

## Family Worship Weekend – Implications of the Cross

Matt Chandler – April 13, 2014

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Hey, how are we? Doing well? Okay, if you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab them. If you want to help your kids get there, that would be great. Luke, chapter 23, is where we're going to be. While you turn there, let me just say a couple of things. If you're one of our first through fifth graders, I want you to look right at me. Let me talk with you for a second.

My name is Pastor Matt. Basically, when you are in your class being taught, I'm in here with Mom and Dad teaching them. We teach the same thing; I just teach longer. I'm glad you're with us. You bring an energy and a joy that we need. As you get older, you have a tendency to get a bit crustier and a bit more nervous. Your energy and joy help remind us of some really important things. So I am personally really glad you're here with us. My expectation is that you're going to do great in here today with us.

Now parents, let me talk with you. I know there are a lot of first through fifth graders in here, hundreds of them. My expectation is that there will be some more up and downs. There will be more bathroom breaks than usual. My expectation is that we'll hear some talking back and some chatter. Now let me put everybody at ease.

My hope would be, as a mom and as a dad (maybe just as a mom or just as a dad; I don't know who made it today), that you would have a standard of conduct for your children, and I want you to administer that standard of conduct, but I have no expectation that your child will be perfect, as I have no expectation that *you* will be perfect when you come in without them. I just say that so we might breathe and you not get nervous that your kid is squirmy or maybe talking here and there, because they're in third grade. My expectation is they'll act like they're in third grade.

Now I didn't just give you permission to let your kid wild out. So parent, but don't... I'm not expecting perfection out of them this morning. With that said, I want us to begin to prepare ourselves for Easter, which is next week. To do that, I want us to talk today about the death of Jesus

Christ. I know some of you are like, "Really, Pastor Matt? You're going to do the crucifixion on Family Worship Weekend?" Yeah. I'm not going to be graphic about it. We're going to just read it out of the Bible. The Bible is not graphic about it, although it was a graphic ordeal.

I just want us to read and talk about the implications of Jesus dying, because without his death on the cross we have no hope. Without his death on the cross there's nothing to celebrate next weekend. So I want us to start to get ready for next weekend, because both in here as well as in Kids' Village across all of our campuses, next weekend we'll be talking about the implications of the resurrection of Jesus. So today I just thought we would talk about the implications of the death of Jesus.

Five years ago I was on a family bike ride, and by "bike ride" I mean Lauren and Audrey were riding bikes. Reid was too small, so he was on a Big Wheel. He wasn't really good at the Big Wheel, so I just walked. I didn't even have to jog next to the Big Wheel. I just walked next to Reid, all out effort trying to get that thing to go faster than 0.6 miles an hour.

In the middle of that little ride, Reid looked up at me and said, "Dad, Jesus died for our sins." I was like, *Bam! Father of the year.* "That's right, son. He *did* die for our sins." I'm thinking, here I am, discipling at home, like a boss. I said, "Then what happened next, buddy?" Reid started to think about it, and he smiled, and he looked up at me and said, "And then the Easter Bunny brings me candy!" I was like, "Well, I could see why you think that. That's a fail on our part. I apologize."

I do think there's this kind of confusion. I don't know where you are in regard to faith, where you are in regard to the person and work of Jesus Christ, but for a long time, even personally, I didn't quite understand what the death of this man 2,000 years ago had to do with me or what exactly was happening when he came back to life. So what I want to do is just try to make crystal clear, moving into next weekend, what we're really celebrating here.

To do that, I want us to look at the death of Jesus, and then here's what I want to talk about. It's very simple. Three things that Jesus took from us when he died. There were three things (probably more, but three things I'll hit on) that Jesus took from us. How many of us have had things taken from us? Maybe some other adult took it. Maybe it was Mom and Dad. Maybe you started running the mouth and lost the Xbox, something like that.

Jesus takes things from us when he dies, and it's important that he does so. With that said, let's look at Luke, chapter 23. I'm going to pick it up in verse 32. Again, my plan is that we'll be done in probably less than 20 minutes at this point. I know some of you are scoffers and don't believe that, but we'll give it a go. Verse 32. Jesus has been arrested by the police. He has been beaten badly at multiple times, and now they've condemned him to die.

Picking it up in verse 32 the Bible says, "**Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull...**" Now let's chat. "The Skull" doesn't sound like a lovely place. If it's a place called "The Skull," then it sounds like it would be scary after dark unless you're a pirate. Then from there it says, "**...there they crucified him, and the criminals...**" That is, they nailed nails through his hands and his feet and hung him there to die. They put one of the criminals on his right and one on his left.

**"And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And they [gambled] to divide his [clothes]. And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers [made fun of him], saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!' The soldiers [or policemen] also [made fun of him], coming up and offering him [bad drink] and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'**

**One of the criminals who were hanged railed [or yelled] at him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him [or told him], saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of [death]? And we indeed justly [deserve to die because we are thieves] but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And [Jesus] said to [the thief], 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'**

**It was now about the sixth hour [the middle of the afternoon], and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!' And having said this he breathed his last.**

**Now when the centurion [or guard or policeman] saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, 'Certainly this man was innocent!' And all the crowds that had assembled [watching Jesus die], when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts [or**

feeling sad that they had been involved with killing Jesus]. **And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things."**

After this, Jesus is taken down and buried. He is put in a tomb, and they sealed that tomb with a giant rock to make sure nobody could get in and steal Jesus' body. This is the story of the physical death of Jesus Christ, but there's something going on behind the physical, the what-you-can-see death of Jesus. There's something spiritual going on behind all of this that's extremely important for you and me to understand. In it, Jesus is taking three things away from us.

The first thing Jesus takes from us in his death is *our sin and our guilt*. Let's talk sin. *Sin* is any breaking of God's rules in glad rebellion against him. I do this with your parents all the time. How many of you have lied? Go ahead and get your hand up as high as it'll go. How many of you have lied? All right, parents, I'm talking to you too. Keep your hands up. Kids, look up. Are your parents' hands up?

Okay, now look at me. This becomes important. Put your hands down, you lying parents. Kids, look at me. Here's what you just saw. I've prayed all week long that the Lord would burn this into your tiny hearts. Mom and Dad are just as much in need of Jesus Christ as you are. They are imperfect. They *will* let you down. They *will* fail you. The only perfect one in the universe is Jesus. If your dad happens to be named *Jesus*, I'm not talking about him.

Your parents are not perfect. They will let you down. They will snap when they shouldn't. They will get angry when they shouldn't, and there will be times they *don't* get angry and they *should*. So don't be surprised when they let you down. They will imperfectly reveal to you the goodness of God. They will be a shadow of it, but they will not be the substance. We've all sinned. We're all broken.

How many of you have done things you wish you wouldn't have done, said things you wish you wouldn't have said, done things that made you feel bad about doing them? Look at us. We're just a train wreck in here. It's awesome. This is sin. This is rebellion against God that's visible. But here's something else. The word *guilt* here, so not just sin but our guilt... It goes a little bit bigger than we like to think, because it's not just what we get caught doing that makes us sinners; it's the things nobody else knows but us that still make us sinners.

Several years ago, Lauren was out of town with Audrey and Norah. It was just Reid and me. I think my son was 6 at the time. It was just him and me, which means there are sandwiches for every meal. It was lunchtime, and I left the room and was making us sandwiches. I had gotten a package the day before, so there was a box by our doorway (I just hadn't taken it out yet) filled with packing peanuts, those little Styrofoam things they pack stuff in.

I went and made two sandwiches and came back in, and that stuff was thrown all over the living room. I said, "Hey Reid, why did you dump that all over the floor?" He said, "I didn't." Kids are all really bad liars, and then they learn to be good at it. Think about how dark that is. They learn to be good. They learn by getting busted. "Oh, next time I lie, this is how I'll do it." This is when he was terrible at it. "I didn't do it."

"Okay, son. It's just you and me here. We're the only two human beings here. We don't have a pet. It was you, Reid."

"It wasn't me, Dad."

"Reid, I went to the kitchen and made two sandwiches and grabbed the Doritos, and the floor was fine. Then when I, the only other human being here besides you, came back into this room with our sandwiches and Doritos, the peanuts were all over the floor. What am I to make of that?" He said, "Maybe Audrey did it."

"Okay, let's change the question here. Do you know where the spanking spoon is? Can you go get me the spanking spoon? I'm trying to give you a way out. You don't want to take the way out, then we'll just do it your way." Even when no one has seen, it's that obvious to God. There are no secrets to God. None. Every thought, every desire of your heart, every wicked motive... Nothing surprises God. He knows everything.

Secrecy is a myth. That's not frightening until you begin to think about what it would mean for all of that to be made public. Then all of a sudden you feel guilt. Then all of a sudden you feel shame. The way I've tried to communicate it to your parents is this is a giant television screen. Like literally, we could loop stuff in and watch movies on this.

But if we could take the thoughts of your mind and heart this week and put it on the screen, nobody wants to stay and watch. Nobody goes, "You guys go ahead and watch that. I'll be out here in the

back." You're literally going to go start packing your bags to move. What Jesus takes from us on the cross is our sin and our guilt.

This is what John the Baptist meant in John 1:29 when Jesus walked into the water there and he said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**" He takes it all. All of our sin is taken from us on Jesus' cross. It's why it's such a huge deal that he died, because we couldn't get rid of our sin. We couldn't get rid of our guilt. It would always be present until Jesus, God in the flesh, took it from us. But that's not all he takes from us.

The second thing he takes from us is *God's anger*. This is something nobody wants to talk about, not to kids, not to adults. Everybody thinks God is kind of like a sky fairy, like he has wings and a wand and he always smiles. He just puts happy dust on people and makes them fly. Look right at me, regardless of age. The Bible is clear. God hates sin. Exodus 32 says he burns with a white hot wrath, rage toward sin. He hates it.

Every bit of loss and heartbreak on earth is owing to the reality of sin in our hearts and our lives, and so the all-powerful, all-knowing God of the universe has a heart filled with rage toward sin. He wants to kill it and snuff it and strangle it and drown it. He despises sin. He's angered by it. Don't make God a fairy. He's not. That white hot rage from the Creator God of the universe is aimed directly at you and me until Jesus takes it from us on the cross.

So if you're a hunter, if you play video games where you shoot stuff, the gun is levied right at us. It's cocked. It's loaded. It's powered up. All that's going to happen is just...*Poof!* Gone, blown up. The gun is dialed in, one on the trigger filled with rage at our glad rebellion and our participation in destroying what God has made beautiful and lovely, and Christ, as he hangs there on the cross, causes the gun to move off of us, and he takes upon himself God's white hot rage and anger toward us. Jesus takes it from us.

Not only does he take God's anger from us, but in its place he gives us God's favor or God's delight or God's joy in us. For our grownups in here, this is the theological term *propitiation*. It's that God takes God's wrath for us off of us, and he instead puts delight on us. It's what's accomplished in the cross. We see that in 1 John, chapter 4, verse 10. It says, "**In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**"

Jesus comes and dies on the cross, and in dying on the cross, all of God's anger is taken from us and

put on Jesus, and all of God's delight in Jesus is put on us as we become adopted as sons and daughters of God. It's what's happening on the cross. He's taking God's anger from us. Now there's one more thing Jesus takes from us on the cross.

Jesus takes from us *the distance between God and us*. See, between you and between me is a huge gap, a huge space, between where God is and where we are. My little sister lives in Taiwan. She has lived there for many years now. In fact, it has been two years since I've seen her. The only way for me to see her or for her to see me is to hop on a plane and for 17 hours make our way either to Taiwan or back to Dallas. There's a giant space between the two of us. In fact, when it's daytime here it's nighttime for her, and when it's daytime for her it's nighttime for me. So we are a long way away from one another.

What Jesus lovingly does on the cross is because our sin has been taken from us and because God's anger has been taken from us and been replaced with God's joy in us, Jesus, in the cross, lovingly grabs us by the shirt and brings us near to God. Where we were far from him, now we are near to him, and this is why you were born. This is why we exist: to be near to God, to know God, and to enjoy God. Jesus and Jesus alone accomplished this in the cross.

Now let's have a real and maybe difficult conversation. What I have just described Jesus doing is not true for everyone. It is true for those who believe and repent. Those who believe this is what Jesus did get the benefits of what Jesus did, and for those who repent of their sins... What *repent* means is simply to turn our backs and walk away from our sin. So we're not going to sin anymore. We're going to try not to sin. We're going to stumble and fall, but we're going to try not to sin, and we're going to repent. Where there is no repentance and no belief, this is not true for you.

So Mom, Dad, you need to hear me say this, because we live in a part of the country where carnal Christianity is just kind of looked at as the norm. I'm telling you, without repentance, you are not a Christian. You're not. You're not saved, and therefore, you have not been rescued from your sins, and therefore, God's anger is still aimed right at you, and therefore, you are as far from God as you have ever been.

Church attendance or you being baptized when you were 11 did nothing to change that. There must be repentance as an objective evidence of God saving us. Where there is no repentance, there is no salvation. It's an absurd notion, if we believe the Bible, that we can be Christians without following

Jesus. It's just not true. Those who believe. For those who repent. Now we're going to stumble. There are no perfect people in here.

For those who hate their sin and seek not to walk in it any longer, this is good news. A friend of mine said it like this this past week: if there's not repentance, we don't have any good news. I have no good news for you if there's not repentance. I have only the biblical reality of you being stuck in sin and guilt, of you being right in the middle of God's just anger toward your rebellion and the fact that you are far from God, the reality of this being that you will be condemned to hell forever.

Some of you are like, "Really? You're going to go there with our kids in the room?" Well, if I can put weight on you that'll make you consider in ways that maybe you haven't, then I think it's loving for me to do that, not hateful for me to do that. Now let's do this to end out our time together. How can we believe any of this is true? I mean, a dude died 2,000 years ago? How can we be confident? Can't this be just like another myth, another fairy tale? (I'll be careful on my example, parents, because I don't know how you're running your home.)

Couldn't this be just another myth, another fairy tail? How many of you like fairy tales and myths? Let's do Spider-Man. Anybody like Spider-Man? I like Spider-Man. We like myths. We like fairy tales. We like those things, so how do we know that Jesus isn't another one of those? Look right at me. Here's how we know. We know because Jesus didn't stay dead. What does that mean? Well, now that's next week, isn't it? Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for these little boys and girls. Thank you for the busyness and noises in this service. Those noises don't exist in dying churches. These boys and girls are an evidence of your grace and mercy on us as a congregation. Thank you for them. I pray that you would open up their hearts to belief early, that you would protect them from our stumbling and bumbling as parents, and that you would raise them up to walk in the goodness of your grace.

I pray, Father, where maybe in this room we have flippantly considered ourselves Christians, I pray that maybe some of the things that were said today might rattle our souls and we might consider whether or not our lives are marked with repentance, whether or not we have really worked out our salvation with fear and trembling.

I pray where we have been given false confidence you would erase that confidence, and where we lack assurance, that the desire for repentance and the desire to walk in it would be an

encouragement to us, the reality that we hate our sin would encourage our hearts as an objective evidence that the Spirit lives inside of us. Help us. We love you. It's for your beautiful name, amen.

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