

## **Week 12: Final Victory Over Sickness and Death**

Description: The Gospel is all about God. We were created to enjoy God. And we were created to glorify God. These are not two purposes. They are one. And Christ has rescued us from eternal wrath so that we may experience this singular purpose forever.

### **Chapter 19 (John 3:16)**

- What is the opposite of eternal life (56)?
- Why is eternal life so amazing - 1 Corinthians 2:9 (57)?

### **Chapter 22 (1 Peter 3:18)**

- While the Christian should want psychological relief of forgiveness, or the removal of God's wrath, or the inheritance of God's world, she should want this even more (63)?

### **Chapter 47 (Hebrews 9:28)**

- What are the three aspects to our salvation? We would say, we, ".....(112).
- Those who know the horribleness of God's future judgement find the gospel to be..... 113)? \_\_\_\_\_

FIFTY REASONS WHY  
JESUS CAME TO DIE

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 **CROSSWAY**

WHEATON, ILLINOIS

*Why Jesus Came to Die:*

19

## TO GIVE ETERNAL LIFE TO ALL WHO BELIEVE ON HIM



*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,  
that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

John 3:16

In our happiest times we do not want to die. The wish for death rises only when our suffering seems unbearable. What we really want in those times is not death, but relief. We would love for the good times to come again. We would like the pain to go away. We would like to have our loved one back from the grave. We want life and happiness.

We are kidding ourselves when we romanticize death as the climax of a life well lived. It is an enemy. It cuts us off from all the wonderful pleasures of this world. We call death sweet names only as the lesser of evils. The executioner that delivers the *coup de grace* in our suffering is not the fulfillment of longing, but the end of hope. The longing of the human heart is to live and to be happy.

God made us that way. "He has put eternity into man's heart" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). We are created in God's image, and God loves life and lives forever. We were made to live forever. And we will. The opposite of eternal life is not annihilation. It is hell. Jesus spoke of it more than anybody, and he made plain that rejecting the eternal life he offered would result not in obliteration, but

in the misery of God's wrath: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him" (John 3:36).

And it remains forever. Jesus said, "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46). This is an unspeakable reality that shows the infinite evil of treating God with indifference or contempt. So Jesus warns, "If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched'" (Mark 9:47-48).

So eternal life is not merely the extension of this life with its mix of pain and pleasure. As hell is the worst outcome of this life, so "eternal life" is the best. It is supreme and ever-increasing happiness where all sin and all sadness will be gone. All that is evil and harmful in this fallen creation will be removed. All that is good—all that will bring true and lasting happiness—will be preserved and purified and intensified.

We will be changed so that we are capable of dimensions of happiness that were inconceivable to us in this life. "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined . . . God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). It is true every moment of life, now and always: For those who trust Christ the best is yet to come. We will see the all-satisfying glory of God. "This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). For this Christ suffered and died. Why would we not embrace him as our treasure, and live?

## TO BRING US TO GOD



*Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.*

1 Peter 3:18

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

Ephesians 2:13

When all is said and done, God is the gospel. Gospel means “good news.” Christianity is not first theology, but news. It is like prisoners of war hearing by hidden radio that the allies have landed and rescue is only a matter of time. The guards wonder why all the rejoicing.

But what is the ultimate good in the good news? It all ends in one thing: God himself. All the words of the gospel lead to him, or they are not gospel. For example, salvation is not good news if it only saves from hell and not for God. Forgiveness is not good news if it only gives relief from guilt and doesn’t open the way to God. Justification is not good news if it only makes us legally acceptable to God but doesn’t bring fellowship with God. Redemption is not good news if it only liberates us from bondage but doesn’t bring us to God. Adoption is not good news if it only puts us in the Father’s family but not in his arms.

This is crucial. Many people seem to embrace the good news without embracing God. There is no sure evidence that we have a new heart just because we want to escape hell. That’s a perfectly

natural desire, not a supernatural one. It doesn't take a new heart to want the psychological relief of forgiveness, or the removal of God's wrath, or the inheritance of God's world. All these things are understandable without any spiritual change. You don't need to be born again to want these things. The devils want them.

It is not wrong to want them. Indeed it is folly not to. But the evidence that we have been changed is that we want these things because they bring us to the enjoyment of God. This is the greatest thing Christ died for. "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, *that he might bring us to God*" (1 Peter 3:18).

Why is this the essence of the good news? Because we were made to experience full and lasting happiness from seeing and savoring the glory of God. If our best joy comes from something less, we are idolaters and God is dishonored. He created us in such a way that his glory is displayed through our joy in it. The gospel of Christ is the good news that at the cost of his Son's life, God has done everything necessary to enthrall us with what will make us eternally and ever-increasingly happy, namely, himself.

Long before Christ came, God revealed himself as the source of full and lasting pleasure. "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11). Then he sent Christ to suffer "that he might bring us to God." This means he sent Christ to bring us to the deepest, longest joy a human can have. Hear then the invitation: Turn from "the fleeting pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:25) and come to "pleasures forevermore." Come to Christ.

## TO RESCUE US FROM FINAL JUDGMENT



*Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many,  
will appear a second time, not to deal with sin  
but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

Hebrews 9:28

**T**he Christian idea of salvation relates to past, present, and future. The Bible says, “By grace you *have been saved* through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). It says that the gospel is the power of God “to us who are *being saved*” (1 Corinthians 1:18). And it says, “*Salvation is nearer to us now* than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11). We have been saved. We are being saved. We will be saved.

At every stage we are saved by the death of Christ. In the past, once for all, our sins were paid for by Christ himself. We were justified by faith alone. In the present, the death of Christ secures the power of God’s Spirit to save us progressively from the domination and contamination of sin. And in the future, it will be the blood of Christ, poured out on the cross, that protects us from the wrath of God and brings us to perfection and joy.

There is a real judgment coming. The Bible describes “a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:27). It calls us to live “with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28-29).

John the Baptist warned the people of his day to “flee from the wrath to come” (Matthew 3:7). For Jesus himself will be “revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Some pictures of this final wrath of God are almost too terrible to ponder. Ironically, it is John, the “apostle of love,” who gives us the most graphic glimpses of hell. Those who reject Christ and give their allegiance to another “will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and . . . will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night” (Revelation 14:10-11).

Until we feel some measure of dread about God’s future wrath, we will probably not grasp the sweetness with which the early church savored the saving work of Christ in the future: “[We] wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Jesus Christ, and he alone, can save us from the wrath to come. Without him, we will be swept away forever.

But when he saves us in the end, it will be on the basis of his blood. “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (Hebrews 9:28). Sin was dealt with once for all. No new sacrifice is needed. Our shield from future wrath is as sure as the sufferings of Christ in our place. For the sake of the cross, then, exult in future grace.