

***“Was It Not Necessary?” (Luke 24:26)***

Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA (LCMS)

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Introduction: We often wonder, “Was it necessary?”

- A. “it” = being whatever it was that evidently you “had to” go through or “have to” go through right now. **There was and there is a reason for it.**

1. This is not to say that that thing is necessarily good in and of itself. For example, there is nothing good about suffering that comes from sin in this world.
2. But what we are saying is that there is some kind of necessity being met in and through all circumstances.

- B. For His children, God is always working for their good!

**Romans 8:28: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.”**

- C. This is true even when others might be trying to harm you. Joseph’s brothers hurt him a great deal, but the day came when Joseph said to them:

**Genesis 50:20: “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”**

- D. The Lord works in such a way that we look back and we see that even through our struggles – and often *especially in the midst of them* – we necessarily gain something even through trials:

**James 1:2-4: “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”**

Part I: Our Lord Jesus Christ looked back on His life in Luke 24:

- A. It is vital to be able to look back and gain understanding.

- B. We are in the midst of the Easter season, and yet look at our bulletin cover: you see Christ’s passion all over again, the cross and the crown of thorns.

1. You might say, “I thought we had moved past that already!”
2. But the real perspective comes after the fact and we see necessity especially after the storms of life.

- C. This is what He said:

**Luke 24:26: “Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”**

Part 2: Christ’s Suffering and Glory were NECESSARY!

- A. First because this is what Scripture said had to happen.

1. In the prior verse – verse 25 – Christ said, ***“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!”***

a. **God’s Word must be fulfilled.**

b. **No divine prophecy can possibly fail.**

- B. Second because of God’s love and His resolve to save the world. And this is really the underlying reason.

**1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:4: “[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”**

**Ezekiel 18:23: “Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?”**

- C. So the Lord entered into *suffering* because it was necessary that the price for sin be paid; and it was necessary that He should be glorified as Savior of all!

Part 3: But why was it necessary that Christ save *this* way?

- A. Perhaps the greatest book ever written on the necessity of the incarnation of Jesus Christ was written by Saint Athanasius. It’s

a book you can actually get on Amazon and it is very readable and relatively short. It is called *On The Incarnation Of The Word of God*. Here is a short excerpt that explains the necessity of Christ taking on our flesh:

*“The Word perceived that corruption could not be got rid of otherwise than through death; yet He Himself, as the Word, being immortal and the Father’s Son, was such as could not die. For this reason, therefore, He assumed a body capable of death, in order that it, through belonging to the Word Who is above all, might become in dying a sufficient exchange for all, and, itself remaining incorruptible through His indwelling, might thereafter put an end to corruption for all others as well, by the grace of the resurrection.”*

- B. Athanasius also touches on the necessity of the cross. Why the cross? I mean it’s one thing to speak of His paying the price for our sins, but why did it have to happen on a cross?
  1. Because through this particular way of death, the Lord was able to bear the curse that lay on us (Dt 21:23; Gal 3:13).
  2. But another reason is to consider the cross itself. Think of the crossbeams. The horizontal crossbeam symbolizes that His sacrifice was for ALL people! Everyone is included. You are included!

**John 12:32: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”**

Part 4: The Necessity of the Christian Life Here and Now:

- A. In his book *The Prodigal God*, Timothy Keller explains that “Jesus uses the younger and elder brothers [in His parable] to portray the two basic ways people try to find happiness and fulfillment: the way of *moral conformity* and the way of *self-discovery*.” (29)
- B. Both ways come up short:

1. Both approaches resent God’s authority.
2. Both approaches want to tell the Father what to do.
3. Both rebel against God: the younger brother by being very bad; the older brother by being extremely good.
4. Neither loved the Father for Himself. They were both using God for their self-centered ends.

*“This means that you can rebel against God and be alienated from him either by breaking his rules or by keeping all of them diligently.” (36-37)*

- C. Why mention any of this and doesn’t this belong to a different sermon? No, because these are the reasons we often get ourselves in the messes we do that *necessitate our hard times!*
- D. God allows us to do our thing, so that eventually we wake up and get back to what is life is really all about:
  1. It is necessary for us to learn that salvation is EXPERIENTIAL (106f). He wants us to rejoice in His love!
  2. It is necessary for us to learn that salvation is MATERIAL (110f). We must help in tangible ways those who suffer!
  3. It is necessary for us to learn that salvation is INDIVIDUAL (113f). We need to receive individually God’s gifts, His Word and His Sacraments.
  4. It is necessary for us to learn that salvation is COMMUNAL (124f). We are called to be in a community of believers and be deeply involved in the church.

**Conclusion: Yesterday I attended the memorial service for Anthony Ackley, born: 10-18-1990 and entered into glory: 4-27-2011.**

- A. He left a testimony behind. It was *profound*.
- B. #1 was “I have learned that God is the most important thing.”
- C. #2-#4 was a tribute to those he loved starting with his MOM!
- D. #5 was warning against rationalizations; stop making excuses...seek God [Mt 6:33].
- E. He had gone through a lot of pain, but look at what God did!