

a Sponge, a Curtain, and a Cross

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1 Memorial Day:** TY to **Bagpiper:** Tress Maksimuk (*Mac-si-mook*).
 TY to **Gunnery Sergeant** Randy Bennett *ret.* **And** his daughter Heidi is a **Cadet Second Lieutenant**, *Marine Corps Jr. ROTC* (Posting the Colors).
1. Armed Forces Day is a day we celebrate & thank those who are **currently serving** in the military. (2 weeks ago May 20th)
 2. Veterans Day celebrates the service of all U.S. military **veterans**.
 3. Memorial Day is a day of remembering the men/women who **died** while serving.
 4. **Our National Anthem/Star Spangled Banner** ends with **a question and a challenge:**
Does that flag still wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?
 - a) **We have many issues in our land** (*divisions: economy/domestic/international*).
But compared to so many countries in our world we are still **Free &** have so many in our **armed services** that I call **Brave**.
 - b) **Today** it's *apropos* that we **honor** those who have **died in serving their country...as** this morning is our place in Scripture where we **honor the 1 who died in serving our world**, Jn.15:13 *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down 1's life for his friends*
- B. **Slide2 Charlotte Paulson** - The *Journey of Hope* Program. [**unaccompanied refugee children**]
- C. **Slide3 Sun Night of Prayer** - Next Sun. *Agape* rm 6:30pm. Praying for our youth/youth ministries.
- D. **Slide4 Children's Ministry:** Next Sun *Movin on Up*. **Also few spots Summer Volunteers**.
- E. **Slide5 Better Together Couples Date Night:** Next Sat @ Oceanside Harbor.
- F. **Slide6 Church Office** will be closed tomorrow.
- G. ***Also, Dave Eubanks** shot thru-thru in Mosul. **Paul Burke**, St.Cyprian's in LB Sat.11am.

II. Slide7 Intro: a Sponge, a Curtain, and a Cross

- A. I'm going to read an excerpt from *When God Weeps*, by Joni Eareckson Tada.
- B. **From** Heaven the Father now rouses himself like a lion disturbed, shakes his mane, and roars against the shriveling remnant of a man hanging on a cross. Never has the Son seem the Father look at him so, never felt even the least of his hot breath. But the roar shakes the unseen world

and darkens the visible sky. The Son does not recognize these eyes.

“Son of Man! Why have you behaved so? You have cheated, lusted, stolen, gossiped – murdered, envied, hated, lied. You have cursed, robbed, overspent, overeaten – fornicated, disobeyed, embezzled, and blasphemed. Oh, the duties you have shirked, the children you have abandoned! Who has ever so ignored the poor, so played the coward, so belittled my name? Have you ever held your razor tongue? What a self-righteous, pitiful drunk – you, who molest young boys, peddle killer drugs, travel in cliques, and mock your parents. Who gave you the boldness to rig elections, foment revolutions, torture animals, and worship demons? Does the list never end! Splitting families, raping virgins, acting smugly, playing the pimp – buying pornography, accepting bribes. You have burned down buildings, perfected terrorist tactics, founded false religions, traded in slaves – relishing each morsel and bragging about it all. I hate, loathe this things in you! Disgust for everything about you consumes me! Can you not feel my wrath?”

Of course the Son is innocent. He is blamelessness itself. The Father knows this. But the divine pair have an agreement, and the unthinkable must now take place. Jesus will be treated as if personally responsible for every sin ever committed.

The Father watches as his heart’s treasure, the mirror image of himself, sinks drowning into raw, liquid **sin**. Jehovah’s stored rage against humankind for every century explodes in a single direction. **“Father! Father! Why have you forsaken me?!”**

But heaven stops its ears. The Son stares up at the One who cannot, who will not, reach down or reply.

The Trinity had planned it. The Son endured it. The Spirit enabled him. The Father rejected the Son whom he loved. Jesus, the God-man from Nazareth, perished. The Father accepted his sacrifice for sin and was satisfied. **The Rescue was accomplished.**

- C. **Slide8 The Cross of Christ** - the gospel can be summed up into words: *became & become*
1. **Jesus became sin for us so we could become righteous.** 2Cor.5:4 loose paraphrase
 2. **The cross is about *forgiveness*: both getting it & giving it.**
- D. **Slide9,10** If you were to look at **Rembrandt’s painting of The Three Crosses**, your attention would be drawn **1st to the center cross** on which **Jesus** died. **Next** note the contrast of light & darkness depicted by the **2 thieves**. **Finally**, your eyes would drift to the edge of the painting and catch sight of another figure, almost hidden in the shadows. Art critics say this is a representation of **Rembrandt himself**, for he recognized that **by his sins he helped nail Jesus to the cross.**

- E. Slide11,12 (45) **Darkness** - From 9am to Noon He hung in the **light**. From Noon to 3pm, a miraculous *darkness* covered the land. **It was as though all creation was sympathizing w/the creator.**
- F. 3 hours of **silence**, as well as 3 hours of **darkness** & no record of what happened. **Yet**, here lies probably the 3 most important hours of all human history.
1. So tremendous that it cannot be described. **It cannot be told.** No wonder the sun buried its face & hid its glory.
- G. Remember it was **Passover**. Passover required them to **remember back** to the 1st Passover. (Passover had to do w/the 10th plague)
1. **Do you remember the 9th plague?** (Ex.10:21-29) **Darkness**, that was even felt.
 2. **How long?** For 3 days.
 3. **Do you remember the 10th plague?** (Ex.12:29,30) **Death of 1st born.**
 - a) **The shed Lamb's blood** meant the **saving of life** for some & the **surety of death** for others.
- H. 7 **Statements on the cross:** 3 before noon. 4 at 3pm. 0 from noon to 3pm.
1. **Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**
 2. **Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.**
 3. **Woman, behold your son, Behold your mother.** *Then at 3pm...*
 4. **My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? - I thirst. - It is finished. - Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.**

III. Slide13a/b **4 STATEMENTS (46-50)**

- A. **FORSAKEN (46)**
- B. **No man** could answer this question. **No Angel** could answer. **But Ps.22 decodes the mystery.** 1 **My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?** 2 **O My God, I cry in the **daytime**, but You do not hear; And in the **night season**, and am not silent.** 3 **But You are **holy**, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.**
1. (Ps.22:2) a period of **light & dark.** (Ps.22:3) The reason...**The Holiness of God.**

a) Jesus was saying, *Father I understand because You're Holy & I am Full of Sin (not mine, but of others). You must give this strike of Divine wrath.*

C. Then God turns His back on the *sin-bearer*.

1. Here is the *colossal difference* between the **martyrs & their Lord**. In their dying agony they were divinely sustained, but Jesus...*forsaken by God*.

D. **Forsaken** - Jesus was **partially** forsaken, when He came to earth. **Gradually**, as He drew near to the cross. **Then totally**, not only from man, but now from *His Father*.

1. **Forsaken** can mean, *abandoned, deserted, left behind, left alone*.

2. *Please don't say, He doesn't know what I'm going through or He doesn't understand my pain.*

E. **Slide13c SPONGE** (47-49)

F. Interesting a sponge, the very *lowest* form of animal life, brought into contact w/Christ, who is at the *top* of all life. [best & softest sponges come rt. out of the Med]

1. As *the sponge* brought **refreshment** to the lips of our dying Lord, **so** may *the least of the saints* bring **refreshment** (or please Him) today.

2. **This was no ordinary sponge**. This was a sponge w/a high calling of bringing refreshment unto its Maker. Yet, this sponge might not have always felt this way. Let me read to you about *The sponge w/an attitude*. (my Poem 2004)

G. **Slide13d FINISH LINE** (50a)

H. **Jesus cried out again with a loud voice** - *Like the shout of a conquering warrior*. [yet, odd coming from a condemned man dying on a cross, *isn't it?*]

1. But what a shout it was, *It Is Finished* #6

2. 1000's have preached on this, but who can tell the meaning that lies compacted within it? *It was finished. It was over. He had won. He was Victor. This was no cry of despair, but of completion. A cry of fulfillment. A cry of Victory. Jesus the Finisher, not the quitter.*

3. **So, what was finished?** [1] All prophecies regarding His 1st advent.

[2] The completion of His suffering. [3] The goal of Incarnation was reached.

[4] His work on earth was finished. [5] The Atonement was complete.

[6] It was the end of our sins. [7] A fulfillment of the Laws requirements.

[8] The destruction of Satan's power (sentenced passed/thou not executed yet)

- I. **Slide13e YIELDED** (50b) *Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit #7*
- J. **Yielded** - Jn.10:17,18 *I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one 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.* [He was in control & was voluntarily yielding up His Sp]
- K. **The Timing...Impeccable.** He was our Passover Lamb, it was Passover, it was 3pm.
 1. 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) **It was a death by appointment, not an accident.**
 2. **This is how we die also.** Not according to the will of cancer, or from an erratic drunk driver. **No** we die under **God's providential care.**
 - a) 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. (Lutzer)
 4. Ps.31:14,15a *But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, You are my God. My times are in Your hand.*

IV. Slide14a **3 SUPERNATURAL EVENTS (51-53)**

- A. **TEMPLE - Veil Torn** (51a)
- B. Ripped **top to bottom**...i.e. something **God** did...*not man*. **And**, speaks of the **completeness** of Jesus' sacrifice (not torn 1/2 way...meeting u 1/2 way).
- C. **The draw bridge is let down.** The vault is open. **100% unrestricted access to God.**
 1. **No more need for the temple** (*one greater than the Temple was here*).
 2. **No more need for the priesthood.** (*He is our great high priest*) Heb.10:21
 3. **No more need for the sacrificial system** (*He offered 1 sac for sins forever*) Heb10:12

a) The veil, **torn**. Christ's body, **torn**. The earth itself, **torn**. Graves, **torn** open.
Even the centurion's heart, **torn**.

D. **Slide14b TERRAIN - Shake & Break** (51b)

E. The earth quaking reminds us of *Mnt. Sinai*, when God gave **the Law** to Moses. **Now** it quakes again at **the Laws fulfillment**.

F. **Interesting**, the **Incarnation** didn't rend the veil. His **sinless life** didn't. Nor his **anguish in Gethsemane**. Not even **His agony on the cross**. He must **actually die** to redeem the sinner.

G. **Slide14c TOMBS - Open** (52,53)

H. The Torn Veil says, **He conquered Sin**. The Earthquake suggests, **He conquered the Law and fulfilled it**. The Resurrected saints prove, **He defeated Death**.

V. **Slide15a 4 HUMAN REACTIONS (54-66)**

A. **The cross is a mighty magnet** (attracting **or** repelling).

B. **SOLDIERS** (54)

C. Before his salvation C.S.Lewis thought, **We can't know God anymore than Hamlet or Romeo & Juliet could know Shakespeare**.

1. **We can't know God, anymore than any character in a play can know its author**

2. **Then it occurred to him...Hamlet or Romeo & Juliet could know their creator...IF Shakespeare wrote himself into the Play.**

3. **Then he realized...this is the phenomena of the bible...God wrote Himself into the play, so man could know who God is.**

a) This Centurion just witnessed the Greatest **Scene/Act** in History. He witnessed **God wrote Himself into the play!...and he had front row seats**.

D. (57) Once He had finished His work of redemption, **note that Jesus Christ was not again touched by enemy hands**. **While** Christ was being made sin for us, God permitted people to do their **worst**. **But** when the work was finished, God permitted only Christ's friends to handle Him.

E. **Slide15b WOMEN** (55,56; 61)

F. **Last** to leave their Lord's resting place...**1st** to return to it when the Sabbath was past.

G. Slide15c JOSEPH, of Arimathea (57-60)

H. Joseph was a disciple, but secretly for fear of the Jews, yet when his lord was actually dead, extraordinary courage nerved his spirit & he boldly went to Pilate.

1. This is the hour of late blooming love that draws him out of the shadows...to fearlessly befriend His Savior.

I. Joe & Nic (Nicodemus) are like stars that appear amidst *a black sky*.

1. Not any of the apostles, but these 2 men attend & officiate the burial service.

2. Picture this wealthy man, propping a ladder up against the cross beam, struggling to pull out the deeply embedded nails, one by one. How do you lower him to the ground w/o getting blood all over you? Removing the thorns from his punctured & swollen head, his face swollen from Roman fists, bones out of socket.

J. Nic & Joe understood Is. 52:14 better than we ever could, *his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.*

1. Sponging the blood off the body their hands would no doubt run across the spear wound & remember, *He was pierced for our transgressions.* Isa 53:5

2. They defiled themselves (touched a dead body) & were not able to eat Passover... but what difference did it make...*they found the Lamb of God.*

3. New tomb - new, so no one could say that another came forth from the tomb. *They made His grave w/the wicked, But w/the rich at His death.* Is.53:9

K. Slide15d CHIEF PRIESTS (62-66)

L. The disciples forgot that Jesus said He would rise, but His enemies didn't.

1. Interesting, that at His trial His false witnesses gave a different meaning to His words; but they knew all the while that He was speaking of His bodily Resurrection not the raising of the physical Temple.

M. Make it as secure as you know how - Pilate either *didn't want Him coming out.* Or, was saying, *just try to hold hold Him in.*

1. Slide16 Can man hold back Spring when it's ready to bud forth?

N. Unintentionally, they did honor to the sleeping King, & helped prove His resurrection by sealing the tomb, making it impossible for anyone, friend or foe, to steal the body.