

HE TOOK YOUR PLACE

As I travelled along the unfamiliar country road I noticed a number of cars parked outside a farmhouse and some people entering the house as others left. I had travelled 40 miles to attend the funeral of a close relative of one of my friends, and was glad to eventually find the house in which the wake was held. After signing the book of condolences at the front door I entered the house and was met in the hallway by some members of the grieving family.

Grief

When I entered the parlour, the room in which the corpse was laid out, I moved from person to person, shaking hands with the mourners and expressing my sympathy at their loss. I noticed an elderly lady who was sitting on her own. This poor mother sat beside the coffin, looking through tearful eyes at the body of her son. Her heart was breaking. As she grasped my hand tightly she said in a trembling voice, "I am 88 years old and my son is only 58. It is a terrible thing to lose your child." She then said something that I will never forget. Looking at her son, she said, "I would gladly change places with him." She wished she could take his place. She would be willing to die instead of him so that he might live.

As I considered the unforgettable words of that dear broken-hearted mother I was reminded of the words of Jesus, who said, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."¹ It was not possible for this poor grieving mother to lay down her own life in place of her son's, so that through her death he might live. However, this is just what Jesus Christ did. He laid down His life for us, so that we might have life, even everlasting life.

Gospel

According to the Scriptures, all of us are sinners by nature and are subject to sin's penalty - 'The wages [penalty] of sin is death.'² Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins'.³ This is why Jesus said, "You must be born again [receive spiritual life from above]."⁴ There is not a sacrament or ritual, church, minister or religious organisation on earth that can raise us from spiritual death to spiritual life. Christ alone can do this. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life."⁵

Grace

Friend, in order to rescue you from having to pay sin's penalty in Hell for all eternity, Jesus paid that penalty on your behalf. At Calvary **He took your place** - 'But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners'.⁶ He took your punishment and paid in full all that was required so that you could be released from the demands of sin's penalty. **He took your place** by dying on the cross as your substitute and sin-bearer, thereby making it possible for you to be reconciled to God - 'For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son'.⁷

When **He took your place** and dealt with your sins Jesus secured for you a Pardon. This Pardon will be put to your account if you will come in repentance to God, confess your sins to Him, ask Him to forgive you, and put your faith in Jesus, believing **He took your place** and died on the cross and rose again from the dead so that you could receive everlasting

life. Jesus said, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me.”⁸

Gift

Friend, Jesus gave His life for you. **He took your place.** The Pardon that Jesus secured through His death on the cross on our behalf is now offered as a free gift to all who will accept it – ‘For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord’.⁹

Will you reach out by faith and receive this wonderful gift today? Do not delay, ‘For God says, “At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.” Indeed, the “right time” is now. Today is the day of salvation’.¹⁰

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Scripture References

1: John 15:13

2: Romans 6:23

3: Ephesians 2:1,5

4: John 3:7

5: John 5:24

6: Romans 5:8

7: Romans 5:10

8: John 10: 28

9: Romans 6:23

10: 2 Corinthians 6:2