

Show slide #1 : God’s other work.

INTRODUCTION

If I were ask you to think about some of the greatest works ever completed by humans, we’d have a lot to think about. In engineering, the Great Wall of China would be the longest project, taking over 2000 years to complete. Other projects like the Panama canal or the Erie canal might come to mind too, certainly the great pyramids of Giza. There is also the transcontinental railroad completed in 1869 joining the right and left coasts of the U.S. Or maybe you’d think of the “Ultimate I-4 project” and you might also wonder if it is going to take 2000 years to complete! That project actually did come up on my list as the 14<sup>th</sup> most expensive road projects in the U.S. at \$2.3 Billion.

If you thought about the arts, maybe the painting on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel by Michelangelo. Or perhaps the music of Beethoven or Mozart, or even Justin Bieber.

Then we could think about the great cathedrals or more modern accomplishments like the Apollo program that got us to the moon or Space shuttle or the internet. We could think of discoveries in physics like radioactivity discovered by Madam Currie or the principles of electricity by Tesla and Edison or the world of relativity and quantum physics by Einstein. We might think of the medical sciences with immunizations or antibiotics or the project to map the human genome.

So, mankind has had some really amazing accomplishments...

But’s let’s turn our minds to God’s works now...

Genesis 1:1–10 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Then of course the Lord created the seas, and the land and the plants and animals and men and women. And on the seventh day, God rested from all his work. And so begins the story of creation. If we consider the creation, we see that our works, though amazing, are nothing in comparison; even if we can blow up the whole earth with nuclear bombs.

We see also that the Holy Spirit was there, hovering over the face of the deep – we cannot really comprehend what that means. The Book of John, shows us that Jesus was there at creation too.

John 1:1–5 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> **All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.** <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Colossians 1:15–17 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> **For 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.** <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

We see that creation was through Jesus and also for him. Jesus is the beginning and the end purpose, he is the Alpha and Omega. As always, all three persons of the Trinity are involved in the all the works of God.

**What we want to look at today is God’s other work; and what is that? It is the redemption of mankind.**

It seems that after God had a day or two off from creation, that Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, and God immediately began to enact his next work, in saving mankind from their sin and the consequent alienation from him.

Genesis 3:15 (ESV) [**God is judging the serpent that personified Satan**]

<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

And though it is veiled, that is prophecy of Jesus bruising the head of Satan while his own heel (his flesh) would be wounded.

From the earliest moments, God had already begun his next work of saving humans from their sin.

#### THE GOAL

**Our goal** this morning, as we read the account of Jesus’ death and resurrection from the book of Matthew, will be to clearly see that all the events “mark” the completion of God’s work, through Jesus, to bring forgiveness and a new relationship with God to everyone who believes.

God completed his second major work on Easter morning, nineteen hundred and ninety years ago. As in creation, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have worked together to bring it to pass.

OUR CONDITION

**We need to understand that God is working on our behalf to bring about our salvation. He did not even spare his own son in the process.**

PROPOSITION

**God had a plan.**

Ephesians 1:8b–10 (ESV)

... in all wisdom and insight<sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ<sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

God had a plan - and like any job that a person goes about doing, they need to have a job description. I have written a few lately – people need to know what is expected; what success will look like.

Can you imagine the council that the persons of the Trinity engaged in, since before the foundation of the world, to redeem humankind?

Here is Jesus’ job description in short...

**Show Slide #2**

Jesus’s job description:

- Obey God completely; [check]
- Live a perfect life; [check]
- Die on the cross; (in shame and rejection) [check]
- Rise from the dead in victory over death. [check]

Oh yeah, in the end, you will finally be honored:

- Be glorified as King of the Universe,
- Receive all praise and thanksgiving from the multitudes that are saved.
- Rule over a New Heaven and New Earth.

Now, let’s read about the events of Jesus last day alive as a normal human on the earth.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

*Matthew 26:36–46 (ESV) [after the last supper]*

<sup>36</sup>*Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.”*

<sup>39</sup>*And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”*

<sup>40</sup>*And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping.*

<sup>42</sup>*Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”* <sup>43</sup>*And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.* <sup>44</sup>*So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.*

Just like in his temptation with Satan, Jesus appears to have been strongly tested. No one can imagine the intensity of that temptation to take another path. But Jesus has to **obey God completely – and he did.**

We will see over and over, that Jesus had to do the work that only he could do. He had to be alone in it, men were not strong enough to be with him, they fell asleep here in the garden.

Jesus asked the cup be taken away, but Jesus had to drink the cup of God’s wrath for our sin. Our sins were in that cup and Jesus asked three times for there to be another way, but there was not. He obeyed God and found the strength in him to do what he had to do.

Jesus was determined to do the will of the Father – to please him and accomplish his mission! Verse 26:45

*<sup>45</sup>Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

*<sup>46</sup>Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”*

*<sup>47</sup>While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.*

*<sup>48</sup>Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” <sup>49</sup>And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. <sup>50</sup>Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.*

At that point Peter tried to be courageous and took out his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and only cut off his ear.

*<sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. <sup>53</sup> Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”*

We see that it was completely in his power not to go to the cross. He could have called on twelve legions, or 72,000 angels, to deliver him if he wanted. But he did the will of the Father - **Jesus was no victim of circumstances.** Verse 57,

<sup>57</sup> *Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered*

<sup>59</sup> *Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death,* <sup>60</sup> *but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward* <sup>61</sup> *and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’ ”* <sup>62</sup> *And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?”* <sup>63</sup> *But Jesus remained silent.*

Just like the Passover lamb was required by God to be perfect and spotless, Jesus was examined and found to be perfect – much to their dismay. The High Priest could see his case unravelling. He had to do something... Caiaphas could see the charges were “not sticking” they seemed false and weightless,

Verse 63,

<sup>63</sup> *And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”* <sup>64</sup> *Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”*

The priest knew at that point that Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God, the Messiah and ... verse 26:65

<sup>65</sup> *Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy.”* <sup>66</sup> *What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.”* <sup>67</sup> *Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him,* <sup>68</sup> *saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”*

The words of Jesus were seen as blasphemy to the High Priests and other ruling Jews, because they did not believe Jesus. But the words were true. They could not make any charges stick.

What if someone could secretly observe you for a single day. Do you think that they would find anything, even a small sin to accuse you of? **But Jesus had to live a perfect life.** It was required that he be sinless, or else he could not be a perfect spotless sacrifice, and he could not be a substitution for you and me.

On the celebration of the Passover, the Jews were to take a spotless lamb to be a sacrifice – Jesus was the last and final, perfect “Lamb of God”.

<sup>69</sup> *Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.”* <sup>70</sup> *But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.”*

<sup>74</sup> *Then [Peter] ~~he~~ began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed.* <sup>75</sup> *And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.*

We know from the story the Peter denied Jesus two more times. I think that this part of the story is in the Bible for several reasons, but one of them is to show that no one could stand with Jesus. He is the only one that had the strength to endure in this drama of Hell against Heaven. No man was able to stand with Jesus in his trial – the spiritual forces were just too great. Jesus has to do what only he could do – alone.

*Matthew 27*

<sup>1</sup> *When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.* <sup>2</sup> *And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.*



The Jewish court did not have the power of being able to execute people, so they had to involve the Roman authorities.

Verse 27:15,

<sup>15</sup> Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. <sup>16</sup> And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. <sup>17</sup> So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” <sup>18</sup> For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. <sup>19</sup> Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.” <sup>20</sup> Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. <sup>21</sup> The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” <sup>22</sup> Pilate said to them, **[surprised]** “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Let him be crucified!” <sup>23</sup> And he said, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!” <sup>24</sup> So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” <sup>25</sup> And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” <sup>26</sup> Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Scourging was a terrible punishment. It involved a whip with multiple tails and on those tails, were pieces of metal and barbs to tear the flesh as they whipped the prisoner. Some died just at this stage.

Matthew 27:32–37 (ESV)

<sup>32</sup> As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. <sup>33</sup> And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), <sup>34</sup> they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.

The wine and gall was offered in mercy to dull the pain – probably an opiate – but Jesus refused.

<sup>35</sup> *And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.* <sup>36</sup> *Then they sat down and kept watch over him there.* <sup>37</sup> *And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”*

**Jesus’ job description was to die on the cross.** It was necessary and it was God’s will.

One of the most famous verses in the Bible, John 3:16 clearly shows this,

John 3:16–17 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

God sent his son on a mission to complete the work of redemption; to save people from condemnation. God does not want to condemn so it was necessary to send Jesus. **And his job was to die on the cross.**

Matthew 27:45–51 (ESV)

<sup>45</sup> *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.*

<sup>46</sup> *And 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?” [quoting the prophesy from Psalm 22]* <sup>47</sup> *And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.”* <sup>48</sup> *And 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.* <sup>49</sup> *But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.”*

<sup>50</sup> *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.* <sup>51</sup> *And*

*behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.*

The temple curtain that separated the most holy part of the temple from any intrusion, by anyone other than the high Priest on the day of atonement, was ripped in two. Jesus’ death meant that we are no longer separated from God by our sin. We can enter that Holy place, into God’s very presence with confidence and no barriers! Praise God. Thank you Jesus!

*Matthew 27:57–61 (ESV)*

*<sup>57</sup> When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. <sup>59</sup> And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud <sup>60</sup> and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. <sup>61</sup> Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.*

*Matthew 28:1–7 (ESV)*

*<sup>1</sup> Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup> And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”*

And finally, Jesus has one more thing to do: **Rise from the dead in victory over death.**

He appeared to his disciples on multiple occasions and even appeared to more than 500 hundred people that could testify to having seen him alive.

His resurrection was brought about by God the Father and the Spirit and even Jesus himself: Jesus said, “I have the power to lay down my life and I have the power to take it up again.” Jesus completely accomplished the job description that God had given him – and he had to do it alone.

#### CONCLUSION

How do we possibly understand all that there is about Jesus and his work and mission in life and his death and resurrection. We could spend all day here and not scratch the surface; though we are going to end soon.

There are a few things that we should not think about Jesus and his mission:

We should not feel sorry for Jesus. The accounts of suffering are not for the purpose, but rather to see what great extent God and Jesus were willing to go to save you!

God wants you to turn to him and not away from him. He wants you to turn to Jesus in faith and thanksgiving.

We should not have excessive sorrow for our sins. Yes, we need to be sorry for our sin, but not the extent that we would wish to harm ourselves or try to bear the penalty of those sins. That is not God’s will. His will is that would turn to Christ and be forgiven!

**I want to lead us in prayer right now.** This prayer is a way to say to God that you are turning from yourself and turning to him.

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I want to conclude with this quote from John Ryle, and Anglican Bishop. He wrote and preached these words that are a great summary of Jesus life and mission.

*Was He scourged? It was that “through His stripes we might be healed.”*

*Was He condemned, though innocent? It was that we might be acquitted though guilty.*

*Did He wear a crown of thorns? It was that we might wear the crown of glory.*

*Was He stripped of His clothing? It was that we might be clothed in everlasting righteousness.*

*Was He mocked and reviled? It was that we might be honored and blessed.*

*Was He reckoned a malefactor, and numbered among transgressors? It was that we might be reckoned innocent, and justified from all sin.*

*Was He declared unable to save Himself? It was that He might be able to save others to the uttermost.*

*Did He die at last, and that the most painful and disgraceful of deaths? It was that we might live for evermore, and be exalted to the highest glory.*

Great summary. Jesus was not a victim of circumstance, he and God were completely in control and all things went according to plan, to accomplish their work of saving sinners like us. It was accomplished on Easter morning.

Please pray with me.