What Would Good Friday Look Like *Without* Generosity?

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What would Good Friday look like if Jesus had decided to take care of Himself – for just this one day?

If you are over the age of about 20, you have probably seen the movie “It’s a Wonderful Life.”  Let me rephrase that.  If you’re over 20, you’ve probably seen the movie “It’s a Wonderful Life” a ridiculous number of times.  We know the story.  We’ve wept with George Bailey and smiled as Clarence got his wings.

Spoiler alert!  Just in case you have not memorized the movie yet, let me remind you of the plot.  George Bailey has consistently given up his dreams in order to help others.  But, after a series of hardships (including the loss of $8000 from his bank), he’s ready to commit suicide…on Christmas Eve.  His friends pray for him and ultimately, the guardian angel Clarence comes to show George what the world would have been like without his life of generosity.

For a short time, fictional-George gets to see fictional-life without his fictional-generosity.  But, what if we could see this in the midst of reality?  What if we could see the world minus Jesus’s Good Friday generosity?

**Spiritual Implications of Jesus's Generosity**

As I have thought about that question, a few obvious things spiritual have come to mind:

* Salvation would still be a dream – something espoused by the prophets
* Creation would be groaning…with no hope
* Sin would not be hindered…it would reign unchecked (scary, considering how devastating it is after its power has been broken)
* The Holy Spirit would only visit by appointment, not residing or abiding, but only visiting
* The kingdom of God would not be near
* We would still need prophets to tell us the truth and teachers to show us the way
* There would be no churches and the Jews would still be sacrificing animals for the sins of their people
* An eye for an eye would still trump forgiveness and grace

I would guess that you could add to that list.  If Jesus had been selfish – for just a few hours one Friday – the spiritual implications would have been huge.

**Historical Implications of Jesus's Generosity**

In addition to the spiritual implications, the historical ramifications would have been large as well:

* The calendar would not consist of BC and AD references
* Pontius Pilate and so many others would have been the historical equivalent of me (unknown)
* Nero’s reputation would be much kinder and gentler
* The world would have missed out on much of the genius of Dante, Michelangelo, Mozart
* Many more people would have died brutal, isolated deaths during the plagues
* Formal education would have faced worldwide setbacks
* It’s doubtful that the United States would have been founded on democratic principles growing out of a desire for religious freedom
* Mother Teresa would have simply been Agnes – a girl with a sensitive heart
* Billions of charitable dollars would be missing from the economy to care for everyday necessities such as food, shelter and clothing

All of those things were hinging on the decisions of Jesus on Good Friday.  Each historical and spiritual issue was riding on the generosity of Jesus.  And if He wanted to wreck the whole thing, all he had to do was say, *“I’ve worked really hard to take care of others.  So, today is my day.  Today, I choose to take care of me – and to enjoy the fruits of this world.  But, just for today.”*

Good Friday matters.

And apparently generosity does as well.