

WHO IS THERE TO DELIVER?

I. Psalm 32:1-7

A. Think of the calamities we've endured in the last month or so: Hurricanes *Harvey, Irma, Maria*; an earthquake in Mexico City; a shooting massacre in Las Vegas; wildfires in California. During the same time in our community, there've been several losses while other folks are battling life-threatening diseases.

B. Around the middle of last month, a young man died that I suspect none of us knew. His loved ones called him, Wes. Out of sensitivity, I won't share his full name but I do want to share his sobering obituary, written by his grandmother:

*** Wes: Born May 08, 1991; Died September 16, 2017 (Just 26 years old.)**

This is to announce the death of Wes, son of Lowell and Deborah; brother of Gene, Thomas, and Alexa; nephew of Michael, Dina and Vernon, Brad and David; cousin to Tara and Jessica; grandson of Jean; and preceded in death by maternal grandparents, John and Phyllis.

"Wes" as he was known to friends and family, was a graduate of the 2009 class of (Close By) High School, in (Nearby), Ohio. Wes was active in football and baseball, and loved the Buckeyes. "Boots" his dog, was the love of his life. He worked for a while at the Mongolian Restaurant in Columbus as a cook and was very good at it. Wes was, for a while, a healthy, smart, 6 foot gorgeous replica of his father.

But--and there is always a but--Wes died September 16, 2017, on a street in Columbus, Ohio--alone, from an overdose. This was not his first OD, but it was his last.

I write this in hopes that it will give his death some meaning. If these words will save even one life. A plea to those of you who are tempted to experiment, be it with any drug, the thought-to-be harmless "pot", "alcohol", a relative's "meds" or the romanticized "street drugs" that are laced with the latest killer chemical. If you choose to experiment, bear in mind that this little adventure into euphoria could be your death warrant. It may not happen at that moment, but the end of your world as you know it, is about to begin.

And in destroying your own young life, you will take along with you the collateral damage of every person that loves you. Addiction is a monster. If you are already on this road, there is help, go online. If you have a church, speak to someone within. There are programs at no cost to you, find one. If you are "sick and tired of being sick and tired," get help, it is not too late. I speak to you from a broken heart, at the loss of a beautiful young man, who had unlimited potential and a beautiful spirit, who was loved by so many, who got lost in the clutches of addiction. *Grandma Jean...*

C. There's an old saying, "Don't wait to go to church until six strong men carry you there!" Sadly, 4.5 million people around the world have died since Wes passed away back in mid-September. Where they stood with the Lord at the time of their passing totally matters. Like Solomon's words in Ecclesiastes 11:3b: "*Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie.*"

D. Today's text is for those this side of the grave. Your tree's still standing. It's about forgiveness and deliverance and what it might take for God to get your attention. Do you think because you have different addictions or obsessions or less obvious moral failures than Wes, you've no need of being set free? What (or who) can't you say "no" to? Or "yes" to? What entangles you or possesses you? If the Lumberjack takes the axe to your tree, which way's it gonna fall?

E. Psalm 32:1-7 (ESV) *A Maskil of David...*

1) V1-2: 1 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. (Are you so Blessed?!)

2) V3-4: 3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; (God's nearness is our good-whether He comes with a warm embrace or a switch! His rod and staff both comfort us!) my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. (NLT: "My strength was sapped!") Selah (Selah: Drink this word in, let it flow down deep, and let it soak into your heart.)

3) V5-6: In the midst of the psalmist's agony and affliction, orchestrated by God, here's what he does: 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover (hide) my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," (And what happened?) and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to You at a time when You may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. (The NLT puts V6 this way: "Therefore, let all the godly pray to You while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment." PSBV: "Do serious business with the Lord before your tree gets chopped down!")

4) V 7: Then the psalmist worships: 7 You are a hiding place for me; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with shouts (songs) of deliverance. Selah

F. Isaiah 61:1-2 (ESV) foretells of our ultimate Deliverer: *1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn...*

G. Luke 4:16-21 (ESV) 700+ years later, this happens: *16 And He (Jesus) came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as was His custom, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and He stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 And He rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

H. Jesus Christ, who bore our sins on the cross, stands ready to be your Strong Deliverer, to forgive you and set you free from all that holds you captive. His hand is on your prison door, ready to yank it open. No other help is coming. Rescue will come from none other. Call on Him while He may be found.

* Close with Prayer...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Psalm 32:1-7 (ESV) A Maskil of David.

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Ecclesiastes 11:3b (NIV)

3b Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie.

Isaiah 61:1-2 (ESV)

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Luke 4:16-21 (ESV)

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Film Clips & Other Links

"Deliverer" - Matt Maher

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pb_DT0MhY0

"Our Deliverer" - Third Day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhgZxZTY5js>

How I-An Atheist-Fell In Love With Jesus - Revive Our Hearts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcMx4F0aHoE>

What Encourages You & Discourages You About The Millennial Generation? - Tim Keller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ja9U1X3xeSY>

Millersport Covenant Church Sermon Podcasts (MP3s on iTunes)

<http://millersportcc.com/feed/podcast>

Bonus Stuff

Our Deliverer

Ligonier Ministries

<http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/our-deliverer/>

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2:14). - [Hebrews 2:14–15](#)

As the epistle to the Hebrews unfolds, the author tells us that Jesus, with regard to His human nature, has the same origin as His brothers. Far from being a Savior who stands completely apart from His people, Jesus the Messiah shares our common humanity with all of its original dignity.

Lest there be any doubt about this, 2:14 makes explicit what is implicit in the preceding Old Testament quotations. Jesus, like the children whom He sanctifies (2:11), partook of flesh and blood. Jesus freely chose to take on our humanity and identify with us. Here we have a clear teaching on the Incarnation. Far from being a doctrine found only in John's gospel, the teaching that the Son of God became incarnate is also taught here, and throughout the rest of the apostolic writings (e.g., [Phil. 2:7-8](#) [Acts: 20:28](#); [2 Peter 1:1](#)).

The Incarnation was not accomplished for the purpose of giving tribute to the glory and worth of humanity. To be sure, mankind possesses great dignity because man was created in the image of God. But due to the Fall, this image is shattered and is at best only a pale reflection of what it should be. Because of this, Christ became incarnate not to pay tribute to the image, but rather to rescue it. Verses 14–15 tell us that Christ partook of our nature so that by His death He might conquer the one who held the power of death and free those who were subject to lifelong slavery because of their bondage.

We are the ones who were subject to slavery. We feared physical death because we know it is the just punishment for sin. Even more than that, we feared the second death, the eternal punishment that we know is coming for all those who have sinned against the infinite God.

Christ has freed us from this slavery. His atonement in our place and on our behalf destroyed the devil and the power of death that he held over us. For a time, God gives Satan the power over death in order that it might be wielded over those who join Satan in rebellion. In Jesus, God takes that power away. On the cross, Jesus Christ destroyed Satan and now frees from Satan's power all those who are drawn to Him in salvation. We need not fear death because Jesus has defeated the one who used it to enslave us, and He will one day eliminate its effects completely from those whom He came to save.

Coram Deo

Christians know that Christ has already destroyed the devil and the power of death that he held. Because of this, we know that physical death will one day be eliminated as well. Thank Christ for His victory over the devil and remember that those who follow Christ need not fear death because He has rescued us from it.

Passages for Further Study:

[Job 19:25](#)

[Isa. 53:4–12](#)

[John 11:25](#)

[Col. 2:13–15](#)

[Rev. 21:1–4](#)

Augustine's Conversion

By Ray Stedman

Augustine was a young man in the 4th century who was what we would call a swinger. He lived a wild, carousing life, running around with evil companions, doing everything they were doing. He forbade himself nothing, went into anything and everything. And, as people still do today, he came to hate himself for it. One day he was with his friend in a garden, and he walked up and down, bemoaning his inability to change. "O, tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow! How can I free myself from these terrible urges within me that drive me to the things that hurt me!" And in his despair, as he walked in the garden, he suddenly heard what he thought was the voice of a child -- perhaps some children were playing in the garden next door -- and the voice said, "Take and read, take and read." He could not remember any children's games with words like that, but the words stuck. He went back to the table and found lying on it a copy of

Paul's letter to the Romans. He flipped it open, and these were the words he read: "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies, and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ..."

Augustine said that at that moment he opened his life to Christ. He had known about him, but had never surrendered to him. But that moment he did, and he felt the healing touch from Christ cleansing his life. He was never the same man again. He went on to become one of the greatest Christians of all time -- Saint Augustine.

Mistaken Identity

Author Unknown

With his request approved, the CNN News cameraman quickly used his cell phone to call the local airport to charter a flight. He was told a twin-engine plane would be waiting for him at the airport. Arriving at the airfield, he spotted a plane warming up outside a hanger. He jumped in with his bag, slammed the door shut, and shouted, "Let's go!" The pilot taxied out, swung the plane into the wind and took off. Once in the air, the cameraman instructed the pilot, "Fly over the valley and make low passes so I can get shots of the fires on the hillsides." "Why?" asked the pilot. "Because I'm a cameraman for CNN," he responded, "and I need to get some close up shots." The pilot was strangely silent for a moment. Finally he stammered, "So, what you're telling me, is...you're not my flight instructor?!"