

At The Cross

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The series is entitled, At The Cross can be summed up in the following word picture.

Two beams. One vertical. One horizontal.

Horizontal - embracing the world's sin.

Vertical - pointing to a loving Father.

³¹ What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things? (Romans 8-NET)

Father, Your word is truth and truth everlasting, for it has the power to change lives, give hope, heal bodies, cleanse from sin and offer eternal life.

Help me, Father, not to play stage tricks with Your eternal doctrines. Today You are here to offer more than holy hunches. You are here to offer eternal life to seekers and believers alike. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

In 1871, a 21-year-old medical student read one sentence that would change the trajectory of his life. At the time the pressure of exams and the prospect of starting a medical practice led to a near nervous breakdown.

Now, what is amazing, this student, known as the father of medicine, not only got past that emotional breakdown, but William Osler also went on to become one of the most famous doctors of his generation. He would start the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, create the first residency program for specialty training and write the dominant textbook of his era.

The Father of modern medicine would go on to be knighted as Sir William by the King of England. Now, at 21, this broken-down, emotionally-distraught, troubled medical student knew none of this.

When you are confronted with emotional difficulty, your perceptions about yourself are really skewed. Your perceptions about yourself are really messed up. Your perceptions about yourself are distorted.

Then the 21-year medical student, in a funk, struggling with emotional chaos discovered a life-changing 22-word quote by Thomas Carlyle. The quote radically altered his trajectory. (Win the Day, pg xi.)

“Our grand business undoubtedly is, not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.” (Thomas Carlyle)

Forty-two years later, Sir William Osler delivered an address to the student body at Yale University, crediting that quote as a guiding light, a north star for his life success. Osler describes his life as possessing average intellectual potential and modest talent. What then could explain the life of this now-distinguished success?

Osler traced it back to the 22 words that altered his outlook on life the day he made the discovery. He took those words, “Do what lies at hand,” and put his fingerprints on them.

The benefits of 22 words changed the life of a 21-year-old forever. The benefits of 22 words.

This series is going to show you over 60 benefits of Jesus’ atoning death. Over 60 blessings. Over 60 advantages. Over 60 gifts. Over 60 privileges.

Today you will discover the benefits of Good Friday. These benefits could change your life forever. Like the 22 words that changed William Osler, these over 60 benefits could change your life.

What is so Good about Good Friday?

When I was a kid growing up in Delta Baptist church Everett Washington, I have to admit I did not know what the phrase “Good Friday” really meant. I mean, what is so good about it?

On the day that Jesus died he was arrested, deprived of water and sleep for 24 hours, beaten and scourged with whips, a crown of thorns pressed down on his brow, laughed at, mocked, hung partially naked, spit upon, cursed, and then he died.

What was so good about Good Friday? It certainly wasn’t so good for Jesus. Here was my problem. My confusion. My ignorance. And it might also be some of yours.

I did not understand the benefits of Jesus’ death that day in Jerusalem some 2000 years ago.

What He was doing.

Who He was doing it for.

And why Jesus was doing it.

I did not understand personally why Good Friday was so good. I don’t think I ever heard a message growing up providing me with the answer to my question. Now, this got me thinking this pre-Easter season, and I thought, “Maybe others have the same question.” Read this verse with me slowly. Succinctly.

³¹ What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things? (Romans 8-NET)

Look at the phrase, “freely give us all things.” There you have it. The benefits of Jesus’ atoning death on the cross – “but gave him up for us all.”

Perhaps I can suggest why knowing these benefits of Jesus’ death can be so beneficial. The answer can be found directly in the verse. Look closely with me, three benefits right from Romans 8:31-32.

Live daily with solid confidence you have eternal life.

“If God can be for us, who can be against us.” (vs 31b) Today, you can stop walking around wondering if you are in God’s family.

Thank God regularly for the gift of His Son.

“Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son.” (vs 32a) Today, the depression and anxiety can start to lift when you offer regular thanks to God for the gift of His Son. One of the greatest mental health practices is giving thanks. Offering gratitude.

Go to God often for access to gracious promises He will give.

“... how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things?” (vs 32b) Today, like a lawyer, I plan to build a case for you to regularly, often, daily go to God for access to over 60 gracious benefits of Jesus’ death on the cross.

This next verse tells us that Jesus was glad that He endured the pain, suffering and torture to secure you each and every single benefit.

² We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete. He endured the shame of being nailed to a cross, because he knew later on he would be glad he did. Now he is seated at the right side of God's throne! (Hebrews 12-CEV)

Why was Jesus glad He went through all of that pain, torture, torment and even death? A humiliating death. Or what is the good news about that?

There are a number of people in America who have inherited massive fortunes, but they still live in poverty because nobody has told them what they have inherited. Imagine that. What is that all about?

Think with me for a moment. What if you inherited a million dollars and you did not have anybody tell you about that amazing, fortunate event. Here is the shocking side of that story. You could go through life living significantly below a level of wealth or fortune than you had to.

Years ago, Danice and I bought an insurance policy when our kids were little. A life insurance policy for each of us. As Danice and I met with our agent, I learned a new term that explained how to use the policy.

It is the term “death benefits.” In the life insurance policy when Danice or I die, our kids would get a certain lump sum of money. That is called a death benefit, because you only get it after a death.

What are Death Benefits?

A death benefit is a payout to the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, annuity, or pension when the insured dies.

What I want to do in this series, “At The Cross,” is look at the death benefits provided for you because of Jesus’ death on the cross. If you do not know the benefits you cannot enjoy them.

If you do not know the benefits of why Jesus died on Good Friday, you are going to miss them.

Jesus paid for these benefits with His life. Can I suggest something profound? As a Christian, you should go ahead and collect them. They have already been paid for. If you go through the Bible you will discover there are over 60 benefits of Jesus’ atoning death.

I did that deep Biblical dive this past week. Very rewarding. Enlightening. But most of all thrilling because I saw benefit after benefit pour off the pages of God’s Word for me. For you.

The Bible identifies over 60 benefits of Jesus’ death on the cross.

Would you like a peek at the list? Ok, you twisted my arm. Here goes. Just a partial list. These benefits of Jesus’ death on the cross are for you and me.

Entry into God’s presence.

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, (Hebrews 10-NIV)

Deliverance from the powers of darkness.

¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 2-NIV)

Personal spiritual growth resulting in eternal life.

²² But now, freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your benefit leading to sanctification, and the end is eternal life. (Romans 6-NET)

Christ is interceding for us.

³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. (Romans 8-NIV)

How was that sample of benefits? Pretty amazing. Are you enjoying the benefits?

Do you enjoy God's presence always, or are you condemning yourself and thus staying away from God? Stop! You don't have to do that. God wants you close.

Are you tormented and depressed because your adversary is encroaching upon your life? Stop! You are more than a conqueror.

Are you committed to daily spiritual growth? 15 minutes in a chair? Worshipping your King? God wants you to cast all your cares on Him.

Are you talking to God every day? Asking Him to intervene in your affairs? If not, stop! Start benefiting from Jesus' intercession, talking to God about your situations. Troubles. Illness.

So, again there are over 60 benefits for your life of Jesus dying on your behalf. On the cross for you. For the rest of our time together I just want to go through three of those benefits.

I call these the elementary school education of benefits. These are the primary colors of benefits. These are the first notes of the music scale of benefits. These three are the A, B, C's of benefits from the list of over 60.

Perhaps, we can produce a list for you in the weeks ahead. Would you like that? More important would you use them? You can place it someplace important and enjoy Jesus' death benefits for you.

Now, let me just give them to you, and then we can look at each of them. **Total forgiveness. Deep healing. Supernatural freedom.** Read them again.

So, leading up to Easter, we will look at the benefits of Jesus' death for you. Then on Easter we will look at the benefits of Jesus coming back to life, Jesus being resurrected for you.

You will discover on Easter, like when you are here, what those benefits are. The benefits of Jesus' death, now. Easter, the benefits of Jesus' resurrection. Let's get into it. Look there on your handout.

Jesus' death on the cross offers total forgiveness.

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the riches of his grace. (Ephesians 1-NET)

With Jesus' death, you can receive total forgiveness of everything you ever did wrong. Every sin you ever committed. All of the anger. Greed. Covetous. Murder. Lust. Stealing. And I could go on and on. It is all forgiven as a death benefit to Jesus' death on the cross.

Even if there was no Heaven, this benefit alone would be worth it, so you could go through life with a clear conscience. This benefit removes the guilt, shame, and regret.

God does not want you walking around feeling guilty all the time. You can be released from remorse, regret, misery and shame by this first benefit. Jesus' death on the cross offers complete forgiveness.

One of benefits of Jesus' death is you can have total forgiveness of everything you ever did wrong. Every sin. Every time you missed God's mark on purpose or resisted His will for your life.

¹⁴ He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:14-NLT)

Now, for some of us, that was or is a pretty long list. Jesus took the charges against us because we sinned and nailed them to the cross.

Simply put, the cost of your sins is more than you can pay. The gift of God is more than you can imagine. And that gift is seen in Colossians 2:14.

What if you got a call this afternoon, and the person on the other end of the line said they have decided to show you grace, and that person has the power to forgive every debt against you.

Every debt that you have. This is the first benefit of the cross. This benefit is spelled out in the most famous prayer in the Bible.

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we ourselves have forgiven our debtors. (Matthew 6-NET)

^{4a} And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. (Luke 11-NET)

One of the benefits of Christ's death on the cross is that God forgives our debts. Our sins. Our trespasses. Jesus paid for every sin that you ever committed.

I kicked a girl's lunch on the roof in junior high. God forgave that.

I started up a tractor in junior high and sent it running down the street as I ran home. God forgave that.

I borrowed someone else's bike at the Boys' Club and rode it all over the streets of Everett. God forgave that.

Wow, I just noticed, I committed a lot of sins in junior high. Thank you, Father, for that forgiveness. It did not stop there. And it won't stop until I get to Heaven, when I will no longer need forgiveness of sins.

Every word, every thought and every action that you ever committed as a sin, God has forgiven them. Even those I don't know that I committed. **You see, I don't always know the occasion of my sin.**

There are times I sin and I do not even know it. How about you?

Is it a sin eat a grape before I pay for it?

Is it a sin to cut someone off in traffic?

Is it a sin to tithe only 9%

Is it a sin to work on Sunday?

Is it a sin that I got dropped by my insurance company for speeding?

When Kenny was one, he got into the dog room and ate some of Moses' dog food. Was that a sin of neglect?

And what about secret sins? Is it wrong to want the preacher to say less and let you leave sooner?

And what about sins of omission? Anything on the ledger? Did you miss the opportunity to say thank you? Overlook a chance to forgive?

God gives you His grace in the form of forgiving your sins. You don't deserve it. You can't barter for it. You can't beg for it. You can't work for it. It is a free gift.

Forgiveness of sins comes as a free gift. Perhaps you have never thought of this.

If you turn away from grace and choose goodness, slowly, eventually, Christ's death will not benefit us.

If you turn away from mercy and choose merit, slowly, eventually, Christ's death will not benefit us.

First benefit, Jesus died for my sins. ²⁵ He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God. (Romans 4-NLT)

Now, most of you have heard of that one. Now, there are many other benefits. Let me show you another one. Second, death benefit. I get the healing power of Jesus in my life.

Jesus' death on the cross provides **deep healing**.

²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness. By his wounds you were healed. (1 Peter 2-NET)

We all need healing in different areas of our lives. Not just physical healing. Those are not your deepest wounds. Your deepest needs are invisible. Many of the deepest wounds in your life are not physical. Many of the deepest wounds you have, we cannot see. We can see a handicap. We can see a broken arm. We can see when people have to wear glasses, like I do.

The deepest wounds in our lives are not seen by others, but they are seen by God. And Jesus not only came to forgive your sin, but also to heal your deepest wounds.

Peter tells us that we are healed by Jesus' wounds. What does that mean?

Jesus died to forgive your sins and offer you salvation, but He also died to heal your deepest wounds. Peter is quoting Isaiah who tells us 700 years before this, that Jesus' death on the cross provides deep healing.

⁴ Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53-NIV)

Isaiah 53 is redemptive suffering. That means when you take on the pain for someone else, keeping someone else from having that pain, this is called **redemptive suffering**.

Everything is broken on this planet. Nothing works perfectly. \

The weather is broken.

The government is broken.

Your family is broken.

The economy is broken.

Your body is broken, it has aches and pains.

Relationships are broken.

Hearts are broken.

Minds are broken with mental illness.

Jesus came to earth to not only restore a broken relationship between you God, but He also wants to restore everything else that is broken. He wants to provide deep healing for all wounds. Jesus wants to heal. This is why Jesus' ministry is such a prominent part of Jesus' ministry. You can't read about Jesus without noticing that everywhere Jesus went He healed. Look at Matthew 9:35,

³⁵ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. (Matthew 9-NKJV)

One-third of Jesus' ministry was healthcare. This verse gives us the formula for Jesus' ministry: education, preaching and healing. Or in other words: schools, churches and hospitals are the works of Jesus.

Jesus is here to heal your mind, body and soul. God does not want you to just get to Heaven, He wants you to get some healing along the way. So, Jesus' teaching is for your mind.

Jesus' healing is for your body. Jesus' preaching is for your soul. Let me suggest two areas that God wants to heal that are invisible. Bitterness and depression. And God wants to heal you of those today. If you need someone to pray for you for healing, at the end of the service there will be imperfect, faith-filled leaders who pray a prayer like this:

Dear Father, here is a sister/brother, who has this terrible health affliction. They possess a wound and pain that is excruciating and maybe invisible. Would you, Father, be true to Your promises to heal? We know that Jesus was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

So, Father, by your grace would You touch and heal my sister/brother directly. Supernaturally. Today. And we will look to You for that and be sure to give You the glory and tell others about Your healing and salvation. In Jesus' Name, amen.

I have prayed that prayer thousands of times. **And many times, God does heal you because of those of prayers.**

Jesus' death on the cross supplies **supernatural freedom**. (Ps 34:17) And that freedom comes because Jesus is interceding.

¹⁷ The godly cry out and the LORD hears; he saves them from all their troubles. (Ps 34-NET)

¹ God is our **refuge** and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. (Psalm 46-GW)

A lot of bad things can happen to each of us, but God is your source of refuge, strength and is an ever-present help in **times of trouble**. Lock into that, **in times of trouble. The troubles are happening all the time**. Your job can release you. Your spouse can cheat on you. Your kids can steal from you. Your friend can betray you. We all have something, and the same things in common. We are all weak as humans and need supernatural freedom from troubles.

Pressure wears on us. Anxiety gives us ulcers. People intimidate us. We lose our cool and get angry. Criticism hurts our sweet hearts. Disease scares the fire out of us. Death – the king of fears – eventually takes our lives. We are fragile, weak, and sinful creatures, fashioned by the Almighty's hand. Made in the image of God. Called on by Heaven to do Heaven's work on earth. Now, to do Heaven's work, in a hell-like world, you need a place to retreat to from time to time. A place to go and find supernatural freedom through the cross.

^{34b} Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (Romans 8-NIV)