

6/4/07 midweekchurch

Easter 07 (mid)

We had a new soccer coach one year at Cudgen who loved cliches. One week we arrived at a big game and he had put up posters all around the dressing room. Posters that said

Go hard or go home *No guts, no glory!*      One week at a time  
*There's no I in TEAM*                                      No pain no gain.

Now there is some truth to those sayings, aren't there? Not all the truth, but in them is enough truth to motivate you, to give of your best. To continue on when you are tired. To pick yourself up, dust yourself off and give one last effort. To go out and give your best for the team.

Well this evening I want us to think about one of those sayings.. *No pain, no gain*. And apply it not just to ourselves, which we will a little later, but apply it to Jesus over that first Easter period. Because as you read through the Bible's account what you keep seeing time and time again is the pain

**1. The pain.** Its one of his own disciples that betrays Jesus. Judas, the one who lived with him, ate with him, shared with him for three years of his life. It was he that goes behind his back. Tells the chief priests where he is. Is paid for his services and then meets Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and greets him with a kiss.

The Judas kiss. That act that should be that of a friend, is one of a friend turned enemy. A traitor. A dobber. A coward. Boy that would hurt. To be betrayed by one of your friends, wouldn't it? Stabbed in the back at the same time as being kissed on the cheek.

But if that isn't painful enough, Judas has with him a detachment of guards to arrest Jesus. So he is arrested by his own people. His own countrymen, his fellow Jews. The ones who should have known that before them was the Messiah. The ones who should have known the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. They were the ones that arrested him.

And not in front of the crowds while he taught in the Temple. No, they didn't have the courage for that. In a dark, deserted place, where no one would complain or raise a fuss. If it would hurt to be betrayed by your own friends, its worse when your own countrymen want you arrested. And what's more they want you killed as well.

For when Jesus appears before the Sanhedrin, the highest court in the land, they have already made up their mind about the verdict. They give Jesus a sham trial, it's a kangaroo court. The witnesses don't agree. The evidence is flimsy. These religious leaders who should be upholding God's law of justice are more interested in getting rid of a trouble maker. The leaders who should have recognised God's chosen one are blind and simply don't care.

So Jesus is next sent off to the Roman Governor, who really doesn't care any more than the Sanhedrin. He knows the crowds are volatile, he understands there could be a mutiny on his hands. He doesn't want to provoke the Jews so he gives them the verdict they want. Death by crucifixion. And he lets the guards go loose. To hit and spit and pummel the man he knows does not deserve death.

And so Jesus feels the pain of a broken heart, betrayed by Judas, abandoned by his disciples, disowned by his best friend Peter. The unjust words of the Sanhedrin and the Roman Governor hit worse than sticks and stones. And the physical pain of the beatings, the whippings, the carrying of

the cross. The being nailed onto the cross and the physical exhaustion of the crucifixion itself is something no man should have to bear. Let alone a perfect, innocent, son of God.

Friends, the pain would be incredible. I don't know whether you have ever seen Mel Gibson's movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. It concentrates on the pain of Jesus last few hours. Its horrific. Its unbelievable. Its almost unwatchable. And yet on the whole it is a true reproduction of what Jesus had to go through. Its rated R and rightly so. But when I saw it at the movies there were many, many tears and others who could not stand to look at it any more.

2. The pain, but if that isn't bad enough there's **The shame**. The shame of dying is bad enough. Having your name dragged through the mud. Being stripped naked in front of all those who have come to watch. The jeers and the taunts when you can't defend yourself. And the fact that those who might have wanted to defend you have either run away or have lost the ability to speak up.

But the shame is worse than that. For the cross was reserved for the worst of criminals. It was a despised form of punishment for the Romans. But for the Jews the horror was even worse. Deuteronomy 21:23 stated "*Anyone who is hanged on a tree is under God's curse.*" Jesus is now under God's curse. And that is true because God the Father then proceeds to abandon the Son.

Jesus cries out in agony, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me." The man who has always had such a close relationship with His Father God is now disowned, abandoned, rejected, accursed.

Oh the shame of it all. The shame. He now has the sins of the world on his shoulders. He now receives the full weight of the penalty that should have gone to you and me,. It now falls heavily onto Him.

But this was why he came. Not just to teach. Not just to show God's power, Not just to live a perfect life. He came to die. To feel the pain. To receive the shame. To take the blame. If there was any other way, God would have found it. But sin has to be punished by death, physical death and spiritual death, separation from the perfect, holy and just God of the Universe. Judgement had to fall, if not on him, on me, on you, on the whole world.

God could have sent another flood, like he did in Noah's time. God could have destroyed the heavens and the earth like he promises to do when Jesus comes again. But instead, the pain, the shame, the guilt, the punishment that the whole world deserved, fell on Him.

**3. The pain, the shame, the gain.** Why? Because of the saying "*no pain, no gain*". Because God wanted to find a way to hate the sin and yet love the sinner. God graciously wanted to show his love to the world that he sent his one and only Son into this world. Because God had found a way to be just, to deal justly with our sin and yet show mercy. To give us a second chance by allowing his Son to take the punishment of our sin. Because Jesus would rather go to hell for you than go to heaven without you.

Jesus endured the pain and the shame to offer you and I the gain. It is his death on the cross that takes the punishment that should have been ours. It is the forgiveness that he secures, that allows us to come back to God and be made his friends. It is his curse that brings to us God's blessings. It is his death that gives us his life. It is his weakness that gives us our strength. His poverty that gives us our riches. His submission that gives us our power.

That is why today is called Good Friday. It was Bad Friday for Jesus. But it is Good Friday for us. We can now start again. We can now be God's friends. We can now have eternal life. We can now be given God's Spirit. We can now have meaning and direction and purpose in life. We can now gain through Jesus pain.

**4.** But the story doesn't end on the Friday. Because on the Sunday we see **The reign.** The grave cannot hold the Christ. Hell cannot keep this good man down. Satan loses his grip over his adversary. The demons see him slip through their fingers.

On Sunday he is alive. The tomb is empty. The stone has been rolled away. Death has been defeated. God is not dead any longer. He is reigning. He is in control. He is the boss. Jesus has taken the pain and the shame, given us the gain and now his reign has begun.

You see the resurrection proves that Jesus was God. The resurrection convinces us that God is doing something special. The resurrection fulfils God's predictions and his prophecies. The resurrection is the foretaste of our resurrection. The resurrection means that Jesus is alive and he now says he is reigning over the world from the right side of God the Father.

So the pain has now gone, so has the shame. The gain has been secured and the reign has begun. So what should we do about it all? What should our response be to the death and resurrection of Jesus? We should make sure that our lives are never the same.

For wouldn't that cause Jesus even more pain if we were to hear about the death and resurrection of Jesus and do nothing! If we were to hear about what He went through and say to ourselves, "So what"? If we were to remember what happened for us that Good Friday 2000 years ago and not even stop and reflect on that gift of eternal life? Not even come along and worship Him. Not even stop in our busyness and honour Him? Not even allow it to change our life, one little bit?

I was reading earlier in the year about a violin that had been given to the Australian Chamber Orchestra. This violin wasn't any old violin it was 1743 Carrodus, probably one of the best 10 violins ever made in the world. Its worth over \$10 million . But do you know it hasn't been played since 1953, it was so valuable that no one wants to use it.

Until now that is. For the donor has given it to the ACO to be used. And Jesus death and resurrection, his pain and shame has been given to us not to just sit within the pages of the Bible getting dusty, not to leave it in a cupboard unopened, but to be used.

His death is to be used as the basis of our forgiveness. It can be used to remind us that our guilt and shame can now be wiped away. It can be relied upon, trusted in, allowed to become a part of us. And Jesus resurrection shows God's power over everything. We don't need to fear death any more. We don't have to trust in our own power. We don't have to trudge through the life of faith alone. Jesus is there. His hands are open wide. He is to be used, relied upon, trusted in, embraced.

His pain leads to your gain. The shame is replaced by the reign. And so we can't afford to be the same. So don't try and run your life, let Him reign. Don't ignore Him that would be a crying shame. Instead make it your aim to live every day in the light of that first Easter. Remember that with out his pain, there is no gain. And every day seek to live a life that glorifies his Name!

That's why today is Good Friday. But do you know what? Tomorrow is Good Saturday and next week we have Good Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Because we don't just rely

on Jesus death and resurrection, one day but everyday. And then as he lives inside of us, others begin to see through us, that Jesus is still alive.

Aim....claim...fame...train...vain...wane...blame...game....name....same...tame...