

The Bridge

*Where Love and Justice meet.
Where Love and Justice are complete.*

***‘Jesus said, ‘Anyone who hears my
word and believes... has crossed
over from death to life.’***

(John 5:24)

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I dedicate this book to every man,
woman and child, God's creation.

Introduction

The most convincing thing to me about Jesus is the *'full narrative'*. It is not one specific thing he said or did that I find convincing. It is *all* the elements of his life, his story. They come together and form the missing links of life, of death, of meaning.

In this short book I share this perspective in a little more detail. We look at who Jesus said he was, what he did, what he called us to. We try to see where Jesus fits into life, or where life fits into Jesus.

He claimed to be a door, a path, a bridge from death to life. Let's see can we catch a glimpse of this, and maybe even cross over...

Nothing Else Matters!

There are moments in life when everything comes down to only one thing. When I was a kid I lived on a ship for four years. Many a voyage I would stand at a railing and gaze out over the expanse of the surging ocean. My ears were full of the beating wind and breaking waves. No land in sight.

My life on this ship was much like my life here on land – days were consumed with school, play, food, drink, family, friends, challenging relationships, work, emotions, etc. I never actually thought of the ship itself possibly sinking.

However, a few years after we as a family had moved on from this ship, one dark night in bad weather, 1988, it hit rocks in the Beagle Channel between Argentina and Chile, tearing a hold in the side, water rushing in. The ship leaning over slowly, balancing dangerously on the rocks

it had struck.

The ship could not be saved, but not one member of the 150 people on board were lost.

Consider that moment of the ship hitting the rocks. Everyone on board, in the dead of the night, in stormy weather, suddenly realizing the ship was going to sink. In this moment, nothing else matters. Every hope and dream fades, every relationship around you becomes life or death, not friend or foe. No piece of jewelry, no photo, no social status matters in the slightest. No one is packing anything. No one is bragging about how much education they have. No one is pointing at the stars and talking about the universe and all their vast knowledge. No one is checking their retirement portfolio, or their ten-year plan. In this moment there is only a group of people that face death. And there is only question: *What must we do to be saved?*

In the case of this particular shipwreck, the people gathered in groups to pray that the ship would not dislodge from the rock it hit, and sink. It didn't. There was time for everyone to get off the ship and taken to shore.

The Narrative of Jesus

Jesus came into the world, into people's lives, in that space, that moment of history, where life itself had struck rock and was sinking. Jesus came to address critical matters of the soul, matters of forgiveness, healing, holiness and eternal life. Jesus claimed that his coming was God's last rescue effort for people.

'In the past God spoke to us through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.' (Hebrews 1:1-2)

There had been prophecies about this 'Savior' to come. But the people were thinking of this Savior in very worldly terms – a king or a political leader, to bring victory and prosperity here on earth. But the prophecies ran deeper. The prophecies were not about a Savior of just these few years we live on earth. But a Savior of the soul. A Savior to rescue us

from all the deep, dark, spiritual issues of life. A Savior to defeat death itself.

We often find ourselves debating about God, maybe even with God, about things that just are not important right now. The ship is sinking, and we are stressing about making beds in the cabins.

Look at what Jesus said to the people, and what he says now to you and me:

‘Jesus looked over the city and wept. He said, ‘Destruction is going to come on you, because you did not recognize me when I came to visit you.’ (Luke 19:41-44)

Jesus told another parable with this same warning. It is called the parable of the rich fool. As the man works and lives to get rich, to live comfortably, the parable ends with God saying to him: ***‘You fool. This night your life will be demanded of***

you.' (Luke 12:20)

There was an urgency about Jesus and his message. You see, Jesus is God in the flesh, and he came to save us. He came to talk primarily about our sin – that is, the wrong we have done, the wrong we continue to do, and that rebellious spirit deep within us that rejects God. Jesus came to rescue us from the very source of sorrow.

'His name will be Jesus, for he will save people from their sin.'
(Matthew 1:21)

Let's Talk About Sin

It's really important that we understand what sin is. Jesus – God in the flesh¹ – came to rescue us from sin.

'Jesus gave himself for our sins, to rescue us from the present evil age.' (Galatians 1:4)

'Sin' is our rebellion against God. It is that evil within us that wants to do what God does not want us to do. It is that evil within us that wants to have what we should not have, to take what we should not take, to look at what we should not look at.

Sin is a type of sickness of the soul, and the reason why we are mortal, why we die. You can read about this in the first three chapters of the Bible.

¹ John 1:1,14; Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:23

Sin affects you in two ways: First, it compels you to do things you later regret and are ashamed of.

Secondly, it compels others to do things against you that deeply scar you. Let's consider this a little more.

Sin You Do: We all have done things we are ashamed of. Maybe you have regrets that weigh heavy on your soul each day. Maybe you have hurt people, robbed people, in ways that have left you almost ashamed to live. *Jesus came to save you from this!*

Sins Against You: Maybe you have been touched by another's sin. Maybe you have been abused, wronged, robbed. Maybe you wake up remembering this pain, and wish you never woke up. *Jesus came to heal you from this!*

Let's Talk About Jesus

Some of us have pain – scars of sin – that make us wish we never existed. We feel that there is not even a type of ‘forgiveness’ – from God or man – that can take away that stain. Well, there is one power that can. Only one. It is the blood of Jesus.

Jesus is God in the form of man. He came not only to save us from our sin, but to pay the penalty of the sin. Jesus knows how deep and dark our sin is. From the beginning of time sins had to be paid for – in a symbolic way – with the sacrifice of an animal. In other words, something living had to die for our sin. Blood had to pay for sin. It is that serious.

But the sacrifices of animals for wrongdoing was only symbolic. How can the blood of an animal actually pay for the sin of a man? It can't. It can *symbolize* regret, however. And this is what God required for a time.

But then God made the ultimate sacrifice for sin. He himself *became* the sacrifice, the **'Lamb of God'**, and died a cruel death on the cross. The cross was an altar for our sin. Jesus was the sacrifice.

'All of our sin was laid on him.'
(Isaiah 53:6)

Our sin and shame was put on Christ, and he died with it. His blood spilled for it, and over it.

This is where Love and Justice meet.
This is where Love and Justice are complete.

Love and Justice

‘Remember your Creator before the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.’

(Ecclesiastes 12:7)

When the end of life comes into focus, the end of the road, only one thing will matter: connecting with God.

At this point, a point of urgency, two spiritual truths will surge in the heart and mind of a person: God’s love, and God’s justice. These are like the two missing links in the chain that connect us to heaven.

How can I get right with a holy God?
(Justice)

Will God save me?
(Love)

God’s love and justice is the valley we can’t cross on our own. It is the

valley that our sin cut between us and God. It is the valley where we stopped loving God and walked away.

When we cut that valley between us and God, when we walked from him, there was no way back. We had created a divide, an eternal separation of body and soul from the holy God. There was only one way for this divide to ever be crossed again, and that was if God crossed it. If God came after us. If God restored what we destroyed.

This is the place in history, the space in our soul, when Jesus came to us. He came to pay for the sin that cut the chasm between us and God. He came to restore love lost.

Jesus Christ satisfies God's justice by dying for our sin. Jesus fulfils God's love for us by crossing the valley and coming to find us, to forgive us.

'It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life... but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish.' (1 Peter 1:18-19)

New Life

Jesus remained dead and buried for two nights. All was quiet. Our sin had been put to death. But something happened that changed history, and changed our futures. Jesus not only put our sin to death, but he put *death* to death. He broke open for us a doorway to a new life, a new soul, and heaven itself.

‘Jesus Christ destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light!’ (2 Timothy 1:10)

You see, for some of us ‘forgiveness’ is not enough. We need to know that what we did, we never *actually* did. We need not a forgiven past, but a *new* past. We need not a healed spirit, but a new spirit. Or we just can’t go on. We need our past erased, that we never did those things, that they were never done to us. We need a miracle from God.

Look at this promise! Look at what

Jesus offers you, offers me today!

'I will give you a new heart and a new spirit!' (Ezekiel 36:26)

'Jesus became sin for us.'
(2 Corinthians 5:21)

'I will turn your red crimson stains whiter than wool, whiter than snow!' (Isaiah 1:18)

'Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come!'
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

After two days in the tomb, sin and death destroyed, Jesus rose from the dead. He came back to us, as one coming back from battle, and offered us the victory. Jesus now offers us a new life where our past sin and sorrow has been destroyed, and heaven is laid out before us.

Do you want this?

The Bridge

‘Jesus said, ‘Anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned. They have crossed over from death to life.’
(John 5:24)

If we want Jesus and the life he offers we need to meet Jesus on his terms. He came to us at that place, that space, where the ship of life is sinking, so to speak.

He came not to discuss whether God exists, whether we can get away with this or that and still be a ‘good’ person. He came not to address our hopes and dreams of wealth, of self, of safety and comfort. Rather he came to meet us in the dark of our night, where hopes and dreams fade, where nothing else is relevant except this pressing cry of the soul: *What must I do to be saved?*

Are you willing to meet Jesus in this

place? Do you want to receive from him the gift of forgiveness, the gift of healing, the gift of eternal life?

If you want to cross this bridge right now, here is a prayer you can whisper in faith. Read it aloud to Jesus now:

Dear Jesus, thank you for creating me. Thank you for coming to rescue me. I want to receive from you forgiveness of my sin that you paid for, that you offer me. I want to receive from you the healing of my pain and scars that have been done to me. I want to cross this bridge from death to life. I believe in you. Thank you. Amen.

Eternal Life

If you have believed in Jesus, and received him now into your life, you are saved. You are safe. Now and forevermore. You are a new creation.

In fact, you are now on a road to be given a new name. Your new and true name are up ahead, and will be given to you after you live out this new life as a follower of Jesus.¹

Jesus said: ***‘There is great rejoicing in heaven when one sinner repents and comes to God.’***
(Luke 15:7)

The angels rejoice over you now!
You are a child of God. Look carefully at these two Scriptures:

¹ See Revelation 2:17

‘Anyone who receives Jesus has become a child of God.’

(John 1:12)

‘You are God’s special possession. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.’ (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Like a newborn baby in a new life, you have to grow now. You are a ‘new creation’ and you are in a new world – a new spiritual world and reality.

I recommend a twenty-step booklet called, ***‘First Steps With Jesus’***. It is on the website:

www.1peter1three.weebly.com

You can read one entry a day for the next twenty days, and this will give you a good footing for your walk with Jesus. It will give you simple guidance on things like buying a Bible and how to read it, and how to

look for a good church, etc.

Your eternal life in God starts now. Jesus said that even when we die, we will live! (John 11:25-26) Jesus defeated death, defeated sin, and invited us to cross over in faith. And you have done just that!

Thank you for taking time to read this book!

If you are just starting your new life with Jesus, please read the book called, 'First Steps With Jesus', free on the website and the APP:

www.1peter1three.weebly.com



***'The Spirit himself testifies with
our spirit that we are God's
children.'***

(Romans 8:16)