

He took my place

"he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself."
heb 9:26

one day, a man went to visit a church. he arrived early, parked his car, and got out. another car pulled up near him, and the driver told him, "i always park there. you took my place!"

the visitor went inside for sunday school, found an empty seat, and sat down. a young lady from the church approached him and stated, "that's my seat! you took my place!" the visitor was somewhat distressed by this rude welcome, but said nothing.

after sunday school, the visitor went into the church sanctuary and sat down. another member walked up to him and said, "that's where i always sit. you took my place!" the visitor was even more troubled by this treatment, but still said nothing.

later, as the congregation was praying for Christ to dwell among them, the visitor stood, and his appearance began to change. horrible scars became visible on his hands and on his sandaled feet. someone from the congregation noticed him and called out, "what happened to you?"

the visitor replied, "i took your place."

it's amazing how possessive and disgruntled we can become over the slightest things. things like OUR pew

in church. this ought not to be so.

and now, another little story.

“He took my place”

by ray pritchard

the current controversy over “the passion of the Christ” has raised an important point that deserves careful discussion. we know that Jesus died for others. what does that really mean? perhaps an illustration will help.

at the time of the civil war, there was a band of organized outlaws in the southwest called the quantrill raiders. they would sweep down upon an unsuspecting community on the frontier, rob, pillage, burn, then ride away before help could come. the situation became so desperate that some people in kansas formed a militia to search out the desperados. they had orders to execute without delay any of the raiders that could be found.

not long afterward a group of these men were captured. a long trench was dug; they were lined up, hands and legs tied, and eyes bandaged. suddenly, as the firing squad was forming. a young man rushed out of the underbrush, crying out: “wait! wait!” covered by the guns of the firing squad, he approached the officer in command. he pointed to a man who was waiting to be shot, and said: “let that man go free. hHe has a wife and four children, and is needed at home. let me take

his place. i am guilty.”

it was an extraordinary appeal, but the stranger insisted that it not be denied. after a long consultation, the officers decided to grant the request. they cut the ropes and released the condemned man. the volunteer was put in his place, and fell dead before the firing squad.

later the redeemed man came back to the awful scene of death, uncovered the grave, and found the body of his friend. he put it on the back of a mule and took it to a little cemetery near kansas city, where he was given a proper burial. there he erected a memorial stone upon which was inscribed the words: HE TOOK MY PLACE. HE DIED FOR ME.

there is only one thing lacking in that illustration. the young man who offered to die in the place of another was himself guilty of the same crimes. this story is about one guilty man dying in the place of another. but something much greater happened at the cross.

there a truly innocent man died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. when Jesus died, He took your place and suffered the penalty meant for you. He who was innocent paid the price that you might go free. this is truly beyond human understanding.

as romans 5:7 notes, perhaps for a righteous man some would dare to die. but who would die for sinners? only God's Son would do a thing like that. if we focus

only on the physical sufferings of Christ, we will miss the true point of the cross. He died in our place, taking our sin, paying the debt we owed to God. this is the good news the world needs to hear.

i don't think any of us can fully grasp the magnitude of what done and given in that act of selflessness. and still, many in the hardness and darkness of their heart refuse that most precious gift. in doing so, they will not only live forever in torment, but with an eternity of regret. would the condemned soldier also have refused his relief, or would he be forever grateful for his rescue?

we are all now that soldier, born into condemnation, and Christ is our rescuer. He is willing to be sacrificed as substitute in our place. will you say yea or nay? will you allow Him to step in for the punishment you so worthily deserve? the decision is yours. will you be forever grateful or repentant you were not?