

Contentment

I. Announce:

- A. Slide1 Baby Dedication: Des. Jonathan & Kristin Ferrell. *Lila Joy*. older sister Ellie.
- B. Slide2-5 Larry: R&R Wrap Up. Movie, ICA Fundraiser. March of Remembrance.
- C. Slide6-9 Easter Weekend: Communion. CrossWalk. Service Times.

II. Slide10 Intro: Contentment

A. Phil.3:10 Paul says, (3 purposes) *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings*, (1 expansion) *becoming like him in his death.*

1. Jesus *not only* taught us **how to live** but also **how to die**.
2. **No**, we can't share in *His substitutionary-death*, but we can *imitate His self-emptying love* that He showed on the cross.
3. **So...**what can we *learn from Jesus on How He died & thus How we are to die?*

B. Slide11 I've heard **Psalm 23** Outlined this way...

[The secret of: a Happy **Life**] *1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

[The secret of: a Happy **Death**] *4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

[The secret of: a Happy **Eternity**] *5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

C. Slide12 Lk.23:44-49 *It was now about the sixth hour (noon), and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour (3pm), 45 while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two (symbolic of: open access, or God departing, or God rending His garment) 46 Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice (for all to hear), said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. 47 Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" (Mt & Mk, truly this man was the Son of God) 48 And all the crowds that had*

assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home **beating their breasts** (sign of grief). 49 And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things. [only Luke shares this]

- D. In Jesus' final hour He turned to the **Hymnbook** of His people...quoting Psalm 31:5.
1. Slide13 **Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.** [Wiersbe said this verse was used as a Jewish child's bedtime prayer]
 2. It's no surprise that His last quote was both a **Prayer** & a **Quote** from Scripture
 3. Note: He left off **redeemed me**, & added the endearing, **Father**]

III. Slide14a **FATHER - Intimacy**

- A. **Father** - this was Jesus' favorite title for God.
1. It spoke of the intimate family relationship that had existed **from all eternity**.
 2. His **1st word** from the cross had been, **Father, forgive them**. His **last word** was, **Father, into your hands I commit my spirit**.
 - a) **But in between** he had cried out, **My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Not My Father, My Father**. God forsaken by God...**but** no longer.
 - b) **The price has been fully paid, the cup emptied, the burden borne, estrangement ended, the battle won, the struggle over.**
 - c) Whatever happened in those 3 mysterious hours of darkness is now **in the past**.
 - d) Jesus **yields** his life to the One He called **Father**.

B. Slide14b **The Fathers Timing of Jesus' Death was Impeccable**

1. He was our Passover Lamb. It was Passover. It was 3pm.
2. Ex.12:6 **Now you shall keep it** (lamb) **until the 14th day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.** (lit. **between the evenings**. i.e. **between sunset & dark**. To the Jews that was between 3-6pm)
3. It was a **death by appointment** (not an accident).

C. This was a deliberate act of dismissing His spirit.

1. This was **not martyrdom nor a suicide**, which is *using some external means* to end your life. **But instead** simply **dismissing his spirit**. He **gave His life**. He **was a sacrifice**.
2. This was **not just passing on into oblivion nor unconsciousness, nor nothingness, nor annihilation**.
3. His spirit was going **to a place...to the Father**.

D. These were also the same dying words of:

1. Stephen (Acts 7). Polycarp (Bishop of Smyrna). Martin Luther. Philipp Melanchthon. Jerome. And John Huss.

a) When **John Huss** was condemned by the Council of Constance (1415) the bishop who was conducting the ceremony said, *“And now we commit **thy soul to the devil**.”* Huss calmly replied, *“I commit my spirit into thy hands, lord Jesus Christ; unto thee I commend my spirit, which thou hast redeemed.”*

E. How Jesus Faced Death

1. We see **no protesting, no crying, no defiance, & no resignation**.
2. Here is a the real **Triumphal Entry**.
3. **Death is not the end of the road, but simply a bend in the road**.

F. And what was taking place in the high walls of heaven?

1. Jesus was **coming home**. And showed up with *one poor thief*. **I'm Home!**
What a reunion for heaven!

G. Slide14c God is also in Complete Control of Your Death

H. Our death is **by appointment** also (not an accident).

1. We do not die **according to the will of cancer, or from an erratic drunk driver**.
No we die under God's providential care.
2. We do **not** pray, *Father into the hands of accidents or the apparent randomness of ill health I commit my spirit*.
3. **We will pass through the curtain according to God's clock, not the timetable of random fate**. Erwin Lutzer

4. Slide14d Ps.31:14,15^{David} ***But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors.***
- I. Slide14e When you come to die, remember that we pass from this life ***into the loving hands of the Father*** who is waiting in heaven to receive us to Himself.
1. God does not promise a ***calm passage*** through the pathway of death, **but** he does promise a ***safe landing***. [think, ***Jesus brutal death***] Erwin Lutzer
 - a) 1 Pet.4:19 ***Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.***
- J. Slide14f When you come to die, remember that ***God reigns***.
1. Acts 4:27,28 ***for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.***
- K. Slide14g When you come to die, remember God reigns in ***life & death***
1. Deut.32:39 ***See now that I, even I, am he, & there is no god beside me; I kill & I make alive; I wound & I heal; & there is none that can deliver out of my hand.***
- L. Slide14h When you come to die, also remember God ***Pities***.
1. A possible meaning for ***the darkness*** (from noon to 3pm) **& the tearing of the temple curtain** is that God was ***clothing His world in the color of grief*** (darkness) and ***rending the garments next to His heart***.
 2. Ps.103:13,14 ***As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.***
 - a) The nails, the spear, the whip, the crown of thorns, did not feel like ***pity***. **Neither do** intravenous needles, respirators, tubes down your throat or hand restraints today.
 - b) **But** all the more to remember ***He reigns, & He does pity***/have compassion on His children.
- M. Slide14i When you come to die, remember ***your spirit lives on***.
1. Death is not the end, not even a sleep for your conscious personalty. ***To be away from the body is to be present with the Lord.***

2. We say, **Father into your hands I commit my spirit**, not into *the grave*, not into *the void*, not into *the dark unknown...but into the hands of God*.
3. One of the **great temptations** at the hour of our death is to believe that our death is **a horrible blow from God** and that therefore we are *under His wrath* and *cannot* commit our spirit is care. Let us learn here from **Jesus**. **His death was a horrible blow from God**. **He became a curse** for us. **But Jesus** did not abandon faith in **God's love** for him. *John Piper*

IV. Slide15a **INTO YOUR HANDS - Security, Protection**

- A. Oh, the Touch of a Father's Hands. What son does not long for his father to reach out and embrace him?
 1. There is something wonderful about this expression. It speaks of **safety**, *I am safe in my father's hands*. And of **greeting**, *Welcome home, Son*. And of **love**, *Dad, it's so good to see you again*. And of **approval**, *I'm so proud of you, Son*.
- B. **My dad** had big hands (were your dads?). **Slide15b** How big are **God's** hands?
 1. God's hands are big enough to **bless you**.
 2. God's hands are big enough to **show you off**. Isaiah 62:3, *The Lord will hold you in his hand for all to see — a splendid crown in the hand of God*.
 3. God's hands are *tattooed* to **never forget you**. Again Isaiah says, *Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion for the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved/write/inscribe you on the palms of my hands*. Isaiah 49:15-16a NIV
 4. God's hands are strong enough to keep you **eternally secure**. John 10:28-29 says, *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish...My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand*. NIV How big are **God's** hands?
 - a) It's the picture of a small child standing at the edge of the pool, w/you in the water saying, *Trust me. Jump to me*. They're always afraid at first. They wonder, *Is he strong enough to catch me? Are his hands slippery? What happens if he doesn't catch me?* **But** finally they would get up enough faith to jump into your arms, and of course *you catch them*. **Then** they'd want to do it 100 more times.

b) Your Father is waiting for you to jump today. He's saying, *Trust me. I can be trusted. I'm working behind the scenes. And I can handle anything you give me. Don't you want God's hand to be on your life? Don't you want your life to be in God's hands? You can trust Him with your life and your future.*

C. Slide15c Look who's hands he had been in for the last 15 hours...*in the hands of men.*

1. In the hands of a friends: Judas, who betrayed him, Peter who emphatically denied him.
2. In the hands of men who arrested Him. Men who dragged him before Caiaphas the high priest.
3. In the hands of false witnesses who pointed Jesus out in court and falsely accused him.
4. In the hands of the council that voted a guilty verdict for Jesus.
5. In the hands of Soldier's who held the whips that scourged Jesus.
6. In the hands of those who placed the crown of thorns upon his head and pressed it into his flesh.
7. In the hands of those who ripped out his beard & smote him with the palms of their hands.
8. In the hands of those who led him before Pilate, who tried to wash the *indelible blood stains* from his own hands.
9. In the hands of the mob who clenched their fists demanding that Jesus be crucified.
10. In the hands of that dragged him to Golgotha and nailed him to this cross.
11. In the hands of those who lifted His cross into the air.
12. In the hands that threw the dice to obtain His cloak.
 - a) Jesus had been *at the mercy* of hands *that had no mercy*.
 - b) Wicked hands have done all they can do. Jesus now returns to His Father's hands.

D. Slide15d Things change when you put them in God's hands.

1. In God's hands is my **victory**. In God's hand is my **success**.
In God's hands is my **way up**. In God's hands is my **deliverance**.

In God's hands is my **hope**. In God's hands I'm leaping for **joy**.

V. Slide16a **I COMMIT - Trust, Yield, Deposit**

A. **Commit** - To **deposit** w/another, to give him charge, to commit.

1. To put into the care or protection of someone. *LKGNT*

2. To commit for safe keeping. *Wiersbe*

a) *Into your hands do I deposit my spirit.* Here is the **banking trust** of a confident depositor. This is the fine art of **banking on God**.

b) Jesus had a lifetime here on earth of **making small deposits** to the Father...this was His **last deposit**.

3. **Slide16b** The question is **not** whether we shall **bank on God**, **but rather on** what kind of God are we banking?

B. **Commit** - This committal of himself was *a habit* of **Jesus**.

1. **Slide16c** *I trust My spirit into Your hands* - This is the whole meaning of our Christian religion (**complete trust** in the Father).

C. **Have YOU said, Father into your hands I commit my spirit?**

1. This was Jesus' final cry of dedication to God the Father.

D. **Our prayer might be...***Father into your Hands do I commit my life, I commit my gifts, I commit my talents, I commit my resources, I commit my finances, I commit my service, I commit my thought life, I commit my marriage life or singleness, I commit my future, I commit my job, I commit my ministry...and one day I will commit my spirit to You.*

VI. Slide17a **MY SPIRIT - My All in All, My Everything**

A. **My Spirit** - *Jesus meant His very life, His personal existence.*

B. Matthew 27:50 tells us that at the moment of his death, *Jesus dismissed his spirit.* That is, he **voluntarily yielded** it up to the Father. His life was not taken from him against his will; when the time came, he gave up his life voluntarily.

C. **Slide17b** *The death of Christ is not the final act of a tragedy but the victorious ending of a mighty battle.*

- D. **God hangs on a cross...** This is what it means for **the Word** to become **flesh**.
There are **no** safe places, **no** walls to get behind, **no** fortresses in which to hide.
There are **no** holy retreats where a man can spend his life free from evil men.
There are **no** nice clean places where he can escape from life's dirt.
This is, at least in part, what **the cross means** to those who dare to take seriously Jesus' command to follow him.
- E. **Prayer:** *Dad, into your safety & security, I yield & deposit my body/soul/spirit, my living, my dying, my eternity, **and** everything until then.*