

Easter
“The Bridge”
Steve Ely

I. Introduction

(Video Clip of man choosing to lower bridge for train full of passengers even though his son would be crushed.)

I have two sons and I can't even imagine the anguish that the father in this clip went through. The choice of many lives or the life of my son. The pain only deepened by the fact that many of the passengers were oblivious, unaware or perhaps - surely it isn't even plausible - unthankful/uninterested in the sacrifice that had been made. Were the passengers worth saving? The father determined that the answer was yes. And so, this father made it possible for these passengers to continue their journey and their ride.

We are all passengers this morning. We talk about the ride of life. Jimmy Buffet sings in his song "Just one more trip around the sun!" . . . Yes I'll make a resolution, That I'll never make another one Just enjoy this ride on my trip around the sun. Just enjoy this ride.

Kenny Chesney sings, "Well they say the sea is rising, well that's alright with me 'Cause there ain't no other place than on the sea I'd rather be. That second comet's comin', it's right around the bend and some day could be any day this world is gonna end but that's alright, that's okay there ain't nothin we can do about the whole thing anyway it's a hang on kinda ride, whispin' in through space and time, Rockin' this big old rock just try'n'a have fun so let's drink another beer, here's to another year, Let's take another crazy trip around the sun.

Passengers ... taking trips around the sun. Days are passing. Weeks go by. Months are marked off. We are convinced this ride is just about marking time and possibly having fun, making some memories and we are unconcerned and some unaware that a sacrifice has been made. Although the story that played out on this screen is fiction the same story played out on the stage of the universe and another Father did make this choice. This Father saw a collision and a catastrophe about to take place. He recognized that the track we are on leads to death. In fact, Paul, in Romans, gives us a glimpse of our destination when he said, "The wages of sin is death!" Not might lead to death, possibly, potentially . . . no, this ride we are on could only have one outcome. Punishment, judgement, and ultimately eternal death. Why? Because our righteousness - or rightness - is like filthy rags before a holy God. The track of sin we are on can only lead us to a train wreck. We are on the ride and the truth is that in our own strength we have no ability to get off of or change

course. We can try to be holy on our own and we will fail. Paul again weighs in and says "We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

We ride and we are doomed. So, we try to cross every possible bridge thinking it will lead to life. We get wrapped up in work, relationships, money, sex, drugs all in hopes of finding safety only to discover that more times than no these things only quicken our pace toward destruction.

But this Easter morning I want you to understand that there is a good, good Father watching our ride. He saw our impending destruction and out of a heart of mercy, grace, and compassion He responds. He turns to His one and only Son and comes to the decision that He would sacrifice His only Son in order to gain many sons and daughters. He lowers the draw bridge and our Father closes the gap . . . "God so loved the world, that He gave His only son so that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life."

1 Peter 2:22-25

He never did one thing wrong, not once said anything amiss. They called him every name in the book and he said nothing back. He suffered in silence, content to let God set things right. He used his servant body to carry our sins to the cross so we could be rid of sin, free to live the right way. His wounds became your healing. You were lost sheep with no idea who you were or where you were going. Now you're named and kept for good by the Shepherd of your souls.

He loved us so much that He makes a way for us to cross safely. He lowers the bridge on His Son for us! That is why we call Him the way maker. He makes it possible for us to have peace. That is why we call Him the Prince of Peace. Jesus becomes our bridge!

He steps in so that you can step across to eternal life, safety and salvation!

You might say this morning I don't get it - I was unaware, I was oblivious or maybe even worse I don't care I didn't ask Him to save me. I'm just on this ride . . .

ROMANS 5:6-8

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

That's what make His choice so incredible. He died because we were powerless. And He did it even though we didn't ask, know or care! Why?

He did it because He loves.

1 John 4:9-10

This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God.

Here is the truth this morning . . . through Christ's death on the cross and resurrection we have a bridge that we can cross to life and life more abundantly. However, just because the bridge has been lowered and passage is possible does not mean that we have chosen to cross the bridge. We can detour. We can explore other paths. We can refuse to cross. And we can perish.

Scripture declares that today is the day of salvation. That simply means that when presented with the opportunity to gain safe passage you should take advantage of that moment because you are not promised another.

Our Father has determined that we are worth saving! See that is the importance of this morning . . . you can't sit in a service like this and then claim that you didn't know. You can't experience this and then claim no one ever told you. We have been praying that on this day that as we give you an opportunity to accept the great gift of love and life that Jesus has made possible that you will.

You may say I'm not good enough . . . none of us are. You may say I'm still in sin . . . all of us were. It isn't clean up then cross it is cross then clean up. In fact, the truth we have all discovered is you can't clean up until you cross. So, you are offering religion right? No . . . we are offering you the good news of relationship! The bridge to right standing with God has been lowered. Will you cross? Get on track!

Maybe you're ready to access the bridge. Prayer of salvation. ABC - Acknowledge, Believe, Confess. Turn to your fellow passengers and if you made that choice confess by crossing - bring your ticket!

WE BUILT A BRIDGE THAT WHEN CLOSED LOOKED LIKE A CROSS ON THE FRONT OF IT. WE HAD PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO MAKE A DECISION CROSS THE BRIDGE.