

Good Friday April 7, 2023

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

Romans 5:6-10 tells us: *"⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"*

Lets' Pray. Our Lord and Heavenly Father, we come to you today with hearts full of praise, with hearts full of joy. For we know that this time of year is where we very specifically remember the boundless love you hold, even for sinners who rejected your rule over their life. Lord, we thank you for the beauty of this gift. And Lord, we count the cost. We recognise that we crucified Jesus as much as Pontius Pilate or the Roman guards. We recognise that we denied Jesus as Simon Peter did. We recognise that we mocked you as the robber or the soldiers who forced the crown of thorns onto his head. We recognise that we often worship in secret, as Nicodemus did. And yet Lord, you have loved us enough to send your Son to die and then to call us and reveal this truth to us.

As we ponder your sacrifice, make us a people who sacrifice for others. Help us to give up time, money, reputation, pride – these earthly trappings – for that which is so much better. Make us a people who submit, who love, who give sacrificially, not for our own glory, but to shine the love Jesus showed on that first, strangest of all Good Fridays. Keep this uppermost in our mind, Lord. Many are in need in our community right now, Lord. Open opportunities for us to help meet those needs all around us.

Father, we pray you will comfort and protect those who are vulnerable. As they struggle with various needs, often in silence, we pray that the message of Easter will be prominent. Help those who are lost to realise their need for you and your limitless love. Encourage them to come to you in humble repentance, accepting the gift that Jesus offered as he gave up his life for them. Father, we pray that even through the unusual societal impact of COVID-19 that you will bring people back to you. In the name of Jesus, we bring these petitions to you. Amen.

Song – Glories of Calvary [The Glories of Calvary With Lyrics By Sovereign Grace Music \(feat. Norton Hall Band\) - YouTube](#)

1. Lord, you're calling me to come
And behold the wondrous cross
To explore the depths of grace
That came to me at such a cost
Where Your boundless love
Conquered my boundless sin
And mercy's arms were opened wide

2. Sinners find eternal joy
In the triumph of Your wounds
By our Saviour's crimson flow
Holy wrath has been removed
And Your saints below
Join with your saints above
Rejoicing in the Risen Lamb

Chorus: My heart is filled with a thousand songs
Proclaiming the glories of Calvary
With every breath, Lord how I long
To sing of Jesus who died for me
Lord, take me deeper
Into the glories of Calvary

Chorus x2
Bridge: For all eternity we will sing worthy
Our God has set us free
We'll sing the glories of Calvary
Repeat Bridge
Chorus

Bible Reading – Matthew 27:32-50 (NIV)

³² As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). ³⁴ There they offered Jesus’ wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵ When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸ Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.” ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” ⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. ⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (Which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). ⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” ⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

Announcements 7/4/23

Focus for April – Easter.

Over the Easter weekend it is good to think about the progression of the story of Jesus

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Cross	Stone	Empty Tomb
Dead	Buried	Life
Loss	Grief	Joy
Sin forgiven	Waiting for God to act	Life eternal

How will your Easter reflect the wonderful truths of Easter?

Easter Service

Last Supper Service	Thursday 6 th April	4:30pm (Swansea), 6pm (Charlestown)
Good Friday	Friday 7 th April	8am (Swansea), 9:45am (Charlestown)
Resurrection Sunday	Sunday 9 th April	8am (Swansea), 9:45am & 6pm (Charlestown)

Regular Activities. Over the school holidays our regular activities will go into recess. If you would like to serve in any way in Term 2, we would love to hear from you.

Kids Packs. Over the school holidays, our normal Kids Church programme is slightly modified. Kids up to year 2 can still go out to the hall for an age-appropriate lesson. Years 3 & 4 have the option of going to the hall or staying in church with a Kids pace. And those in Year 5 or above are encouraged to stay in Church.

Steve’s Leave. Stephen will be on holidays for the next week so if you need any pastoral assistance, please can you contact Jon.

AM Preaching Programme. Stephen will be preaching on the OT book of Joshua in term 2. It might be good to read it in preparation for our time together.

Joshua: The Promise Keeping God

23/4	Joshua 1	Be strong and courageous
30/4	Joshua 2	Extravagant grace
7/5	Joshua 3-4	Stepping out in faith
14.5	Joshua 5-6	Joshua didn’t fight the battle of Jericho!
21.5	Joshua 7-8	The setback due to sin

"But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15 (NIV))

Marriage Course. The Church is thinking of running the Alpha Marriage Course on either a Thursday night or a Saturday afternoon in Weeks 3-9 of term 2. At the same time, we are hoping to have a child-minding option. If you are interested in being a part of this, please let Stephen know by Easter Sunday. We will make a final decision based on numbers in late April.

Jesus Revolution. A new movie out in cinemas from April 20. Might be worth a look?

Bible Reading – Matthew 27:51-66 (NIV)

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split ⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. ⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!" ⁵⁵ Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. ⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. ⁵⁷ As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb. ⁶² The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³ "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

Pastoral Prayer Points

Pray for online communities: Pray the powerful gospel would flood into many people's homes and hearts via online platforms. Pray that many young people online would hear the message of the cross this Easter, turn to Jesus Christ in faith, and be saved.

Pray for North Korea: Pray for Almighty God to deliver a nation long-enslaved by a brutal regime. Pray for the Church to persevere and multiply amid horrific persecution. Pray for Truth to reign and liberate the nation from the regime's indoctrination and lies.

Tear Fund reports that a deadly combination of conflict and climate-related drought have produced a perfect storm for mass food insecurity. Right now, 50 million people are on the brink of famine. In the Horn of Africa around 20.2 million children face severe hunger, thirst & disease. Please pray that God would move the world leaders to send much needed relief.

Song – Jerusalem <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g252SXZvdn4>

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|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. See Him in Jerusalem | 4. See the empty tomb today |
| Walking where the crowds are | Death could not contain him |
| Once these streets had sung to Him | Once the servant of the world |
| Now they cry for murder | Now in victory reigning |
| Such a frail and lonely man | Lift your voices to the one |
| Holding up the heavy cross | Who is seated on the throne |
| See Him walking in Jerusalem | See him in the new Jerusalem |
| On the road to save us | Praise the one who saved us |

2. See him there upon the hill
 Hear the scorn and laughter
 Silent as a lamb he waits
 Praying to the father
 See the king who made the sun
 And the moon and shining stars
 Let the soldiers hold and nail him down
 So that he could save them

Lift your voices to the one
 Who is seated on the throne
 See him in the new Jerusalem
 Praise the one who saved us
 Praise the one who saved us

3. See him there upon the cross
 Now no longer breathing
 Dust that formed the watching crowds
 Takes the blood of Jesus
 Feel the earth is shaking now
 See the veil is split in two
 And he stood before the wrath of God
 Shielding sinners with his blood

Sermon – It's time to STAND UP! - Stephen T

I was a young auditor just a couple of years out of university. I was sent to do a job by myself and in conducting the audit I found fraud, systematic fraud. Someone was siphoning off cash from the company to feather their own nest. Which meant I had a duty to report it. Which I did. But my manager didn't want to do anything about it. He told me to change the wording of my audit report so that the fraud was no longer disclosed. And I had a decision to make. Would I stand up for what was right or cave in to the pressure from my boss?

I choose to stick to my guns. More pressure was put on me. But I knew I had to do what was right. Why couldn't I just fudge the truth, I was asked? I answered because of my faith in Jesus. He would want me to be honest and tell the truth. No matter what the consequences.

Now I was fortunate. Standing up for Jesus didn't cost me much that time. But there have been plenty of times since when it has cost me big time. Sometimes its money or your reputation with others. At other times it has caused difficulties with family and friends. But I have been extremely fortunate over my life. There has been no physical persecution. No loss of job. No jail sentences. No long-term family and friends have shunned me.

Slide 2

But there is no guarantee that these things won't happen in the future. The landscape in Australia is changing. The opposition is getting more vocal. Our views are seen as out of touch and dangerous. As Stephen McAlpine has put it this way in his latest book, we are now the bad guys. And we all know where this could lead. We look at China or Communist Russia or the Middle East, where Christians are the bad guys and when they go against the prevailing view of the government it can be death, imprisonment, poverty, rejection.

So, are we ready to stand up for the Lord? Are we prepared for whatever might come our way? Will we stand up for what is right, what is true, what is Christian in the face of stiff opposition? This morning I want us to look at one man who at a critical moment of his life, stepped out of the shadows and was willing to stand up, stand up for Jesus. And as we think about this man, Joseph of Arimathea, I want us to see who he was, what he did, why he did what he did and where that leads us today. Who, what, why and where.

1. Who (Verse 32-44)

⁵⁷ “As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus.” Now who is Joseph? He is a rich man, a man of standing, someone who has done well for himself. He’s from Arimathea, a small town about 30 kms NW of Jerusalem & he is a believer. A disciple of Jesus. Now we are well within our rights to ask why haven’t we heard of Joseph before? Well, there is a good reason for that. John’s gospel says “*Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews.*”

A secret believer. Still in the closet. A disciple unwilling to put his head above the trenches in case it might be blown off. A scaredy cat. Someone who feared the Jews. Now why would he fear the Jews? Jesus had quite a strong following at this stage. There were 12 disciples, & at least 70 people had gone on that first missionary undertaking earlier in the gospel. The crowds who welcomed Jesus just a week ago coming into Jerusalem, would have numbered in their thousands and they made a song and a dance about Jesus being the one who has come from God. So why is Joseph scared?

Luke’s gospel tells us why. “*Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council (the Sanhedrin), a good and upright man.*” That’s why he was fearful, he was part of the group of people who had just condemned Jesus to death. He was there when the chief priests and the teachers of the law were plotting to get rid of Jesus. He was probably around when Caiaphas said it would be good for one man to die (Jesus) on behalf of many.

Now Luke goes on to say that “*Joseph was a member of the council, a good and upright man who had not consented with their decision and action.*” Which raises more questions than it answers. Was he not there at the trial of Jesus? Probably not the first trial anyway. But most likely he was there when the decision was confirmed by the whole of the council the next morning. So, did he speak up against the decision? There is no evidence that he did. So probably he remained a secret believer. He kept his head down. He abstained from the vote.

Slide 5

Probably he was a bit like Nicodemus who we are told in John’s gospel also helped with Jesus’ burial. Now we meet Nicodemus in John 3 where he meets Jesus at night, in secret & is told he must be born again. He too was a member of the Sanhedrin, a secret believer who kept his head down at the crucial moment when they were deciding on the fate of Jesus.

Slide 6

Now before we are too hard on Joseph and Nicodemus, I haven’t always defended Jesus either and I bet you have had your moments where afterwards you have kicked yourself and said why didn’t I say something? Besides look at the environment they have found themselves in? ³² “*As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, **and they forced him** to carry the cross.*”

You wouldn’t want to find yourself too close to Jesus or you might be pressed into action. For what is happening here? ³⁵ “*When **they had crucified him**, they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*” Jesus is losing his life here. So, what is to stop the Sanhedrin from turning their attention from Jesus and next wanting to crucify Jesus disciples?

Slide 7

And this crucifixion is happening on a public highway, just before the Passover, a day where hundreds and thousands of people would be coming into town. And as they did that Matthew tells us they hurled abuse at Jesus. ³⁹ “*Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads* ⁴⁰ *and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”* ⁴¹ *In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.*

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⁴² "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Its stacks on Jesus. It a free for all out there. The atmosphere is tense. The climate dangerous. The whole world seems to have deserted Jesus. The disciples have gone into hiding. His followers have disappeared into thin air. All that was left of the crowd of followers were three women. We see that in verse 56. *"Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons."*

Slide 9

I can see why Joseph was a secret believer. It was a dangerous thing to be a follower of Jesus. Now in the past in Australia it has been a respectable thing to be a Christian, a normal thing, an everyday thing. Some of you who are older will know it gave you bonus points to be actively involved in a Church. It showed you were reliable, honest, caring, faithful. But today we are the bad guys and the situation has changed incredibly quickly. Especially in the last decade or so. We are on the wrong side of history. We are now people of the past.

So, what are you and I going to do about it? Stay quiet? Be a secret believer? Blend with the crowd? Well, that's who Joseph was but secondly, we see what Joseph did. He made a stand

Slide 10

2. What (Verses 58-60)

⁵⁸ "Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body & Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb."

Now it should have been the Lord's disciples who buried their master but they were too scared to do so. For apart from these few women, they were conspicuous by their absence. So, Joseph stepped up to the plate. Being a member of the Sanhedrin, he had the standing to go and see Pilate. Now that would have been brave enough. Pilate would have been in a foul mood and to be interrupted at the end of such a day to ask for the body of a criminal might have been a bridge too far. But Joseph was willing to cross it.

You see it was time for him to make a stand. His days of being a secret disciple are now over. He would now be going against the rest of the Sanhedrin. He would now be the brunt of jokes and the destination for insults. He would lose his position of standing. It even puts in jeopardy his riches. But someone needed to honour Jesus body. Someone needed to give him a proper burial.

Slide 11

So, he takes the body, wraps it in a clean linen cloth, which might be the best clothing Jesus has ever had! He was after all from a poor carpenter's family. Joseph and Nicodemus then place around the cloth, spices, not to preserve the body, no they don't have time for that. But it's something to take away the stench of death. And he is placed in Joseph's own tomb.

That's interesting, isn't it? Joseph's response to Jesus dying in his place was to bury Jesus in his place. Joseph, you see makes a costly sacrifice. And it shows not only can a rich man be a follower of Jesus but he can use his wealth in the service of Jesus. And as he does this extraordinary thing, Joseph fulfils Scripture.

Slide 12

For Isaiah 53 says about the suffering servant of the Lord, *"He was assigned a grave with the wicked, **and with the rich in his death**, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."* The actions of Joseph are showing us all that God was still in control of everything, even Jesus' death, even in his burial.

But not only was Joseph unwittingly fulfilling Scripture, his actions would help prove the resurrection in three days' time.

Now if Jesus had been thrown into a common grave, even His disciples wouldn't have known where He was. And it would be harder to prove that it was his body that had risen. But here God is setting up the scenario where his own disciples know where the tomb is, so they won't be going to the wrong place on Easter Sunday but also the Romans and Jewish leaders also know exactly where Jesus was buried!

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Listen to what J.C. Ryle says: *"They little thought what they were doing... unwittingly they were providing the most complete evidence of the truth of Christ's coming resurrection. They were actually making it impossible to prove that any deception or imposition had occurred. Their seal, their guard, their precautions were all to become witnesses. In just a few hours that Christ has risen, their own devices became instruments to show forth God's glory."*

You couldn't make this up. The disciples run away. The only people there at the end were the women, who can't give evidence in a court of law. And the two people who bury Jesus were Pharisees, who had earlier in the day been there when Jesus was condemned to death. Before the foundation of the world God had ordained that His Son's body would be cared for by a disciple who was until that time utterly unheard of & perhaps even unknown to the circle of disciples of the Lord Jesus! But it was now time for them to stand up.

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3. **Why?** Because of what they saw happening on the cross **(Verses 45-56)**

You see the cross changes everything. Absolutely everything. Look at what Matthew tells us happens as a result of Jesus dying on the cross. ⁴⁵*"From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land."* That's a coincidence, isn't it? Just when Jesus is on his last legs, there is some sort of an eclipse for three hours. No that's no coincident, it's a God incident. For in the same way that God had sent 3 days of darkness on the Egyptians in the book of Exodus as a sign of his judgement, so now judgement is falling on Jesus on the cross.

And we know that because of what happens next. ⁴⁶*"About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' (Which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?')."* God separates himself from his son. Jesus is forsaken by his father God. Because the sin of the world has been transferred from us to Jesus, God turns his back on Jesus. The physical darkness then points also to a spiritual darkness.

For when Abraham went up Mt. Moriah & he got to the top there was a voice from heaven which said don't touch your son. When the death angel gets close to Jerusalem in the days when David wickedly took the census, there is a voice which says, 'stop.' But here on Calvary there's no voice, there's no answer to Jesus' cry. And Jesus is drawing our attention to that because He wants us to understand this. Though God had so often come to the rescue of his people before, and though God will certainly come to your rescue in time of need, Jesus shows us that it is the plan of God **not to rescue Him** in order that **He might rescue you**.

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⁵⁰*"And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit."* ⁵¹*"At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."* The curtain that separated the holy of holies from unholy man was rent asunder. By God Himself. Symbolising God has broken out. He is now at large in his world. And many now has access to God. Man can now come into the very presence of God. Because their sin problem has been solved. Because Jesus has died for them on the cross.

And it was not as if all hell then broke loose but in fact heaven and earth then broke loose. Crazy things began to happen. *“The earth shook, the rocks split ⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.”*

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The entire cosmos is affected by Jesus’ death. Death itself is reversed by Jesus’ death. A new age is now breaking in. Sin has been defeated. Satan has been defeated. Death itself has been defeated. And the result of all of this happening? ⁵⁴ *“When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”*

Earlier, this term Son of God, had almost been an abusive term. The crowds had said to Jesus, “come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God.” And the chief priests had mocked him, “He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” But the proof that he really was the Son of God was not Jesus getting down from the cross, it was Jesus staying up on that cross on our behalf. And it was not God saving Jesus from the cross, it was God allowing Jesus to stay on that cross in our place.

It looked like a defeat but it was actually a victory. It looked like it was all about death but it was really all about life. It looked like punishment but it was actually about acquittal. And the chief priests don’t see this. And the crowds don’t see this. But a Gentile with no background in the Scriptures and very little knowledge of God sees it when the leaders of the faith don’t see it all. The centurion then proclaims, “Jesus really is the son of God.”

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The promised son of God because almost everything that happened on the cross was prophesied in the OT. The vinegar and the gall are talked about in Psalm 69:21, the crucifixion and the piercing of the hands and feet in Psalm 22:16, the gambling for Jesus’ clothing from Psalm 22:18, the staring and gloating over him from Psalm 22:17, the mockery is also predicted in Psalm 22:6-8, 12-13 and 17, even the exact words *“He trusts in God, let God deliver him now”* comes from Psalm 22:8.

God is in complete control of what happens to his son. And at the pivotal moment of history, most were blind to what God was doing but this Roman Centurion could see. And so could Joseph of Arimathea. This I believe is what moved him from a secret believer to a loud and proud believer. It moved him from the darkness into God’s light. Out of the closet into the world. For that is the power of the cross. It changes everything. Absolutely everything.

Jesus died for me. I can now live for me. Jesus gave it all for my salvation. I can now give it all back to him in celebration. Jesus opens up the way to God and I can now live day by day in the very presence of God. So, I no longer need to be afraid. No longer need to be fearful. If God is for me, who can stand against me? If God has the power to raise the dead, he has the power to look after me whether I live or die.

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4. So **where** does that leave us today?

Let me quote American preacher Ligon Duncan. *“Now I want to speculate with you a moment... Can you imagine the conversation that Joseph had with his wife? ... he says to his wife on the afternoon of the Lord Jesus’ death, “Honey, I’ve got to go get His body, and I’m going to bury it in our family tomb.” And his wife says, “Joseph, you have got to be out of your mind. If you identify yourself with Him by going and asking for that body, you will lose all the wealth of our family. You will be cast out of the synagogue. I will be cast out of the synagogue. Our children will not be allowed in the synagogue in the town in which they grew up. You will lose your status. You will be removed from the Sanhedrin & it will be no telling, given what they have just done to the Lord Jesus Christ, what they will do to you. And Joseph, after all He’s already dead.” And he says, “Honey, I owe that man everything, and I just have to do it.”*

You get that. I owe that man everything. I just have to do it. Here was a man who was never heard of before and to be honest is never heard of again, who stands up for Jesus. Yes, in the past he was scared but now he is bold. Before he was afraid now, he is brave. And what changes him is the cross. Seeing what God has done for him on the cross.

Slide 19

And I wonder if we could get that same courage if today, we took a long hard look at the cross. Jesus dying for us. The curtain being torn in two. The earthquake, the darkness this is a global phenomena. And the people rising from the dead, showing us that the cross is the source of our hope, all our hope in a resurrected life. And so, we need to live in the light of the cross. Not just at Easter time but at worktime, dinner time, leisure time, all the time. Lives of sacrifice. Lives of witness. Lives of courage. Friends, it's time to stand up.

Yes, I know that you have let God down before but at the cross we are given forgiveness for our sins. Yes, I know we have gone quiet at work in the past but at the cross we are given the power of the presence of God. Yes, I know that it's hard in the awkward family situations but the son of God is your big brother & he will help you to stand up, to be bold, to do what is right. Yes, the world is getting a dark place but we are being called today to be the light of the world. And we do that by reflecting the light of Jesus into every corner of our lives.

But friends that sort of bravery & courage doesn't come from within us. It comes from recognising that Jesus is the Son of God. And by being in Christ. By trusting in Christ, by living for Christ I am not on the wrong side of history instead I have glorious eternal future.

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Let me end with a story that was first told by Elizabeth Elliot. It is about a king who went into the village streets one day to meet and greet his subjects and there was a beggar there who held out his begging bowl thinking this is my chance. The King will give me something handsomely. Instead, the king looked at the beggar and said "Give me something."

This shocked the beggar and made him grumpy. And he fished out three little grains of rice from the bottom of his bowl and gave them to the king. At the end of the day the beggar poured out his bowl and was astonished to find three pieces of pure gold at the bottom of his bowl. He looked up and said to himself, if only I had given him everything! **If only we would give everything to Jesus. Because remember at the cross he gave everything to us.**

Song – When I survey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDkuxElcpdI>

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|--|---|
| <p>1. When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.</p> | <p>3. See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?</p> |
| <p>2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.</p> | <p>4. Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.</p> |