

Begin with 1 Corinthians 11:25-26...

I read this past week that Christians in a village in Africa pray they will die a ‘good death’
To them a ‘good death’ is not a pain-free death, or a dignified death or even dying in old age
It’s the opportunity of gathering one’s family around them one final time and having the strength
to give them a final ‘charge’ to live a godly life and prepare for a reunion in heaven
A year ago last weekend, our brother and friend Dean Wildasin died a ‘good death’
Before Dean, Sue Jakiella died a good death, both of them praising God, and blessing those
around them just hours before God took them home
Yet, no one has died a better death than Jesus, and we have a lot to learn in it

PP 1-Jesus died a perfect death: “*And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus
...said, “**Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit!**”*”

Did you notice that the great veil in the temple that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of
Holies was torn in two *before* Jesus spoke and died?
Matthew and Mark, in their gospels, do not mention this order but neither are they trying to be as
specific as Luke: the curtain was torn in two, then Jesus spoke/died
There’s a reason I’m stressing that the curtain was torn not after, or when, but before He died

Last week when we looked at the 6th statement, ‘*It is finished*’, we heard about *redemption*
To redeem someone from captivity one had to buy them back, and the price paid was the *ransom*
The message of the Bible is that we are all captive to sin, we need Someone to free us, redeem us
Every person has knowingly and willingly sinned, coming up short of God’s standard
His justice has pronounced the sentence of ‘guilty’ over every person
And someone might think, *Why is God so persnickety about sin?*

Imagine it’s the Superbowl, 4th down with seconds to go, enough time for one final play
The team with the ball is behind by 5 points, and 3 feet from the end zone, and they snap the ball
They run the play, a quarterback keeper, he stretches toward the goal line in what seems slow
motion...and is stopped 2 inches short from a touchdown and the clock expires
But then, the referees huddle together, and they really appreciated the effort of the offense, so
they decide to award a touchdown despite the fact they came up short
What a breach of justice that would be; the papers would light up with the scandal
We don’t want referees, police or judges to pervert justice, and we get that!
But when hell is on the line, people who all come up short, want God, the great referee to break
from the huddle with His Son and the Holy Spirit and open the door to eternal life
But He won’t do it, He cannot do it, He has another way to help us

Friends, every play we’ve ever run falls short of the end zone, even our good acts fall short of
God’s pure, perfect holiness, because sin runs like a fault line through us
God knew our predicament before He even created this world and He had a plan of redemption
He sent His Son to do what we couldn’t, to play the game of life perfectly
And Jesus did, and every word, action, thought made it to the end zone of righteous perfection

He never once sinned, He completely satisfied every single standard of God's holiness
He earned righteousness
The bank account of redemption, out of which He would write the ransom check, was filled by
the righteousness, the perfect merit that He earned in His life
If Jesus had committed even one sin, had selfishly refused to share his toys with His little step-
brothers, that check He wrote with His death on the cross would be worthless!
But He didn't, and that ransom check is inexhaustible for every person who will cry out to Him
for freedom, trusting in Him to deliver them from the captivity and penalty of sin
He signed that check with His own perfect blood, authorizing it with His death

So back to the curtain again, which Matthew said was torn from the top to the bottom
God took the Old Covenant, the Old Testament, the sacrificial system and tore it up
In effect, God said *My Law was put in effect to show you my holiness, my standards that I will
not, cannot yield*

*My Law was to show you your sin, your falling short, your captivity, your need or a redeemer
And with My Son's death, He has a way for you and I to have peace and fellowship*

Jesus lived the Law perfectly on our behalf, doing what we could not do
Jesus died as our sacrifice doing what the death of an animal could not do
When that curtain was torn, the temple became obsolete, now we are the temple of God
The high priest was obsolete, now Jesus is eternal high priest, the mediator between God and us
Even priests became obsolete for every Christian is now a priest, serving in the presence of God
Animal sacrifices became obsolete, for the superior blood of Christ has taken away sin
And the curtain became obsolete, for Jesus is now the curtain, making a way into God's presence

You see that great curtain in the temple was always the great divide between sinful humanity and
Holy God, and only one person once a year could walk through that curtain, the Day of
Atonement, and only to sprinkle the blood of an animal sacrifice on the mercy seat
But now, because of the sacrifice of Jesus, God ripped open that curtain giving His people access
to Him

PP Friends, **Exodus 12:6** tells us that the Passover Lamb was to be killed at twilight, literally
meaning between the evenings, between sunset and dark, which was 3-6 PM
The men would be lined up against the rails of the Court of Priests with their live, sacrificial
lambs, a priest attending to each man, thousands of priests in all
Other priests were standing ready with their long trumpets, and at the signal they would raise
them to their lips and blast forth the signal to begin
It is entirely possible, that at that moment, the curtain was ripped with a loud, mighty tear, just as
Jesus died, bringing an end for all time to the sacrificial systems and the Law
The ripped curtain was the game clock expiring, and in one final surge, Jesus crossed the goal-
line of a perfect death, signing that ransom check to free His people from sin's bondage

PP 2-Jesus died in perfect peace: "Father..."

Have you heard of the word 'scapegoat', someone who bears the blame on behalf of another?
On their great *Day of Atonement*, the Jews took two male goats, both of which, God purposed, to
give a picture of what Jesus would do on the cross in redeeming His people

The High Priest would cast lots over the goats and the one selected was killed and its blood taken though that great curtain, into the Most holy Place and sprinkled on the mercy seat
This symbolized the just wrath of God, poured out on that slain goat, the innocent substitute
Then the High Priest would take the live goat, the scapegoat, and put his hands on its head, symbolizing that the sins of Israel were placed on that animal's account, it was to blame
Then someone was selected to lead that goat into the desert, so it would never return
The **first goat** was killed, taking on it the penalty that should have fallen on Israel
The **second goat**, the scapegoat, carried away their sins, restoring fellowship and peace with God

But as we saw last week, no amount of animal blood could in effect do this
The ceremony was only effective because it was empowered by what it pointed forward to
It was a shadow that said that one day the **Lamb of God** would be in place of both goats
He will be a perfect, spotless sacrifice, He will be slain and His blood will satisfy God's justice
And He will be the scapegoat Who will carry away the sins of God's people, making peace
PP He will make possible the Psalmist's hope: *"as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us."* 103:12
PP And the promise of Micah 7:19 *"You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."*
Think of this from the perspective of a Jew living in Israel, where to the east was the trackless waste of the desert and to the west were the depths of the Mediterranean Sea
Both are places of irretrievable banishment
Sin's penalty, which barred us from the table of fellowship with God, is put away, permanently

Can't we see this in the final words of Jesus as He begins, **"Father"**
Just moments before, His fellowship with His Father was breached, He was made a curse for us crying out, **"My God, My God, Why have You forsaken Me?"**
That was the awful condition of Israel, of every sinner
But now, His redemptive work on the cross is finished, He has carried our sins away, and now His final words begin with **"Father"**, a word of relationship, of fellowship
Friends, Jesus didn't die under the Father's wrath, He does not yield up His Spirit to His God, whose just and terrible wrath was inflicted on Him, He gives it to His **"Father"**

Are you seeing the significance of this for us?
We were separate from God because of our sins, objects of His perfect, holy, just wrath
But when you put your trust in Jesus, and repented from your sins, the ransom He paid in His death, **the first goat**, purchased you out from the captivity and severe penalty of sin
But too many Christians forget the **second goat**, that our sins are carried away and our fellowship restored, and there is no retrieval of them
PP *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* Romans 8:1

PP His death made possible the great mercy of God for us who believe: *"For His anger is but for a moment, and His favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning."* Psalm 30:5

PP 3-Jesus died as our perfect example: *"into Your hands I commit My spirit!"* Luke 23:46

Ever since my own father died, as well as a really close friend, death has become a serious thing

Yet the Bible makes it clear that should Jesus tarry long enough, we all have an appointment with death: **“it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,”**

Hebrews 9:27

PP But then, we’re comforted by Paul: **“O death, where is your sting?”** **1 Corinthians 15:55**

Christ took the terrifying stinger of death into His own body so that those who trust in Him should have the courage and confidence of what lies on the other side of death

PP *“He disarmed death by burying its shaft in His own heart. Death has no more arrows.”*

Alfred Edersheim

The apostle Peter wrote that though Jesus was killed by lawless people, He was ultimately

PP **“delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God”** **Acts 2:23**

He ultimately died by divine appointment, not by cruel humanity

He could have walked away in the Garden Gethsemane when the whole mob fell at His feet

He could have answered Pilate’s questions and gained His freedom

He could have called 10,000 angels to deliver Him before one punch landed on His face

PP He had taught His disciples this divine prerogative: **“I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.”** **John 10:17-18**

In fact, His death came earlier than normal for a crucified victim, catching Pilate by surprise

The soldiers went to perform crucifraction, where they took a hammer or iron bar and broke the legs so that the victim could no longer push up to expel air, dying within minutes

They did this to the two robbers, but when they came to Jesus, He had already died

PP This was important because **Numbers 9:12** said that not a bone in the Passover lamb was to be broken, in fact even eating the lamb during the Passover meal was done so with caution that not a single bone would be broken

Jesus, our Passover Lamb must die with unbroken bones

PP This perfectly fulfilled **Psalms 34:20**, **“He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.”**

Jesus died on a divine calendar, the same as all of His children

“Into Your hands I commit My spirit”

For Jewish children, this was often the first Scripture they learned as their mothers taught them to pray it before they went to bed, and for good reason

Demonic activity was a widely seen problem of the day, as they were believed to sit on thrones and hover around cradles, thought to be able to eat children and drink their blood

As Jesus was dying, He gave His spirit into the loving, trusting and extended hands of His Father

PP In fact, the word **‘commit’** means to place, present or deposit something into what was trustworthy and secure

It’s what people do when they deposit their valuables into a secure bank box

Illus I read a story of a family whose little boy was suffering from a terminal illness. At first the boy didn’t understand what was happening to him, but as his friends would go out to play and he had to stay inside, he began to realize the truth. He began to wonder what it would be like to die. One day his mother read the stirring tale of King Arthur and Sir Lancelot and the final glorious battle where so many gallant knights met their death. And when she finished, her son was silent for a time. Then he asked her most dreaded question: *Mom, what is it like to die?*

Does it hurt? Tears sprang to her eyes, so she excused herself to go to the kitchen to get composed. She prayed God would give an answer to that question for her son. He did. “Kenneth” she said when she returned, *“Do you remember when you would play hard all day? When the evening came you would be so tired that when you came in, you would lie down on Mommy and Daddy’s bed and fall asleep. That wasn’t your bed. That was not where you belonged. But you stayed there a little while. In the morning, you were surprised to wake up and find yourself in your own bed. You were there because someone you loved had come and taken care of you. During the night while you were sleeping, your father came-with big strong arms-and carried you to your own room. Death is like that. One night we are very tired and very sleepy. We fall asleep and the next morning we wake up to find ourselves in another room-our own room where we belong-because”* God has carried us from our home in this world to our home in heaven. That little boy’s face showed that he had understood. And a few days later he fell asleep just as his mother had said.¹

PP John tells us as Jesus died, ***“He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”*** **John 19:30**

PP The word ***‘bowed’*** means to lay your head down on a pillow at the end of a tiring day
He trustingly died falling asleep into the loving hands of His Father

For the believer, death is going from the land of the dying to the land of the living, from the land
of tears to the land of unbridled joy
And when we fall asleep in Christ, we will wake to the beaming, glorious face of our loving Lord
For our heavenly Father has carried us home, where we belong!

Return to 1 Corinthians 11:25-26

Pray

¹ Peter Marshall, [A Man Called Peter](#)