

“That Thing That Jesus Did on the Cross”

(21st in our series, *Jesus Everywhere*)

Matthew 27:45-54, Colossians 1:3-23*

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**All scriptures are ESV unless otherwise noted.*

Sermon

Peter Hiett is really quite a coward. As a toddler, I used to bump down the stairs, afraid I'd fall. I remember my little sister defending me at the bus stop.

In Elementary School ... terrified of germs ... I developed something of a psychological disorder – washing my hands till they bled.

I was terrified of failure and being judged a failure.

Behind my house was a baseball diamond. And from my backyard I could hear coaches and parents yelling at kids for “striking out.” When I played baseball, at school, I almost always “struck out” – to strike out is to “miss the mark.” In Greek, there is a word for “miss the mark,” it's the word “Hamartia,” normally translated “sin.” Ironically, I was so afraid of “missing the mark,” I'd always “miss the mark.” I was so worried about myself, I couldn't keep my eye on the ball. I couldn't connect; I couldn't swing free – I couldn't play the game; I couldn't live – because of fear.

I think that's why I've always loved movies. For a few minutes, I could lose my frightened little self and then find myself in Davy Crockett, Superman, or Batman.

Early Friday morning, 24-year-old James Holmes stormed into the premiere of *Batman* in Aurora, gunned down 70 and killed 12. He stopped the movie. He tried to rewrite the story for his own glory. Some will blame the movies and try to shut them down (which ironically is what the gunman did).

December 9th, 2007 Matthew Murray shot up the YWAM base in Arvada and the New Life Church in Colorado Springs.

April 20, 1999 Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris shot up Columbine High School.

Should we shut down High Schools, churches and mission bases?

Well, I found courage at the movies. The movies always portrayed some evil; yet in the midst of the evil, a man of faith and courage would set people free. And for a few brief moments, I'd lose my life in him and imagine his life in me. But most of the time ... Fear – I was afraid of my own failure and my failure was fear – I was afraid of my fear and I was afraid of Evil that would inhabit my fear. I bet Eric Harris, Dylan Klebold, Matthew Murray and James Holmes missed the mark and struck out due to fear. The Fear turned to Rage and the Rage was absolutely drenched with Evil. Scripture teaches that Satan keeps us in “lifelong bondage through fear of death” which itself is like death itself.

Around 1987, I saw a demon cast out of a man at Hollywood Presbyterian Church and I knew it was real. I was terrified of the evil and even more the power that cast it out. I was terrified of God and especially terrified of my own lack of faith. And now this is where it really gets weird:

I'd been told that I'd be saved from my sin, the power of evil, and the wrath of God – in other words ... I'd be saved from my fears if I had faith. And what is Faith? - lack of Fear.

Calvinists and Armenians explained it a little differently. But either way, I was only saved from sin if I had faith ... and sin is a lack of faith – *“Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin,”* wrote Paul.

So I was saved from Fear, if I didn't have Fear. But if I had Fear, I was sentenced to endless torture imprisoned in my worst fears. And then they'd say *“So, just have Faith.”* ... And Holy Crap ... That's a lot of fear.

You know it's interesting to me – that I'd strike out at school, but I wouldn't strike out at home. I mean when I played baseball with my friends (friends that I trusted to love me), I wouldn't usually strike out. I'd keep my eye on the ball cause I wasn't worried about myself. I even began to love baseball.

You know when I'm afraid – I'm afraid for myself and I can't keep my eye on the ball. I can't see the person next to me – I can't hear the music. In a word, I can't love because I'm imprisoned in me. Now Scripture says *“Fear is the beginning of wisdom”* but then *“Perfect love cast out Fear”* – Perfect Love. So God gets our attention with Fear... And then He casts it out.

Well anyway, I was told by some, in so many words: I'd be saved if I had Faith in Jesus and *“that thing He did on the cross”* saying ... that if I understood the *“plan of Salvation”* – *“that thing Jesus did on the Cross”* and then trusted *“that thing He did on the Cross,”* I'd never have to go through *“that thing He did on the Cross.”* And then they'd explain *“that thing He did on the Cross”* as some substitutionary Penal Atonement they entirely understood which applied to me if I had faith that it applied to me. So *“that thing that Jesus did on the Cross”* was a test to see if I had faith in *“that thing that Jesus did on the Cross.”*

Well I'm just saying:

My greatest fear was that I didn't have Faith and Fear is a lack of Faith...

And I was told that Faith is my choice – my judgment. Last week I said *“Stop judging and trusting your judgment”* and look to God's Judgment ... which is, by the way, *“that thing that Jesus did on the Cross.”* So what was *“that thing that Jesus did on the Cross?”*

Matthew 27:45

⁴⁵Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ⁴⁷And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” ⁵⁰And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. ⁵¹And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

And that's called "Faith."

I still remember the day in Seminary when the professor introduced a section on "*Theories of the Atonement*." Atonement is "*that thing Jesus did on the Cross*." I was shocked to hear that there were in fact "*theories*" which meant we really didn't know everything about "*that thing that Jesus did on the Cross*" but just saved by Jesus when He did "*that thing on the Cross*." So maybe it's His faithfulness that saves me from my Faithlessness – my Fear.

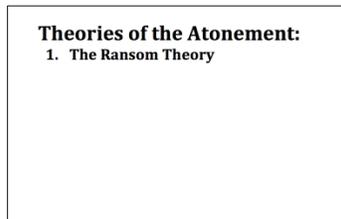
And even if I can't fully understand it, I can observe it and observe Him

Lose my Life in Him

And find His Life in me – find His faith in me.

Well anyway ... What was "*that thing that Jesus did on the Cross*?"

I remember one of the very first theories we learned about was from the 3rd century AD, Origen, the great Church Father articulated the common belief and titled it *The Ransom Theory of the Atonement*.



Jesus said, "*The Son of Man came to give His life as a ransom for many*." So Origen argued that Jesus was a ransom paid to Satan to deliver us from Hades. Kinda like this

Clip from movie *Hercules*

[Meg, the love of Hercules, has been thrown into The Underworld. She is dead, in the realm of Hades. Hercules approaches Hades.]

Hercules: *You like making deals. Take me in Meg's place.*

Hades: *Oh, well. The son of my hated rival trapped forever in a river of death.*

Hercules: *Going once!*

Hades: *Hmm. Is there as downside to this?*

Hercules: *Going twice!*

Hades: *Okay, okay, okay, okay. You get her out – she goes, you stay.*

[Hercules dives]

Hades: *Oh, you know what slipped my mind? You'll be dead before you can get to her. That's not a problem, is it?*

[Hercules swims, turning older and older. Atropos goes to cut the thread of life, but it suddenly shines, and the scissors don't cut it.]

Atropos: *Oh?*

Lachesis: *What's the matter with those scissors?*

Clotho: *The thread won't cut.*

[Shining, Hercules rises from the river of death with the soul of Meg.]

Hades: *This is – this is impossible! You, you, you can't be alive! You'd have to be a, a –*

Pain and Panic: *A god?*

Hades: Fine, okay, listen. Hah! Okay, well I deserved that ...

When Jesus died, Matthew records that the tombs were opened and saints came out. They came out of Hades – the Underworld – the Grave.

Well some struggle with the idea of God paying a ransom to Satan and they think God must pay the ransom to God. Whatever the case, God pays with His own blood ... and His blood is Life and Love. So if God pays Satan with Jesus, Satan hates the payment.

In 395 AD, Gregory of Nyssa said that, *“Christ’s Divinity was hidden under His humanity like a fishhook under bait,”* Satan *“like a ravenous fish gulped it down.”*

Satan gulped Jesus down –

gulped the Light into darkness;

gulped the Truth with lies;

gulped the Life into death;

gulped Faithfulness into Faithlessness; gulped Grace into the belly of the Accuser.

Like this

Clip from movie *Men in Black*

[K and J are battling a giant, dragon-like cockroach. The cockroach eats their guns and flings K and J backwards. They fall to the ground.]

J: *That did not go at all the way I planned.*

K: *Whatever happens, don’t let him get on the second ship.*

J: *What? What are you talkin’ about?*

K: *Keep him on this planet.*

J: *Okay.*

[K gets up and starts to move toward the giant cockroach.]

J: *K, where you goin’?*

K: *I’m gonna get my gun back.*

[K goes up to the cockroach and starts taunting him.]

K: *Hey, hey, bug, wait a minute. I’m talkin’ to you. Do you know how many of your kind I’ve swatted with a newspaper? You’re nothing but a smear on the Sports page. You’re nothin’ but a slimy, gut-sucking, intestinal parasite. Eat me. Eat me!*

[The giant cockroach eats K in one gulp.]

J: *K! K!*

[K is shown swimming through the inside of the cockroach. The cockroach then turns menacingly to J.]

J: *You need to ease up outa my face ‘for somethin’ bad happen to you.*

[J hears K’s gun.]

J: *Too late.*

[K shoots the giant cockroach from the inside. The cockroach is blown up, and K and J are blown to the ground, covered in slime.]

That's the *Ransom Theory* and "*Christus Victor*" theory of the Atonement which most historians argue was the most predominant theory for the first thousand years of church history.

Theories of the Atonement:

1. The Ransom Theory
2. "Christus Victor"

That God and Jesus conquer Satan and deliver us from Hell to Heaven as Moses and Joshua conquered the Egyptians and delivered the people from bondage to Freedom.

According to Scripture this world is under the dominion of Evil and doomed to death. Hades is the realm of the Dead. Hades begins now in our terrified hearts and continues under the Earth – what some call Hell.

Paul writes that "*Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth and lead a Host of Captives free.*"

Peter writes that "*Jesus descended to the Spirits in Prison, that refused to be saved in the days of Noah. And there He preached to the dead, that they might live.*"

Jesus descends into the Pit, full of Faith.

Remember Neo Anderson, meaning the "New Son of Man?" In the *Matrix* - the only one in the world with Faith? He descends into the Pit to battle the Smith (Isaiah 54:16) and free the world from a Matrix of Lies.

Clip from movie *The Matrix Revolution*

[Neo is shown strapped to the machine through which he enters the Matrix. In the Matrix, he is fighting Smith. They have descended into a pit in the rain. For some reason Neo stops fighting and allows Smith to lunge his fist into Neo's heart. From that point where Smith's arm has penetrated Neo's chest, a black ooze from Smith envelopes Neo and turns him into a "Smith." Smith has already infected the whole Matrix with himself. Thousands of "Smiths" stand watching.]

Smith: *Is it over?*

[Neo/Smith nods. The screen flashes between Neo's body strapped in the shape of a cross on the machine and Neo/Smith.]

[Neo/Smith twitches.]

[Neo's body and the machine begin to glow with a bright light. Neo's body arcs as if electricity is running through his body. Neo screams in agony, as the light grows more intense.]

[Light begins to break through from behind Neo/Smith's black glasses. Smith looks worried.]

Smith: *Oh, no, no. No, it's not fair.*

[Light bursts through Neo/Smith until he explodes. Smith sees the other Smiths standing behind where Neo/Smith just exploded. They all start to glow with light just as Neo/Smith did. Smith,

himself, begins to fill with light and then explodes. The whole Matrix is enveloped with light and transformed.]

[The final scene shows Neo lying limp on the machine. A voice says, "It is done."]

St. Paul wrote "He who knew no sin became sin that we might become the righteousness of God."

Jesus destroys the darkness by descending into it with Light and Fire.

Or maybe we could say

Jesus destroys the darkness by absorbing it into Himself and being cast into the Fire.

At the start of the 12th century, St. Anselm argued that the Atonement was not a ransom paid by God to Satan, but a debt paid to God on behalf of sinners. So Jesus absorbs our debt and pays it on our behalf – that's called *The Satisfaction Theory of the Atonement*.

Theories of the Atonement:

1. The Ransom Theory
2. "Christus Victor"
3. The Satisfaction Theory

Just last week we talked about the scapegoat and the sin offering and how Jesus is our goat. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would confess the sins of Israel over a goat which was then sent into the outer darkness (it's called the scapegoat). He would also sacrifice another goat to the fire – the Sin Offering. The priest would then take its blood behind the curtain (that separated the Holy of Holies from the People) and sprinkle it on the Mercy Seat – the Throne.

Scripture says that Jesus is our "Sin Offering" and "the lamb that takes away the sin of the world." He's enthroned on the Cross and when He dies, that curtain in the temple is rent from top to bottom, just as the Earth shakes and the Rocks are rent and the tombs are opened (same verb in both verses). So maybe Jesus breaks the Prison of Hades, even as He satisfies the Righteousness of God. Whatever the case ... He terminates Sin in Faith like this:

Clip from movie *Terminator II – Judgment Day*

[They have defeated all the other cyborgs.]

Sarah: *It's over.*

Terminator: *No. There is one more chip.*

[He touches a metal finger to the side of his head.]

Terminator: *And it must be destroyed also.*

[The Terminator hands the controls to Sarah.]

Terminator: *Here. I cannot self-terminate. You must lower me into the steel.*

John: *No, no!*

Terminator: I'm sorry, John.

John: No, no, no!! It'll be okay. Stay with us!

Terminator: I have to go away, John.

John: Don't do it. Please ... don't go –

[Then we see the Terminator being lowered into the molten steel. It is a lake of fire. He disappears ... the metal hand sinking last. At the last second it forms into a fist with the thumb extended ... a final “thumbs up.” Then it is gone.]

Yah – I'll be back – that's *Terminator II – Judgment Day*. I'd vote for him for Governor. You know “*the Government will be on Jesus' shoulders.*” Jesus said it – “*All judgment has been given to the Son.*”

So Jesus is the Lamb on the Throne; who issues Judgment and bears His own Judgment on our behalf.

- He destroys our sin with His Righteousness.
- He destroys our unfaithfulness with His Faithfulness.
- He bears our sin to destruction in the Eternal Fire that is God.

But the way Anselm put it, was a little strange. He said that Christ “satisfied” God's “offended honor” (as if we could take God's honor.) The Reformers (especially Calvin) tried to improve on that. They said that Christ “satisfied the penal demands of God's Justice.” It's called *The Penal Substitution Theory*.

Theories of the Atonement:

1. The Ransom Theory
2. “Christus Victor”
3. The Satisfaction Theory
4. Penal Substitution Theory

And many Protestants have been told it's the only one there is. Yet when it's the only one, it sometimes gets twisted as if God punished for punishment's sake rather than Love's sake. It's sometimes communicated as if God's Justice was the opposite of God's Love.

As if God were 2 and not 1.

As if God the Father had to hate us and could not love us until He tortured and killed God the Son to feel better about us ...

And so, the Cross was really a revelation of “Not Love” (defined as Justice) when, according to Scripture, “*In this is Love.*” The Cross is the revelation of perfect Love and God is not 2 but 1 and

God does not change. God's Justice is Love – God is Love.

So the Cross isn't what God needs in order to love us; the Cross is what we need in order to love God. Likewise, the Cross isn't a test to see if we have faith; the Cross is a test so that we would have faith. It's a test that Jesus passes on our behalf.

So Jesus does what we could not do – fulfills all Justice in Love and He is a substitute. But that doesn't mean that Jesus was crucified so that we wouldn't be crucified ...

Or that He sacrificed so we would never sacrifice

Or that He loved – so we would have to Love
He said “Pick up your cross,” “present yourselves a living sacrifice,” and “love as I have loved you.” He passes the test for us but also in us and with us.

We die with him and rise with Him. Like we said last time, He is the goat that bears our sin. But He is also the sheep that is our righteousness.

He is our sacrifice for sin and He is our fragrant offering.

He bears our unfaithfulness and He gives us the Faithfulness.

With our unfaithfulness we took God’s Life, who is Jesus and that’s called sin. But in Faithfulness God gave His Life – who is Jesus and that’s Grace. So Jesus destroys our sin and gives us His Righteousness with a revelation of Grace.

Clip from movie *Gran Torino*

[Walt (Clint Eastwood) is standing outside the home of the “young punks” in the dark putting a cigarette in his mouth. Neighbors are looking out of their homes.]

Walt: *Gotta light? Now me, I’ve got light.*

[Walt sticks in hand in his jacket while he begins to recite the Rosary.]

Walt: *Hail Mary, full of grace.*

[Walt pulls his hand out of his jacket quickly as the “punks” begin to shoot him in the chest. He falls to the ground on his back, and his hand opens to reveal a lighter.]

Remember that scene in *Gran Torino*? That’s Walt. They take Walt’s life but it turns out, he gave his life – he forgave his life. And that’s a revelation of Grace that consumes the evil in town and liberates the Good. See? Jesus is the Revelation of Love ... and God is Love ... and we are being made in the “Image of Love.” Adam is to be “made in the image of God,” “male and female in the image of God.”

In the 2nd century Irenaeus proposed the *Recapitulation Theory*.

Theories of the Atonement:

1. The Ransom Theory
2. “Christus Victor”
3. The Satisfaction Theory
4. Penal Substitution Theory
5. The Recapitulation Theory

It’s the idea that Christ went through all the stages of Adam’s life, yet without sin – he “recapitulated” it. That’s interesting for in Matthew 25:45 there is “darkness over the face of the land” (like in Genesis 1). And there is a tree - a tree of Law – a Cross; (a tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil – that also becomes a Tree of Life. And there is Adam – the “Eschatos Adam” and He’s nailed to that tree. Scripture says He is the “Perfect Image of the Invisible God.”

On the 6th Day God said, “Let us make man in our image.” And this is a Friday – the 6th Day of the 6th Hour and He hangs in front of His Bride: Jerusalem.

We are his Bride, Jerusalem.
We took His Life and yet He gave His Life.
He's nailed to the Tree and He doesn't know why. Yet He remains Faithful.

He's the Perfect Adam (unlike the 1st Adam and the rest of us Adams). On that tree, He draws;
He romances all People to Himself.
We are His Bide.

Jesus reminds me of faithful Westley in the *Princess Bride*; faithful Westley who descends into the pit of despair for the love of his unfaithful bride, Buttercup.

Clip from movie *Princess Bride*

[The evil Prince Humperdinck has captured Westley. Westley is deep in the ground in a chamber called "The Pit of Despair" where the evil prince has placed him on "The Machine." The Machine is designed for torture. It has not been used yet past the second level of torture.]

Prince Humperdinck [in a rage]: You truly love each other, and so you might have been truly happy. Not one couple in a century has that chance, no matter what the storybooks say. And so I think no man in a century will suffer as greatly as you will.

[And with that he whirls, turns on The Machine, grabs the lever and -]

Count Rugen: [the Prince's evil accomplice]: *Not to fifty!!!*

[Prince Humperdinck shoves the lever all the way up to 50, the highest level. Westley screams in agony. His scream is so loud and agonizing it is heard in the forest and in the streets where the crowd stops and listens. It's heard in the castle. Buttercup hears it as she prepares to marry Humperdinck. The scream reaches the marketplace where Westley's friends, Inigo and Fezzik, stop and listen.]

Inigo: *Fezzik, Fezzik, listen, do you hear? That is the sound of ultimate suffering. My heart made that sound when Rugen slaughtered my father. The man in Black makes it now.*

Inigo: *His true love is marrying another tonight, so who else has cause for Ultimate Suffering?*

"Now from the 6th hour to the 9th hour, there was darkness over the face of the land. Then Jesus cried, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?'" Some think God forsook Him. I'm not convinced of that, but I know Jesus felt forsaken for He had entered our Hell ... and was speaking our Fear.

Isaiah reveals that we are God's Bride and we are trapped in a "covenant with death and Hell." We don't know we're dead – but we are. Jesus helps us confess our deepest fear – *"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"* On Friday, I bet they felt that fear in Aurora. Maybe you did too.

In *What Dreams May Come*, Robin Williams plays a man named Christy who dies and goes to Heaven. But an angel tells him his wife is trapped in Hell. She's blaming herself for her children's death and her husband's death and her own death - she had committed suicide. The angel says, *"Hell is for those who don't know they're dead."* They think Life is death. She's trapped in her own fear, unable to recognize another soul; unable to perceive Love or Life.

Christy obtains a Guide and finds his bride in Hell. But she won't remember him ... and so he makes a decision ... and comes out to inform the guide.

Clip from movie *What Dreams May Come*

Guide: *Nothing you could do could ever help her. This trip was always just for you. Did you come close?*

Christy: *To losing it? Oh, yeah. I had pushed her right to the edge. That's why I had to come out now. So, yeah... I'm giving up... Just not the way you think... Go home, Al. Please tell my children I love them, and I won't leave their mother. Thanks.*

[Christy re-enters his wife's chamber in Hell and closes the door.]

[Next scene: Christy kneels at the feet of his bride, talking to her. She looks very scared and confused. It's obvious she does not recognize him.]

Christy: *Where are you headed, babe? In one minute, I won't know you any better than you'll know me. But we'll be together... where we belong. Good people end up in Hell because they can't forgive themselves. I know I can't, but I can forgive you.*

Bride (Annie): *For killing my children? And my sweet husband?*

Christy: *For being so wonderful, a guy would choose Hell over Heaven, just to hang around you.*

Christ-y's presence is like the kiss of the Prince in *Sleeping Beauty*. It wakes her from the Sleep of Death. Because Christ-y chooses to be with her, she begins to remember Love and Life. He helps her confess. He helps her repent. They rise together to Heaven: the Prince and his Sleeping Beauty.

Do you remember Sleeping Beauty's name? Princess _____. Well, anyway... That's the *Theory of Vicarious Repentance*.

Theories of the Atonement:

1. The Ransom Theory
2. "Christus Victor"
3. The Satisfaction Theory
4. Penal Substitution Theory
5. The Recapitulation Theory
6. Theory of Vicarious Repentance

Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" If you were here at Easter, you learned that that line is the first line of Psalm 22, written by King David 1,000 years before Christ. It begins with that line of despair and goes on to describe crucifixion and then proclaim, "God has not turned away." It ends with these incredible lines: "Before Him shall bow all who go down to the dust..." "He has done it" ... "It is finished."

So just think: David sang the words in some pit of despair in 1,000 B.C. But in truth, Christ was singing the Word in David as David was being transformed into the image of the Eschatos Adam.

In the 12th century, Peter Abelard formulated the *Moral Influence Theory of the Atonement*.

Theories of the Atonement:

1. The Ransom Theory
2. "Christus Victor"
3. The Satisfaction Theory
4. Penal Substitution Theory
5. The Recapitulation Theory
6. Theory of Vicarious Repentance
7. The Moral Example Theory

That Christ's death was an example to produce Faith and Mercy in us. Many view that as "Liberal" – only ideas and lacking in substance. Yet Faith is the "substance of things hoped for" and God is Mercy... And Jesus is a seed... And Faith and Mercy are the Harvest of the Earth... And Jesus is the Logos; the idea of God; the Word of God. Could anything ever be more substantive than the Logos of God? The Cross is where the Logos of God (literally the Brave Heart of God) is ripped open, revealed, and planted in faithless hearts like me.

Clip from movie *Braveheart*

[William Wallace has been captured by the British and is tortured by the Magistrate on a device shaped like a cross. There is a large crowd watching the execution. The Magistrate and the crowd are goading Wallace to beg for mercy.]

Magistrate: *The prisoner wishes to say a word.*

Wallace [struggling to speak, gathers all of his remaining strength to say:] **FREEDOM!!!!**

William Wallace is tortured and dies on a cross for all of Scotland to see. Then you hear his voice, *"In the Year of our Lord 1314, the Patriots of Scotland, starving and outnumbered, charged the Fields of Bannockburn; they fought like warrior poets; they fought like Scotsmen and won their freedom."*

Matthew 27:50, *"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit."*

- That's the same Spirit that cries out *"Abba Father"* in us, with us.
- That's the Spirit of Faith; Christ's Faith.

Remember what Jesus said – *"I must go and where I am going, you cannot come now?"* He is the Savior and we are not the Savior.

So He says, *"Where I am going you cannot come – now (no following now), but I will send another helper."* That helper is His Spirit – that helps us Love, as He loved us; that is "shed" abroad in our hearts like this

Clip from *Iron Giant*

Giant: *Hogarth, you stay; I go. No following.*

Hogarth: *I love you.*

[The Giant blasts off into outer space toward a rocket that is going to destroy the Earth.]

The Giant hears Hogarth's voice in his mind: *You are who you choose to be.*

Giant: *Superman*

[The Giant intercepts the nuclear warhead and both explode.]

Remember that? The whole world was terrified of the Iron Giant, the whole world was trying to “nuke” the Iron Giant and in the process, they were destroying themselves. But the Iron Giant chose to die for Hogarth and the whole world. He freely chose Love; and that’s called Faith. He chose to be Superman, Super Adam – Eschatos Adam – Ultimate Adam.

“As in Adam all die – so also in Christ shall all be made alive,” wrote Paul. “The first Adam became a living being; the last Adam (Eschatos Adam) became a life-giving spirit.”

The body of the Eschatos Adam (the Superman) reigns down all over the Earth. Hogarth gets a piece of the body, a bolt, and places it in a box in his room. Today you’ll take a piece of the Body and place it in your gut. The body of the Iron Giant doesn’t stay dead and the Body of Jesus doesn’t stay dead.

At the end of the *Iron Giant*, the broken body of the Giant comes to life.

Clip from *Iron Giant 2*

[Hogarth is laying in the dark in his bed and suddenly his eyes open. He opens up the box where he had placed the Giant’s bolt and the box is empty. Hogarth looks under the bed. A light begins flashing (from the bolt) outside Hogarth’s window and Hogarth smiles. He opens the window and the bolt falls to the ground and begins to move away from the house.]

Hogarth: See you later.

[The bolt continues to move “toward” something and soon other “parts” of the Giant are seen and all are moving toward a light and beeping sound. The next scene is the Giant’s head with a light and antenna on the top of his head. Suddenly his eyes open.]

That’s *The Mystical Theory of the Atonement* and the *Federal Headship Theory of the Atonement*.

Theories of the Atonement:

1. The Ransom Theory
2. “Christus Victor”
3. The Satisfaction Theory
4. Penal Substitution Theory
5. The Recapitulation Theory
6. Theory of Vicarious Repentance
7. The Moral Example Theory
8. The Mystical Theory
9. The Federal Headship Theory

We ingest His Body and become His Body and His Body rises and comes together in Harmony with the Head. So what is “that thing that Jesus did on the Cross?” Listen to the Apostle Paul:

[God] ¹³He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead [Firstborn of Creation and firstborn from the dead. See? We’re not even created until we die with Him and rise with Him and He finishes us in the image of God.] *that in everything he might be preeminent.* ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him

to reconcile to himself and all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
Colossians 1:13-20

At the Cross God reconciles “all things to Himself.” So a Theory of the Atonement, is a theory of everything that’s anything.

- It’s the Word of God creating everything.
- It’s the meaning of all things.
- It’s the plot to every story.

It is THE PERFECT LOVE OF GOD, the decision of God, the Judgment of God.

We must proclaim it but,

We can’t control it, market it, and make threats with it.

We can’t comprehend it.

But we can know it or be known by it –

We can know Him because His name is Jesus – He casts out Fear

And He finishes us, with Faith.

Jesus didn’t die on the Cross to see if I had Faith; Jesus died on the Cross so I would have Faith.

Salvation is Faith (No one is saved apart from Faith).

But it’s not really my Faith – it’s Christ’s Faith in me.

My faith is a Gift – the Gift of God in me.

I receive it as I look at the throne ... And ironically, I often look to the throne when I am most assaulted by fear. See? Faith grows in this world of Fear. Fear is temporal but Faith is eternal.

So every week – it’s like we come to a theater and we listen to the story behind all stories. (You can’t tell any story without telling the Story) ... The Story of Love, Life, Truth and Grace. We tell the story and we look to the throne. And He changes us. He even becomes us – He lives His life in us – His Body.

On Friday (the 6th day) around 12:15 in the morning, Evil entered the theater in Aurora and tried to rewrite the Story. But what Satan intends for evil – God intends for good. So wherever Satan writes a story of sin and death; God in Christ has already written a story of Grace and Resurrection and that’s The Story. You’ll even hear it in coming days: stories of people coming together, stories of Faith, Hope and Love.

Like the boy who died to save his girlfriend.

Like the man who proposed to his bride in the Emergency Room.

The stories (like the faith) may only be the size of a seed ... But they’ll grow and fill the whole Earth ...

Jesus died in Aurora and Jesus will rise in Aurora.

Aurora is our Lord’s Sleeping Beauty ... Princess Aurora.

Jesus dies with us and rises in us as Faith, Hope, Love, and Life.

Several years ago, late one night in my office, I stood over a friend holding a Communion cup filled with wine. I know this is hard to believe and you don’t have to believe it, but I believe...

Satan was manifesting in the body of this friend (a Sleeping Beauty). He had gained access through a world of fear; but Jesus had been revealed in the midst of the fear and Jesus had revealed the truth in all the lies. I knew Satan had to go. I had bound him, in the name of Jesus, to only speak the truth. I remember I put Communion wine on his head and I was angry ... not

thinking about myself but about Jesus. I screamed, *“Jesus wins, doesn’t He?”* And in the most agonized voice that I’ve ever heard, as he left, I heard Satan moan *“Jesus always wins.”*

Does Jesus always win?

“At the Cross, God reconciles all things to himself; making peace by the blood of the Cross.”

Even when He loses – He wins.

Everything: That’s *“the thing that Jesus did on the Cross.”* But that’s not my favorite thing that Jesus did on the Cross. My favorite thing that Jesus did on the Cross was that He gave little Peter, the coward, some faith ...

I stood over Satan and told him to leave and he did. That was Faith ... but it wasn’t really my Faith, or maybe I should say my Faith was the life of Christ in me.

Well, I still I have lots of Fear and so I still need more Faith.

And so I keep coming to the theater ...

And I keep telling the Story.

Communion

So on the night He was betrayed; on the night that He was surrounded with the most frightening of circumstances – He took bread and He broke it saying, *“This is My body given to you; take and eat. Put it in your gut. Do it in remembrance of me.”* And in the same manner, after supper, He took the cup and He said, *“This cup is the New Covenant; the Eternal Covenant and My blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink it. Let it be the blood in your veins. Eat and drink.”*

And so we invite you to come forward, tear off a piece of the bread and dip it in the cup and place it in your gut and worship. Let’s worship. That’s really everything I’m saying ... It’s really, even now, the only thing I’m supposed to say and that is *Worship*. In other words, lose your life in Him and you will find His Life in you. It’s a commandment. Believe the Gospel. Amen.

Benediction and Prayer

And so in Jesus’ name, believe. Now I said that before and I wasn’t planning on it, but believe the Gospel – it’s a commandment. And you see that can kind of create a crisis in us, right ... because there is an *“if.”* Because if you don’t, well then you aren’t saved; you can’t be saved unless you do. The *“if”* creates a crisis; it makes us ask a question, but you see this is the Gospel – the *“if”* belongs to God; the *“if”* belongs to Jesus.

Jesus passes the test, He gives His victory to you, that victory is called Faith, and so this used to confuse me when I’d preach through Scripture ... That Jesus would always just say, *“Believe”* like a commandment until I realized that, my goodness, that’s the Word of God. The same one that spoke the stars into existence and when He said *“Exist”* they existed. And when He said *“Let us make man in our own image and likeness,”* you see, I think He’s still saying that. And so when He says *“Believe,”* well I believe it will happen because He’s the one that’s saying it. And this (touches the Communion table) – that *“thing that Jesus did on the Cross”* – that’s how it happens and it’s happening right now ... in this world of fear. Believe the Gospel.

Soon the broken ground in this world of dirt and shame and fear – it will pass away. And the Faith ... the Faith is eternal; it fills all things and makes them new.

In Jesus' name, because you believe, right now, you are free. That's good news. Believe the Gospel. Amen

Disclaimer: The author has not edited this document. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio or video version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.