

Why Christ Died and Rose Again

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon explores the profound significance of Christ's death and resurrection, emphasizing the necessity of understanding these truths for genuine Christian faith and moral living.

Duration: 1:07:31

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 27:46, John 3:16, Revelation 20:12

Topics: "Salvation Through Christ", "Guilt And Redemption"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the concept of our memories being recorded and played back on a 'videotape' in the day of judgment. He explains that every single thing we have done, including our thoughts, attitudes, and motives, is recorded and will be shown on the screen. The speaker highlights the fact that no one can escape guilt, as we have all sinned against God. However, he also emphasizes that God, in His love, provided a solution for our guilt by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for our sins. The speaker encourages listeners to share this message of salvation with others in their own little world, as it is a great honor to be representatives of God.

Transcript

is not understood by, I would say, more than 90% of Christians. That's been my observation. Although I was born in a Christian family, I never knew what exactly Jesus went through on the cross or all the reason why he died on the cross for many, many, many years.

I used to go to church and hear that he died for me. So I want to share something with you, which I believe will open your eyes to see the purpose with which he died and rose again. You know, in scripture, you never hear about, in the epistles particularly, about the death of Christ without his resurrection.

Many Christians think more about the death of Christ than his resurrection. And I believe that's one of the reasons why so many Christians are so powerless. I think the devil has done a great work in portraying Christ as a weak type of person.

And can you think of the most common pictures of Christ that you have seen in your life? The most common ones, three or four that I can think of, are one, to begin with, as a baby. You know, you see these Christmas time, people make little cradles. I mean, a little cow shed and a manger.

You see Christ there as a helpless baby. That's a very, very common picture. And then we see, I've seen pictures of him, you know, praying in weakness in Gethsemane.

Again, it's a picture of weakness. And then you see a picture, another common picture is of him hanging on the cross. That's also a picture of weakness.

And the devil wants us to think of Christ only in these ways. How many of you have seen a painting of Christ coming out of the grave, risen? That's not a very common picture you'll see in many Christian homes. Or Christ whipping the money changers and driving out the people who are selling sheep and doves in the temple.

I've never seen a picture of that. But that's all in the Bible. The devil succeeded in portraying Christ as a very weak, he's a baby, he's weak, in Gethsemane he's weak, on the cross he's hanging, he's helpless, weak.

And even these, our Roman Catholic friends have pictures of what they call the sacred heart. I mean, Jesus looks so effeminate, he's almost like a woman in those pictures. It's the whole purpose of Satan to present Jesus Christ, the Lord of the universe, as someone meek and mild and helpless and weak.

And so Christians also find that if they are in any difficulty, this weak and helpless Christ can't help them. They've got to go to some strong human being to help them or depend on human resources because they don't know the risen, powerful Jesus Christ. So in the New Testament, the death of Christ is always linked with his resurrection.

If there was no resurrection, then Paul says, of all the men on earth, we Christians are the most miserable. He says that in 1 Corinthians 15. If there was a crucifixion, if Christ lived, he was born, he lived, he did miracles, and he did all that and he died and he never rose again, then of all the religions in the world, the worst is Christianity.

And of all the people in the world, the most miserable are Christians. That's written in the scriptures, 1 Corinthians 15. That is how important the early apostles felt the resurrection of Christ was.

So, see Christianity is founded upon two fundamental truths. You remove those two truths and Christianity degenerates into just another religion, just like any other religion in the world. Many people think, what is the difference between all the religions in the world? Many religions lead different roads that lead to the same God.

And they say that, well, you know, all religions teach that you must be kind to others, you must not harm others, you must love people, you must promote peace, and you must be good and etc., etc., speak the truth and all that. But I want to say Christianity does not teach that. That is the superstructure.

We're talking about the walls and the windows and the doors, when we talk about being good, kind, humble, forgiving, gracious, all that is a superstructure. What about the foundation? It's in the foundation that there's a fundamental difference between Christianity and all the religions in the world. So, if you look at the superstructure, I suppose many religions have said, speak the truth and love others and don't harm anybody, pursue peace, etc., etc.

But Jesus once spoke about two men who built houses, one without a proper foundation and the other with a proper foundation. And he said one house collapsed. Externally the houses may have looked the

same, but the foundation is what made the difference.

So we need to understand that there's a foundation in Christianity which makes it fundamentally different from every other faith in the world. And what are those two things in the foundation? Christ died for our sins and Christ rose again. So I want to explain that and explain to you why that is so necessary to be a foundation.

See, when God looks at man, he doesn't look at us as Christians and Hindus and Muslims and atheists. No. All human beings are his creation.

He doesn't look at us as different. And when babies are born, I mean, if you went into a hospital and you saw a baby born, you wouldn't be able to say whether it's a Christian baby or a Hindu baby or a Muslim baby or an atheist baby. They're all the same.

And as you see them growing up, every one of those children behave exactly the same. And all of you who are parents know that. They tell lies, they fight, they are angry, they quarrel, they are selfish.

Whatever religion they are. The only thing is the Christians take their children to the church and the Muslims take their children to the mosque and the Hindus take their children to the temple. So they are indoctrinated into certain religious faith.

And so they grow up and they have that faith. I think that's true of most of us here. Whatever religion you are, why are you having that religion today? Because you were born into it.

That's true of 99% of people in the world. So it's not because they were born that way. They were born just like any other baby.

But they were indoctrinated through the years by their parents into a certain religious understanding. But when God looks at us, He looks at us as those who have a nature that takes us away from God. A nature that is self-centered, that thinks only about ourselves, that thinks, what can I get for myself? How can I enjoy myself? If it's sin, sin.

So God looks at us as sinners. The Bible says that all have sinned. Every human being, all religions.

It doesn't matter what religion you are born in. The thing that makes us different from animals is that we've got a conscience. No animal has got a conscience.

If you go to the jungles of the world, you'll find among the barbarians a sense of having grieved an unknown creator. They don't know who that creator is. Sometimes they think it is the sun or some high mountain.

They don't know. But there's a sense of guilt in the hearts of even barbarians that they have grieved and hurt their creator. And so they pray.

They make sacrifices. I mean they do a lot of stupid things sometimes like offering children as sacrifices. Somehow there's a feeling that I have angered God and I want to appease Him in some way.

But you'll never see an animal doing that. There's no animal in the world. You'll never find an animal feeling that he has to appease some creator.

So that's because man's got a conscience. There are a lot of things in which animals may be like us in eyes and ears and limbs and internal organs. But there's one fundamental thing which man has which sets him apart from the entire rest of creation.

And that's the fact that we've got a conscience. And that conscience is exactly the same in people of all religions. You could be born in an atheistic family.

You could be born in a barbarian family in a jungle. You could be born in any religion in the world. You have a conscience.

A conscience that tells you that you're guilty, that you've grieved God. I mean you can suppress that conscience. You can kill it over a period of time.

And many people do. I think we all know that it's very difficult for a three-year-old to tell a lie with a straight face. It's very easy for any mother to catch a three-year-old telling a lie.

Because if you ask, did you do that? Even when that little boy says, no I didn't do it, you can see from his face he's telling a lie. Because he can't hide it. Because his conscience is very sensitive at that age.

But give him 15 years, and when he becomes 18 years old, he can tell you a lie straight to your face without even you'll be convinced that he's speaking the truth. Now how did he succeed in doing that in 15 years? Over 15 years he killed his conscience. Now he can tell a lie with a straight face.

And you and I are like that. We have developed the art of killing our conscience so cleverly that it doesn't even reflect on our face. We can be thinking dirty, filthy thoughts in our mind and we can look like the holiest people on the face of the earth.

This is the deception man has developed. But inside we know, our conscience tells us we've done something wrong. We've gone against the laws of God.

As I said, you can kill that conscience if you like, but you don't realize that conscience is the greatest gift God gave you. If you kill it, you destroy yourself. You destroy the greatest gift that God's given you.

Jesus compared the conscience to the eye. And he said, just like the eye gives light to the body, the conscience is what gives light to your spirit. If you want to know what blindness is, just shut your eyes.

That's what blindness is. It's terrible. And if you want to know what it is to kill your conscience, that's it.

It's the equivalent of blindness in the human body is the killing of your conscience where your conscience is no longer sensitive. Another picture the Bible uses to picture a dead conscience is leprosy. You know, in leprosy, if a patch of your skin gets leprosy, you don't have any sensation there.

I've heard of people who get leprosy, lose their sensation in their legs, and rats bite off their toes at night, and they don't even know it. That's a picture of a dead conscience. You can do the most horrible thing, and your conscience is not even disturbed.

Think of that poor leper. A rat bites off his toes, and he doesn't even feel it. And we feel it even if the pin pricks us.

That's the way our conscience should be, that even if a small little thing, we feel guilty. That's the way it should be, and that's the way we were when we were small. But over a period of time, spiritual leprosy has penetrated and pervaded our conscience till there are so many things we could do wrong.

We can do something wrong and justify it with our reason and our mind, and convince ourselves that in this particular case, it is necessary for me to do that. I mean, people do horrible things, and they murder, they commit adultery, they are unfaithful to their wives, and they justify it in some way or the other. So, we must recognize that conscience is a great gift to us.

It's just like pain in the body. What is it a leper doesn't feel? Pain. You don't realize, in fact, I never realized for many years, that pain was one of the greatest gifts to the human body.

I mean, not in its intensity, but when you have pain, it always shows you something is wrong. You know, if you didn't feel a leper, you poke him somewhere, he doesn't feel any pain. That's not a blessing.

It's a curse. Because, you know, when you have a stomachache or some other pain in the body, that's a signal saying, hey, you got a sickness. And if that pain had not alerted you to that sickness, you'd probably die very soon.

Pain is what alerts us to a sickness, so we go and get some treatment and get medicine or something to cure it. But what was it that first alerted us to any sickness? It was pain. So pain is a tremendous blessing from God to show us something is wrong.

And our conscience is exactly like that. And if we, you know how pain, when it gets intense, can be unbearable almost. If only we could feel the seriousness of sin in our conscience, like we feel pain in our body.

Boy, that would be a tremendous blessing. That's what God intended our conscience to be. But when leprosy comes in gradually, we lose that sensation.

But our conscience tells us we're sinners. We've grieved God and we cannot come before him. We feel guilty.

In every religion, there is a fear. And that's why people go on pilgrimages. That's why people do various sacrifices.

You know, in our own country, we've seen people roll on the ground and do all types of things to appease God, to somehow wash away their sins. They're going to dip in a river to wash away their sins somehow because they know they're sinners. They give lots of money to God to somehow try and bribe him to forgive their sins.

But he can't be bribed. And many people say, well, why can't God just forgive us if we go to him and say, I'm sorry. I mean, if my dad, if a son comes to his father and says, Dad, I'm sorry for doing that.

Dad will forgive him. Why can't God be like that? Because God is not only loving. He's also just.

Justice is the foundation on which this world is built. And the universe is built on the principle of justice. You remove justice from the world, there'll be chaos.

There was a man I heard of who once said, I can't imagine how a loving God could ever send anybody to hell. How can a God full of love send anybody to... Hell is the jail of the universe, by the way. How can anybody send God... How could a God send anybody to... And he believed that for years and years till one day, somebody kidnapped his daughter, raped her and murdered her.

And the man was never caught. And this man changed his opinion. He said, well, if there is no hell, God must make one for a man like that.

Because he's escaped justice on the earth. Right? No, but he didn't get caught. Do you know the number of criminals who've escaped justice on the earth? Particularly the white collar criminals who cheat and swindle so many people of money.

They've escaped so much. I mean, if you think of your own life, many of you sitting here, you can think of wrong things that you have done for which you never got any punishment. You somehow escaped.

But they die. And they never get caught for the evil they've done. Now, if all the people have hurt others, think of the flesh trade that's going on in the world today.

Poor young girls being kidnapped from the villages of India. I read about it all the time. Bangladesh, Nepal, by crooked people telling lies to them that they're going to give them a job and then selling them and all over Europe it's going on.

All over India it's going on. And these fellows just reap millions of dollars in money and they never get caught. The police and the politicians are all in their pockets and these poor, helpless and these girls would never have been in that situation if they were in rich families.

Their families were poor and they were exploited. And these girls never get justice. And there's so many other things like that.

So much of injustice in the world and the crooks never get caught. What do you think? If there is a God, do you think he's going to let them all go? Don't you think there has to be logically, there has to be a final judgment when all these people will be brought to justice? The Supreme Court of any country is not the final court of justice because many millions have escaped having hurt others and harmed others incredibly, seriously. And they've escaped.

That itself proves to me there must be a God. And there must be a God who will one day judge all of this. And the Bible says there is.

God is one day going to judge everything. You can say, well, you know, we don't understand God. How can God remember all the things that every single human being ever did? One of the pictures I have used, one of the pictures that's come to my own mind, you know, when it speaks about the final judgment of God in Revelation 20, it says there that when the Lord sits on his throne to judge all humanity and they all stand before him, it says here in Revelation 20, 12, that the dead all stand before God.

And then it says the books were opened and they were judged according to the things written in the books. And now, by the way, this was written in the first century. The Bible, the last book of the Bible was written in around 95 AD.

And in those days when they talk about a book, it's not a book like this. There was no printing. There was no binding.

There was a scroll. And if you have read history, you know that in the first century they used to write on parchment and they used to roll it up in a scroll. And if you wanted to go to the next, it was one long scroll.

You roll up this side and then you keep, it keeps moving. And here is the other end of the scroll. The closest thing that we have to that today is a videotape.

You know, where you wind up one side and then the other side opens up. That's what a scroll looked like in the Old Testament. So I want to read it like that.

And they all stood before God and the videotapes were taken out. And the rewind button is pressed way back to the beginning. And the play button is pressed.

And all the, this is an amazing videotape that records not only our words and actions and deeds, but also our thoughts and our attitudes and our motives. This videotape is our memory. And if you make a little bit of effort, you can think back to some of the terrible things you did 10 years ago, right? And you can think also of the many good things you did to other people that we have a good memory for.

And we have a very good memory for the bad things that other people did to us, right? We usually have a poor memory for the bad things we have done to other people, but we have a good memory for the bad things that other people have done to us. But in the videotape, everything is there. I remember hearing of a man, a neurosurgeon who was operating on a man in his brain.

And I don't know how it is that when a man, his brain is being operated because the center of all pain is there, he doesn't feel pain but when the neurosurgeon touched some part of his brain, this guy suddenly could remember certain things which he hadn't thought of for a long time because it's all there in the memory. I mean, because our memory is weak, we can't remember what he did 45 years ago. But when it's all stimulated, it's there.

It's all recorded. Every single thing is recorded. There's nothing that's not recorded.

From the day you were born, a videotape started running in your memory. And all that God has to do is click the button and the whole thing is there. So anybody who thinks he's lived a pretty good life, God says, okay, let's see.

Watch the videotape. And your thoughts, attitudes, motives, and every single thing that you did which nobody ever knew is all going to be played back on the screen. They say, what do you think? Are you clean? Are you holy enough to come into God's presence? The answer is no.

We are guilty of a crime. I mean, if I'm a judge in a court and my own son is standing there as a criminal brought before me, and he says, Dad, don't you love me? I'm sorry for what I did. Let me go.

Do you think I can let him go? Even a human judge would not do that. He'd lose his job. So let's say this is not a very serious crime, but a crime that requires some type of fine.

So I say, okay, well, you're fined the full penalty of the law, \$200,000. He doesn't have \$200,000. Where is he going to pay that from? And he thinks Dad is very hard.

He's a hard man. I'm his son. I'm saying I'm sorry.

You see, I'm answering that question which many people ask. When I come to God and say, Lord, I'm sorry for what I did. No, son, I can't let you go.

\$200,000. Pay the fine or go to jail. He doesn't have the money.

And what do I do? I take off my robes. I step down from my seat. I take out my checkbook and write a check for him, probably empty out my bank account and give him a check for \$200,000 and say, son, go and give that and pay the fine.

You're free. That's exactly what God did. That's what God is thinking of today.

Christ died for our sins means what? He says you're guilty. The videotape declares, shows what you've done which nobody else knows. You've sinned against God.

You're guilty. You're punished with the full penalty of the law by a just and holy God. And the punishment for sin is to be separated from God forever because God is holy.

One sin is enough. I mean, if you want to understand that in human terms, it's like how many holes do you need in a vessel for water to leak out? 20? 30? One. Even children know that.

Actually, it doesn't make a difference whether it's one or a hundred. All the water will leak out. You may think, well, I've only sinned two or three things.

That guy is worse. That murder, I'm not like him. That's like one fellow who's got only three or four holes in his vessel thinking that his vessel is better than the other fellow who's got 500 holes in his vessel.

Essentially, what's the difference? Which one is going to hold water or milk or anything? Neither. Do you understand how it doesn't make a difference before God, whether your sins are five or 500? Nothing is broken. I'll take the other example.

A better example is electricity. See, this light burns because two wires have touched. I mean, you all know that.

If you don't know, you know it now. When you put on a switch, all that that switch does is make two wires touch. That's all it does.

The wires go from the bulb to a switch and they are kept apart. The moment you put on the switch, the wires touch and the light comes because the current begins to flow then. It's separated by 0.1 inch or 100 feet.

It's just the same. No current. It doesn't matter whether it's 100 feet apart or 0.1 inch apart.

The connection is broken. And the connection between man and God is broken with one sin or a hundred sins. So, the punishment for sin is not sickness.

Some people think like that, you know. Oh, because I sinned, therefore I'm sick. Oh, because I sinned, I lost some money or I had a financial crisis.

No, no, no, no. There's nothing. The punishment for sin is to be separated from God forever.

And that is the price you and I have to pay. And if somebody is willing to take the punishment for my sin, just like I said, I took off my robes as a judge and I took off my checkbook and paid my entire life savings and gave it to my son. If somebody has to take the punishment for my sin, the punishment he has to pay is to be separated from God forever.

You need to understand this, you know. Many of us may have seen the film *The Passion of Christ*. And I think most Christians would cry when they see how he was, how Jesus was beaten and hammered and ill-treated.

I did when I saw that. But I've seen that the physical suffering of Christ is almost nothing compared to the real suffering which he went through on the cross when he died for my sins and your sins. Because what is the punishment? I mean, I've thought of this.

What, I mean, if Christ only died physically on the cross and that's what the whole world thinks of today. Christ hung on the cross for six hours. It's true.

And he died. But if that physical death is the punishment for sin, now think of it. All of us are intelligent, logical, reasoning people.

If physical death is the punishment for my sin, then when I die physically, I've paid the punishment for my sin. Right or wrong? When you die physically, you've paid the punishment for your sin. And there is no double punishment.

Every person who dies has paid the punishment for his sin. He should go to heaven. Every single human being should go to heaven because when he dies he's paid the punishment.

So did Jesus only die physically? Is physical death the punishment for sin? No. So if Jesus died only physically, then he has not paid the punishment for my sin. This is what I was trying to say to you earlier that I want to explain to you what the death of Christ really involves.

What is the punishment for sin? It is to be separated from God. That's what hell is. You know, the Bible speaks about hell as a place of fire and worms and all that.

I think Jesus uses picture language because those are the most terrible things by which we understand pain on the earth. To be burnt. Worms biting us all the time.

That's a picture of suffering on the earth. And Jesus used picture language because he can't explain to us spiritual things. And so he uses earthly language to explain to us that the suffering is intense.

Jesus used about weeping and gnashing of teeth. But the meaning is, the Lord is trying to portray to us that you are cut off from God for eternity. It's the most horrible punishment any human being can experience.

And when Christ hung on the cross, he was crucified at 9 o'clock in the morning. And at 12 noon, something began to happen. The sky was darkened.

The earth began to shake. It was like a thunderstorm and everything. For three hours, it was total darkness.

I believe it was pitch dark. And more than that, he cried out saying, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why have you cut me off? Why did he suffer there? In his own words, he was forsaken by his heavenly father for no crime that he had committed. He lived a perfect life.

Why should he be cut off? Why should I pay the \$200,000 for the crime my son committed? Because I loved him. Why should Jesus be cut off when I am the one who should be cut off? Because he loved me. Because he loved you.

He was actually cut off. And when he said, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He was literally forsaken. That was the greatest agony that he suffered on the cross.

The nails and the crown of thorns meant nothing compared to being forsaken by God. We don't understand that because we are not such spiritual beings. We are so carnal that even if you are not in fellowship with God for a whole day, it doesn't bother you.

But for Jesus, who had lived with the Father for all eternity, even to be cut off for a second was the most intense agony that you could ever think of. Now think if somebody took your head and wrenched it off. I think you would suffer some pain, right? Well, it's something like that.

Every picture we use is unable to present to us the agony of Christ's suffering for those three hours on the cross. And the other proof is throughout his life, if you read the Gospels, he always spoke to his Heavenly Father as Father. Whenever he prayed, he said, Father.

He taught his disciples to say, Father, Father, Father. Don't call him God. Call him Father.

In the Old Testament, they called him God because they couldn't know him as Father. But Jesus said in John 17, I have revealed your name to the disciples. What is that name? Father.

Nobody in the Old Testament in all of his entire life on earth, he called him Father except once when he hung on the cross, he said, My God, My God. Why didn't he say, My Father, My Father, why have you forsaken me like he normally spoke to his Father? Why did he use the expression, My God, My God? Because now he was not hanging there in the relationship he always had. He was now hanging there before the Judge of the Universe, paying the price for the sins you have committed and which you committed today and yesterday and last year and all your life and the sins I have committed.

He was hanging there before the Judge of the Universe saying, God, don't punish him, punish me. I'll take it. I'll pay the debt.

I know he's the one who owes you the debt but I'll take it, I'll pay it. And what a price it was. It wasn't money.

The Bible says, you are not redeemed with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ. He poured out his life. The Bible, there's a verse in Leviticus which says the life of the soul is in the blood and that life was poured out.

It wasn't just physical death. A person who never repents of his sin on earth faces the prospect of being eternally separated from God in what the Bible calls hell. Eternal.

And what Jesus suffered in those three hours on the cross was what you would suffer in eternity in hell. So the eternity in hell was concentrated into three hours on the cross and not just one person. The combined

suffering of billions of human beings for eternal ages in hell.

Take all of that concentrated into three hours on the cross. That's what Jesus suffered from 12 noon to 3 o'clock in the afternoon that day. It was so intense it's difficult to describe it.

I don't think we'll ever understand it till we see him face to face. I have tried for years. I mean I never understood all this when I first got converted.

When I first got converted all I knew about Christ was that he hung he was beaten he was hammered and I felt so sad that he did all that. But as as I came closer to God closer to the heart of God he revealed to me things that were inside his heart which were not obvious on the outside. You know when you're a superficial type of Christian you know God only superficially and the suffering of Christ on the cross you'll only only know in a few years how painful it must have been and et cetera et cetera.

But when you're a deep Christian seeking to get into the depths of God God will show you things that are in the depths of Christ's suffering on the cross which that's how he showed it to me. I mean after I'd been a Christian for 20 30 years after being born again Christian 20 30 years I began to understand what Christ suffered on the cross as I got closer to the heart of God that was the concentrated suffering of billions of people of all humanity no Hindus Muslims Christians here. Christ died for all human beings because all are sinners.

He doesn't look at people as different religions. Everyone has sinned. He took the concentrated punishment of all the sins of all humanity the suffering that billions of people would go through in hell for eternity concentrated into three hours hung there and he said my God my God why have you forsaken me.

Now listen to another thing. That was the only prayer of Jesus which did not get an answer. Do you know that every prayer of Jesus always got an answer immediately.

At the tomb of Lazarus he said Lazarus come forth and it didn't even take one minute for Lazarus that dead man to come out of the grave. His prayers were so powerful when he turned water into wine it was not a gradual process it was in a moment. His prayers were answered instantaneously.

There was never a delay for the prayers of Jesus to be answered because he lived his life so faithfully before his heavenly father. But there was one prayer of his which was never answered. He asked a question.

Why have you forsaken me. He wants an answer. When your little son comes and asks you daddy why did you do this.

Supposing you spank your child and he asks you daddy you spanked me why did you spank me. Are you going to tell him. Of course you'll tell him.

He's saying why have you forsaken me. No reply. Why.

Because when a man is forsaken by God God doesn't even speak to him. No God doesn't speak to anybody in hell. You know that.

He doesn't speak to anybody in hell. And when Jesus cried out there was no reply. There are so many things there on the cross that we haven't seen because we look at it so superficially.

We read the Bible so superficially. Our lives are so superficial. Our Christianity is so superficial.

But when we see all of this we see the depth of his love for us. Now go back a few hours to Gethsemane. A few hours before he hung on the cross.

Late at night he's praying in the garden of Gethsemane. Father take this cup away from me. I don't want to drink it.

I don't want to drink it. What was this cup which he did not want to drink. Was it physical death.

Can you imagine Jesus being afraid of physical death. I've read stories of martyrs in the first second century who went singing to the stake and when they were burned and the lions would come to eat them they would sing songs of praise. Can you imagine Jesus being a coward.

Oh father don't let me go to the cross. He would have been ready to go to a million calvaries any day. He was not scared.

There was something else. There was something else. He was not afraid of being put to shame.

He was not afraid of being hung up in an underwear on the cross and being despised and ridiculed. He was not afraid of any of those things. He was the most fearless man that ever walked on this earth.

But there was something else. He said father I don't want to drink this cup. You know what that cup was.

The break of fellowship with his father for three hours. Which he had enjoyed from all eternity. We don't understand.

That was the thing he loved the most. If you want to understand it in your terms think of what you value the most in your life. Is it your job? Is it being taken away? Would you pray oh God don't take it away.

Is it your bank account? Some hacker got into your bank account and rifled and took out your bank account. Lord don't let that happen. Is it your health? Lord don't take away my health.

Is it your marriage? There are so many things that are precious to us which we don't want to lose. You don't want to lose your marriage. You don't want to lose your children.

How many of you would want to lose your children in death? Oh no Lord don't take it away. Do you know what was most precious to Jesus? His fellowship with his father. Don't take him away.

That's how Jesus prayed. Don't let this fellowship between you and me break up. I can picture.

I'm using my imagination now in Gethsemane. It says he prayed there for one hour. Father does this fellowship between you and me have to be broken up? I know it's only for a short time but I don't want to lose it for even one second.

I can imagine the father telling him come straight up from Gethsemane to heaven come and be back with me forever but put your name there. But Zach will go to hell and Jesus thinks about me. Zach will go to hell.

Okay father I'll drink the cup. You know the first it was I think more nearly 20 years after I was born again that I understood this. I wept when I saw how much he loved me and I said Lord shame on me that I love

you so little that I serve you so little that I think I have made sacrifices for you.

I've never made any sacrifice for you in my life. Even if I live all my life and pour out my life in service for you it will be nothing compared to what you did for me. How selfishly I have lived on earth thinking of myself and my needs and my not understood how selflessly you lived on on earth for me.

But Zach will go to hell. Oh then I'll drink it. Put your name there.

It was for you. And he went to the cross and how do we know that he took my punishment. I want to know whether my debt is cleared.

I want to see a certificate that the almighty God has been cleared. The proof is here. At the end of three hours he said it is finished.

It's finished. The debt is cleared and his fellowship was restored with his father. How do we know that? Do you know his last words on the cross? Father into your hands I commend my spirit.

He didn't call him God now but back to the old relationship. Father So picture this in your mind. Always Jesus prayed father, father, father, father, father, father then suddenly a drop three hours he was God God, my God, my God and then back again father fellowship was restored.

That's how I know that my sins were paid for completely. It is finished. Three hours of concentrated suffering the hell I should experience he experienced.

He stood there my God, my God why have you forsaken me? No reply and then back again to fellowship with the father. It is finished. It's finished.

Zach doesn't have to go to hell. You don't have to go to hell. It's finished.

Your debt has been paid. Father into your hands I commend my spirit. And further proof of it is three days later came out of the grave.

Resurrection the proof that everything he said was true. Now I just want to add a word of clarification here. There are some charismatic people who teach that Jesus went to hell for three days to suffer our punishment.

That's a lot of rubbish. It is a lot of rubbish. There are some great preachers who preach that.

He went for three days to paradise. He told his thief on the cross today you'll be with me not in hell but in paradise. The thief went to paradise and he went to paradise too.

The other thief went to hell. I know that. But Jesus didn't tell the other thief I'm going to come with you.

He told the thief who was going to paradise I'm going to be with you today. So where did he go? He was in paradise for three days. Paradise was in the heart of the earth which in the Hebrew language is called Sheol in the Greek language is called Hades.

Unfortunately translated as hell in the King James Version but really the word is Hades a place of departed spirits which had two sections paradise and hell. Jesus went to the paradise section with the thief on the cross because the punishment is over on the cross. He didn't have to pay any more.

He said it's finished on the cross. There's nothing more to be done. I just add that as a word of clarification.

And he rose up from the dead came back into that body and was seen on earth for 40 days. If Jesus did not rise from the dead as I said in the beginning we Christians are the most miserable people on the face of the earth. We are the most deluded and we are not only deluded we are crooks going around promoting a religion which is just as false as any other.

Why do I believe the Christian faith is the only true faith in the world because of two things. There is only one person who ever walked this earth who even said that he came here to die for my sins. Who even said it and did it.

And there is only one human being that ever walked on this earth who rose from the dead never to die again. There were people who were raised from the dead who died again like Lazarus but conquered death. Conquered death means he never died again.

Lazarus did not conquer death. He was raised up and he died again. Death conquered him finally.

But Jesus conquered death. He rose from the dead and he's alive and he went up to heaven and when he went up to heaven he sent his spirit before he went up to heaven he told his disciples it's good for you that I go away. And they couldn't understand it.

They said how can it be good? I mean when he's there with us all our problems are solved. If there's a storm on the lake that's still if there's not enough food at a marriage feast that's supplied. Not enough bread and fish for everybody to eat that's supplied.

If somebody is sick he's healed. How can it be better for Jesus going away? And here's the explanation. That if Jesus was on earth it's only the people in Israel who could have been blessed.

The people in India would never have got it. Or the United States or anywhere else. But when he went up to heaven he sent his spirit and his spirit can be inside us wherever we live on the face of the earth.

It's like having Jesus in us. It is actually having Jesus in us. That when I open my heart to the Holy Spirit it's exactly the same as Christ not just being with me but in me.

It's even better than being with me. So that this Christ could never come and live with me if he had not risen from the dead. He died and he rose again.

Those are the two things which are the foundation of the Christian life of the Christian faith. You remove those two things we got a sand foundation. And that is why I say the only foundation on which I want to build my life and my home and my church and my family is this foundation.

Christ died and rose again from the dead. Conquered death. See death is man's greatest enemy.

Of all the fears we have on in our life the greatest fear is the fear of death. We have fear of losing our jobs. We have fear of sickness.

We have fear of financial crisis. We have so many fears but at the top of it all the greatest fear of all is the fear of death. We fight that and fight that more than anything else.

And the Bible says that Jesus has come to deliver us from the fear of death and when he delivers us from the fear of death he delivers us from all the inferior fears as well. He comes to live in us to enable us to share in his triumph. And if we are Christians if we have received this Christ and this Holy Spirit into our hearts do you know my brother, sister what is your greatest responsibility now? It is to demonstrate by your life that Christ is living.

To speak words anybody can speak words. But to demonstrate by your life that this Jesus who walked the streets in Israel 2000 years ago who died is risen again and has come to live in me. He is living and he lives in me.

I talk to him he talks to me. He guides me along life's pathway. There is no problem that this Jesus cannot solve.

Absolutely none. He may not always solve it the way I think he should but his solution is always the best. He is triumphant and he loves me so much that the Bible says he controls all the circumstances of my life.

It's amazing. He brings me into a very blessed position of being an object of God's care. It's not just me you too.

If you surrender your life to him see one of the wonderful things about God is that he doesn't take away our free will. Never. If you don't want to yield to him he won't force his way into your heart.

He is a thorough gentleman. He says I stand at the door and knock the door of your heart. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I'll come in.

He doesn't barge his way into people's lives if they don't want him. He's not a thief. He's not a burglar.

He's a gentleman. He knocks at the door of your heart. Can I come into your life? Can I run your life? Say no Lord no thank you.

Not really. Okay. He'll go away.

I guarantee he'll go away because he respects your free will. And when he comes in he doesn't occupy every room. He knocks at every room and he will only occupy those rooms you give to him.

Do you know what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit? I'll picture it for you. Think of a hotel building with say 500 rooms on the bank of a river and you're seeing looking at that hotel from the other side of the river and you look at the hotel none of the rooms are occupied. There's no light in any room except one little room there's light.

And if I were to ask you a question is there light in that hotel? Yes. Is the hotel filled with light? No. Our heart is like a house with a 500 rooms.

I can ask Jesus to come into one of those rooms. Lord forgive my sin come into my heart. Has he come in? He has.

Are you filled with the Spirit? No. That depends on whether you open the door of the other rooms to him and let him in. Will you allow him to look through all the books you're reading and throw away the ones which he thinks you should not read? Will you allow him to control the remote on your television and tell you the channels you should not look at? The R-rated movies that he wants you to throw out? See we

don't want him to come and interfere in those areas and he will not.

That room will remain in darkness. That one area of your life will be darkness or some financial area where you don't want him to come and tell you how you should handle your money and all. That area will be darkness in your life.

Wherever he comes in there's light. Many Christians have got one room in their heart. They live in darkness because they don't open their hearts to the light of the world.

Years ago I read a little poem which went something like this that if Jesus one day came to your house how would you respond? I mean picture this in your mind that one day you hear a knock on your door and as you open the door you go is Jesus himself standing there? Amazing. And he says can I come and spend a couple of days with you? What will you say? Of course Lord. Sure.

Please come in. And you welcome him. You give him your best room.

You give him the best food. Won't you do that? Of course. But I think you'll speak a little kindly to your wife that day and you won't yell at your children so much.

And you may not watch certain television programs that day which you normally watch. You may like to hide some books which are lying around some magazines and all. There will be certain modifications in your house that day.

You know the way you speak and the way you many things because Jesus is in the house. And after two days of this strenuous way of living he comes and says okay I'm going now. Of course you say no no no Lord.

Don't go. But he says no I have to go and he goes away. What do you say? Now I can relax and live the way I normally live.

Now I can watch those movies again which I couldn't watch when Jesus was here. Now I can speak to my wife the way I always speak to her or to my husband. We say Christ is the head of this house.

He lives here. Does he really live in your house? Do we want him? If we want him he'll come. If I sit and watch a television program I ask myself can Jesus sit here and watch that with me? If not I don't want to see it.

I don't care how interesting it is or on the internet particularly. The internet is worse than television. With a click of your mouse you can go so many places where Jesus doesn't want you to go.

But if you yield to him it's the most wonderful life you can ever live because he'll clean up your life. You know many Christians are living in a pretty messy house. I'm sure if I were to come to your house many of you you've got houses that are so spick and span you love to keep it clean everything in order and tidy but is your heart like that? Is your heart as clean as your house is? Areas of your life are they clean? Imagine if you had a sitting room where there was garbage piled up stinking filthy garbage.

Is it possible that your heart is somewhat like that? With all types of bad thoughts about other people people you have not forgiven filthy lustful thoughts that wander around it's garbage. Wrong things that you do and say words that are evil and hurtful garbage. Imagine a sitting room full of garbage.

How many of us believe that our heart is more important than our home? Your home will perish one day no matter how neat and tidy you make it. Your heart is what is going to remain forever. Keep it clean.

That's why Jesus died. That's why he said in Gethsemane okay father I'll drink that cup. It was for you.

When I realized these things I said Lord I want to spend my life serving you. I don't want to live for anything on this earth. I don't want comfort.

I will ask for nothing except the joy and privilege and honor of living for you and accomplishing your will on this earth and sharing these wonderful truths with people everywhere. You can have that too. Don't you think Christ did that much for you? You may not be able to preach like me.

That's a gift. But you can share with your friends. There was a young man in one of our churches in India who was once speaking in a meeting and said God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And he said all of us have a little world of people whom only we know. It's true of everybody sitting here. There are certain people in this world whom only you know.

Nobody else in this room knows them. People you meet at work, some of your relatives, nobody else here knows them. That is your little world.

God so loved that little world that he sent you, his son, his daughter, into that little world to share this wonderful news about Christ's death and resurrection with them so that they may not perish but have everlasting life. Do you know that it is the greatest honor you can ever have to be a representative of this wonderful God in that little world of people whom you know, people who will never come and sit in a room and listen to me but you know them and you meet them very often. Tell them about this wonderful Savior.

Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before the Lord and if you have never surrendered your life to Christ, if you are just a Christian by name, I invite you today to say Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. I am the sinner for whom you hung on the cross and were forsaken.

I want you to forgive my sin. Thank you for dying for me Lord. Come into my heart and forgive me and cleanse me.

Give me a clean heart and fill me with your Holy Spirit. I want to surrender every area of my life to you and if you are a Christian who has accepted Christ but allowed him to come only into one or two rooms of your heart, open every room in your heart and say Lord I want you to be totally Lord of my life from today, of my home, of my family, of my business, my work, my thoughts. I want you to be Lord of the television programs, the movies I watch.

I want you to be Lord of every area of my life 24 hours a day. It is the secret of a very happy Christian life. I pray Lord that you will help those who are calling out to you at this time.

You know those who have been convicted by the Holy Spirit this evening. Don't let them shake off that conviction. I pray they will respond.

They will not fight with your spirit but will surrender to your spirit. They will not be deceived by the devil anymore. They will surrender to your spirit and say Lord I come to you.

Lord Jesus answer prayer tonight. In Jesus name. Amen.

Thank you my friends. .

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