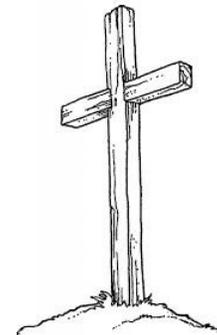


*When I Survey
The
Wondrous Cross*



Looking Unto Jesus-When I Survey the Cross

“When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the prince of Glory died...” (Isaac Watts, 1707)

Today, we continue our series of “Looking Unto Jesus” and we turn our gaze to Calvary.

Hebrews 12:2. “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

In part 4 of our series, we pick up the story where we left off last time. Jesus is betrayed and captured in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He is then led to the house of Annas, the former high priest, for questioning. They then lead Jesus to the residence of Caiaphas. During the questioning at Annas’ house, Caiaphas

had been rounding up witnesses to try and drum up some charge so that they could put Jesus to death. They have gathered a portion of the Jewish high council, those who are part of this plot to kill Jesus, at Caiaphas’ house.

One witness says one thing. Another witness says something different. The problem is none of them can agree on what Jesus has done wrong. But then one of them stands up and remembers something Jesus said three years ago. They think that Jesus threatened to destroy the temple and rebuild it by some supernatural means. But even then they can’t quite get their story straight. So the high priest comes right out and asks Jesus, “Are you the Christ, the Son of God?” And Jesus replies, “I am and you will see the Son of Man, sitting at the right of God and coming on the clouds of heaven.”



Volume 36 - Number 1 - Jan/Feb 2017
BC is published every other month. Send all inquiries, address changes and subscriptions to the editor: L Scott Gage, PO Box 3425, Fayetteville, AR 72702-3425 Voice & Fax 479-521-6809 Email: Lsgage129@cs.com

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be treated, so that He might treat us as Christ deserved to be treated.”

Only in the death of our Lord Jesus on behalf of sinners could God’s justice be served and God’s love conveyed. At the cross, Jesus paid the debt of my sin with the currency of his blood. As the prophet in Isaiah predicted, He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. He was oppressed and he was afflicted. He was brought as a lamb to slaughter so that this righteous servant could justify us.

And we see this occur at the cross, where God’s justice and God’s mercy met on a lonely hill called Golgotha. And the transaction, the payment for our sin, occurred.

Conclusion

Christ paid the debt for your sins. He laid down his life and bore your sins. He took on your sins, so that you could put on his righteousness. And so when God looks at you, He will no longer see your debt, your sin. But He will see the blood of the lamb and righteousness of Christ. But the question is, “Will you do that? Will you put on Christ?”

Galatians 3:27. “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ...”

Jeff McFadden
Mesquite, TX

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

*When I survey the wondrous cross/
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss/
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most/
I sacrifice them to His blood.*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine/
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

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love will go to save you, to reconcile you, to redeem you. He loves you so much that he sent the King of Kings to die for a rebel like me

When I Survey the Cross... I See Where the Transaction for my Sin Occurred

So on one hand we have the Justice of God demanding punishment for sin. And on the other hand, we have the love of God desperately wanting to show mercy and grace and forgiveness. On the one hand the debt my sin has incurred. On the other, a savior who is willing to pay the debt that I cannot pay. And when I look to the cross, I see where the debt was paid. I see where the transaction occurred for my sin.

Just before he entered into Jerusalem for the final time, Jesus said in Matthew 20:28, "The Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve others and to give his life a ransom for many."

A ransom is a sum of money or payment paid for the release of a prisoner. We are prisoners, slaves to our sin and the penalty demanded for it. Death. Physical and spiritual death. But Christ came to pay that ransom to release us from the enslaving

power of sin and Satan.

As Jesus hangs from the cross, one of the last things that he says is "It is finished." Translated into Aramaic this would be "Tel Taleo." It was a common phrase that you would hear in the market place. Someone would buy something and you would hear the vendor say "Tel Taleo." The deal was done. The transaction was complete. And as Christ finishes his work on the cross, this is the phrase he uses to describe what just occurred on the cross. The transaction for my sin was completed.

2nd Corinthians 5:21, "God made him to who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

Alistair Begg, in his book ***Pathway to Freedom***, said, "In this great exchange God took our sin and charged it to Christ and took all of His righteousness and credited it to us. To put it in a very contemporary form, God treated Christ as we deserved to

Now the Jews have what they think they need. They accuse Jesus of blasphemy. The high priest rips his garment and charges Jesus with the capital crime of blasphemy. They now have their death penalty case. Then some of the guards blindfold Jesus. They begin to spit in his face and strike him. They slap him and say, "Prophecy to us, Christ, who hit you?"

And then at daybreak, they gather the entire Sanhedrin together. They want to make this sham of an arrest and trial look official, so they gather all of Jewish High Council together. Jesus undergoes similar questioning and a mockery of a trial. And he is (illegally) condemned to die.

Jesus is then led to Pilate, the Roman governor over Judea. Pilate was a self-seeking political opportunist who despised the Jews. There had been several uprisings and revolts in the area recently. And especially during these feast times, everyone was on edge about an uprising. Also, Pilate was being watched closely by Rome because it was rumored he was part of some plot to overthrow Caesar. So Pilate already finds himself in a precarious situation, and as he sees this angry mob leading this prisoner to his doorstep early Friday

morning, he begins trying to figure a way out of this political mess.

The Jews bring Jesus to Pilate and Pilate tells them to go back and judge him by the Jewish laws. But the Jews reply that they aren't allowed to put anyone to death under Roman law. This must have made the hairs on Pilate's neck stand up. He probably already knew a little bit about the arrest of Jesus. It is likely that Jews came to him, or at least to his people, earlier. That would explain Pilate's wife having dreams about Jesus the night before and it is likely that the soldiers that were dispatched to the Garden of Gethsemane were Roman soldiers. But Pilate thought they were just going to arrest this guy and punish him. He didn't realize that they were going to kill him! But the Jews bring Jesus to Pilate. They accuse him of refusing to pay taxes and claiming to be a king. Pilate knows that these are trumped up charges so he brings Jesus in for some questioning. He doesn't find anything worthy of killing this man, so he goes back out to the Jews and says that he has no reason to condemn him to death.

But the Jews continue to press on. They say, "This trouble maker has been stirring up peo-

ple all over Galilee!” When Pilate hears this he has an idea. Once he hears Jesus is Galilean, he sends him over to Herod. Herod is the Jewish ruler over Galilee, so he would have jurisdiction over this case. Jesus is lead over to Herod. Herod questions Jesus a little and wants Jesus to perform some tricks for him. Jesus refuses to play along. He remains silent.

Jesus is then led back to Pilate. Pilate must have been a little disappointed. He thought he could wiggle out of this, but he sees Jesus being returned.

Pilate has another idea! The Jews had a custom that, during the feast, the Romans would release a prisoner. So Pilate gives them a choice. Barabbas or Jesus? Barabbas was a notorious criminal in the area. He was a thief that had led a revolt and committed murder. So the Jews had a choice. This thieving murderer or Jesus? And they chose Barabbas.

Pilate tries one more thing. He goes out to the Jews and says, “Look. I don’t find anything worthy of death in the man. I will give him a good beating and then I will release him.” So the soldiers take Jesus, strip him of his clothes, tie him to a post, and they beat him. They flogged him

within an inch of his life, ripping his back to shreds and beating him mercilessly. They know that Jesus has been called the “King of the Jews,” so they make a crown of thorns and smash it down on his head and put a scarlet robe on him.

Jesus is then led back to Pilate and taken in front of the people. Pilate says, “Look! I have beaten him. I have punished him for you. But I don’t find anything worthy of death. I will release him.” But the people begin to chant, “Crucify Him. Crucify Him.” Pilate replies, “Why? What has this man done? I find no fault in him?” And they chant louder, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” And Pilate says, “Shall I crucify your king?” And crowd screams, “CRUCIFY HIM! CRUCIFY HIM!”

Pilate realizes there is nothing that he can do. He gives in to the crowd and hands Jesus over to be crucified. Pilate washes his hands and says that the blood of this innocent man is not on me. And the Jews scream back, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

Jesus is led off to die. He begins walking the road to Calvary, through the streets of Jerusalem, where he is mocked and ridi-

came to take away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). Notice that phrase he used, “take away the sins of the world.” The Lamb of God didn’t “make the sins vanish.” He TOOK the sins. He bore them personally.

1 Peter 2:2. “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, by his wounds you have been healed.”

He bore our sin on the tree. Jesus loves you so much that he bore your sins on the cross. Often times, we look to the cross and think about what Christ endured and we get caught up in the physical pain that he endured, the beating and the crown of thorns and the nails. But when Christ bore our sins, the anguish and pain was deeper than just physical pain. When he bore our sin he experienced a separation from God. Jesus cries out from the cross, “Why have you forsaken me?” Forsaken and abandoned. That is the punishment for a criminal. That is the punishment that I deserve, not Jesus. Not the king of kings. Not the creator of all things. Not for the Son of God. But on the cross, when Jesus was bearing my sin he felt abandoned, forsaken, and separated from God. Christ experienced the separation from God so that

we would never have to.

Romans 5:7-10. “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Notice what Paul said. Even when we were sinners Christ died for us. We aren’t that righteous man or that good man for which some might dare to die. We are sinners. He says that even when God’s wrath and justice demanded a punishment for my sins, when I was an enemy of God, HE STILL SHOWED HIS LOVE TOWARD US. And we see this love when we turn our gaze to the cross.

God loves you. Don’t ever forget that. And he loves you so much that he was willing to send his Son to die on the cross, to endure the pain and shame and to be forsaken.

That is the lengths that God’s

“This is not the mere petulance of an offended deity because his commands are not obeyed. It is rather the necessary response of God to uphold His moral authority in the universe.”

God’s word says that sin must be punished. Sin always has consequences, even those sins that no one else knows about. Those skeletons way in the back of your closet must be punished. And when we look to the cross, we see the lengths that God’s justice and his wrath will go to punish sin.

This righteous and just requirement of sin’s punishment led God to not just punish me or you for our sin. But God’s requirement to punish sin sent his only begotten Son to the cross. It required God to lay his son on the altar of the cross and bear the burden of sin.

I shudder to think about a circumstance where I would have to put my son in a situation where he would experience such a beating and death. I love my son and would do anything to keep that from happening. But, God’s Justice required that my sin be punished. And his justice demands that someone bear that burden. His standards cannot be lowered. He requires and demands holiness to be in his pres-

ence, not sin. And when I survey the cross, I see the lengths that God’s justice will go to punish the sin in my life.

When I Survey the Cross... I See the Lengths God’s Love and Mercy Go to Forgive Sin

And when I think about my sin and the debt I owe to God because of my sin, I begin to think what a horrible situation I am in. But then I look back to Calvary and I realize the second thing that I see when I survey the cross is the lengths that God’s love and mercy go to forgive sin.

God’s justice demands payment for the debt of sin. But God’s love and mercy and grace for his creation yearns to forgive those sins. And that love and mercy and grace is so great that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him will not die, but have eternal life.

“See, from his head, his hands his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e’er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?”

Early in the ministry of Jesus, John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and he said, “Look, the Lamb of God who

culed and beaten. He is forced to carry his own cross, which probably weighs somewhere between 50 and 75 pounds. He eventually collapses under the weight of it. Simon, a pilgrim from Cyrene, is forced to help carry it the rest of the way.

Once they arrive at Golgotha at about 9 a.m., Jesus is laid on the ground. His arms are stretched out and nails are driven through his hands and into the cross. The horizontal beam of the cross is then attached to the vertical beam and then lifted into the area. His feet are nailed to the cross. And Jesus is suspended between heaven and earth to die.

While on the cross, the mockery continues. The people begin to say things like, “Look! He said he came to save the world. He can’t even save himself! Come down from that cross and we will believe you, Jesus!” But Jesus looks down on the crowd and says, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

He sees his mother in the crowd and directs John to take care of her after he is gone. Even in his suffering he was more concerned for others than himself.

Jesus hangs from the cross for about three hours, in excruciating pain, struggling to breathe,

beaten to a pulp. He is mocked and ridiculed by all of these people, and then about noon the sky goes dark. It is as if the sun has stopped shining.

Jesus hangs on the cross for nearly 3 more hours. He is beaten and broken, mocked and ridiculed. He is forced to endure the horror and the shame of the cross.

And now he has come to the end. He knows that his work is complete. He has fulfilled his mission and now he is ready to face one last foe, death. He gives his spirit to God and dies

One of the soldiers comes to break the legs of the men that were being crucified. But by this time, Jesus is already dead. The soldier pierces Jesus’ side and blood and water flow. Jesus has died.

As we look at the cross and all that Jesus endured, what do we see? Do we see the execution of a good man? Do we see the failure of the judicial system? Do we see pain and suffering?

I think when we survey the cross, we actually see more than that. I think that when we survey the wondrous cross, on which the prince of glory died, we see much more. We see

three vitally important things when we turn our gaze to the cross.

When I Survey the Cross... I See the Lengths of God's Wrath to Punish Sin

The first thing that I see when I survey the cross is the lengths that God's justice and wrath go to punish sin. To properly begin to appreciate what occurred at the cross, we must try and understand a few things about what sin is and how God views sin.

1 John 3:4, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

John tells us that sin is the transgression of the law. When we are practicing sin in our lives we are breaking the law.

But whose law are we breaking? Maybe we are violating our own personal code of conduct. Maybe the law he is talking about is the rules of our family or our parents. Or maybe he is talking about the laws of our city or county or state.

The issue, though, is that the law John is talking about is more than our personal conscience or family rules or governmental

laws. IT IS THE LAW OF GOD. Sin is the violation of the moral and spiritual law set forth by God himself. When we sin, it is a violation of and rebellion against the AUTHORITY OF GOD HIMSELF.

Unfortunately, we sometimes view sin like I view the speed limit. Every day I drive to work and I see the speed limit sign that says 65 MPH. But you know what? I get in my truck and I press down on the accelerator and set my cruise control at 70 MPH. Sure, I see the speed limit sign. But what does it hurt? I may go a little bit over, but I want to get to work a little bit quicker. I want to get where I am going and I'm not too concerned with what the law says I should be doing. And it doesn't really matter. Who cares if I drive a little bit faster? I view that speed limit sign, that law, more as a "guideline" than "law". Don't get me wrong, I take the "important laws" seriously. I don't murder. I don't deal drugs. I follow the big laws. I, by and large, am a law-abiding citizen. But actually, I break the law every day. And when I break one law, I can no longer say with a straight face that I perfectly keep the law.

And we view sin and the transgression of God's law the same

way. In our minds, there are "guidelines" and there are the "big sins." And we are good people that don't commit the big sins. We don't murder. Well, except when we get angry with our brother and commit spiritual murder in our hearts. We don't commit adultery. Well, except when we look at another woman or man on the internet, or on TV, or while we are at school or work, and have lustful thoughts and commit adultery in our heart. But we love. We love our family and we love each other here at church. Well, except we let our pride and our jealousy cause division in our families and in this church. And what about those people that might not love us? Do we love them? Do we love our enemies? Or when it's time to turn the other cheek or make peace with those around us, do we lash out and try to tear them down? And that is not to mention all of the things that God has to say about lying, and gossip, and pride. And when we commit one single sin, we stand in violation of God's law.

There is a difference, though, between the laws of the land and God's law. When I speed, I'm not too worried about it. Chances are I won't get caught. And even if I do, what is the worst that could happen? I have

to take defensive driving or pay a small fine, inconvenient, but not a big deal. If I murder someone, though, it is a much bigger deal. And the punishment will be much more severe. Justice and the penalty of transgression depends on the severity of the crime

With sin and the violation for God Law's, God's justice requires the same penalty for all sin, whether big or small, from the little white lie to sexual immorality to murder. God's justice requires the same penalty.

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death..."

Sin, whatever that sin may be, earns death. Our sin earns us death. Beginning in the Garden of Eden, the result of sin is death. God's justice REQUIRES AND DEMANDS THAT THE DEBT I OWE FOR MY SIN IS DEATH. Not just a physical death, but a SPIRITUAL DEATH.

Romans 1:18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..."

The wrath of God and the justice of God require that penalty for sin occurs. Jerry Bridges, in the "Gospel for Real Life," says,