

The Story: Chapter 27 Paid In Full

So, on this date, about 2000 years ago, the Disciples and followers of Jesus woke up knowing that their Messiah was dead and gone.

- They were terrified about what the religious leaders of the day were going to do to them because they had followed Christ.
- They had no idea what life was supposed to look like moving forward.
- Their hope for the Messiah, the answer to all of their challenges in life, their hope for the future, had died on a cross just days before.

What do we think they were feeling?

- They felt like they had no hope for their future. And...
- They were definitely felt like they were in a hole that they saw no way out of.

Here's the truth about us today:

- Many of us feel the same way today.
- We may not say it out loud. We're definitely not headed toward the tomb with a bucket of embalming spices...
- But we understand that feeling of hopelessness and feeling like there is no way out of the hole that we've dug ourselves into.

**Some of us have gotten past a lot of that and, today, we simply come here with zero expectations that Jesus would do anything with us, for us, or around us.

- We have lost that expectation and we've decided that this is just what the Christian life is supposed to be.

But for them...

They go to the tomb that morning, fully expecting Jesus to be dead, wrapped in cloth, and buried in His tomb.

To their surprise....

Matthew 28:1-6

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ² There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven

and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵ The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; **he has risen**, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

They had never fully grasped what Jesus was telling them when He was still with them.

- They were blown away with the news that Jesus was not in that tomb.
- And, I believe in the next few days that truly found an understanding of all that Jesus had been telling them.

For us, here's The Problem: We've heard the story.

- We fully expect to read the story today about how Jesus rose from the grave and is still alive today.
- Many of us have heard it so many times it doesn't even affect us anymore.
- And we came here today with zero expectations whatsoever.

Well, here's the big question for you today?

What if you were the one that was resurrected today?

- What if you actually came to life in a whole new way today?
- What if you came here with zero expectations and you were the one that went from death to life right here in this room this morning?

That's what Jesus has to offer you and me.

HUGE: When Jesus came out of that tomb He took His place as the **Living Hope** for them and still serves as that Hope for you and me today.

Let's look at that:

Look back at the last few minutes that Jesus spent on the cross and see how we can connect that to where we are today.

John 19:30

³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It is finished broken down is best stated as: **"Paid in Full"**.

There are two areas that Jesus is referring to here as being "Paid in Full".

1. The Entire Old Testament Law.

- He had told the people that He did not come to **abolish** the law, but to **fulfill** it.

Last Week: We even learned more last week of how specifically He covered the Old Testament requirements in the way He was crucified in the New Testament.

The majority of the Old Testament was built around a system of rules and laws that you had to follow if you wanted to be in good standing with God.

- You constantly felt like you were in debt to God. You owed Him something for every sin that you committed.

He also paid for...

2. The New Testament Condition of Sin.

Romans 3:23 says

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

The New Testament "condition of sin" is something we all have and we all have to deal with.

But...

When Jesus said, "It is Finished" on the cross He was telling them, these debts are "Paid in Full". You're covered!!!

EX: Question: How many of you are in, or ever have been in, debt financially?

- There is a constant nagging feeling that you owe something.
- You feel like it's almost impossible to make any progress on getting out of it.

Good news for you... today's message is not about our financial debt, but it does serve as a very good example of how some of us are living in spiritual debt and what hope is there for us in that area.

So, let's match those up and see what we can learn.

What is financial debt?

- That credit card that is full of things you already purchased, used, and threw away, and you're still paying for.
- When you owe more money each month than you have the ability to pay back.

What is Spiritual debt?

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death...

- We are all born with a Spiritual Debt because of sin. The payment for that sin is death. And, until we can figure out a way to pay that debt off, we still owe that payment.

The Problem with Debt:

It Limits Our Ability to Live in Freedom

Financially: bank says no, car is a no, etc.

Spiritually: We have to understand the big picture here...

- Our spiritual debt, or the sin in our lives, keeps us from being connected in fellowship with God.
- Leading us to a spiritual life of religious activity, trying to do the right things, and having ZERO expectations of Jesus in our lives.

From the day Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, God has been working His plan to get his people re-connected to Him.

- He desperately wants a relationship with us and He showed that He was willing to do whatever it took to get us back.

Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate, final, and required step to get you and I back in connection with the Father.

Look what else happened that day:

Matthew 27:50-51

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.

That curtain was a representation of the separation between God and man that occurred in the Garden because of sin.

Hebrews 10:19-20

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, 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,

Jesus tells us in John 14 that He is the only way to get to the Father.

- He body dying on that cross became the open door for you and I to be with God.

So, why do we still feel disconnected?

Because we've never fully understood the statement, "Paid In Full".

Let's look at our comparison:

We understand that we're born into Spiritual Debt, but why do we stay there?

Just like financial debt...

- We feel like we're too far in to ever get out.
- We won't really accept the truth of our current situation.
- Or because many of us have built our identity on where we are now and just don't see how that can ever change.

Big deal is that we simply don't understand the benefits of living a debt free life!

Financially:

- Less burden on you.

- More opportunity to give to others.
- To be a blessing in others lives.
- More opportunity to live in freedom.

Spiritually:

- Less burden on you
- More opportunity to be a blessing to others
- A chance to live in freedom.

But, here's the big difference:

John 10:10

...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Many of us are missing this part: Life to the Full!

Translated "Jesus, to the Full".

Jesus offers us complete freedom from the debt of sin that holds us back.

So, here's the big question that we must have the answer to:

How do we get out?

Financially:

- Multiple steps in this area...

Spiritually: Here's the good news!

- Accept the truth of where you are.
- Accept the payment that Jesus has already made for your debt!

That's It!

Romans 3:23

...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Too many of us try to get out of financial debt by making the minimum payment each month and hope that works.

- News flash: It doesn't.

We also try to get out of our spiritual debt by the same methods:

- Throw our minimum effort at the church and hope it works.

- We ignore our debt completely and assume that one day it will just go away.
- We choose to live in our debt because our pride keeps us from accepting the truth of where we are.

EX: My Dad after college offered to pay off all of my debt to help me get a fresh start.

Here's the deal.

- He didn't put a lot of rules on it.
- He didn't expect me to pay it back.

This is what he said, "We've decided to pay off whatever debt you have so you can get rid of that. How much do you owe?"

What an amazing gift, right.

But the question that still haunts me to this day:

How much do you owe?

My only two requirements:

- Accept the truth of where I am currently.
- Accept his payment for my debt.

Struggle:

- Telling the truth was hard.
- I didn't want to tell him exactly how bad it really was.
- I was even willing to live with a little debt leftover if it kept me from having to tell the whole truth of the situation.

This is where too many of us are living spiritually.

Because this is what really happened on that Friday night before Easter Sunday morning:

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Jesus said to us: "I have paid off your spiritual debt. All you have to do is accept it as my gift to you!"

Notice: He didn't even ask us how much we owed!!

Our only requirements:

- Accept the truth of where we are.
- Accept His payment

Then we get to learn to walk in the freedom of being spiritually debt free.

How do we do that?

Romans 10:9-10

⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Total surrender to Him.

Too many of us know the story, and we're doing the minimum, but we've never truly surrendered to Jesus and accepted His payment for our spiritual debt.

If that's you today, let's let go of the pride, and allow Jesus to pay off our debt, so we can live the life of FREEDOM that He offers.

Possible Conclusion:

I've always thought it was interesting that after Jesus was raised from the grave some people that knew Him well didn't recognize Him.

- Mary at the tomb thought He was the gardener.
- He walked with two of His followers on the road to Emmaus and they didn't recognize Him.

I think one of our main problems today is that the world has been lying to us for so long we struggle to recognize the real Truth.

- We struggle to recognize Jesus.

So, we live in spiritual debt thinking this is the best it will ever get.

- We continue to give minimal effort thinking, one day, it will all pay off with a wonderful life.
- We have built our identity around the way things are and we really see no hope for anything better in the future.

I'm here to tell you that the same Jesus that came out of that tomb 2000 years ago and gave them Hope is the same Jesus asking to be your Savior today.