













School of Grace:

Reading: Hebrews 10:1-25; John 19:1-37

In the 1960s there was a Newsweek cover that sent shock waves through Christian theology. The cover was simply in large, red letters Is God dead? against a black background. There was outrage and no doubt the mailman at Newsweek had to carry much heavy mailbags. The idea came from a quote by Nietzsche, and the Christian theologians had developed this school around the idea that society had lost an understanding of transcendence, of sacred. From that, they proposed a post-Christian culture was needed to regain that idea.

I won't go into all the complexities of the debate, of the variations between its proponents, or of the reactions by other schools of theology. But it did raise one question that haunts all of us?

Do we actually see God as He really is? Or are we holding on to our traditions, our ideas, our beliefs instead? Christianity has always had this problem. It is based around a person. A being. Something that is ephemeral, not easily defined. Not easily pigeon-holed. All our practices and beliefs emerge from trying to understand Jesus. They all come from trying to get a unified picture from the opposing positions that the Bible presents. They all come from holding human thought as authoritative. They all come from judging history, from choosing which experiences are acceptable.

The cross strips all of that away. All of it is merely the human games we play, conceived in a right-wrong continuum. The cross might use that continuum, but it reveals that we are wrong, everything we have done is wrong. Anything we think is right, even if it happens to be so, doesn't amount to anything with all the wrong it can bring. The cross strips away our infallibility. The cross strips away our self-righteousness. The cross ends our ability to do good.

It is when we have learnt this hard, painful lesson, we begin to see our rich grace is. It is not merely something to fill the gap between our righteousness and God's standard. It is all of our righteousness. We bring nothing. Have achieved nothing. Mercy is given, not because we deserve it, but we need it, just like we need air to breath.

God is dead.

Do you see it as good news or bad news?

For the answer will tell you much about yourself and the 'God' you believe in.

Listen for the blood crying out from the ground See this water turns into blood just like that

Everywhere flowing through Gushing out taking life Let Your blood be on us & on our children

Let it be a sign on the door of our hearts On the altar place sprinkle it for your sins

It atones my life I wear it with this robe Taking away guilt cov'ring shame no price left

God's sacrifice made in my place left with stains Innocence restored drops of sweat justify

No prophet immune as we rush to shed blood I will drink this blood making peace reconciled

The cross we bear precedes the crown we wear
The weight of the world's problems weigh us down
Our darkest fears the shame all the guilt
The burden of sin's consequences reign
To face the pain the fading hope
The troubles we face in everyday life
The dreams I've lost this life worse than death
The memories that we cannot forget
I can't go on the suffering the orphan child
The broken promises that can't be kept
The lost trust the innocence denied
The poor everyone the nobodies

My God My God why have You forsaken me? My God My God why have You forsaken me?

At the cross of Jesus grace abounds to all Mercy flows forgiveness comes love revealed in scars At the cross of Jesus blood poured out for sin Death overcomes life itself broken by our nails

Redemption has arrived salvation has been made Glory to the King
The triumph over sin the vict'ry over death
God has done it all
Despised in our lives not knowing who He is
Suffered crucified
Rejected by us all His worship was the cost
Worthy is the Lamb!

At the cross of Jesus God's sacrifice made Giving us atonement's gift we're now reconciled What happened to Your voice?
What happened to Saving this nation?
Is this the end of time?
Can You even defend Yourself?
So are You really God or just a man?
Why are they gonna win?
What happened to the promises?
You gave life to the dead can't You keep life?
You led us to believe so what are we supposed to do?
Is this what happened to all God's prophets?
Messiah's don't get killed we wanted You to overcome A week ago You rode in as the King

Why can't You answer these questions? You saved others why not Yourself? Where's Your God now? What's He doing? Why should this happen to a righteous man?

What happened to the plan? How's this gonna deliver us? Your followers abandoned You quickly Religious leaders win the powerful will rule again We need another strategy or else? You let Your people down Why did You create mirages? Elijah stayed alive so why can't You? You gave us hope again so why is it now vanishing? So what are we left with? Just the mem'ries Who are we to turn to? These expectations crumbling Another disappointment in history

It is finished it has ended the time is up it's all over All the sin all the fighting all the anger All the sacrifices all the guilt & shame All the laughter all the crying all the pain The humiliation it is finished all the fear All the words all the despair the broken promises All the worshipping all the working All the trying all the prayers never lonely again It is finished all the time all the failure All the darkness the empty successes All the brokenness my hopelessness All the struggles all the plans Questions with no answers it is finished

God is dead the god of our making
The God of creation is dead
God is dead the god of politics
The god of punishment is dead
God is dead the god of racism
The god of the wealthy is dead

God is dead the god of our wisdom
The god of enforcement is dead
God is dead the god of our ideas
The god of our ideals is dead
God is dead the god who chooses some
The god of the winners is dead

God is dead the god of our justice
The god who leads battles is dead
God is dead the god of elections
The god of our churches is dead
God is dead the god we've forgotten
The god we remember is dead

God is dead the god of mysteries
The god of judgment is dead
God is dead the god of high standards
The god of self-interest is dead
God is dead the god of importance
The god of big success is dead

God is dead denominations gone
The god of barriers is dead
God is dead the god of worshipping
The god of sacrifices is dead
God is dead authority removed
The god of miracles is dead

God is dead the god of our culture Society's kingdom is dead God is dead the rulers of the world The arrogant power is dead God is dead important issues dimmed The god of national pride is dead God is dead the god of our music The god of the famous is dead God is dead the god of all terror The god of the others is dead God is dead the god of enemies The god of all of us is dead

God is dead! God is dead!