



"The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good."

—Ann Landers

**01-Mar-24**

## **Priceless**

One of the most memorable series of marketing promotions in recent decades was MasterCard's "Priceless" commercials. The ads listed a series of desirable goods or services and their corresponding costs. Finally, the narrator named an accompanying intangible that no amount of money could buy, along with the punch line, "Priceless." The narrator then intoned, "There are some things money can't buy. For everything else, there's MasterCard."

Here is similar treatment for Christians:

New Bible: \$80

New Clothes to Wear to Church: \$250

Contribution to Building Fund: \$500

That Jesus Died to Pay for Your Sins: Priceless.

Spring is just over the horizon in the northern hemisphere, heralding Christianity's annual memorial of the Savior's death and His resurrection as

our High Priest and soon-coming King. For the church of [God](#), that means the annual observance of [Passover](#) will soon be upon us. On Passover day, roughly 2,000 years ago, Jesus of Nazareth sacrificed Himself in [payment for our sins](#), opening up access to the Father and making possible our salvation and eternal life. What a profound deed that was, both in its execution and accomplishment!

Because it happened so long ago in a land far removed from us in time, distance, and culture, Christ's sacrifice is often not as real to His modern disciples as it should be. Some reduce it to mere fact: It happened, with the result that God forgives us by His Son's blood, opening to His disciples the potential of everlasting life. Others approach it emotionally, somewhat like most movies on Jesus' life, sympathizing with His agony yet failing to fully appreciate the moral and spiritual obligations it imposes on His followers. Many who claim to be Christians figuratively leave Him hanging on the tree for all time, overemphasizing His death and minimizing His present, glorious life as our Advocate before the Father ([Hebrews 7:25](#); [9:24](#); [1 John 2:1](#)) and Head of the church ([Ephesians 1:22-23](#); [Colossians 1:18](#)).

Where do we begin in trying to understand the unfathomable costs involved in this supreme sacrifice?

- The Father and the Word ([John 1:1](#)) planned this sinless death of the Creator God ([Colossians 1:16-17](#)) from the foundation of [the world](#) ([Revelation 13:8](#)).
- The Word had to divest Himself of His prerogatives as God and become a flesh-and-blood human being, a servant ([Philippians 2:5-7](#); [Hebrews 2:14](#), 17), a worm in comparison to the glories of a spirit Being ([Psalm 22:6](#)).
- Jesus, constantly surrounded by sinful men and women, had to be ever-vigilant against the pulls of human nature so He would not give in to the temptations that surrounded Him on every side ([Hebrews 2:18](#)).
- His whole life, He was a target of the archenemy, [Satan](#) the Devil, who mercilessly attempted to lure Him into [sin](#) (Matthew 4; Luke 4).

- He had to bear under constant misunderstandings of people about Himself, His teachings, and His purposes ([Matthew 16:13-14](#); [John 7:14-17](#), 25-43).
- He was frequently in danger of losing His life ([Matthew 2:13-18](#); [Mark 3:6](#); [Luke 4:28-30](#); [John 8:59](#); etc.).
- He knew one of His closest friends would betray Him ([John 6:70](#); [13:18-30](#)).
- He knew another of His closest friends would deny Him three times in one night ([John 13:36-38](#)), and ultimately, all His disciples would forsake Him ([Zechariah 13:7](#); [Matthew 26:56](#)).
- He knew that part of the plan of redemption included His Father forsaking Him ([Psalm 22:1-3](#)).
- The defiling sins of men throughout history were placed on Him, who was Himself absolutely pure ([Isaiah 53:5-6](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#)).
- He had to endure a horribly unfair and illegal trial from the Sanhedrin ([John 18:12-14](#), 19-24).
- He received terrible beatings, scourgings, and mockings from the Jews, Roman lictors, and Herod's troops ([Matthew 26:67-68](#); [27:27-31](#); [Luke 23:11](#); [John 19:1-3](#)).
- He was stripped of His clothing and crucified, the most agonizing, cruel, and shameful method of execution man has ever devised ([Matthew 27:35](#)).
- Finally, in death, He was completely separated from His eternal companion, God the Father, for [three days and three nights](#) ([Matthew 12:40](#)).

This comprises only the major sacrifices and sufferings our God and Savior Jesus Christ—and His Father—went through to bring us forgiveness of sin, a relationship with God, and the potential for eternal life.

*Priceless .*

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Christ, Our Passover](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Many people, even in the church of God, believe that Passover focuses on our sins—but they are wrong! We are certainly to examine ourselves to take it worthily, but the Passover's central figure is Christ, the Lamb of God. John Ritenbaugh explores His awesome, gracious sacrifice that enables forgiveness of sin and opens a relationship with God. How well do we know Him?

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