

Teacher: John Burton

Teaching Title: What Will Your Was Be?

I. Is vs Was

- a. *"When 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!" (Matthew 27:54, ESV)*
  - i. The split second Jesus died, the people used the word, "was."
    1. This was the Son of God.
  - ii. Jesus' "is" determined his "was."
    1. "... we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." (John 4:42, ESV)
    2. "Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16, ESV)
    3. "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, ESV)
  - iii. Our life today is what will be immediately considered moments after we leave the earth.
    1. "And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" (Matthew 8:27, ESV)
    2. "And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:37, ESV)
  - iv. His "is" determined his "was."

II. Obituaries

- a. Recently someone suddenly died. He was young and vibrant and ready to live a long life, but that plan was interrupted.
  - i. Mere hours after his death, the descriptive language changed.
  - ii. That morning someone could have said, "He is."
  - iii. Now as I was listening to the news report, they said, "He was."
- b. Whatever your "is" is right now would be your "was" when you were gone.
  - i. Your "was" will be permanent.
  - ii. There is nothing you can do to change it.
  - iii. Your "is" however can change, and this is more important than we have considered.
- c. Gary, March 1950-June 2021
  - i. Legacy: "He was a retired mechanic, a stubborn traditionalist, and a grandfather who spent his retirement restoring a classic Mustang in his garage."
- d. L'Wren, April 1964-March 2014
  - i. Legacy: "She was a glamorous designer, a fiercely independent creator, and a woman hiding insurmountable debts and deep depression behind a flawless facade."
- e. John, November 1780-May 1829

- i. Legacy: "He was an army captain, a failed trader, and a relentless promoter of the deeply mocked pseudoscientific theory that the Earth was hollow."
  - f. Christopher, February 1968-August, 1992
    - i. Legacy: "He was a disillusioned drifter, a man who alienated his loving family, and a deeply unprepared wanderer who starved alone in the wilderness."
  - g. Robert, May 1918-October 2007
    - i. Legacy: "He was a high school English teacher, an obscure eccentric, and a man who spent his entire adult life compulsively typing a diary of his mundane daily routines."
  - h. Evelyn, September 2023-May 1947
    - i. Legacy: "She was a bank bookkeeper, a reluctant fiancé, and a young woman so consumed by feelings of inadequacy that she jumped to her death."
  - i. William, May 1870-September 1922
    - i. Legacy: "He was a humble, praying man who gathered a small, hungry remnant in a rundown building, sparking a global revival marked by miracles, signs, and wonders."
  - j. Evan, June 1878-January 1951
    - i. Legacy: "He was a young coal miner who believed in total surrender to God, holding daily meetings that ignited a fiery revival and transformed an entire nation."
  - k. Corrie, April 1892-April 1983
    - i. Legacy: "She was a watchmaker, a survivor of a concentration camp, and a relentless ambassador of God's radical forgiveness."
  - l. Jim, October 1927-January 1956
    - i. Legacy: "He was a young missionary, a husband, and a martyr who gave his life to share the love of Christ with an unreached tribe, believing that 'he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.'"
  - m. Leonard, June 1907-November 1994
    - i. Legacy: "He was a fiery preacher, a relentless intercessor, and a prophetic voice who wept over the modern church, calling a remnant back to a desperate culture of prayer."
  - n. Richard, March 1909-February 2001
    - i. Legacy: "He was a pastor, an underground church leader, and a man who spent fourteen years enduring brutal torture in a communist prison, emerging only to preach radical love for his captors."
- III. From "was" to "is"
  - a. Your "was" is not final.
    - i. No matter how discouraged, frustrated, weak, failed or flawed you have been up to now, your "was" is not yet final. Why?
    - ii. Because Jesus' "was" was not final.
    - iii. In a matter of three days the testimony went from *"Truly this was the Son of God!"* to *"He is not here; for he is risen!"* (Matthew 28:6)

- iv. The truth that Jesus IS alive and that he paid the price for our sin should change everything for us tonight! What is your “is” and what must happen for your “was” to reveal the power of God during your lifetime?
  - b. Jesus is:
    - i. Revelation 1:18 proclaims that Jesus is alive and holds the keys to death and hell.
    - ii. Colossians 3:1 reveals that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God.
    - iii. Hebrews 7:25 and Romans 8:34 reveal that Jesus is interceding for us.
    - iv. Revelation 19:16 declares that Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords!
- IV. Conclusion
  - a. So, what will your “was” be?
  - b. Your “was” can be an earth-shaking testimony of the power of the risen God.
  - c. Jesus paid the price for us and we can now walk in supernatural power and leave a legacy that impacts the generations!