

Sermon Series: Fundamentals of the Theology of the Cross—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN 3/28/2010

Title: “Through the Death of One Comes the Salvation of All”

Text: John 11:47-53

Intro: *Illus.: In a meaningful way calling yourself a Christian*

Theme: When we look closely into the historical facts and overlay them with God’s stated promises of the past, we find that God was more than just and demonstrated his grace and mercy beyond measure in Jesus’ death for sins.

The circumstances that set the stage for the death of Jesus

- The events of the preceding days leading up to Jesus’ death
 1. The teachings of previous week and miracle of Lazarus’s resurrection (**Therefore, vs. 47**)
 - a. *The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. John 11:44-45*
 2. The Palm Sunday entrance into Jerusalem and confrontations in the temple
- The evil plots of sinful men
 1. Caiaphas and the Jewish leader feared losing self-made security blankets – position, temple, nation (**48**)
 2. What “gods” have you and I set up in our lives which are being challenged by the conditions of our times?
 - a. **Illus.: Mayor tries to ban death**
 3. God will not be intimidated by false gods in our life but often will shake the very timbers of life to which attached
- The eternal plan of God
 1. More than random fate or star-crossed events – God even utilized the evil plot of Caiaphas to conduct his plan (**51**)
 - a. *For God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. Ephesians 1:4-6*
 2. God’s salvation plan is purposeful, focused, and will not be thwarted
 - a. And who knows but that you have come to *this* position for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14
 - b. Jesus, obviously, was the culmination of God’ great salvation plan woven throughout history
 - c. God’s salvation plan weaves its thread through the events and days and outcomes of our lives

The miracle of Jesus’ sacrificial death for us

- Despite the sin of humans, God is not thwarted in his love and mercy
 1. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Exodus 33:19*
 2. True not only with the Jewish leaders but even with you and me – our sin is not so great that God can’t forgive
- Despite the enormity of the world’s spiritual problem, God is not paralyzed in his ability to act
 1. The Jewish leaders were frustrated, hassled, and panicking because their plan was not of God
 2. Neither the Father nor the Son were wringing their hands as their plots against Jesus unfolded
 3. Neither should we as we view again the story of our personal salvation and restore our hope in One who can save
 4. *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39*
- An objective salvation with a personal connection
 1. Jesus came to die for the sins of all people of all time around the globe (**52**)
 - a. The universal grace (not salvation) is objectively offer to everyone who would believe in it for salvation
 - b. *My dear children, I’m writing this to you so that you will not sin. Yet, if anyone does sin, we have Jesus Christ, who has God’s full approval. He speaks on our behalf when we come into the presence of the Father. He is the payment for our sins, and not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:1-2*
 2. Jesus came to die for you, personally, and make payment and satisfaction for your sins (**52**)
 - a. Not just generic salvation but God had you in mind – *without prejudice*
 - b. *Then Peter said, “Now I understand that God doesn’t play favorites. Rather, whoever respects God and does what is right is acceptable to him in any nation. God sent his word to the people of Israel and brought them the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ. This Jesus Christ is everyone’s Lord. Acts 10:34-36*
 3. How will you respond? Will you believe in him or not? (**53**)
 - a. **Illus.: In Your Place**
 - b. *God loved the world this way: He gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save the world. Those who believe in him won’t be condemned. But those who don’t believe are already condemned because they don’t believe in God’s only Son. John 3:16-18*

In a Meaningful way Calling Yourself a Christian

During a recent trip to Portland, Oregon, noted atheist Christopher Hitchens laid down some seriously good theology. Most people recognize Hitchens as the author of the bestselling book *God Is Not Great: Why Religion Poisons Everything*. Since the book's publication in 2007, Hitchens has toured the country debating a series of religious leaders, including some well-known evangelical thinkers. In Portland he was interviewed by Unitarian minister Marilyn Sewell. The entire transcript of the interview has been posted online. The following exchange took place near the start of the interview: **Sewell:** The religion you cite in your book is generally the fundamentalist faith of various kinds. I'm a liberal Christian, and I don't take the stories from the Scripture literally. I don't believe in the doctrine of atonement (that Jesus died for our sins, for example). Do you make any distinction between fundamentalist faith and liberal religion? **Hitchens:** I would say that if you don't believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ and Messiah, and that he rose again from the dead and by his sacrifice our sins are forgiven, you're really not in any meaningful sense a Christian. This little snippet demonstrates an important point about religious "God-talk." You can call yourself anything you like, but if you don't believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for our sins and then rose from the dead, you are not "in any meaningful sense" a Christian. Talk about nailing it. In one of the delicious ironies of our time, an outspoken atheist grasps the central tenet of Christianity better than many Christians do. What you believe about Jesus Christ really does make a difference. **Dr. Ray Pritchard, "Christopher Hitchens Gets it Exactly Right," KeepBelieving.com**

Mayor Tries to Ban Death

Facing a capacity crowd in the town's only cemetery and other government-protected properties, Pereira da Silva, mayor of the Brazilian town of Biritiba-Mirim, wants to impose fines or jail time on the families of those who die too young. His proposed law would make it an offense for the town's 28,000 residents to neglect adequate health care for themselves or family members. Should death result, fines and jail time could follow. The state government had promised the town a new vertical cemetery, but, to date, nothing has been done. Mayor da Silva offers his new proposal as an attempt to discourage death and resultant cemetery use. Since announcement of the proposed law, both gym use and health care visits have increased. The mayor has not yet revealed, however, whether his office plans to impose civil restrictions on the deceased themselves. **"Mayor Wants to Ban Death," <http://www.ananova.com> (12-13-05)**

In Your Place

During the 17th century, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, sentenced a soldier to be shot for his crimes. The execution was to take place at the ringing of the evening curfew bell. However, the bell did not sound. The soldier's fiancé had climbed into the belfry and clung to the great clapper of the bell to prevent it from striking. When she was summoned by Cromwell to account for her actions, she wept as she showed him her bruised and bleeding hands. Cromwell's heart was touched and he said, "Your lover shall live because of your sacrifice. Curfew shall not ring tonight!" **Our Daily Bread.**

John 11:47-53

⁴⁷Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. ⁴⁸"If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." ⁴⁹But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." ⁵¹Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, ⁵²and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³So from that day on they planned together to kill Him. [NASB]