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The Death and Burial of Christ; Matt 27:45-61

GPBC

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Introduction – We step into a very somber and sacred text today. Never before and never again will victory look so much like defeat. From the human perspective, watching the Savior die upon the cross and hearing His final cry of anguish is absolutely devastating. The disciples hide. The religious leaders thump their chests in victory. Hell rejoices. From all appearances, all is lost.

But that's the human perspective. From God's perspective the promise has been made good, the prophecy has been fulfilled. The plan of God the Father to redeem a people unto Himself has just been secured through the willing sacrifice of His beloved Son. When Christ breathed His final breath, He achieved what only He could achieve. He led the captives free. He purchased the sinner from the slave market of sin. Through His death, He gave life to the dying and perishing.

From the human perspective, this was the end of the Savior and His message and His people. But from God's perspective, this was the beginning of a global, eternal movement that will not end until every single one of His children have been transformed from death to life and are gathered around His throne forever!

- I. The Spiritual Suffering of Christ
  - a. We have seen the mental and emotional suffering of Jesus in the rejection, opposition, false accusation, slander, mockery, betrayal, and denial. And as exhausting as that would have been, His spiritual suffering on our behalf was greater.
  - b. We have seen the physical torture of scourging and the crown of the thorns and the crucifixion. And as excruciating as that would have been, His spiritual anguish was even more.
  - c. The sixth hour to the ninth hour would be noon until 3pm. In that 3 hour period of time, Christ endured on the cross an eternity of judgment for the sins of all God's people. He endured my hell and your hell in 3 hours.
  - d. Now just let that sink in. If I stood before the Lord, without Christ, still bearing the guilt of my sin, it would take an eternity for me to pay for my rebellion against God. Christ took the entirety of my

punishment in 3 hours. And yours. And every other believer who has ever lived or ever will live until the Lord's return. It's an unimaginable weight that lay upon His shoulders. It's what caused Him to sweat as it were drops of blood in the garden.

- e. 2 Cor 5:21 – He made Him to be sin who knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God.
  - f. Imagine that. Christ, the perfect, eternal, Son of God, had never known sin. He had never tasted the vileness, the wickedness, the darkness, the transgression, the ugliness, the shamefulness, the evil of sin. He had only known from eternity past, complete and perfect and utter harmony and union with His Father. And in one moment in time, the entire sin of the world was placed upon Him.
  - g. It was such a weight of darkness centered upon the cross that the light of the sun disappeared. Sin separates us from God. In that moment, Jesus, who had never felt separation from His Father, felt it down to His bones. In His divine nature, He was never disconnected from the Father. But in His humanity, the distance between He and God was immeasurable. So much so that he cried out from Psalm 22 – My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?
  - h. The Father never forsook the Son. But carrying the weight of the sin of the world upon His shoulders, it sure felt like it. From His human eyes, He couldn't see the Father. From His human heart, He couldn't sense the Father. He was taking my hell, my eternal separation upon Himself, and it was more than His humanity could endure.
  - i. And then in v50 we hear that final cry of death. Evidently this cry accompanied Jesus' final words on the cross "It is finished" and "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." But it was a cry and it was loud. That final moment of sin-bearing broke upon the Savior and forced the cry of death.
  - j. The Savior's death cry rang throughout the whole earth, through all eternity, through the pit of hell, and to the throne of glory. And it meant God, through Christ, has saved His people from their sin!
- II. Creation Reacts to the Death of Christ
- a. When the Creator in His humanity died, all creation reacted.
  - b. First we see a reaction in the realm of worship. The temple was the place you go to worship God. When Christ died, the curtain in the

temple was torn from top to bottom. That would be the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place. Behind that curtain set the ark of the covenant that symbolized the very presence of God was with His people, in the temple.

- i. Once a year, on the day of atonement, the high priest, with a rope tied around his ankle in case he didn't survive, would go behind that curtain, sprinkle the blood of sacrifice upon the ark, and thereby atone for the sins of the people.
  - ii. When Christ died, the final, full, sufficient sacrifice for the sins of God's people was complete. There was no longer any need for a high priest, Christ is our Great High Priest.
  - iii. No longer would God's presence be reserved for one man, once a year. Now the throne of God was opened for all believers. No longer would one man enter with timidity – now all God's people can boldly approach the throne of grace and find mercy to help in time of need!
  - iv. No longer do we come to God at a place – now we come to God in a person – the Lord Jesus Christ!
  - v. Christ has opened access to the Father anywhere at any time from any believer!
  - vi. The gift of prayer that we so often neglect was bought and paid for by the death of Christ. And if we would just be faithful to pray God-sized prayers, God would be faithful to move in God-sized ways! The death of Christ forever changed worship.
- c. Second we see a reaction in the material creation. The earth literally shook. The Richter scale topped out as the rocks split. The magnitude of the death of Christ was felt even in the material creation.
- d. Third we see a reaction in the realm of the afterlife. Some of the OT saints, believers who were trusting in the Savior to come, were raised from the dead, and after Jesus' resurrection, walked around Jerusalem for a few days before God took them to heaven. What!?!
- i. The death of Christ defeated death for every believer. So when He died, some of those believers popped out of their tomb indicating death had died. John Owen
  - ii. Jesus said I am the resurrection and the life. Notice these saints came out of their tombs after Jesus came out of His. Signifying that resurrection is truly in Jesus. God gives us a

glimpse in the death of Christ for what is to come at the return of Christ. Here a few saints were raised – then every saint will be raised!

- iii. The raising of saints from the dead served to illustrate beyond a doubt the enormity and eternal significance of what took place when Christ died. His death really brings life! III.
- e. Fourth we see a reaction in the spiritual realm. The old hard-hearted centurion and some of his soldiers felt the spark of faith. When they saw what happened, they were filled with awe, and concluded, “Truly this was the Son of God!”
  - i. If you get that close to the death of Jesus, you’re sure to be changed. You see the death of Christ saves sinners!
  - ii. Christ literally had died for those who put Him on the cross. And He died for us whose sin put Him there too.

### III. What About Joseph?

- a. The story of Joseph of Arimathea tells us of the burial of Jesus. And like Barabbas and Simon, Joseph unintentionally portrays the gospel.
- b. Matthew said he was a wealthy man. Wealth is the greatest obstacle to true saving faith in Christ. Jesus said its easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Its impossible. But not for God’s grace. He can save the most vile sinner and He can save the wealthiest sinner.
- c. He requested Jesus’ body. He took Jesus’ body down from the cross. He wrapped it in clean linen and laid the body of Christ in his own tomb. He put a great stone on the entrance so no one would disturb it.
- d. You see with what great care and sacrifice Joseph handled the body of Jesus. Why? He was a disciple. He loved Jesus. You see how we treat Jesus, either with care and sacrifice or not, shows whether or not we love Him.
- e. Barabbas pictures believers in salvation. Simon pictures believers with salvation. Joseph pictures believers because of salvation.

Conclusion – walk by that cross and see the Savior die, hear His cry. Walk by that tomb, sealed and know His died to bring you to life. And if you have yet to do so, love Him today!