

At The Cross

God put His Son on the cross so we could put our sins on the Son.

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all --- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32-NIV)

Like you I too, often get in the mail, an announcement that a credit card is available for my usage. It offers me an additional \$5,000 or \$10,000 of immediate credit. Immediate cash. I did not ask for it. I did not want it. I did not need it. It came to me because I already had a relationship with the lender. And the lender wants me to have more of his benefits.

Jesus' death purchased additional resources that are available to all believers because of the cross. Unfortunately, so many Christians take a pass on benefitting from over 60 death benefits.

The series of messages, At The Cross, is intended to encourage you to stop taking a pass and start taking God's provisions. God's blessings. God's resources.

Romans 8:32, is one of the greatest verses in the Bible, it shows us how Jesus' death benefits, provides so much more than we could imagine.

This verse spells out that Jesus not only died, but he provided death benefits along with his death.

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all --- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:32-NIV)

This verse tells us that the death benefits you receive, come for free. The verse indicates that Jesus graciously gives us all things.

How many like it when you receive something unexpected for free?

You buy tires and the tire store throws in some free stuff: warrantee, free tire balancing, free tire inflation, free tire rotation.

You eat in your favorite restaurant, and the steak is overcooked, you get free dessert because of the cooking mistake.

You buy a new shirt at Dillard's, and they give you a second shirt for free.

You buy some cool, stretch black, dress pants at Express, and you discover a sale is happening and you get a second pair for free.

Recently, I added to my phone an app to get points for coffee, and a couple days later, I got my first notification, "If you get a coffee, TODAY, you get a second coffee for free. Yea, free stuff we all love it.

And when you throw your lot in with Jesus, you get over 60 free death benefits. Death benefits that will defeat the powers of darkness, heal your afflicted body, provide resurrection power in this life and in the life beyond.

Collect your death benefits. Use your death benefits. Grow in grace as you apply Christ death benefits to your everyday faith walk. Faith practice. Faith journey.

All things for free. All that God has promised to you as a believer is yours, at no cost to you.

It does not have to be earned.

It does not have to be bartered for.

It does not have to be paid back.

It does not have to be negotiated.

It does not have to be forced, cajoled or manipulated.

It is free. Es gratis!

It is free. C' est gratuity.

It is free. Ni buri.

It is free. Yo nihsulka cha.

It is free. It is free. It is free.

Now, for some of you that are driven by performance or have lived in a faith system where you had to gain approval through works, free is difficult to imagine.

If you have spent your life earning or working for everything, this is hard to grasp. Free. Grace. And without measure.

This goes against our understanding; it goes against our nature. God tells that if you embrace the Son, what does that look like?

God put His Son on the cross, so we could put our sins on the Son.

God tells us that the death benefits are free. Now, the word in the Bible that explains free is called grace. Another word is mercy. These words are used interchangeably.

Just before I explain grace, let me show you grace. In Rom 8:32, we find two supporting beams of truth that strengthen, steady and offer sturdy faith that you can count on.

Let me show you 2 theological load bearing beams (Picture of strong and sturdy wood beams for building a house. Load bearing beams.)

Two supporting beams of truth:

Beam number 1

“He who did not spare his own Son ...”

Christ lived a life we could not live; took a punishment we could not endure and then gave us a hope we could not resist.

Beam number 2

“ ... but gave him up for us all.”

Heaven’s Holy Son endured earth’s toughest sufferings.

When you are sinking again, be sturdied and strengthened with wood beams that can accommodate a lot of weight.

When you are attacked, be strengthened.

When you are losing your courage and confidence, be sturdied.

When you want to give up, don’t, and be strong in the power of his might. His death benefits are like load bearing walls.

Question: Because of these gifts, “How will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

Why should Jesus’ death on the cross excite us? Because it comes with so much more.

And that so much more is because of grace. Grace is simply, all that God is able to do for you, because of what Christ has done. Grace is what God does without any help from you.

Grace is simply all that God wants, desires and is able to do because Jesus died an atoning death. So again, if...you have to meet the condition to get the benefit.

And the condition is, the death benefits are for believers in Christ. Those who have decided to surrender their one and only life to God's control through Christ.

Grace is what God does without any help from You.

So, let me say it again:

If you embrace the Son, all of Christ's death benefits are given to you freely.

Now, these are not just any death benefits. These are supernatural, God empowered, devil stomping and Christ arising - making you more than a conqueror, benefits.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:37-NIV)

Verse 37 is a reference to the cross. Paul makes it blindingly clear, that it is the death benefits of Jesus' death (in all these things), that makes us more than conquerors.

So, what does it mean to be, "more than conquerors?"

Glad you asked. The following four death benefits makes you more than a conqueror.

Jesus' death on the cross supply's supernatural freedom. (Psalm 34:17)

And that freedom comes because Jesus is interceding to release supernatural freedom. A lot of bad things can happen to each of us, but God is your source of refuge, strength, and ever-present help in **times of trouble**. Lock into that, in **times of trouble**. **The troubles are happening all the time.**

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

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 thing in common. We are all weak as humans and need supernatural freedom from our troubles.

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? (Roman 8-NIV)

Pressure wears on us, anxieties give us ulcers, people intimidate us.

We lose our cool and get angry,

criticism hurts our sweethearts,

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 from time to time. A place to go and find Supernatural Freedom through the cross.

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

Jesus' death on the cross defeats evil's effect. (Ephesians 6:12)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against powers, against the world rulers of darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. (NET)

There is an unwelcome and insidious presence that exists in every believer's life. And will be around us on this earth until the end.

How did it get here? There are two sources - Satan fell from Heaven; Adam and Eve fell from the Garden.

Both occasions emboldened evil one.

The enemy cloaks himself in light and darkness. He is the dark adversary who knows every move you are making. He appears on the landscape and timeline of humanity as a snake, dragon, devil, Judas, anti-Christ, Hamon; in Nazism, totalitarianism, and in the mass shootings of Columbine, and Vegas.

He has an abundance of evil servants who work to undermine all that God is attempting and unleashes atrocities of oppression, political anarchy, genocide, abortion, sex slavery and many other evil events on all of humanity.

Everything on this planet is impacted by darkness. In this fallen state good people become butchers of evil. And the idolatrous love themselves over loving God.

The central message of the NT is mankind's salvation from sin and wrongdoing. Jesus Christ saves. What he saves us from is the power of darkness and death. If the person of the devil is dismissed, then the saving work of Christ becomes meaningless.

When you learn to win over darkness your life gets better.

When you win over darkness everyone's life around you get better.

When you win over darkness, your city, your state, country, and world get considerably better.

Jesus' death on the cross disarms Satan's power. (Colossians 2:15)

Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (NET)

Jesus' death on the cross destroys the consequences of death. (Hosea 13:14)

Will I deliver them from the power of Sheol? No, I will not!

Will I redeem them from death? NO, I will not!

O death, bring on your plagues!

O Sheol, bring on your destruction!

My eyes will not show any compassion!

...who has **destroyed death** and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Tim 1:10-NIV)

The consequence of death is abolished. He annihilated it. Paul says to Timothy, on resurrection day when Jesus Christ rose from the grave, he demonstrated a supernatural and sovereign transcendent power which has never been witnessed before in all of history.

And that same person, Jesus Christ, is holding your hand, so wake Timothy, enough timidity. Face your daily storms and trials with the help of the One that has destroyed a far bigger foe, than whatever you are dealing with.

The argument from Paul was a game changer for Timothy and it can be for you too. If you grab hold of Jesus' death benefits and brand today. The One I follow, has destroyed far larger foes than any opposition I am facing.

Jesus has destroyed a far bigger foe than I am facing today.

This is the universal ache of everyone's soul in the universe. Everyone knows how crazy the thinking is, if our candles went out when we die. Poof. Nothing else. People have argued about this for centuries.

Every soul wonders what happens when our candles go out when we die?

Without life beyond the grave, then life before the grave makes no sense at all. Hitler and Billy Graham experience the same fate in the end. Extinction. No accountability for evil. No reward for grace and goodness.

No consciousness beyond the grave. No future. Just blackness forever. Christianity teaches that everyone will be resurrected. A conscious future beyond the grave. To one of two future realities. To eternal life with God or eternal life separated from God.

First, centers around the majesty and mercy of God. Redeemed followers of Christ enjoy God forever in heaven. Here we enjoy relationship, community and purpose forever.

Second, is void of the presence and goodness of God and centers around the evil, rebellion and wickedness of death, hell and the grave.

God sends no one there. Those who end up there are granted permission by God to live with their choices that say, "I don't want God to have any part in my life", so God grants that request. Avoid it at all costs. No one's candle is extinguished at the end of life. All are resurrected to the future of their choosing.

The open invitation today is to any and all who would like to enter into a relationship with the living God. The door to the family of God is open to all races, all colors, creeds, ages, sexual preferences, political parties...it is open to all.

The second part of the good news message and I get excited every time I tell it, and I am excited to tell you now, "the entrance requirement is mercy based not merit based.

Christianity is the only faith system, religious practice and world philosophy that is merit based. If you buckle down and earn enough merit badges in your faith system-Jehovah Witness, Mormonism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and on and on...some kind of payoff is available. But if you fall short of the standard. Tough luck. You don't enough know if you qualify until it is all over.

A little late by then. Christianity teaches that no amount of merit badges can do enough to please a totally Holy God. Not me. Not you. So, God sent Christ to atone and then announced to the world that entrance into his family would be free of charge.

For by grace you are saved, not of works...

This is the good news that changed my life in college. I just thought that Christianity was merit badge all the way. I was wrong!

If I receive Jesus' resurrection power given to destroy death and declare through faith my trust in Jesus Christ's atoning death, I am child of God. A friend of God. A future heir to God's plans for eternity.

It would be spiritual malpractice if I failed to instruct you not only about how Christ's atoning death has destroyed death and offers you eternal life, but what happens if you chose to reject Christ.

²Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan 12:2-NIV)

²⁸“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. (John 5-NIV)

If you are not sure if you have accepted Christ as your Savior, all you must do is *receive* and *believe*....**to all who have received Him, to those who believed in His name He has given the right to become children of God. (John 1:12-NIV)**

First, receive. Receive Christ as your savior. Receive forgiveness of sins. Receive the Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing your future.

Second, believe. Believe that God loves you. Believe that no sin is too much for God to forgive. Believe that no person is too late to have eternal life. Believe that you are valuable to God's plan.

Believe that God sent His best in His Son Jesus to die for you. Paul reminds us that we all are in the same boat when it comes to our need for salvation. And it is because of Jesus' death that we can all have eternal life. The sting of death is gone, life is being offered.

(15) Our (*my*) firm decision is to work from this focused center: One man died for everyone. That puts everyone in the same boat. He included everyone (me) in His death so that everyone could be included in His life, a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own.

(Today, I claim Christ's forgiveness to cover my pile of sins. And in exchange become born again.) In Jesus Name. Amen.

-2 Cor. 5-Message.