

Dave Brown: It is Finished! (29/9/18)

Introduction:

About a month ago I was walking down the road - as I often have done - talking to the Lord about life. I felt a deep need for the forgiving, cleansing love of God. I reflected back on past experiences where I had a most definite sense that I had seen Jesus, had allowed Him to bear my sin, had received peace. There was a common denominator... Do you know what it was?

At each of the times that I recalled I had gone (in reflection) to the cross!

I was embarrassed at how long it had been since I had been there... But, in spite of the embarrassment, that day - about a month ago - I went to Calvary! As always, it was an amazing experience. I was inspired by the sacrifice of my Saviour for me. I was humbled by His love for me. I was thrilled at the life He chose for me.

Today I would like to take you there with me. I wish I had more time to dwell on the themes that one can contemplate when you step up to the cross, but today, in view of the occasion, I will focus on one aspect of the amazing event that occurred on that hill so long ago.

Revolution — Revelation — Reformation:

We have just completed a series of sermons (as you will remember) on the revolutionary message of Jesus in Matthew 5-7. This was an incredible blessing.

But I have noticed something in my own life, which, if you can resonate with at all you may like to be challenged about as well.

I notice that Jesus called, at the end of that message, for commitment to following those revolutionary ways - reformation (we could say).

In calling for reformation, Jesus is calling for the fruits of that righteousness which He described in that beautiful sermon to be present in our lives. But, for me at least, there is one glaring problem as I look at my life... I don't see the kind of reformation from that series of messages that I think it deserves!

Why, might I ask, is that reformation not present for me? Why can I be touched by the principles of the Kingdom of God and yet not go away and have those principles inculcated into my life?

As I mentioned in my closing message from that series, I believe that the key to the Matthew 7 experience is found in Matthew 6. In Matthew 5 Jesus outlines the principles of the Kingdom, in Matthew 7 He outlines the practices of the Kingdom, but in Matthew 6 He outlines the experience of the Kingdom! That is where we often fall down as Christians.

Today I would like to try to give you a framework for creating that healthy 'Kingdom experience.'

The way I see it, it works like this. We are shaken up by **Revolution** (The Life of Christ), then we see the beauty of God's astounding love by a **Revelation** (The Death of Christ), which in turn produces a **Reformation** (The Resurrection of Christ) in our lives.

So, without any further ado, let us focus on this Revelation.

John 18:30 - "It is finished."

Before Jesus breathed His last breath, He let out this loaded statement - "It is finished."

This is not a 1 dimensional statement. It has many facets, only one of which we will discuss today.

As the Son of God hung upon the cross He was fighting a battle that was deeper than we often see. It was not only about atoning for your sin, bridging the gap between you and the Father. More widely, it was also about the exoneration of the character of God before the onlooking universe.

Luke 2:49 - "Didn't you know that I would be doing my Father's business?"

- Jesus had some business to take care of while on earth. That business centred around what He learned that day...

John 16:25 - "I will show you plainly of the Father."

- Jesus' mission - God's business - was to show us the Father!

John 16:27 - "The Father Himself loves you!"

- In Jesus we clearly see that 'the Father Himself loves us!' Winning back God's reputation

John 17:3 - "This is eternal life - to know God."

- This was Jesus' mission. to help us to get to know God for who He really is again.

John 17:4,5,26 - "I have glorified thee... I have manifested your name... I have declared to them your name, and will declare it: that the love with which I you have loved me may be in them."

- This part of Jesus' mission was complete and now He could move into the next phase.

John 18:1 - Straight after this He entered the garden of Gethsemane.

The struggle wasn't limited to the cross. It began as He entered Gethsemane (oil press) and the weight of the sin of the world began pressing down on His psyche.

Can you imagine what that would have felt like? Even having the totality of your own guilt and shame would crush your soul. Yet Jesus began to take on Himself the weight of it all...

It is no wonder we hear Him saying:

Matthew 26:38 - "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful - to the point of dying."

- Jesus was in a near death anguish as He began to bear the collective guilt of the ages.

Matthew 26:39,42 - Jesus' prayer.

- Even with this intense struggle upon Him Jesus was committed to His mission to redeem us. He prayed saying 'I don't feel I can do this, but if you want me to, I will be pressed.'

Luke 22:43 - "An angel appeared from heaven to strengthen Him."

- Jesus didn't need crucifixion to kill Him! If it had not been for the divine strengthening, He would have died in the garden. But Prophecy didn't have the story ending that way.

John 12:23-32 - "The hour has come, that the Son of man should be glorified... Father, glorify your name... (Voice from heaven)... Now is the judgment of this world: now will the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."

- The cross was the method by which the glorification of God's name would be lifted up

John 18:3-12 - The inversion of power (in action)

- True Power = Love (Self-Sacrifice) & True Love (Self-Sacrifice) = Power

Luke 23:14-21 - Pilat releases Barrabas and sends Jesus to be crucified in his place

- Jesus was innocent and Pilot knew it. But He was too afraid of what would happen to His job to let Jesus go. So, in the place of Barrabas (a deserving criminal) Jesus die.

John 19:18 - One on either side (He took our place)

- Jesus place among the thieves demonstrated the solidarity that Jesus was experiencing by receiving our guilt and shame and bearing it upon the cross.

Luke 23:34 - "Father forgive them for they don't know what they're doing."

- Even when He was upon the cross, feeling the pain we should have felt, bleeding the blood that should have been ours, dying the death that we deserved; still He loved us before Himself and prayed for our forgiveness.

Isaiah 53:1-6 - Read through and observe the text.

Humility — Humiliation — Glorification

Is 53:4A

Is 53:5,6

Is 53:12

(Evaluation)

(Exoneration)

Is 53:4B

Is 53:11

John 10:11,18 - "I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep... No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

"All we like sheep have gone astray," Isaiah says. But Jesus describes Himself as the good shepherd. But what makes Him good? It is that He gives His life for the sheep! Jesus is the good shepherd because He puts the needs of the sheep before His own. This is what we saw in Gethsemane and Calvary isn't it? "No man takes it from me" He says - indicating that the sacrifice He made at Calvary was not out of compulsion, but out of love!

Isaiah 53:7-9 - The agonies of the Son of God for you and I...

Notice what it was that Jesus went through for you. Notice with what patience and serenity He bore it all. You ARE loved by the God of the universe! He has taken it all for you. Why? Because 'He would rather go to hell for you, than to live for eternity without you!'

John 10:14-18

God loves you so much that He somehow manages to value His Son even more because of His sacrifice to save you and I. INCREDIBLE!

SC pg 14 - "My Father has so loved you that He even loves me more for giving my life to redeem you"

Isaiah 53:10-12 - "It pleased the Lord... by the knowledge of Him shall Messiah justify many... for He shall bear their sin... therefore will I..."

The exoneration is complete! On Calvary Jesus has demonstrated - by bearing our sins in totality - the unquestionable goodness and selfless love of God!! There is nothing more that God could possibly do to demonstrate His character transparently.

Ezekiel 34:22-31 - God's plan to swoop the world by His love (as demonstrated through the gift of His Son Jesus), deliver them, make a covenant of peace with them, bring them out to a pleasant pasture, feed them, and give them all of life's blessings and joys.

There is no more beautiful picture than living in a place where there is no more harm (Isaiah 11:9). Here, in the passage of Scripture that Jesus was drawing from in John 10, we see God making the promise to (as the good shepherd) secure His sheep from their wanderings, save them, bring them back to the place that He has prepared for them, and live for ever in perfect peace and safety with them. Why is the Good Shepherd so good? Because He has given His life for the sheep!

John 10:10 - "I have come that you might have an abundant life!"

Commitment:

Is it your desire to live this abundant life? Have you been straying from the Good Shepherd?

When I realised how long it had been since I had been at the cross it came as a rude awakening to me! What Jesus has done for you and I is so grand, so amazing, so unbelievably good that it demands our attention.

On that day when Jesus was lifted up from the earth, the universe saw a love that could not be argued with.

Do you see that kind of love today?

Do you wish to surrender all to the one who surrendered all for you?