

Guest Preacher - Rev Roddy John Campbell

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[0 : 00] Seeking the Lord's help and blessing, let us turn back to the portion of Scripture that we read in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and we'll read again at verse 3.

1 Corinthians chapter 15.

Then to all the apostles, last of all us, to one and timely born, he appeared also to me. Paul says, for I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to receive us then to the twelve.

And so on. That Paul defines those events as occurring according to the Scriptures. The Scriptures indicates to us that the Old Testament foretold the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are many examples of prophecy that foretells the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Among them, we have Isaiah 53, which was all that Philip needed when he met with the Ethiopian, who was reading from a passage in Isaiah.

[1 : 52] The passage that goes, like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearers is silent. So he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation, justice was denied him.

He says, like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and the Ethiopian, and the Ethiopian asked Philip, about whom I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else? Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with the Scriptures, he told him the good news about Jesus.

And here Paul writes, what I deliver to you as of first importance, what I also received, that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the Scriptures.

First of all, let's think of the biblical definition of death. Death means an unnatural separation.

[3 : 02] The Bible speaks of physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death. Physical death is the separation of body and soul.

Spiritual death is life separated from God. And eternal death is separation from the comfortable presence of God.

Physical death is temporary. Physical death is temporary. It is a separation of body and soul, but only until Christ's return on the day of the resurrection.

At the resurrection, our bodies and souls are reunited together. Spiritual death can be changed by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

Whereas, wherein a person that is spiritually dead can be brought to be spiritually alive. Eternal death, on the other hand, is neither temporary and can never be changed.

[4 : 16] Eternal death is a fixed state. Eternal death, on the cross of Golgotha, Christ experienced death in all its forms, physical, spiritual, and eternal.

Now, I'm not going to spend time this morning on how death entered the experience of mankind.

Except that the Bible and experience make it clear that it is appointed unto man once to die.

A person cannot deny that he is never going to die. Such an assumption would be insane and totally against fact and experience.

Death is certain. No one can avoid it. It is an appointed time that we cannot miss. And death is final, not in the sense that there is nothing else after it, but it is final in the sense that it is a closure to any further opportunity.

The Bible says that as a tree falls, so shall it lie. That is, a person's eternal destiny is determined at one's death.

[5 : 34] Death brings closure for a Christless person to accept God's salvation in Christ. You die outside of Christ and God's salvation.

And if you do so, then you will remain like that. So death is inevitable. It is coming our way. The book of Proverbs reminds us that the grave shall never say it is enough. But the grave always shouts out, give, give, give. Now, death is not natural in the sense that we were created to live, but with the possibility of dying upon disobedience. And Adam as our representative disobeyed and sinned, and so death has come into our experience because of original sin. And death is penal. It is the penalty for sin. Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin. And so death spread to all men because all sinned. [6 : 51] Or as we have it in our catechism, our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created by sinning against God.

So this brings us two great truths. And that is that sin is universal. And death is universal. We have broken God's law. And the law is inflexible. And the least breach of it carries the penalty of death. So that man needs divine pardon. Man needs divine forgiveness. Man needs to be reconciled to God.

But the question is, how can God grant pardon, and at the same time retain his eternal and immutable justice?

[7 : 48] And the answer to that question, and the answer to that problem, is Jesus Christ. This is the good news that what man cannot do for himself, that God in his grace, in his mercy, through his eternal beloved son, has done.

Christ had to come to free man from the bondage of sin and death. And he freed us not by changing the rules, but by obeying the rules in our place, and by suffering the consequences of our disobedience.

Two things were necessary for God to be just in saving sinners, in offering salvation to sinners, in offering the gospel to sinners.

And that is, the demands of the law had to be completely obeyed. And the penalty of the broken law had to be completely paid.

And Jesus Christ did both. And without them, there would be no gospel. There would be no good news today. There would be no mercy.

[9 : 08] To sinners like me and you. Throughout his earthly life, Jesus obeyed the law of God.

In fact, had the Lord Jesus not lived the life that he did, in complete obedience to the law of God, then his death would have been meaningless.

Paul writing to the Galatians say, But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth a son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

born of a woman implies a virgin birth, and asserts that the real humanity of Jesus, made under the law, means that Jesus was born under the same inflexible law that every other man is born under. But whereas the law condemns us, and calls for our death, it vindicates Jesus as having been righteous, as having obeyed the law.

[10 : 28] So the life of Jesus Christ took care of the positive demands of the law, but something had to be done to pay the penalty of the broken law.

And so, Jesus bore what our sins deserved in his own body on the cross of Golgotha. Let us second reflect upon the death of Christ as brought before us in the words of Paul here, Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scripture.

There are plenty of testimonies in the Bible that attest the fact that Christ died. For instance, if we turn to John's Gospel in chapter 21, there we read, since it was a day of preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for that Sabbath was a high day, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once, care that came out blood and water. And then we read in Mark's Gospel, chapter 15, that Joseph Armatheia, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

[12 : 14] Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died, and someone in the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

There are plenty more evidence presented to us in the Bible, in the Gospels, to the fact that Christ died on the cross of Golgotha.

But here in Christ, we find a man not destined to die like me and you. We are destined to die because we are sinners.

But he was sinless, and therefore not destined to die. There is no indication that death was inevitable for Christ.

All men die, whether they want it or not, because death is the wages of sin. Yet death was not inevitable for him in his humanity, in that it was unfallen human nature.

[13 : 22] Perhaps you can say it was like Adam before he sinned, for he had unfallen human nature. But Adam became disobedient unto death.

Christ, however, obeyed. and to death. Adam became disobedient unto death. But Christ became obedient unto death.

Now this was not possible for anyone else to be obedient unto death. For we read, the Bible gives us that testimony. For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Death had no hold upon him, but this man chooses to die. In John's Gospel, chapter 10, we read the words of Jesus.

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. This charge I have received from my Father.

[14 : 39] Mark records for us that Jesus said, it is finished, and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Matthew records, then Jesus calling with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, he breathed his last.

He gave himself obediently unto death. So that Christ's death on the cross was real.

His death is not just a theological doctrine, it's a historic fact. On an actual day in the history of this world, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, died on a Roman cross outside the walls of Jerusalem at a place called Golgotha.

And Paul here adds that he was buried because burial is evidence of death. The burial of Christ was conclusive proof of the reality of his death.

[15 : 54] He died and his body was placed in a tomb. His burial like his death was according to scriptures. Again, we go back to Isaiah 53 and there we read, and they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth.

The burial of Jesus is not just a mere filler for scripture. Burial, after all, is the final proof of death. It is proof of the completion and finality of death. If there is any doubt whether a person has died or not, you obviously don't bury that person until you are certain that death has taken place.

Burial is the final event which proves to a person the certainty, a certainty of the fact of death. and our four gospels bring before us the fact that Jesus was buried.

In Matthew we read, And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb which he had cut in the rock and he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.

[17 : 23] Luke records where as the woman who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how the body was laid then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

You see, because burial is absolute proof of the fact that he died in the fullest sense of the word on the cross. His death was true and real.

He died and was buried. It was not a common death but the death of the cross. for the church at Philippi, Paul remarks would be extremely striking because crucifixion was considered a barbaric form of execution for the utmost cruelty.

It was a form of execution reserved for rebellious foreigners or violent criminals and robbers and it was considered the typical punishment for slaves.

it was a death to which the law had uttered a curse. And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death and he has to be put to death and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night

upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day.

[18 : 46] For he that is hanged is accursed of God, that the land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. You see, Jesus did not die a gentle death, but he died as a slave or a common criminal in torment on a cross of shame.

And so we say that the words of Paul to the church at Philippi would have been extremely striking when he says that he would boast not in anything but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, I suppose that the crucial thing in our text this morning is not did he die, for no one can deny that on the cross of Golgotha that Jesus died, that he died and that he was buried.

I suppose that the crucial thing in our text this morning is the fact that he died for our sins, that he died for our sins.

This means that the death of Christ was a substitutionary death. Christ died for our sins, he's died instead of us, he's died in place of us, voluntary.

[20 : 09] He entered death and suffered the deepest agonies, not for his own sins, but for the sins of those whom the Father had given him in the covenant of redemption.

Again, turning to the Gospel of John chapter 6, we read, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out.

For I have come down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

His death was a substitutionary death. His death was unlike what shall be true of mine and your death, because we are sinners, we are destined to die, but he was sinless and therefore not destined to die, but he died voluntary for our sins.

He died a substitutionary, death. Isaiah again, chapter 53 brings to us the nature of Christ's death, when the prophet writes, surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we still esteem him, stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our inequities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed, or we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

[21 : 57] He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our, the chastisement of our peace, now a chastisement is a family word, it belongs to the family, the father chastises his child, the chastisement of our peace, of those who were given to him by the father, who will come to put their trust in Jesus, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

It was a substitutionary death. Christ's death was also a sacrificial death.

All the sacrifices offered up in the Old Testament had no significance apart from what they pictured about Christ, what they told us about Christ. Those who offered them obeyed by faith, looking beyond the visible, looking away beyond the sacrifice that they offered to the days of Jesus Christ. Jesus says that Abraham saw his day and rejoiced. In Hebrews chapter 11 we are told, by faith Abraham offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.

The writer to the Hebrews says regarding the sacrifices offered up in the Old Testament, it can never by the same sacrifice that are continually offered every year make perfect those who draw near.

[23 : 33] and goes on to write, but in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. But regarding the sacrificial death of Christ, we read, Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many, he was offered once to bear the sins of many.

This brings before us the fact that his death was a substitutionary death, but it was also a sacrificial death. It is a sacrifice to which all the Old Testament sacrifices and blood shedding pointed.

And those who came with their offering, whether it be a lamb or a goat or a turtle dove or whatever, as they came with that offering, their faith looked beyond what was visible, what was in front of them.

Their faith looked down through the centuries, to the day of Jesus Christ, when the true sacrifice would be offered.

That is why Paul says in this very letter to the Corinthians that Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us.

[24 : 50] There were many sacrifices offered in the Old Testament, and although all the sacrifices declared the necessity of death and bloodshed, there was one day of the year, which was very special for them, called the Day of Atonement.

It was of great significance what the High Priest of Israel did with the blood on that day. With the blood of the slain goat, he made his way into the Holy of Holies, which was the most restricted area of the tabernacle, and in the Holy of Holies, beyond the veil, he would sprinkle the blood directly on the mercy seat, making propitiation.

What does that mean? Appeasing God's righteous wrath. The writer to the Hebrew takes this picture up for us and says, he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, that is Jesus, thus securing our eternal redemption.

Christ's death was substitutionary, it was sacrificial, it was also a penal death, because death in our case is a penalty, it's the last enemy, and as our substituter, he chose to meet the last enemy, and that the penalty be inflicted upon him.

Paul writes, for our sake, he made him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[26 : 27] He came to minister and to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. He came to deal with the sin, not his own, but the sin of his people.

This was to be a long, hard struggle of obedience and suffering. He battled with what our sins deserved in his own body as he looked into the cup in Gethsemane and became more acutely aware of what was involved.

We'll read that on that cold night that he sweated, and he sweated was as great drops of blood, and that sweat mingled with the dust of Gethsemane, and yet it was only a taste of what was yet to be real.

In his own experience, as Hugh Martin said, it was the shadow of the cross, the shadow of Calvary, because upon the cross he bore the curse of sin and the shedding of his blood.

There were moments of anguish that tore his soul when he was almost overwhelmed by the thought of Golgotha. In the garden of Gethsemane, three times he prayed, O my father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

[27 : 52] When Philip took the Greeks to see him, we are told that Jesus said, now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I into this hour.

There were a time when he sweat drops like blood, and when there were tears in his eyes. The writer to the Hebrew tells us that Jesus in the days of his flesh, when he had offered out prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death. Christ's death was substitutionary. It was sacrificial. It was penal. But it was also a necessary death. it was absolutely necessary if atonement was going to be made, and if a way of salvation was going to be possible, to be preached to you today, and if there was salvation to be experienced by you and me today, it was absolutely necessary.

Paul makes it clear that if salvation could be possible any other way, apart from the death of Christ, then there was no reason for Christ to have died. For Paul says, I do not nullify the grace of God.

[29 : 18] For if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. Oh, what mockery of God's justice would be if Christ's death was not essential for man's salvation.

But God's nature made the death of Jesus necessary. His death demanded penalty. His grace gave his only begotten son, and that is at the very heart of the gospel.

his justice demanded penalty, and no man could pay that penalty. And so God gave his only begotten son, as the only one who was qualified to pay the penalty.

there could be no salvation if sinners were left to themselves, either to obey the law, to make full payment for breaking it.

Salvation for sinners required a saviour outside themselves. And Jesus Christ is the only one qualified to be such a saviour of sinners, because he was completely holy, with no unpaid debt to the law for himself.

[30 : 40] He was able to suffer and die for others. And here is God's love demonstrated for us that in Christ he was giving himself, even to the horrors of a sin bearing death on the cross, and doing so for those who were powerless to rescue themselves, who were powerless and godly and

sinner, in our place who received the penalty that our sins had deserved.

Christ's death was substitutionary, it was sacrificial, it was penal, it was a necessary death, but it was also a planned death.

Paul writes, Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and the scripture makes it clear to us that the death of Christ was a planned death.

In that sense we can say that Christ's death was of divine appointment, God's eternal purpose, it was in God's redemptive plan.

Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Very often we confine the Lord's journey to the cross and to his death from the time of his birth, but the testimony of scripture shows us that his journey began long before Jesus was born, in fact it began before the world was created.

[32 : 09] The death of Jesus Christ was planned from eternity. It was all part of the covenant of redemption that took place between the trinity. The Bible makes it clear that Christ dying for sinners was God's only plan for saving sinners.

Paul preached that even though wicked men crucified Christ, that he was delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God. You see, the death of Christ was no accident. It was not an afterthought in the mind of God. The catechism asks the question, did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

And answers, God, having out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity, elects them to everlasting life, to enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery. And to bring them into a state of salvation by a redeemer. Christ's death was substitutionary. It was sacrificial. It was penal. It was a necessary death.

[33 : 14] It was a planned death, but it was also an effective or a successful death. The death of Christ was successful. It was effective. The death of Christ successfully accomplished its purpose concerning God, concerning sin, and concerning man.

Christ's death was effective with God. It satisfied God's just wrath against sin and sinners. The death of Christ satisfied the penalty of the broken law.

The blood of Christ appeased the divine wrath against sinners. The blood removed every legal obstruction to man coming to God.

God was ultimately in the cross that mercy and truth made together and righteousness and peace kissed. The infinite holy and just God poured out his infinite wrath on his dear and only son.

And because he took the full brunt of God's wrath, there is absolutely no wrath left for us. to be in Christ is to be free from divine wrath because that wrath was appeased.

[34 : 30] Propitiation. God is no longer in wrath with those who are reconciled by the blood of his son. In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The death of Christ was effective regarding sin. This aspect is what we call expiation. Expiation refers to the removal of sin and guilt, the forgiveness of sin.

The writer to the Hebrew reminds us that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. But Christ came and died so that he has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

His death was the ultimate bruising of the serpent's head as promised to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as told in Genesis 3 15. His sacrifice paid the penalty of sin.

It provided cleansings from sin. It defeated the power of sin. It guaranteed the final escape from the very presence of sin. The Bible says that through the blood of Jesus Christ we have the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of his grace.

[35 : 45] The death of Christ was effective for man because the death of Jesus satisfied God and defeated sin. It can save the sinner. The gospel is a loving appeal to common sense.

You know perfectly well that you are going to die. And you know perfectly well that you are responsible to God and that you must appear before him. And you have been told many times that Christ was offered once to deal with sin.

how often have you heard the gospel and why have you not done nothing about it? How is it that most of you can say that I will do something about it in the future?

Well the Bible makes it clear that there is no escape if we neglect this great salvation. And Paul says here for I deliver to you as of first importance what I also received that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scripture and that he was buried.

He died a substitutionary a sacrificial a necessary death a planned death but also a successful death so that there is salvation to be offered to sinners like me and you.

[37 : 13] May the Lord bless these thoughts let us pray eternal and ever blessed God we give thanks to thee that thou has provided for sinners such as we are a way of salvation through the death of thine own son and we pray oh Lord that on this day when we reflect upon the resurrection of Christ that we would also remember his death and his burial that we would remember that he in his own body met with what our sins desired so that we can be free from the bondage of sin from the slavery of sin and ultimately from the very presence of sin we ask oh Lord that thou would continue with us during the day and forgive us for our sins in Jesus name Amen we shall conclude!

by singing to the Lord's praise from Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter on page 369 O thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that in me is be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless bless O my soul the Lord thy God and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee we shall sing down to the verse marked 5 to the Lord's praise Psalm 103 O thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that in me is O thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that in me is bestowed and apes all in name to magnify and bless bless

O my soul the Lord thy God that not forgetful be O Father Christ Christ Christ Benefit!

He hath bestowed on thee who who!

doth he love thee relieve Who doth redeem thy life that thou to death mayst not go down who thee with loving kindness doth a tender mercy's crown who with abundance of good things doth satisfy thy mouth so that the evil's evil says, renew it is thy youth

[41 : 48] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore Amen Amen