



We are talking in this resurrections series about the real life and death and resurrection of Jesus. What are the objective elements that are in place that have impact on our life because they correspond to reality.

And again, what we want to do is transport us out of story and myth into reality. And as that thought relates to tonight, we want to talk the fact that Jesus died for a real reason. There was an objective reason that Jesus had to die.

I don't think most people realize how much hinges on whether or not this is true. It is absolutely the case to say that Christianity is worthless if there was not some objective reason that Jesus went to the cross. You see a lot of people will say, well Jesus is a good example to follow. He was a good teacher. I base my life on the principles of Jesus. What we want to show this evening is that if there is not a real objective peril then Jesus is not even a great

example. He's a crazy person. He's actually just mad.

The best example I've ever heard of this goes like this: Imagine you and I are walking over the snake river gorge their in twin falls. And if you've ever walked across that bridge you know what a thrill it is. There are some people I know who jump off that bridge with a parachute and live to tell about it. But without a parachute you'd certainly die.

Well, imagine you and are walking across that bridge. And I say to you, you know as your pastor we've been through a lot together. I just want you to know how much I love you. You know I'm not very good at showing my emotions sometimes and I really have been working on that which is why we are having this conversation. Let me just prove to you right now how much I love you. And I get on top of the rail and throw myself off.

Now what would you say? You'd say, Wow, that is a clicinal case of insanity. Poor guy, something was clearly wrong with his mind? Why did he just do that? How in the world did that prove that he loved me? I don't get it.

Now what that illustration intends to prove is that choosing to die for someone is only noble if there is an objective threat. Now if someone was holding us at gunpoint and said, "One of you must jump or I'll kill both of you." Well then, suddenly that becomes the greatest act of love possible. You lay down your life for your friend.

What is the objective threat that Christ is willing to die for? And the answer is to save you from the wrath of God. This is why Jesus says what he says in John chapter 12. We ended in verse 27 last Sunday and let's just pick it up there.

John 12:27-50, "Now is my soul troubled.  
And what shall I say? 'Father, save me  
from this hour'? But for this purpose I  
have come to this hour. Father, glorify  
your name."

For what purpose did Jesus come. To throw himself off a bridge for no reason? No, of course not. There was an objective peril. The wages of sin is death. Spiritual death.

Jesus is staring at that objective threat and is trembling. He is horrified at the cup he is about to drink. Is there another way father? No. This is why you came.

The wages of sin is receiving the just wrath of God. One of you is going to suffer the wrath of God. It's either you or Jesus. And Jesus steps forward. I'll lay down my life for my friend.

That's why Jesus' death was love not insanity. Because there was an objective peril. There was a genuine problem.

Jesus says, glorify your name father. Father, make your name great and weighty. In other words be glorified in excusing justice on me.

When Jesus steps forward and volunteers in that manner a voice comes out of heaven.

"I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine.

Why did the crowds need a voice from heaven? So that they would not conclude he was clinically insane. So that they too might understand the objective peril. So that they could be assured that Jesus was not just jumping off a bridge for no reason. So that the objective element of Christ's death could be vindicated by God himself. Jesus says,

Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

Now I wish we had time to decode all that's going on here. But again, I just want to parse off this single element of the objective threat, the objective peril that Jesus is referencing.

You see, when Jesus says, Now is the judgment of this world, what is he referring to? Normally we think of judgment as future. But Jesus says, now is the judgment of the world. Who is doing the judging? God. And what is he judging? He's judging the sins of all who would ever believe. He's not dying for no reason. He's absorbing the wrath of the father so that we would not have to. Now is the judgment of the world. I am going to cross to be judged in your place. Now why? A common question is, "Why couldn't God just forgive it? Why all the blood and the suffering? Couldn't he just let it go?"

And again, I want to think in terms of reality. Real forgiveness means somebody has to pay. Think about it. Forgiveness always,

always, always requires payment.

Think of it just on the most practical physical level you are able. Imagine you're a potter and you've spent hundreds of hours making this beautiful piece of pottery. You've painted it and glazed it. And it's sitting on the table in the classroom.

And you're walking in to the class to grab your piece of pottery to take it to an art show in hopes of winning a prize and all of the sudden you hear this crash.

And you walk in the room and there's a guy with a baseball bat standing over your now broken pieces of pottery. And he's just smashing and smashing the pieces into smaller and smaller chunks. And you scream. All that work, ruined in an instant of pleasure for him. A semester's worth of effort destroyed in an instant.

So your teacher comes over and says, "What's the problem." Now for the sake of the illustration, let's just assume that he has a sudden change of heart and is absolutely sincere. He turns around, he sees us, and he says, "I can't believe I did this. Will you please forgive me?" The teacher turns to you and says, "Well, he said he's sorry. Just let it go."

What do you think you'd say? I'd say, "Give me the baseball bat." The teacher might say to me, "Now Jason, you're being vindictive. Just let it go."

At that moment, everything in your body is screaming, I'm not going to forgive you. Why? Because real loss has occurred. Real damage. I'd feel like saying, where's his pottery? Let me smash his work of art and let him feel what it's like. Now here's what's interesting. Let's say

you did that. Let's say you walked over to his tall skinny vase and you wound up and smashed it as hard as you could and the pieces of pottery flew through the air. All of the sudden a feeling would flood over you. "Now we are even." That's fair.

But imagine somehow after you had done that that you're walking out of the classroom and you look on the table and you see your piece of pottery. You thought it was your piece of pottery that had been shattered but it was another person's who looked just like yours. And not only that, but he lied about which piece was his and so you ended up smashing someone else's piece of pottery. Now what? Now you are the one who has injured someone else.

What this illustration is trying to show is that nobody can just forgive and have it go away because loss is loss. Someone is going to have to absorb the penalty of that loss.

You can't just "let it go." There's real damage. There's real destruction and someone is going to have to pay. Someone is going to have to absorb it. In this illustration either you remake the pots or he remakes the pots or someone else remakes the pots. And if they can't be remade then whoever lost the pots forever walks around with a hole in their heart because of the loss of the pots.

The point is somebody has to bear the cost of what happened. It does not go away. It doesn't go into the air. You can't let it go. It's going to go someplace. Somebody is going to have to bear it. Somebody is going to have to absorb it. There's no such thing as a wrong that's not paid for. Do you know that? In other words, there's actually no wrong that can really be forgotten or just forgiven in word. Forgiveness really means bearing the wrong, absorbing the cost. It's impossible to just have it go away.

And that is what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Why did Jesus go to the cross? Why did he have to die? Why did he get his beard plucked and get stabbed and get mocked. Why didn't he just consume them? The sin doesn't just go away. He absorbed our sin for us and that is what we are celebrating this evening. That's why we call it Good Friday.