



PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

November 26, 2017

Black Friday

by Frank Himmel

The day after Thanksgiving is often called Black Friday. Some call it that because of the traffic and congestion shoppers create that day. Others call it that because of the profits retailers make that day (profits are noted in black ink, losses in red).

Black Friday originally referred to a financial event that occurred September 24, 1869. Two manipulators tried to corner the gold market and caused a stock market collapse that day.

There was another Black Friday much earlier, in many ways the darkest day in history. It was the day Jesus died. On Black Friday...

- ▶ An innocent man was put to death.
- ▶ The innocent man was put to death via crucifixion, among the most painful and humiliating ways one could die.
- ▶ The innocent man was sentenced to death by a judge who three times pronounced Him guiltless (Luke 23:4, 14, 22). Another judge concurred (Luke 23:15).
- ▶ The innocent man was brought to trial because of His enemies' envy (Mark 15:10).

- ▶ The innocent man was scourged, beaten, mocked, and spat upon (Matthew 26:67-68; 27:26).
- ▶ The general public chose a renown murderer for pardon over the innocent man (Mark 15:6-15).
- ▶ The innocent man was crucified between two criminals (Luke 23:33).
- ▶ Judges who illegally condemned the innocent man at a preliminary trial attended His execution, mocking and jeering Him (Mark 15:31-32).
- ▶ The innocent man was the only sinless man to have ever lived (Hebrews 4:15). "He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).
- ▶ The innocent man was the Holy and Righteous One, the Prince of life (Acts 4:14-15), the Son of God!

That Friday's blackness was appropriately marked by a darkening of the sun for three hours (Luke 23:44). At the end of the day, wicked men felt vindicated, whereas the righteous were disappointed and confused. All that soon changed!

As ugly as it was, Black Friday was actually the best day in history. It was the day Jesus atoned for our sins, the day He opened a new and living way to the Father, the day that hope came, the day that the Father's love and grace found their ultimate expression. In a word, it was the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). ■

Which Church?

by Frank Himmel

The opening chapters of the book of Revelation contain letters Jesus wrote through the apostle John to the seven churches of Asia. They reveal a variety of conditions.

Ephesus (2:1-7) was a doctrinally sound church. The Lord appreciated their stand against error and those who taught it. Nevertheless, that group had an issue: their orthodoxy had deteriorated into somewhat lifeless ritual. They were “going through the motions.”

Smyrna (2:8-11) had no marked spiritual deficiency, but it was a poor bunch, and on top of that they had been targeted for opposition by other religious groups in town. And that was about to get worse.

Pergamum (2:12-17) was also suffering; one brother there had actually been martyred. To their credit, they had not given up. But they had compromised the truth on several moral questions. Some members evidently preferred that permissive stance, but the Lord threatened to make war against them because of it.

Thyatira (2:18-29) was an improving church in Jesus’ assessment. Similar to Pergamum, however, they still tolerated immoral behavior among their members. One sister in particular was wielding a great deal of worldly influence. Jesus called her “Jezebel.”

Sardis (3:1-6) seems to have been more peaceful—for the same reason a cemetery is. They were dead. Someone needed to wake them up.

Philadelphia (3:7-13) is said to have had “a little power.” That likely points to smallness in numbers or resources. Small churches can be excellent churches—Philadelphia was—yet size and resource limitations can present real challenges.

Laodicea (3:14-22) was wealthy and at ease. If these churches had buildings, Laodicea’s was doubtless the nicest. They had no problems as far as they knew. The Lord’s view was far different. He said their lukewarmness made Him sick!

If you were moving to Asia, which of these churches would you choose? None was ideal. Each had its drawbacks.



Our answer reveals much about us. It says a lot about how committed to the Lord and the truth we are. It just as surely says something about our willingness to work, to give, to inspire others, to sacrifice, to suffer, etc. It speaks to whether we are primarily givers or takers. It reveals whether we assess churches by worldly or heavenly standards.

Our answer is expressed, not by a response to this hypothetical question, but by the real life choices we make; not only which congregation we choose, but what we do to make that church what it is. ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Greg Winget	Bruce Williams	Chris Brooks
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	Gary Hagler	Mark Clifton
OPENING PRAYER	Bruce Hollander	TBD	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Albert Lee Harrison	Albert Lee Harrison	
CUP	Adam Gibson	Adam Gibson	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Adam Wilson		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Singing	Jason Chandler
CLOSING PRAYER	Kerry Gray	TBD	John Baucom