are doing this morning, it wasn’t good. So why do we call it ‘good’?

Perhaps the most common answer I’ve heard is this: “It’s called Good Friday because of the *good* things that happened on Sunday – the resurrection – the victory”. Yes of course, Sunday is great. We who live post-Easter know that now. But the disciples and others didn’t know that. To them, that Friday was simply awful.

Let’s call it, then what it really is. Maybe ‘Sacred Friday’ or ‘Sorrowful Friday’ or ‘Passion Friday’ or simply ‘Dark Friday’.

But sometimes, when we dig below the badness, we find things that are good, as we might discover in our own lives. If we dig below the bad events of that first Good Friday, what good do we find?

Firstly, it is good in the sense that everything was going to plan. This is how things were meant to be. As we look back over the life of Jesus, we see that he often tried to tell his listeners that his suffering and death was a key part of the plan. In Mark 8:31 he told his disciples that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected and be killed before rising again. The suffering was good in the sense that it was necessary. There could be no victory without it, which is not the way the world understands victory, but it was a new definition of Victory, in God’s plan. There is a message in this for our own experience. There can be no healing and wholeness without the naming, acceptance, and experience of suffering.

Secondly it is good in the sense that it shows the world how God, through his Son, demonstrates in the most powerful way, that he stands with us in any suffering we go through. He’s not on the outside looking in. He lived it in Jesus. He continues living it with us. If we are sick, or rejected, or in pain, or treated with violence or cruelty, he is in that experience with us. That’s why Good Friday is good. Look at how Jesus lived, right up to the end: If anyone was oppressed, marginalised or powerless in any way, he chose to be on their side. In that first good Friday he showed beyond doubt that he is on our side in our struggles.

Thirdly, it is good in the sense that Jesus’ earthly work was completed and finished. That’s what he said in John 19:30, “It is finished”. That didn’t mean it was the end of the story. The risen Christ is still at work in the world. But on that first Friday his *earthly* work was fully completed. And that makes it a *good* thing. The human Jesus completed his human task. When he bowed his head and died on that first Good Friday, it was ‘Job done!’, and that’s a good thing.

Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, what Jesus went through on the cross, for us, was the most amazing expression of love we could ever know. We need to understand Good Friday as a powerful reminder of just how much God loves us, that he would go to such lengths to demonstrate that love. For he loved the world *so much* he gave us his Son. (John 3:16)

Those four suggestions of why today is good, may help us all to grapple with all that was not good about that Friday – all that was dark and foreboding. Because, even in that which seems bad in our lives and in the world, our Lord is always good and always working for good.