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Lord's Day Morning  
April 12, 2009

“The Death and Resurrection of Christ  
from Heaven’s Perspective”  
Matthew 27:33-54; 28:1-7

Introduction

This is Easter. If you’ve been around here for a few years you hear me say this every year at Easter – and it surprises some people. But we don’t really celebrate Easter here. We acknowledge it – but we don’t celebrate it – at least not in the traditional sense. The truth is we go overboard – way beyond celebrating Easter once a year. We believe with all our hearts that every Sunday is Easter. What I mean by that is God has set apart the first day of every week to remember and celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is the heart of Easter and that is the heart of what worship is all about.

So happy Easter to you! And I invite you to come back next Sunday and we’ll do it again. Having said that, I am going to preach today a specific sermon on the death and resurrection of Christ. And I’m happy to do it because His life, death and resurrection is the heart of the gospel. The price for your salvation was very great. It was a price paid by the whole godhead – not just the Son, but the Father and the Holy Spirit as well. We usually think of these things primarily from the perspective of the suffering of Jesus – as well we should. But today we’re going to look at it from heaven’s perspective. The theme of the Bible is that *you have been bought with a price, therefore glorify*

*God in your bodies.* Today we will try and see exactly what that price was – not only on earth, but also in heaven.

[Matt. 27:33-54; 28:1-7]

When we gather to worship God each week, what is it we are celebrating and remembering? The answer is three fold: 1. The life of Christ. 2. The death of Christ. 3. The resurrection of Christ.

The Bible teaches us that our whole life, well-being, future and eternity are connected to how we respond to these 3 things. As I said, much has rightly been said and considered about the sacrifices and sufferings of Jesus.

He left where He enjoyed the glories and privileges of being God. He laid aside many of those privileges to become a man. It's not that He ceased being God, but, as Philippians 2 says *although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

In becoming a man he experienced many of the same things you experience – hunger, pain, fatigue, joy and sorrow. He wept and He slept. He laughed and He sighed. He was tempted and burdened. He did everything normal men do, except for one thing. He never committed a single sin. He never made a mistake. He was perfect in every regard. And because He was a real man, He can sympathize with you in your weaknesses. He knows what it's like to live in a fallen, sinful, difficult world.

We also know that He came to die. He was misunderstood, ignored, hated and opposed by many men. They arrested Him, abused Him, and punished Him without cause. He was slandered by

false witnesses. He was beaten unjustly. And finally they drove nails into His hands and feet and hung Him on a cross where He was crucified.

If we stop and think about these things we can hardly comprehend what kind of love would move Him to such sacrifice. We can hardly fathom the great price that He paid. And yet it was a price paid to purchase your soul. You have been bought with a price.

Still, there is more to the story than the suffering and death of Jesus. Have you ever considered the life, death and resurrection of Christ from heaven's gate? What was it like for the Father to give His only Son? What sacrifices were made by Him from heaven?

First let me give you a little background. The Father and the Son actually made a promise to one another long before Jesus became a man. We call it the Covenant of Grace – or the Covenant of Redemption. In heaven, before creation, the Father and Son, knowing all things that would come to pass, entered into what we call the Covenant of Grace. The Father agreed to send His Son and the Son agreed to become a man. And if He would live a perfect life and die for the elect, then the Father would give to Him the lives of those for whom He died. And so it came to pass, *in the fullness of time*, as Galatians 4 teaches, *God sent forth His Son*.

What was the response of the Father as this grand plan, hatched in eternity before the earth was even made, what was the response of the Father as it began to unfold? Obviously, seeing into heaven has never been a privilege granted to man. So knowing what God thinks is speculation – unless God tells us in the Bible. And, sure enough, there are indications throughout the Bible that shows us

something of the response of the Father as things unfolded.

Think about the night of Jesus' birth. What was it like for the Father to actually send Jesus? If we consider the bright star He put in the heavens; if we consider the dreams He wonderfully gave to certain men and women, and the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, singing and rejoicing – then it's pretty easy to understand that the Father was pleased to send His Son.

As Jesus grew up as a boy into a man, and as He began His earthly ministry, it became obvious to many that this man was different than others. He taught with an authority that no other man had. He did things no one else could do. He healed people, provided for people, loved people, set people free from sin and guilt and oppression. The testimony of the crowds was *He has done all things well!* He obeyed every Law His Father in heaven had ever issued. He fulfilled every desire and pleasure of His Father. Imagine that! If you're a father with a son, you know how proud of your son you can be when he does what you ask or desire. Jesus did that perfectly. He never disappointed His Father. He never disobeyed His Father.

The Son spent hours with His Father. After an exhausting day of ministry, Jesus would get up early, before the sunrise, and go off to some lonely, quiet place, just to spend time talking and being with His Father in heaven. When Jesus would pray and ask God for things, the Father would quickly grant Him His request. Truly, you could say, in the fullest sense of the word that the Father and the Son were one.

So what was God thinking as His Son walked on the face of the earth? From the above, we can make easy assumptions. But the Father didn't leave

any doubt about it. On two occasions, the Father did something He rarely does. He spoke audibly from heaven.

The first time was at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He was being baptized – and it was as though the Father wanted everyone to know what He was thinking and feeling. The Holy Spirit took the form of a dove and descended upon Jesus. And then the Father spoke from heaven and said *This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*

And then again a second time toward the end of His time on earth as the crucifixion was drawing near. On the mountain, as He was transfigured, the Father spoke the same words – *This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* What wonderful words! And what a peak into heaven. The Father loved His Son. The Son was doing everything they had agreed to in eternity. And the Father was greatly pleased.

Do you know why the Son did these things? And do you understand why the Father would ask His son to leave the joy and glory of heaven to humble Himself on earth? He did it for us. He was doing something for us that we were unable to do for ourselves. We can't please God the way Jesus did. We can't live a life free from sin. We can obey all the time. We fail over and over again. And yet the thing God requires from us is that very perfection. So Jesus did all of this for us.

But of course that was not the end of it. God had also established a penalty for failure. For the payment of any sin and every sin God required death. Death was to be paid to satisfy the justice of God. So even if Jesus was to live a perfect life for us – and somehow give it to us – what about justice? What about the penalty? Jesus came to pay that penalty as well.

But what of the Father? What price did He pay to send His Son to pay that penalty?

Do you remember the Garden of Gethsemane? The night before Jesus was crucified He came to His Father. He was overwhelmed with sorrow and grief. The thought of what awaited Him the next day was almost more than he could bear. He who knew no sin was about to become sin – to take the sin of His people upon Himself. And so He had a request of His Father. Would it be possible to find another way? Would His Father take this cup of death away from Him?

Imagine the heart of the Father. His Son had never asked Him for something that He denied Him. Every time Jesus had asked the Father for something, He had gladly given it to Him. And now His Son is in agony. He is grieved to the point that He was sweating drops of blood. And He only has one request. The Father and the Son are one. There is no doubt the Father felt His pain. But His answer was *no, I will not take this cup from you*. And to that the Son said, *Not My will, but Thy will be done*. Why? The reason is because of His love **for you**. The apostle John makes this point in his first letter. *See how great a love the Father has for you? By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Shortly after Jesus prayed, He was arrested. And then the abuse began. He was mocked, beaten, spit upon and humiliated. What would you do if someone attacked your son? To what lengths would you go to defend your child against harm?

Jesus understood that His Father loved Him. In fact, in the middle of His arrest He said, *do you*

*think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?* But Jesus didn't ask that of His Father. And the Father did not volunteer the help. He watched from heaven and did nothing as His Son was mistreated, tried and crucified.

But even that was not the end of it. When Jesus hung on the cross He was fulfilling the last and greatest part of the plan made by Father and Son. He took to Himself the sin of His people. All those whom He would save deserved the wrath and judgment of God. And with a pain that far outweighed the physical agony of crucifixion, Jesus paid to the Father the penalty of death and separation from His Father. When Jesus cried out from the cross *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*, imagine the pain in the heart of the Father. Never before had He turned His back on His Son. Never before had they been separated. But to satisfy the justice of God, the Father, in that moment, took the sins of all of the Christians, past, present and future and placed them upon His Son. Remember what we read earlier this morning in Isaiah 53? *The Lord caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was smitten of God. He pierced Him through for our transgression. He crushed Him for our iniquities. But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering.* It's no wonder Jesus asked *why have you forsaken Me*. That's exactly what the Father did.

And then it was finished. Jesus died. And heaven grieved. The sky was black, the earth trembled, creation wept, men were afraid.

But as a preacher once said, *Sunday was a comin!* What did the Father think of what His Son had done? The chief priests, scribes and elders

didn't get it (17:42,43). They thought the Father rejected Jesus – that His death proved He was a fraud. But after 3 days the Father raised Jesus from the dead. He raised Him in victory over sin. He raised Him in triumph. He raised Him in glory. He accepted His offering on behalf of sinners.

And that's why we are here today. We are celebrating the new life of Christ, not just today, but every Sunday. But here's the one condition – the one catch. The forgiveness of sins and the new life that Jesus offers is not for everyone. This payment for sins was made by the Son to the Father on behalf of those who by His grace would believe.

And so I ask you today”

- Have you acknowledged to God that you are a sinner and you deserve judgment?
- Do you believe that what the Father and Son did 2000 years ago is sufficient to forgive you for your sins? Did they pay the necessary price for your sins?
- Have you ever bowed your heart and life to God? Have you put your trust and faith in Jesus? The testimony of the Bible is that *if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved.*

This is not just an Easter message. This is the ultimate Good News of the Bible. If you have never put your faith and trust in this work of the Father, Son and Spirit, I invite and urge you today to come to faith in Christ today and you will live.