

Silent Witness (The Dice)—Lent 6—4/4/2001—Lord of Life Lutheran Church

Title: “Do you see the whole picture?”

Text: John 19: 23-24

Introduction: **Illus.: What do you see in this picture?**

Theme: Often in our life and in our faith, we can become so fixated on the problem or the distraction that we miss the real beauty of God’s miracle which he has done and is doing for us in Jesus.

More than “chance” brought all of God’s salvation plan together in Jesus

- **Mere coincidence or calculated fulfillments**
 1. The dividing of a prisoners garments was normal course of comp--pay for Roman soldiers guarding a crucifixion
 2. But David predicted this in Psalm 22, “*They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.*”
 3. **Illus.: Really Bad Predictions**
 4. What are the odds that a company of four Roman soldiers would fulfill a Jewish prophecy made 1000 years before their birth and that the garment Jesus wore that day of his arrest would be single-woven so that it could not be torn
 5. **Illus.: Odds on. . .**
- **God does not take a chance on our salvation**
 1. He came himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, to fulfill what none of us could do
 2. *No man can by any means redeem his brother, Or give to God a ransom for him—For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever. Psalm 49:7-8*
 3. God’s Messianic promise and fulfillment testimony designed so no doubt would be left in our mind who Jesus was
 4. If God took care of the greatest of my needs, won’t he also handle the smaller/smallest so nothing keeps me from Him
 5. *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Romans 8:32*

More than all the efforts we can muster brings us into the saving grace of God

- **God did not need us or any other human beings to bring about his plan of saving the world in Jesus**
 1. God did not need all the characters of the passion to get it done (Peter, Judas, Pilate, rioting people, gambling soldiers)
 2. God used their reactions and actions and, *sometimes in spite of their imperfect actions*, accomplished his complete and perfect forgiveness and redemption
 3. God does not need me to do anything to secure my salvation; rather he wants me—he desires me to turn to his plan
 4. *‘I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?’ Ezekiel 33:11*
- **God wants us, human beings, to be a part of his plan of salvation in Jesus**
 1. It is going to require a **SURRENDER** on my part
 - The pride of our heart, the stubborn resistance to give up pet, deadly sin, the dullness of heart to the hope that only Jesus can give requires for me to give up my life—BE CRUCIFIED TO MYSELF AS JESUS ONCE WAS
 - **Illus.: Take Up Your Cross**
 2. It is going to require a **TRUST** on my part
 - As unbelievable to the skeptical human mind is a prophecy about gambling so is the mystery of our forgiveness
 - *“THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.” 1 Cor. 2: 9*
 - *“The righteous shall live by faith.” Habakkuk 2: 9*

Really Bad Predictions

In a recent article in *The Futurist* magazine, writer Laura Lee catalogues some of the worst predictions of all time:

- "Inventions have long since reached their limit, and I see no hope for further developments." —Roman engineer Julius Sextus Frontinus, A.D. 100
- "The abdomen, the chest, and the brain will forever be shut from the intrusion of the wise and humane surgeon." —John Eric Ericksen, surgeon to Queen Victoria, 1873
- "Law will be simplified [over the next century]. Lawyers will have diminished, and their fees will have been vastly curtailed." —journalist Junius Henri Browne, 1893
- "It doesn't matter what he does, he will never amount to anything." —Albert Einstein's teacher to Einstein's father, 1895
- "It would appear we have reached the limits of what it is possible to achieve with computer technology." —computer scientist John von Neumann, 1949
- "The Japanese don't make anything the people in the U.S. would want." —Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, 1954
- "Nuclear powered vacuum cleaners will probably be a reality within ten years." —Alex Lewyt, president of the Lewyt Vacuum Cleaner Company, quoted in *The New York Times*, June 10, 1955
- "Before man reaches the moon, your mail will be delivered within hours from New York to Australia by guided missiles. We stand on the threshold of rocket mail." —Arthur Summerfield, U.S. Postmaster General under Eisenhower, 1959
- "By the turn of the century, we will live in a paperless society." —Roger Smith, chairman of General Motors, 1986
- "I predict the Internet . . . will go spectacularly supernova and in 1996 catastrophically collapse." —Bob Metcalfe, *InfoWorld*, 1995

Aren't you glad your faith does not rest on human words but on the sure Word of God?

Odds on ...

The chances you will eventually die in a car crash: 1 in 125---Develop a brain tumor: 1 in 25,000---Die in a fire this year: 1 in 4,000,000---Win a state lottery jackpot: 1 in 4,000,000

Take Up Your Cross

When Jesus said, "If you are going to follow me, you have to take up a cross," it was the same as saying, "Come and bring your electric chair with you. Take up the gas chamber and follow me." He did not have a beautiful gold cross in mind--the cross on a church steeple or on the front of your Bible. Jesus had in mind a place of execution. *Billy Graham "The Offense of the Cross"*

John 19:23-24

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them four ways so that each soldier could have a share. His robe was left over. It didn't have a seam because it had been woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴The soldiers said to each other, "Let's not rip it apart. Let's throw dice to see who will get it." In this way the Scripture came true: "***They divided my clothes among themselves. They threw dice for my clothing.***" So that's what the soldiers did. [GW]