

6 Hours

Pastor Ken

Week 6, March 24, 2024

(44) It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, (45) while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. (46) Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23-ESV)

...It is the last step of the race.

...It is the pause between the last note of a great choir song and the applause.

...It is the screech of the tires of a 747 landing at ICT airport.

The voice that called those first disciples, "Follow me."

The voice that declared to a leper, "I am willing to heal."

The voice that raised a widow's son, "Young man, I say to you, get up!"

The voice that taught how to pray, "When you pray, say..."

The voice that cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

The voice is now saying, "I am ready to come home, Father!" "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!"

Finally, Jesus Christ is reunited with His father. The two are now One. A dismantled Trinity is now unified. The division that once existed is now bridged. Jesus and the Father are again One.

Jesus catches His father's attention and says, "Bring me home, Dad."

Bring this Son to his Father. Welcome home the victor. Unite this Pilgrim with His home.

Satan and death have been defeated, go home.

Goodbye, Bethlehem's babe.

Thank you for walking in our shoes.

The journey is over.

God Wants You Home With Him

Friend, this is not the land of the living, and we are going on to the land of the dying. This is the land of the dying, and we are going on to the land of the living. **God is looking forward to your arrival with Him.** Eternity is your destiny and heaven is your home.

Since you are going home, let me teach you from God's word **why you qualify** and **what to expect** when going home. One thing I know....

You were made to last forever.

(11) God has planted eternity in the heart (Ecclesiastes 3-NLT).

I loved drama in Jr. High School. I enjoyed being in several theatrical plays at North Middle School in Everett, Washington. Before we performed for the school or our parents, we would always have a dress rehearsal. An evening to work out the bugs. Review our lines. Get our timing down. Smooth out the transitions. Pull all the parts together.

Your life is a dress rehearsal. This life is a dress rehearsal. This is not the real thing. This is just the staging area. The warm-up lap. This life is just pre-school, compared to the real thing.

It is the warmup lap for the Indy 500.

Taking Solomon's text from Ecclesiastes 3:11, let me give you my paraphrase, "God has hot-wired our brains, so we are interested in living forever."

Our last saying on the cross gives us a glimpse of that element of life. While the 6th saying, was a declaration of *triumph*, "*It is finished!*" this last statement is a declaration of *trust*. "*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*"

The word **commit** means, "to deposit something of great value into a safe place." Our life is filled with all types of examples of this:

- *a baby-sitter for your children on Friday night.
- *a trustworthy mechanic for your SUV.
- *the safety deposit box.

That day Jesus was surrendering the control of His life into His Father's hands. Have you done that? Have you said to God, "You take control of my life?" Jesus shows us that all of us should be willing to release our hold on life.

My kids love to put their hand into mine as we wander through the park. As we go to the car. As we walk through the mall. From time to time, I will squeeze their hand twice. When I do, instantly a big smile encompasses their faces. Why? Because two squeezes mean, "I love you."

A Father reached down from heaven and took a son by the hand and squeezed it tight saying, "I love you, let's go home." Jesus let go of His life and placed it into the hands of His father. Never forget your destiny is eternity and your home is heaven. Psalm 119:19, reminds us that, "*I am here on earth for just a little while.*" (TEV)

It was 6 hours on Friday. 6 hours that would change your and my life for eternity. You could say, it was the 6 most important hours in history. But, to the casual observer the 6 hours unfolded, just like the previous 6 hours.

Shepherds attending sheep outside of town. Shop keepers selling their fruits and vegetables in a nearby market. Children playing under the watchful eye of momma.

Too the handful of witnesses who had stayed near the cross for those 6 hours, the most ironic event in human history is coming to a close-God is on a cross!

Spit and blood are caked in his eye lids and cheeks. Sweat and blood is dripping from his feet. Thorns are broken off and embedded into the scalp.

His legs are knotted from cramps. His lungs are filling with fluid. Tight nerve endings snap to the sound of a morbid melody.

Death stands at the door.

Death hovers over the crucified.

Death waiting for another victim.

There is no one to save him. There is no one to serve him. There is no one to speak to him. Alone. For 6 hours. Worse than the breaking of Jesus body, is the breaking of Jesus heart.

His own people call for his death.

His own friends run and hide.

His own disciple planted a kiss of betrayal.

And even his own Father, turns. Goes silent. And pours out his anger, hostility, and wrath on the one perfect sacrifice.

Why would God do such a thing? What did Jesus do to deserve such a reaction from God? From his father? From heaven?

Jesus cries out in those last minutes, "why have you forsaken me? Why forsake your son-God?"

Forsake murderers for sure, but why forsake Jesus?

Forsake perverts doing slimy sins, but why forsake Jesus?

Forsake and abandon the doers of evil, but why forsake Jesus?

Forsake and become angry with peddlers of pain, but why forsake your son?

Forsake those who do genocide and those who are guilty of homicide, but why forsake your son?

Why? Because Jesus carried our sins in his body. ²⁴ *Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross so we would stop living for sin and start living for what is right. And you are healed because of his wounds. (1 Peter 2:24-NCV)*

What did Jesus Christ feel on the cross? Now, listen carefully. Think this through thoroughly. Be impacted emotionally. Be rattled personally. Be guilty individually.

What did Jesus feel on the cross? The angry displeasure of a sin-hating God.

What did Jesus feel on the cross? The holy wrath of a sin-hating God.

What did Jesus feel on the cross? The once-and-for-all, fall out of a God who hates sin, but now loves sinners.

With his hands nailed to the cross. Jesus invited God, “to treat him, as you would treat them.” And God did just that. In an act of wrath that cannot tolerate sin, and broke the heart of God, **Jesus bore heavens cost of sinfulness.**

That day-for 6 hours God honored his holiness. The holiness of heaven now purged sin once-and-for-all as ...

God’s judgment flowed over the sinless Savior of mankind.

God’s judgement flowed over the sinless Son of the ages.

God’s judgement flowed over the Babe of Bethlehem.

God’s judgement flowed over the Healer of lepers, and Deliverer of demons.

God’s judgement flowed over the Teacher of compassion and the compassionate Friend, who returned Lazarus back to life for Mary and Martha.

And during those 6 final hours of Jesus life, the most important 6 hours in human history, heaven gave earth her finest gift:

John the Baptist told us that was Jesus’ mission for coming: ²⁹*The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29-ESV)*

John the disciple years later told us that was Jesus’ mission for coming: ¹⁶*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16-NIV)*

Ok, that was then, but what about now? How can my life be all God intended it to be, because of those 6 hours?

Christ went up. The nails went in. The blood came down.

The final words come out!

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

The final words. Number 7. For six days God had worked, and on the 7th day God rested, and for six sayings Jesus worked, now it is the last of 7, and Jesus is about to rest-Into your hands I commit my spirit.

At death, the spirit which God forms and gives, returns to the God who gave it. God breathed into Adam, and Adam became a living being. *...and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. (Eccl 12:7-NIV)*

So, what benefits can I receive because death has been swallowed up in victory as the Bible says. **Because of Jesus atoning death you were....**

You were given immediate access to God. Anytime. Anyplace.

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. (Matt 27:50-51-NIV)

The earth shook, the rocks split, and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life, as verses 51-52 indicate.

Let me see if I can paint this picture.

The earth began to vomit. A small crack fissured the earth from the place of Jesus death and moved across the well-worn path leading to Golgotha and now the fissure is moving toward the entrance of the city gate.

As the fissure moved through the city of Jerusalem it snaked its way toward the temple. Then suddenly it split the 30ft curtain covering the Holy of Holies.

This inner veil curtain split from top to bottom and then moved out east and entered the place where the dead had been buried. The fissure split the tombs outside of the walls of the city. Thus, leaving a destructive path as this supernatural earth-shattering fissure-quake made its way to the Dead Sea and across the mountains on the other side.

A seismic force of supernatural proportions. Up to this point only priests could enter the temple, one day a year. Why? Because this is where the glory of God resided. It was called the shekinah. It means **dwelling** or **settling** and it denotes the presence and power of God in a place.

Only the high priest could enter. No one else. To do so meant instant death. The curtain was a barrier. A wall that declared, **“this far and no further.”**

What did all of those 1000's of years of curtain hanging in the holy of holies represent? Simple. God is holy. God is separate from us, and we are unworthy and unholy to come into his presence.

God is holy. I am a sinner. And so, God keeps his distance from me. But Jesus atoning death changed the game once and for all. God is no longer unapproachable. *There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Tim 2:5-NIV)*

When Jesus flesh was torn on the cross releasing his spirit to return to God, simultaneously the curtain was torn in two. The hands of God had been waiting for just the right moment, when the sins were atoned for, and when Jesus breathed his last breath.

One moment the curtain was whole. Jesus was present on earth, for a moment longer. The next moment, Jesus dropped his head, breathed his last and the curtain was ripped from top to bottom. No delay. No hesitation.

You are now welcomed into God's presence through Jesus Christ. Any time. Anywhere. And in any condition. Access is through the blood of Jesus.

The barrier of sin that separated us from God has been torn.

No more curtain. But no more Christ on earth. No more sacrifice in the temple. No more carrying of guilt and shame for a whole year. Don't allow another minute for your sin, guilt, and shame to keep you from God. Don't allow the guilt of your sin, to keep you from your Father. The curtain is down. The door is open. The Father welcomes you through Christ into his presence.

The next benefit is provided by an **unnamed Roman soldier** who is no stranger to death. While his heart is callous to suffering, something about this man on the middle cross, disturbed him. This crucifixion is plaguing him. This day's work is already beginning to haunt him, and he has even ended his shift.

You were given immediate access to God for salvation.

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!" (Matt 27:54-NIV)*

As the 6 hours wore on, the centurion did not know what to do with Jesus' silence.

He did not know what to do with Jesus' forgiveness.

He did not know what to do with the darkness in the middle of the day. One minute the sun, the next minute the moon. One-minute clear sky, and the next covered sky.

He did not know what to do with Jesus words, It Is Finished. It was not a cry; it was a roar. Not the cry of a beaten man, but the roar of a victorious champion in the colosseum.

From where the roar of sound came from, the centurion had never heard that sound before, it was other-worldly. But what literally shook him up the most, was when Jesus said, **“bring me home father.”** And the earth began to shake. Almost as if the earth were groaning. And those of us who know our bibles would say, yes, it was!

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. (Rom 8-NIV)

“Father into your hands I commit my spirit,” and had the centurion not said it, the rocks would have.

The angels would have.

The stars would have.

Even the demons would not have been silent when Jesus announced, “it is over, and I am going home.”

At that moment a nameless Roman soldier, a foreigner at that, who represented what it meant to be far from God, was now near, not just geographically, he was now near in faith. The belief of who Christ was became clear to a nameless Roman soldier.

Surely, he was the son of God.

And what other benefits do I receive because of Jesus 6 hours on the cross?

You are given immediate access to God through Christ, along with its countless benefits.

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? (Rom 8-NET)

If you do not know the benefits of why Jesus died on Good Friday, you are going to miss so much of the Christian experience. You are going to miss all of the benefits that Jesus intended for you to have in this life. 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 the policy.

It is the term death benefits. In the life insurance policy when I or Danice 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. If you do not know the **benefits** of Jesus 6 hours on the cross, **you cannot enjoy them.**

If I do not know the benefits of why Jesus spent 6 hours on the cross on Good Friday, I am truly spiritually bankrupt. 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 last year. 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 being on the cross for those 6 hours.

Would you like a peak 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, (Heb 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. (Col 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. (Rom 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. (Rom 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 a day. 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 because Jesus stayed on the cross for 6 hours. On the cross for you. The benefits of Jesus' death are made available to all who believe.

So, let me end by asking you this question, is your death day really better than our birthday as the ancients have said? You be the judge. This is God's way of looking at life. The Christian looks at death differently than the world. The Bible says, "we grieve not as one having no hope."

A good name is better than precious ointment, And the day of death than the day of one's birth; (Eccl 7:1-NKJV)

Our death day is better than our birthday because of release. (Rom 8:23)

²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom 8:23-NIV)

Our death day is better than our birthday because of revelation. (1 Cor 13:12)

¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (1 Cor 13:12-NIV)

Our death day is better than our birthday because of relationship. (2 Cor 5:8)

⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. (2 Cor 5:8-NIV)

Ok, we are going to end our service by taking communion.