

Easter on Friday

Matthew 27:45-55

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Peter Hiett is a coward.

In junior high, I wouldn't use the bathroom for fear of the kids that smoked in there. Almost blew a valve several times. How many of you guys held it all day, seventh grade in junior high? (You can tell me; I understand.)

In second grade, I was terrified of the bus stop, and it was in my front yard. I still remember my little sister, Rachel, putting her hands on her hips and threatening the bullies, yelling, "You leave my brother alone or I'll beat you up!" (Dang that was emasculating. It's a wonder I fathered four children.)

I'm not sure if it was the pain I was scared of so much as the darkness. The idea someone hated me was terrifying... darkness.

In the basement I'd turn off the lights, then run up the stairs 'cause I was afraid of the dark. Peter Hiett... chief of cowards.

I think that's why I've always loved movies. You can go to a movie, lose your sorry self, and find yourself in the life story of courageous hero. For a few minutes you can be Superman, Davy Crockett, or James Bond.

You know every story, every movie (except documentaries perhaps) has a protagonist, an antagonist, and a mystical power called "the plot." The plot is the logic, the meaning, the reason of the story.

Everything that appears in a movie serves the plot and so works for the good... the good story.

Even tragedies are like a longing for a good story. Even dark movies can only be dark because they make you long for the light, hope for justice, redemption, reconciliation, and restoration... the plot, the good story, that is Gospel.

The scariest, darkest movie I ever saw was in college. It was this movie called The Entity. Supposedly, it was something of a documentary, a report on events that really happened. It was about a woman who was repeatedly raped by evil spirits. Scientists and counselors all documented its occurrence, and no one could do anything to stop it.

That's where it ended.

Everyone in the theater scared to death
(especially me).

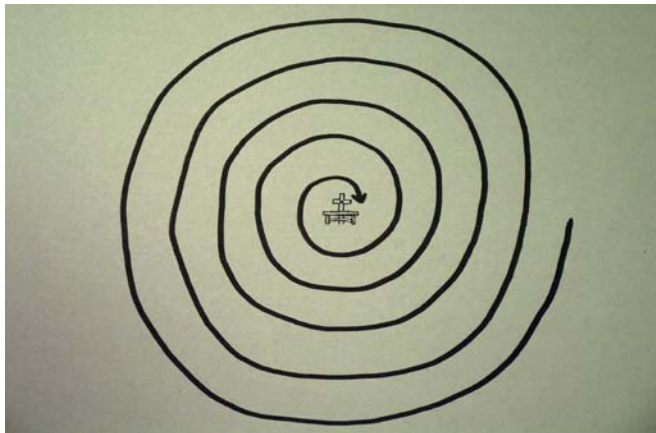
Everyone in the theater longing for a redeemer
courageous enough to descend into that pit
and conquer, no matter what the cost.
Everyone longing for the plot, new meaning...
Gospel.

Matthew 27:45,

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him

to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

We're at the center of all things. Remember this?



We're at the center.

Paul writes, "In him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

All things on earth and in heaven are caught in this vortex. All things, and on the other side of this cross, the new creation, the lamb on the throne who says, “Behold, I make all things new.”

All things... and God, somehow, for Paul writes “the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Him,” and “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.”

So on that cross was crucified Love and Light, Way, Truth, and Life, Word... the Word that makes and upholds all things. The Logos, the Logic, the Meaning, the Reason, the Plot.

All meaning—God’s meaning—was passing through that cross somehow.¹ All things are getting sucked into that cross. And all meaning is coming out of that cross as the new creation.

So it’s insane to preach ‘cause everything’s here. Every sermon ever preached is about this. This is the hermeneutical center of all scripture and all reality.² It’s the

¹ The cosmic Christ was being crucified in history, in flesh. Sometimes people latch on to the idea of the cosmic Christ so they can turn Jesus into a “mere idea,” like a nebulous gas and do what they want. Sometimes people latch onto the idea of the historical Christ so they can confess Jesus, possess Jesus, and judge others out of their club. At the cross, the cosmic Christ—Creator, Sustainer, Way, Truth, and Life—was crucified in space and time in history. He is Jesus of Nazareth. He is the Meaning, the Plot.

² If you start somewhere else in scripture and ignore this, you’ll end up with the Inquisition, the Crusades, or the folks from Westbrook Baptist on the steps of the capital yelling, “God hates fags,” and “God hates the marines,” and “God hates the U.S.A.” Yet this is the meaning of all things, “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Romans 5:6, that at the right time “Christ died for the ungodly.” It’s insane to preach, ‘cause everything’s here, and it’s insane to preach because it’s the meaning of all things.

meaning of all things.

How can we ask, “What does it mean?” when it is the meaning of all things?³

Then, in the middle of our text, Jesus cries, “My God, My God, why?” If Jesus, the Way, Truth, and Life asks, “Why?” surely we should be a bit humble about claiming to have the answer to why? The Meaning asks, “Why?”.

That’s terrifying if you think faith is all about getting answers, like picking fruit from a tree of knowledge.

Yet it’s incredibly encouraging if you think faith is about relationship, that is, trusting a person. For it means this Person nailed to this tree is with us and knows us. The Answer, the Way, the Truth, the Life is with us... Emmanuel.

He is with us. The *answer* is helping us ask the *questions*. He didn’t always ask, “Why?” but on the cross He sounds like us asking, “Why?”⁴

³ The cross is the revelation of God’s heart. Karl Rahner said, “The task of the theologian is to explain everything through God, and to explain God as unexplainable.” At the cross God says, “This is my heart. This is what I mean. In this is love. I am love.” So I’m a tour guide. The tour guide can’t explain the beauty of the Mona Lisa, just try to point it out. The park ranger can’t explain the wonder of the Grand Canyon, just try to point it out.

⁴ He’s with us asking, “Why God? Why this pain, suffering, heartache? What is the meaning of life and death? Why is Way, Truth, and Life crucified? Why has beauty, goodness, and love forsaken us?” Theologians debate whether or not God really forsook Christ or whether that was only His perception because of our sin. Whatever the case, he suffered horrifically more than any of us, and yet we taste His suffering. We feel His words. Why God?

Theologians ask, “Why? Why is the cross necessary? And what is the meaning of the cross?” They argue over theories of the atonement. Atonement basically mean “At-one-ment.”

So how does the cross make us “at one” with God? And what does it mean?

When I went to seminary, I figured we had it all figured out. I was surprised to find that folks had been debating this for two thousand years: “Why the cross?” and “What does it mean?”

In the second century A.D., Iraneous advanced what’s know as the **Recapitulation Theory**: The idea that Christ went through all the stages of Adam’s life, yet without sin. He “recapitulated” it.

That’s interesting for in verse 45, we have “darkness over all the land” like in Genesis 1. And there is a tree, a tree of law. And there is an Adam. He’s nailed to that tree.

And He is the “perfect image of the invisible God.” On the sixth day of creation God said, “Let us make man in our own image and likeness.” Then He rested on the seventh.

This is Friday, the sixth day at the sixth hour.⁵ And the ultimate, the eschatos Adam is nailed to a tree for His bride in front of His bride, Jerusalem. We are His bride, Adam’s bride.

The ultimate Adam is dying on the tree of law for love of Eve. Eve is deceived. In fear, she has entered into an evil covenant with death and Sheol.

⁵ If Jesus rises Sunday morning about 7 a.m., He will have been dead for 40 hours, spread over three days. Numbers matter in scripture.

Jesus reminds me of Westley (the man in black) in The Princess Bride, who survives the fire swamp and descends into the pit of despair for the love of his unfaithful bride, Buttercup.

[Peter shows a clip from The Princess Bride.]

[The evil Prince Humperdinck has captured Westley. Westley is deep in the ground in a chamber called “The Pit of Despair” where the evil prince has placed him on “The Machine.” The Machine is designed for torture. It has not been used yet past the second level of torture.]

Prince Humperdinck [in a rage]: You truly love each other, and so you might have been truly happy. Not one couple in a century has that chance, no matter what the storybooks say. And so I think no man in a century will suffer as greatly as you will.

[And with that he whirls, turns on The Machine, grabs the lever and --]

Count Rugen [the prince’s evil accomplice]: Not to fifty!!!

[Prince Humperdinck shoves the lever all the way up to 50, the highest level. Westley screams in agony. His scream is so loud and agonizing it is heard in the forest and in the streets where the crowd stops and listens. It’s heard in the castle. Buttercup hears it as she prepares to marry Humperdinck. The scream reaches the marketplace where Westley’s friends, Inigo and Fezzik, stop and listen.]

Inigo: Fezzik, Fezzik, listen, do you hear? That is the sound of ultimate suffering. My heart made that sound when Rugen slaughtered my father. The Man in Black makes it now.

Fezzik: The Man in Black?

Inigo: His true love is marrying another tonight, so who else has cause for Ultimate Suffering?

Verse 45,

Now from the sixth hour [which is noon. . .

[So this is the day of the Lord as prophesied by Amos, “On that day I will make the sun go down at noon

and darken the day in broad daylight.” From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness.] Then Jesus cries, “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*”

Scholars debate whether or not God really forsook Jesus or if, wrapped in our hell, Jesus could no longer perceive God. I’m not sure there’s a difference.

Whatever the case, this is the sound of ultimate suffering. God the Son calling to God the Father from the pit of despair.

Jesus experienced something that we will never have to, and yet we taste it, for our souls have been trapped in death and Sheol. Like Isaiah reveals, we’re the bride trapped in “a covenant with death and Sheol,” and we don’t know we’re dead.

Well, Jesus speaks what we all most deeply fear, and are too scared to utter: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

In What Dreams May Come, Robin Williams plays a man named Christy. He dies and goes to heaven but an angel tells him his wife is trapped in hell. Blaming herself for her children’s death and her husband’s death, she had committed suicide.

The angel says, “Hell is for those who don’t know they’re dead.”

She’s trapped in her own despair, unable to recognize another soul, unable to perceive love.

Christy obtains a guide and finds his bride in hell. But she won’t remember him, so he makes a decision and comes out of her compartment in hell to inform his guide.

[A clip is shown from [What Dreams May Come](#).]

Guide: Nothing you could do could ever help her. This trip was always just for you. Did you come close?

Christy: To losing it? Oh, yeah. I had pushed it right to the edge. That's why I had to come out now. So, yeah... I'm giving up... Just not the way you think... Go home, Al. Please tell my children I love them, and I won't leave their mother. Thanks. [Christ re-enters his wife's chamber in hell and closes the door.]

[Next scene: Christy is at the feet of his bride, talking to her. She looks very scared and confused. It's obvious she does not recognize him.]

Christy: Where are we headed, babe? In one minute I won't know you any better than you'll know me. But we'll be together... where we belong. Good people end up in hell because they can't forgive themselves. I know I can't, but I can forgive you.

Bride: For killing my children? And my sweet husband?

Christy: For being so wonderful a guy would choose hell over heaven, just to hang around you.

Because Christ-y chooses to be with her, she begins to remember love and life. He helps her confess. He helps her repent, and they rise together to heaven.

Well, that's what theologians call **The Theory of Vicarious Repentance**. It's the idea that our souls are trapped in death, unaware we're dead. So Jesus descends and repents on our behalf.

You know that Jesus' cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" is the first line of Psalm 22 written by King David which goes on to say,

"They mock me. . ."

"I am a worm and no man. . ."

"My heart is melted in my chest. . ." Yet,

"Save me. . ." and "He has heard. . ." and

"Before him shall bow all who go down to the dust."

It's a cry of faith from the pit of Sheol.

Psalm 22, they are David's words, and yet they are God's words, Christ's words (the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world).

So on a cross in 30 A.D., Jesus descended into King David's hell and helped David speak these words of confession and faith sometime around 1,000 B.C.

Jesus helped David repent. Jesus is "the Helper." Remember how Sam helped Frodo repent of his ring of power and surrender his old man, his golem, to the fires of Mount Doom?

Well, Jesus-Adam is Eve's "helper," our helper, our parakletos.

Remember how Jesus said to John and the disciples, "I must go away, John. Where I'm going you cannot come now. No following now. But I will send another helper." They know this "helper" for it is Christ's very Spirit.

He said if He didn't go, this "Helper" would not come.

Verse 50,

*And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice
and yielded up his spirit.*

His Spirit is the Holy Spirit. His Spirit rains down on His church... like this:

[A clip from [The Iron Giant](#) is shown.]

Giant: Hogarth, you stay; I go. No following.

Hogarth: I love you.

[The Giant blasts off into outer space toward a rocket that is going to destroy the earth.]

The Giant hears Hogarth's voice in his mind: You are what you choose to be.

Giant: Superman.

[The Giant intercepts the nuclear warhead and both explode.]

Remember, they were trying to kill the Iron Giant, but the Iron Giant chose to die for Hogarth and this evil world. He chose to be “Superman,” that is, “Eschatos Adam,” “Ultimate Adam,” Last Adam.”

“As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive,” wrote Paul. “The first Adam became a living being. The last Adam [Eschatos Adam] became a life giving spirit.”

The body of the Iron Giant (Superman) rains down all over the earth. Hogarth gets one bolt that he keeps in his room.

At the end of the movie, all the pieces from all over the world come to life and start moving toward the head. The head sits on an ice field in Greenland. All at once the giant opens his eyes and the movie ends. But we know, his body is coming back together. He lives.

I know it’s dorky, but I can’t watch the end of that movie without weeping for we are Christ’s body, animated by His Spirit. At His death He descended into us and is bringing us together in harmony with Himself, the Head, for He has made us His body.

That’s **The Mystical Theory** and **The Federal Theory**. We are His body and His blood, fruit of His death. Fruit from the seed dropped into this world that bears the harvest of the earth... faith and mercy, body and blood, like fruit from some amazing tree or fruit from a vine and He is the vine. Israel had been God’s vineyard, but now they gave only sour wine. Jesus is making new wine.

Well, that’s a bit like Peter Abelard’s **Moral Theory** from the Middle Ages and **The Example Theory**

from the time of The Reformation, that Christ's death was a moral example to produce faith and mercy.

Many view that as "liberal" and lacking in substance. Yet "faith is the substance of things hoped for," and God is mercy.

Ideas change the world, and Jesus is the idea, the logos, the meaning of God. Where Christians die like Christ, the church grows like wild fire as in ancient Rome and now in places like China.

The cross is where the idea of God, Logic of God, Meaning of God is revealed, where the brave heart of God is ripped open and exposed like this...

[A clip from [Braveheart](#) is shown.]

[William Wallace has been captured by the British and is tortured by the Magistrate on a device shaped like a cross. There is a large crowd watching the execution. The Magistrate and the crowd are goading Wallace to beg for mercy.]

Magistrate: The prisoner wishes to say a word.

Wallace [struggling to speak, gathers all of his remaining strength to say]: FREEDOM!!!!

William Wallace is tortured and dies on a cross for all of Scotland to see. Then you hear his voice,
In the year of our Lord 1314, patriots of Scotland, starving and outnumbered, charged the fields of Bannockburn. They fought like warrior poets. They fought like Scotsmen. And won their freedom.

Verse 50,

Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold the curtain in the temple was ripped from top to bottom.

God tore it.

On Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, the High Priest would go behind that curtain to make sacrifices and offerings, sprinkling the blood of bulls and goats on the mercy seat, the top of the ark. It was like the throne of God on earth.

If the priest messed up, he died in the inner sanctuary. See, the mercy seat was also, like, the judgment seat.

When the curtain ripped, it exposed the world to judgment. And the judgment is mercy.

Jesus said, "Now is this world judged."

His cross is the substance of the law, judgment. It is the revelation of love. Surrender to His love, and you're saved; reject it, and it burns you. You're judged and eventually destroyed.

Paul writes that God made Christ our mercy seat. We will all stand or have stood before the judgment seat of Christ, the cross.

On Yom Kippur, to avoid death and to atone for the ritual sins of the people, the priest would take one of two goats and confess the sins of Israel over it, and then send it with those sins into the wilderness of Azazel—the void of Satan, death and Hades.

As we've preached, Jesus made Himself our scapegoat. He bears our sin to hell. In Revelation 14, death and hell are thrown into the Lake of Fire.

So God reveals our sin in Jesus and bears our sin in Jesus to the fire.

Justice, which is love, demands that sin be terminated, but the Justifier, who is love chooses to be terminated in our place.

[A clip from [Terminator 2, Judgment Day](#) is shown.]

[They have just defeated all the other cyborgs.]

Sarah: It's over.

Terminator: No. There is one more chip.

[He touches a metal finger to the side of his head.]

Terminator: And it must be destroyed also.

[The Terminator hands the controls to Sarah.]

Terminator: Here. I cannot self terminate. You must lower me into the steel.

John: No, no!

Terminator: I'm sorry, John.

John: No, no no!! It'll be okay. Stay with us!

Terminator: I have to go away, John.

John: Don't do it. Please... don't go --

Terminator: I must go away, John.

[Then we see the Terminator being lowered into the molten steel. It is a lake of fire. He disappears... the metal hand sinking last. At the last second it forms into a fist with the thumb extended... a final thumbs up. Then it is gone.]

I'd vote for him.

That's [Terminator 2, Judgment Day](#).

Jesus, the judgment, is the goat that bears our sins to destruction. That is, He is our **expiation** who takes away our sin.

And Jesus, the judgment, is the spotless goat, lamb, and bull that is our pleasing offering to the Father in the temple. God gives us the gift He longs for us to give to Himself. His love poured out, Jesus. That is to say, Jesus is our **propitiation**, our gift to the Father.

So then Jesus bears what we could not bear. He became the curse. He became “sin for us,” writes Paul. And Jesus does what we could not do... He became the perfect offering of love.

Expiation, propitiation, justification, and reconciliation as the curtain dividing mankind from the holy God was rent from top to bottom.

The book of Hebrews says His broken body is that broken curtain. That’s the doctrine of **vicarious** or **substitutionary atonement, The Satisfaction Theory.**

He gave His life for us,

Like Jack gave his life for Rose in Titanic,

sinking into the deep,

Like Frodo in Mount Doom,

Like the Bishop in Les Miserables,

Like John Coffee in Green Mile,

Like this...

[A clip is shown from Hercules.]

[Meg, the love of Hercules, has been thrown into The Underworld. She is dead, in the realm of Hades. Hercules approaches Hades.]

Hercules: You like making deals. Take me in Meg's place.

Hades: Oh, well. The son of my hated rival trapped forever in a river of death.

Hercules: Going once!

Hades: Hmm. Is there a downside to this?

Hercules: Going twice!

Hades: Okay, okay, okay, okay. You get her out - she goes, you stay.

[Hercules dives]

Hades: Oh, you know what slipped my mind? You'll be dead before you can get to her. That's not a problem, is it?

[Hercules swims, turning older and older. Atropos goes to cut the thread of life, but it suddenly shines, and the scissors don't cut it.]

Atropos: Oh?

Lachesis: What's the matter with these scissors?

Clotho: The thread won't cut.

[Shining, Hercules rises from the river of death with the soul of Meg]

Hades: This is-- this is impossible! You, you, you can't be alive! You'd have to be a, a—

Pain and Panic: A god?

Hades: Aaaaaah! Hercules, stop! You can't do this to me. You can't--

[Hercules hits him in the face]

Hades: Fine, okay, listen. Hah! Okay, well, I deserved that. . .

Verse 51,

*The curtain is rent. The earth shakes and the
rocks are rent.*

Below the rocks in the earth were the tombs—the graves, the realm of the dead, Sheol and Hades, the pit.

Paul writes, “God disarmed the principalities and powers. . . by cancelling our certificate of debt at the cross.” Jesus said, “The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many.”

The third century church father, Origin, developed **The Ransom to Satan Theory of the Atonement**... that Satan held people captive in hell until God paid the ransom to Satan.

Many disagree with that theory saying the ransom wouldn't be paid to Satan but to God. Well, to whomever the ransom is paid, it's paid in blood... God's blood.

So God pays God with God...
 His own blood, and
 God pays Satan with God,
 blood that is life , that is fire.
 If God pays Satan,
 Satan hates the payment
 for God pays the Prince of Darkness
 with light, life, and fire.

Remember this? Neo Anderson, the son of man,
 descends into the pit to battle the Smith (the ravager, Isaiah
 54:16) in order to free the Matrix, the world, from evil.

[A clip from [The Matrix Revolution](#) is shown.]

[Neo is shown strapped to the machine through which he enters the Matrix. In the Matrix, he is fighting Smith. They have descended into a pit in the rain. For some reason Neo stops fighting and allows Smith to lunge his fist into Neo's heart. From that point where Smith's arm has penetrated Neo's chest, a black ooze from Smith envelopes Neo and turns him into a "Smith.." Smith has already infected the whole Matrix with himself. Thousands of "Smiths" stand watching.]

Smith: Is it over?

[Neo/Smith nods. The screen flashes between Neo's body strapped in the shape of a cross on the machine and Neo/Smith.]

[Neo/Smith twitches.]

[Neo's body and the machine begin to glow with a bright light. Neo's body arcs as if electricity is running through his body. Neo screams in agony as the light grows more intense.]

[Light begins to break through from behind Neo/Smith's black glasses. Smith looks worried.]

Smith: Oh, no, no. No, it's not fair.

[Light bursts through Neo/Smith until he explodes. Smith sees the other Smiths standing behind where Neo/Smith just exploded. They all start to glow with light just as Neo/Smith did. Smith, himself, begins to fill

with light and then explodes. The whole Matrix is enveloped with light and transformed.]

[The final scene shows Neo lying limp on the machine. A voice says, "It is done."]

Having battled Satan for thousands of years, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Christ absorbed the sin of this world into Himself, and death and hell absorbed Christ into them. And Jesus broke the gates of hell from the inside out.⁶

Peter writes that Jesus descended to the spirits in prison. Who did not obey in the days of Noah. That is, they did not get on the ark in order to be saved. The ark is a picture of Christ, and now Christ preaches to them in prison. He preaches to the dead.

Paul writes that Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth and led a host of captives free, like a

⁶ Jesus conquered death and with His blood purchased The Potter's Field in the Valley of Gehenna where "the worm never dies," and "the flame is not quenched." I believe He is the flame that is not quenched that issues from the mouth of God and ignites Gehenna. In Psalm 22 He even says, "I am a worm." Worms recycle dead matter, turning it into the raw material for life. Doctors now use worms to clean wounds of dead flesh. In the Hebrew this word for "worm" is also translated scarlet. From this worm the Hebrews got their red dye. It's one word. The veil was made with scarlet and Hebrews says the veil is Christ's flesh. Scarlet is all over the tabernacle and the priests used scarlet yarn. To cleanse people of evil. A friend emailed me with a vision two weeks ago. It involved worms making soil. She said the Lord wants you to know the worms are pure. Well, when these scarlet worms are done feeding, they don't die. They turn into moths, like butterflies. Whatever that means I believe Jesus is Lord over hell. So even if I make my bed in Sheol (hell), even there (in the words of David) "his right hand will hold me." He descends into Hades and at the cross He blows the doors open. No place is beyond His reach.

conquering warrior.

Many argue that this was the dominant idea for the first thousand years of church history, more than the idea of vicarious atonement, the idea of **Christus Victor**... Christ the Victor.

So just as the temple sacrifices foreshadow Christ's sacrifice on the cross, Moses, Joshua, and the Jews' conquest of the land foreshadowed Christ's conquest of the land of death and hell... Christ's victory.

In The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, death is conquered because the evil queen does not know and cannot perceive the deep magic, and so she kills the wrong person—Aslan the Lion.

Satan cannot perceive or comprehend the deep magic Who is Love.

In 395 A.D. Gregory of Nyssa said that “Christ's divinity was hidden under His humanity like a fish hook under bait, and Satan, like a ravenous fish, gulped it down.”

Satan gulped Jesus down, gulped light into darkness, truth into lies, life into death. He couldn't comprehend the ransom and gulped Him down. The dragon gulped Jesus down like this...

[A clip from Men in Black is shown.]

[K and J are battling a giant, dragon-like cockroach. The cockroach eats their guns and flings K and J backwards. They fall to the ground.]

J: That did not go at all the way I planned.

K: All right. Whatever happens, don't let him get on the second ship.

J: What? What are you talkin' about?

K: Keep him on this planet.

J: Okay.

[K gets up and starts to move toward the giant cockroach.]

J: K, where you goin'?

K: I'm gonna get my gun back.

[K goes up to the cockroach and starts taunting him.]

K: Hey, hey, bug, wait a minute. I'm talkin' to you. Do you know how many of your kind I've swatted with a newspaper? You're nothin' but a slimy, gut-sucking, intestinal parasite. Eat me. Eat me!

[The giant cockroach eats K in one gulp.]

J: K! K!

[K is shown swimming through the inside of the giant cockroach. The cockroach then turns menacingly to J.]

J: You need to ease up outa my face 'for somethin' bad happen to you.

[J hears K's gun.]

J: Too late.

[K shoots the giant cockroach from the inside. The cockroach is blown up, and K and J are blown to the ground, covered in slime.]

That's Easter! That's Easter! I've been waitin' to show that clip for, like, five years. That's Easter!

You know, we ask, "Why the cross? What is the meaning of the cross?" Scholars debate and argue with each other as if it can only be one thing but not another.

We ask, "What is the meaning of Jesus Christ and Him crucified?" and lo and behold "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" is the meaning of all things.

It is the foundation of all reality.

The hermeneutic of all creation.

It is all that we dream of.

It is faith, hope, and love.

You see, it is the plot of every movie

The meaning in every story.

The beauty in every picture.
 The life in every creature.
 The rhythm in every song.
 The logic in every
 thought.
 The truth in
 every word.

The cross is the revelation of the Word through whom all
 things were made, are made, and are sustained.

It's the revelation of the Logos, the revelation of the heart
 of God.

It's the revelation of what God is saying with every atom of
 creation,

And what He is saying is love.

"In this is love."

And I love you.

In a word, Jesus.

And He always wins,

Even when He loses,

Especially when He loses, He wins.

He is love, and love wins.

He wins everywhere, every when, and every how.

[A clip from [The Passion of Christ](#) is shown.]

[A close-up is shown of Jesus' battered and bloody face as He hangs on
 the cross. Jesus breathes His last. His head drops, and He dies.

The scene is then shown from the Father's perspective in heaven. The
 crucifixion scene becomes blurry as it is seen through a tear from the
 Father's eye. The path of the tear is followed as it travels past Jesus'
 hanging body and falls to the ground.

As the tear crashes to the earth, the scene changes. Satan is shown on
 parched, desolate ground. As the camera moves back, the scene is

recognizable as the circle where the crucifixion took place. It is now a desolate pit. Satan continues to scream as the scene fades to black.]

Verse 51,

The veil ripped, and the earth ripped.

Verse 52,

The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

“They went into the holy city...” that’s a phrase in the New Testament used primarily for the new Jerusalem.

Hebrews 12 says that we’ve come to the new Jerusalem in Christ.

Jesus said to the thief next to Him, “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

In John 5 Jesus says,

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. Do not marvel at this for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out. Those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Jesus said His death was “the judgment.” Sheep and goats, great white throne, all judgments happen at the cross. At the cross, eternity invades time.

So if you come to the cross and believe, you do not “enter into judgment but pass from death to life,” (John 5:24). You have Christ’s eternal life in you.

Hebrews 9 tells us Christ “suffered once at the end of the ages [the aions] for the putting away of sin.”

That means the end of the ages was in 30 A.D. on a Friday.

So come to the cross in faith, and you can live with Easter power and Easter courage in this “aion,” this age, this Friday.

The veil was ripped and the earth was ripped and the tombs were opened on Friday. Your tomb can be opened on Friday, and you can begin to live even now. Eternal life now in the land of the dead.

Freedom.

Courage.

When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!” There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and Mary the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

They were the strange women at the cross. They could have been beaten, raped, or killed by the mob or the Romans. I don’t think we can over-emphasize their courage. All the disciples had fled, filled with fear. Even

the centurion was filled with fear (it was the beginning of wisdom, but it was still fear).

But these women appear to have very little fear. At the cross they were crucified with Christ. At the tomb it was to them that Christ would first appear saying, "Have no fear."

Several years ago my wife and I were praying for a strange woman, my good friend who's come out of years of Satanic ritual abuse, and who is now a gorgeous picture of the Bride of Christ.

Over the years we had prayed through various levels of bondage as she would remember and re-live the most horrid situations. But each time Jesus, her Groom (Ultimate Adam) was with her.

There is no pit deeper than His love. Call to Him, and you'll see that He's been there with you all along ever since that eternal Friday in 30 A.D.

Well, we'd worked through many levels and cast off many demons over the years, and then we began to encounter Satan. (I know that may be hard to believe. It was hard for me to believe.) But he'd come and go. At moments as we'd pray and struggle, he would manifest using her body.

Well, something happened in my office several years ago that changed my life. My friend has given me permission to share her story, but this really isn't even about her, but me.

She was unaware of what was happening at this point. But after a stream of lies, curses, and threats from the evil one, and after Jesus had revealed His presence to her in the pit and flooded her dungeon with His truth, love, and mercy... After a long battle, Satan was cowering in the corner of my office in her body. I was standing over Satan with a communion cup of wine.

The blood of Christ, life of Christ burns Satan like fire. It is fire.

I was telling Satan to leave, and I'd just burned him by making the sign of the cross on her forehead with the wine. I was so angry at what he'd done to her, I screamed, "Jesus wins, doesn't He?!"

And with this utterly agonized voice I heard him moan as he left. He groaned, "Jesus always wins!" She gagged and coughed, and he was gone.

Satan is a very poor source of information. There is no truth in him, but in that moment I think truth was forced through him like a sword through his bloodless gut come out his mouth. For the Truth is Jesus, and He always wins.

"The Lamb, the slaughtered Lamb on the throne conquers," and

"Jesus always leads us in triumph," writes Paul,
and "we are more than conquerors through
Him who loved us."

Scholars debate the theories of the atonement, why Jesus had to die on the cross. I think my favorite theory is that He died on the cross

to go get Kavitha in the slums in India,
 to go get my friend locked in a box with a corpse
 and even more,
 to go get seven year old Peter Hiett at the bus stop
 too scared to stand with his sister,
 too scared to turn off the lights in the
 basement,
 too scared to die,
 and too scared to live.

I stood over Satan screaming, “Jesus wins!” and Satan fled... Peter, the coward. I can’t believe I did that, and yet, of course, I didn’t do that. Satan would devour me. I didn’t do that... for “It’s no longer Peter Hiett that lives, but Christ who lives in me.”

And so His story became my story (eternal history), and He lived out His victory in me. He’s living out His victory in His body, His church.

The Plot, the Meaning, the Life, the Love, the Gospel... Easter in me, in you. That’s scary at times. Ever been scared of a movie? Scared but not scared ‘cause it’s a movie? The Christian life is scary at times but better. Better than a million Blockbuster movies. It is a billion Blockbuster movies and more. It’s the Plot, the Gospel in you for you have been written into His story. You don’t just watch; you’re written in... the body and the blood of Jesus, the Christ.

Now, I’m still that little boy at the bus stop, but Christ is rising in me, and He always wins. He’s always good. He always wins even when he loses, even when He dies... especially when He dies for then His love is poured out. Love always wins. God is Love.

And so on that night, He took bread and He broke it saying, “This is my body given to you. Take and eat.” And in the same way after supper, He took the cup and He said, “This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you. Do it in remembrance of me.” Eat and drink.

We invite you to come to the table, tear off a piece of the bread. Black cups are wine; purple cups are juice. They’re both fire. They’re both judgment. So if you don’t want it, don’t feel like you have to come. You can stay there or you can walk right by. If you don’t want it, just know this: He wants you.

And so would you pray this prayer with me? You can just pray it right after me.

Lord Jesus, I give you my life, and I ask you to give me Your life. Live Your life in me. Amen.

And so, come to the table and have Jesus. Have courage. Amen.

And so, Lord Jesus, Matthew records that You cried out with one last cry. The Gospel of John tells us what You cried. You cried out “Tetelestai,” “It is finished.” It’s perfected. It’s done. It’s accomplished.

Oh, Lord Jesus, we praise You, and we thank You that it’s finished, and we ask You to forgive us for living in this world in fear. You have written us into Your finished story. And so, Lord God, help every little boy in this room to believe that he’s written into Your story as a warrior that

rides with You, and every little girl to believe that she is the bride, the beauty that you came to save.

Lord God, You have written us into Your story. We are Your body and Your blood, and it is finished. You have done it. It is accomplished, and we thank You, Lord Jesus. And so, Lord God, we praise You, and we ask You, Lord Jesus, to fill us with Your Spirit, the Spirit of Easter, even on Friday, for Your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, before you go, if you'd like prayer, we have a prayer ministry team. They'll be down front. I don't know about you, you can go if you want, but we're gonna sing one more song. We're gonna shout. We're gonna shout with a voice of triumph and join the angels, in Jesus' name.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

Now from the sixth hour [noon] there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

Matthew 27:45 (ESV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 1:1-4 (ESV)

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. . . . Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 15:45 (ESV)

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5:18-21 (ESV)

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:46 (ESV)

Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!
 Why would you have the day of the LORD?
 It is darkness, and not light. . .
 "And on that day," declares the Lord GOD,
 "I will make the sun go down at noon
 and darken the earth in broad daylight.

Amos 5:18, 8:9 (ESV)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
 Why are you so far from saving me,
 from the words of my groaning? . . .
 To you they cried and were rescued;
 in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
 But I am a worm [towla: scarlet or worm] and not a man,
 scorned by mankind and despised by the people.
 All who see me mock me;
 they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
 "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
 let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" . . .
 I am poured out like water,
 and all my bones are out of joint;
 my heart is like wax;
 it is melted within my breast;

my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
 and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
 you lay me in the dust of death.
 For dogs encompass me;
 a company of evildoers encircles me;
 they have pierced my hands and feet—
 I can count all my bones—
 they stare and gloat over me;
 they divide my garments among them,
 and for my clothing they cast lots. . . .
 I will tell of your name to my brothers;
 in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
 You who fear the LORD, praise him!
 All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
 and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
 For he has not despised or abhorred
 the affliction of the afflicted,
 and he has not hidden his face from him,
 but has heard, when he cried to him. . . .
 All the ends of the earth shall remember
 and turn to the LORD,
 and all the families of the nations
 shall worship before you.
 For kingship belongs to the LORD,
 and he rules over the nations.
 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
 before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
 even the one who could not keep himself alive.
 Posterity shall serve him;
 it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
 that he has done it.

Psalms 22:1, 22:5-8, 22:14-18, 22:22-24, 22:27-31 (ESV)

And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling
 Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with
 sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.

Matthew 27:47-48 (ESV)

They gave me poison for food,
 and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink. . . .
 I will praise the name of God with a song;
 I will magnify him with thanksgiving.
 This will please the LORD more than an ox
 or a bull with horns and hoofs.

Psalm 69:21, 69:30-31 (ESV)

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
 and men of Judah,
 judge between me and my vineyard.
 What more was there to do for my vineyard,
 that I have not done in it?
 When I looked for it to yield grapes,
 why did it yield wild grapes?
 And now I will tell you
 what I will do to my vineyard.
 I will remove its hedge,
 and it shall be devoured;
 I will break down its wall,
 and it shall be trampled down. . . .
 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
 is the house of Israel,
 and the men of Judah
 are his pleasant planting;
 and he looked for justice,
 but behold, bloodshed;
 for righteousness,
 but behold, an outcry!

Isaiah 5:3-5, 5:7 (ESV)

But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit [pneuma: breath or spirit].

Matthew 27:49-50 (ESV)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit [pneuma] of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. . . . Nevertheless, I tell

you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

John 14:16-17, 16:7 (ESV)

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (ESV)

So that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:19b-20 (ESV)

He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (ESV)

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn [schizo] in two, from top to bottom.

Matthew 27:51a (ESV)

“You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. . . . And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. . . . “And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet [towla: scarlet or worm] yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. . . . And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy.

Exodus 25:17, 25:21, 26:31, 26:33 (ESV)

The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died, and the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. But in

this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall put on the holy linen coat and shall have the linen undergarment on his body, and he shall tie the linen sash around his waist, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water and then put them on. And he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. "Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. Then he shall take the two goats and set them before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the LORD and use it as a sin offering, but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel [most likely a name for a demon, possibly Satan].

Leviticus 16:1-10 (ESV)

Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his stripes we are healed. . . .
Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Isaiah 53:4-5, 53:10 (ESV)

That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:19-21 (NKJV)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.”

Galatians 3:13 (ESV)

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.
It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him,
that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” . . .

Isaiah 25:6-9 (ESV)

“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to
gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my
glory, and I will set a sign among them. . . . And they shall bring all
your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, on horses
and in chariots and in litters and on mules and on dromedaries, to my
holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD. . . .

From new moon to new moon,
and from Sabbath to Sabbath,
all flesh shall come to worship before me,
declares the LORD.

“And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who
have rebelled against me. For their worm [towla: scarlet or worm] shall
not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence
to all flesh.”

Isaiah 66:18-19a, 66:20a, 66:23-24 (ESV)

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places
by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us

through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:19-22 (ESV)

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation [literally: “mercy seat”] by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26 (ESV)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (ESV)

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split [schizo]. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,

Matthew 27:51-52 (ESV)

“For the waves of death encompassed me,
the torrents of destruction assailed me;
the cords of Sheol entangled me;
the snares of death confronted me.
“In my distress I called upon the LORD;
to my God I called.
From his temple he heard my voice,
and my cry came to his ears.
“Then the earth reeled and rocked;
the foundations of the heavens trembled

and quaked, because he was angry.
 Smoke went up from his nostrils,
 and devouring fire from his mouth;
 glowing coals flamed forth from him.
 He bowed the heavens and came down;
 thick darkness was under his feet.

2 Samuel 22:5-10 (ESV)

Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

Ezekiel 37:11-14 (ESV)

For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:40 (ESV)

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. . . . For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

1 Peter 3:18-20, 4:6 (ESV)

Therefore it says,
 “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
 and he gave gifts to men.”

(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

Ephesians 4:8-9 (ESV)

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

Isaiah 61:1-2 (ESV) [see also Isaiah 42:6-7, 49:8-9]

And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.

Colossians 2:13-15 (RSV)

And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 20:13-21:2 (ESV)

And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Matthew 27:53 (ESV)

And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Luke 23:42-43 (ESV)

For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

John 5:21-29 (ESV)

For not into holy places made with hands did the Christ enter -- figures of the true -- but into the heaven itself, now to be manifested in the presence of God for us; nor that he may many times offer himself, even as the chief priest doth enter into the holy places every year with blood of others; since it had behoved him many times to suffer from the foundation of the world, but now once, at the full end of the ages, for putting away of sin through his sacrifice, he hath been manifested;

Hebrews 9:24-26 (Young's Literal Translation)

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:19-20 (ESV)

When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" There were also many

women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him,

Matthew 27:54-55 (ESV)

Note:

In my recent sermon, Walking with the Reaper on the subject of the fear of death, I referred to the “War on Terror” and then said, “We manage terror with terror.” I think that was a poor choice of words for it gave some the impression that there may be no difference between a terrorist and a soldier serving a civil government. I do not believe that. God has ordained civil government to “bear the sword” for the public good (Romans 13:4).

Perhaps I should have said something like, “Civil governments often fight terrorist activity with the fear of death (military activity). Sometimes that produces more fear in the end, rather than less.” I believe that Christians can be called to serve in the military under the authority of a civil government, but as individual believers we are to put away the sword, “For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.” (Matt. 27:52) “The sword” will never be able to free us from the “fear of death,” only the Word of the gospel—The Sword of the Spirit—can do that.

Like me, many of you have loved ones that serve or have served in the military. I apologize for any poor choice of words that would diminish their sacrifice of love and courage for each one of us.

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