

The Great Exchange  
John 19:17-30/#gospelofjohn

Every great love story has an “exchange” in it. It may involve some specific sacrifice or it might involve the main character dramatically and lovingly sacrificing himself or herself for the sake of another. This story is repeated over and over throughout cinema and literature. An exchange occurs when we love.

Up until now in the Gospel of John, Jesus has been exchanging and freeing individually trapped people. Jesus frees the adulterous Samaritan woman, the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, the man born blind, Lazarus and many others. But Paul Miller says, “In the grand scheme of things, it’s a drop in the bucket and there are billions of buckets and every single bucket is leaking.”



Evil and sin aren’t just out there somewhere. The problem isn’t other people; the problem is us. We feel superior and have doctorates in shifting blame, but we are all guilty in our trespasses and sins. Sin is so embedded in us and cannot be eradicated without an unbelievable cost and exchange.

Isaiah says, “But He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (53:5-6).

The payment for everything that we have done wrong was compressed into a few hours of agony on the cross. On the cross, Jesus took what we deserve. He took our sin; we received His righteousness. The balance of power shifted forever at the cross. An exchange occurs when we are loved, and there is no greater exchange than what happened 2000 years ago.

(The picture to the left is the Crucifixion, Francisco du Zurbaran, 1627, Spain)

**There is no greater exchange than Jesus on the cross for us.**

<sup>16</sup> Then Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, <sup>17</sup> and carrying his own cross he went out to the place called "The Place of the Skull" (called in Aramaic Golgotha). <sup>18</sup> There they crucified him along with two others, one on each side, with Jesus in the middle. <sup>19</sup> Pilate also had a notice written and fastened to the cross, which read: "Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews." <sup>20</sup> Thus many of the Jewish residents of Jerusalem read this notice, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the notice was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. <sup>21</sup> Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The king of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am king of the Jews.'" <sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." <sup>23</sup> Now when the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and made four shares, one for each soldier, and the tunic remained. (Now the tunic was seamless, woven from top to bottom as a single piece.) <sup>24</sup> So the soldiers said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but throw dice to see who will get it." This took place to fulfill the scripture that says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they threw dice." So the soldiers did these things. (John 19:16-24)

Sometimes condemned Roman prisoners would carry notices around their necks to the place of execution and at times they were fastened to the cross like with Jesus. The Jews had applied a great deal of pressure on Pilate, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar!" (John 19:12). In light of the Jewish coercion, Pilate was ok frustrating the Jewish leaders with the title that was fastened to His cross. Maybe Pilate was thinking, "This is what I've done and this is the sort of king that you crazy people deserve."

"Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews" was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. In Jesus' world, Aramaic was the local language, Greek the universal/trade language and Latin was the official language of the Roman Empire. John is making the same point that he has been making from the beginning of the Gospel. "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...He is the Savior of the world...He is the light of the world...and when He is lifted up from the earth, he will draw all people to himself" (1:29, 4:42,

8:12, 12:32). Not only is Jesus Messiah of Israel, but as Isaiah says, He is a "*covenant mediator for people, and a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to release prisoners from dungeons...*" (Isa 42:6-7)

John quotes Psalm 22 that David wrote. David is describing something that has not happened to him personally - it prophesies of an execution, specifically an execution on a cross. David was not crucified on a cross, but his descendant, the Savior of the world, will be and that is what David prophesies 1000 years before Christ (cf. Acts 2:30f).

They open their mouths to devour me like a roaring lion that rips its prey. <sup>14</sup> My strength drains away like water; all my bones are dislocated; my heart is like wax; it melts away inside me. <sup>15</sup> The roof of my mouth is as dry as a piece of pottery; my tongue sticks to my gums. You set me in the dust of death. <sup>16</sup> Yes, wild dogs surround me—a gang of evil men crowd around me; like a lion they pin my hands and feet. (Psalm 22:13-16)

As the Psalm continues its awful description of suffering, one of the many horrors it describes is the moment when the sufferer is not only stripped naked by the suffers, but also seeing people gambling for his clothes. Normally a Jew in Palestine wore a tunic next to the skin and an outer garment, something like a robe. It was the robe that was divided, and the tunic John points out was a seamless, single piece. Exodus 28:8 describes the seamless, single piece tunic of none other than the High Priest of Israel. The same high priests who had an engraving on a plate of pure gold that said "holiness to the Lord" (Ex. 28:36).

<sup>25</sup> Now standing beside Jesus' cross were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> So when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, look, here is your son!" <sup>27</sup> He then said to his disciple, "Look, here is your mother!" From that very time the disciple took her into his own home. <sup>28</sup> After this Jesus, realizing that by this time everything was completed, said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty!" <sup>29</sup> A jar full of sour wine was there, so they put a sponge soaked in sour wine on a branch of hyssop and lifted it to his mouth. <sup>30</sup> When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said, "It is completed!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:25-30)

At the chaos of the arrest, torture and crucifixion of Jesus, the disciples had all run away to hide and didn't dare show their faces. But there was no problem about the women revealing by their actions and presence that they were a part of Jesus, because nobody was going to bother arresting them. It was also probably true that John was very young and not a threat or potential revolutionary. Therefore they are at the foot of the cross and to the very last breath Jesus is still loving those around him. He asks John to care for his mother.

Jesus proclaimed, "I AM THIRSTY". Remember, Jesus has a long discussion with the Samaritan woman at the well about living water in chapter 4. In chapter 6, Jesus says those who believe in Him will not be hungry or thirsty. In chapter 7, Jesus passionately declares that "living water" is available to anyone who came to him—I promise you "rivers of living water" (7:38). On the cross, we see another example of exchange; He took our thirst and we got His rivers of living water.

John tells us that Jesus' last words were the Greek words, *tetelestai*—"it is finished or it is paid in full." The verb is in the perfect tense. It is an action that is complete, never to be repeated. The writer of Hebrews says that through Jesus' death we have been set free from the slavery of the fear of death (Heb 2:14). Satan can no longer leverage our fear of death against us.

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### Exchange occurs when we love

We aren't here because we have better strategies to cope with life. We aren't here because once you join this church you are guaranteed a better marriage or better kids or a better life. We aren't here to escape the realities of life and hide away up here on the hills.

Look up at the cross. We are here because love demands an exchange. That exchange 2000 years was the turning point of the universe. Christ destroyed the power that death and sin had over us and those chains of fear are not ours anymore. We are no longer in bondage over our fear of death. Paul, at the end of 1 Cor. 15 says, "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

We were first loved and will continually be loved and because of this dramatic exchange we now have supernatural capacity to love others. We have been so loved by Him, we get to love in a world that is so desperate for His love.