

Sunday April 14th sermon: "Christ is the Savior of the Body – Thoughts about a tragic death"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
by John Pittman Hey

John 6:39-40; Ephesians 5:23-30

Sometimes events compel us to return to old, grand themes about the glorious nature of Christ's salvation of His people.

We look to many people to rescue us from danger and trouble. Firemen, policemen, EMT medics, doctors, or just a kind and strong passerby.

But they are not always able to save the people who cry out to them for help. In our community, we have heard just this week of a poor woman whose car was swept off the highway by high waters, submerged upside down in the ditch, with water pouring in upon her.

She called her husband to beg him to come save her. He called her again and she told him she knew she would not survive. She poured out her heart, telling him she loved him, and she loved her family.

And then she died, before anyone could arrive to rescue her.

When her husband got there, the water was high over the road, flowing strongly, and he couldn't even locate the car to know where to swim out to try to rescue her.

She cried out to her own husband to save her, but he was unable to.

All this should cause believers to rejoice at the power and glory of Christ our Savior, and how He saves us perfectly and forever!

Unlike that poor man who couldn't save his wife, our Savior never loses any of His loved ones!

That poor man had no plan to save his wife, for how could he? He had no ability, because he didn't even know where his wife was to save her. He didn't know what danger to plan for, and couldn't possibly be prepared when she cried out to him.

Not so our Lord Jesus!

The Apostle Peter informs us that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, God's perfect Lamb, Who was foreordained to save us before the foundation of the world!

Christ's means, power, ability, and determination to save His loved ones were all planned before the world even began!

Jesus planned ahead to save us, to pay the price of our redemption!

In the Revelation, John tells us that the Lamb was indeed slain, in the plan of God, before the foundation of the world.

Heretical teachers who believe that God doesn't know the future, claim that God reacted to man's fall in the garden, only then planning to provide a savior for sinners. Apparently, these false preachers think that God's ignorance changes as the situation evolves!

That poor husband lost his dear wife, but Christ cannot and will not lose a single one of His people!

Jesus declared, that it is the Father's will that He should lose none of the people that the Father has given to Him! Christ exclaims that every person who believes in Him will have everlasting life, and He will raise that person up at the last day!

All of that is because, as Christ put it, He laid down His very life to save us!

The Father loves His Son precisely because Christ offered Himself up in death on the cross to save us.

Because of this, Jesus declares, He gives to us eternal life, and we shall never perish, nor can anybody pluck us from His powerful hand!

That poor husband never even got the chance to give up his life to rescue his poor drowning wife, but Jesus had long before planned to lay down His life for His people, and He finished that great saving work at Calvary, when He was put to death for the sins of His people whom He loves.

In this life, we hope to be rescued from dying before our time, but the salvation that Christ has wrought for us is far greater than that.

Christ has saved us from our sin, and the dreadful penalty God demands for our crimes. That has already happened on the cross, but yet there is more!

He has not saved us from suffering in this life, nor even from persecution, which is the lot of all believers in this sin cursed world.

Christ has saved all His people unto everlasting life in the new world to come! This is that promised resurrection of our bodies from the grave at the last trump!

Jesus expanded upon this promise at the grave of His friend Lazarus, just before He raised him from the dead. "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in Me, though he was dead, yet shall he live! And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die!"

Hebrews tells us that Christ has been offered once to put away our sin by His Own sacrifice. Thereby He bore the sins of many, and those who look for Him one day will see Him return, to the saving of our very bodies!

Because this poor husband could not save his wife, now they will never be with each other again.

But Christ's salvation is forever, and the principle benefit of it is, that we will be with Him forever one day!

Paul made this clear in 1 Thessalonians 4, that Christ will return and raise up His people bodily from the grave, and they will meet Him in the clouds, and "so shall we ever be with the Lord!"

This is a great comfort to the Lord's people: that even though our bodies lie in the grave, yet we shall see Him with our own eyes one day, and from that time unto all eternity, we shall forever be with Him!

This is why Paul could exult, in another place, that nothing in this life or the next, or in this world, or the world that is to come, nothing can separate us from Christ's infinite love for us!

That poor husband could not save his wife, but Christ is the savior of the body of His people!

No matter what the heretical full preterists may claim, the physical bodies of the redeemed will be raised from the grave, and changed into bodies like our Lord Jesus rose with, free from corruption and pain and death.

In Ephesians 5, Paul tells us that Christ loves His people, His church, more than He loved His Own body! That is why He gave His very body and blood, to save us.

This text is quite relevant to the sad news we recently heard. The husband has a duty to sacrifice his own body to save his bride. In the ideal world, men will love their wives sacrificially, and cherish and protect them. But the pollution of this world by sin and failure sometimes robs a husband of his ability to protect his bride.

But Christ surrendered up His body on the cross to rescue, save, and perfect His bride the Church! We are joined together with Christ as one body, and therefore partake of all the benefits, and riches, and goodness,

and perfection, of our head, the Lord Jesus. Christ has taken away our sin, and clothed His bride with His perfection and glory!

For Christ, the hard part of saving His people without fail, and unto eternity, was completed at Calvary.

That sacrifice is what we celebrate each Lord's Day at His Table. By His very body and blood, He has perfected the salvation of His loved ones for all time.