

Jesus describes the need for His death like this, 'Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit. He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.' What about the readers? Do we love and serve our present life and senses or do we see through it as a passing phase, shortly to be gone? Is it the gateway to eternity or a few scraps of time - all that we have left?

At the cross, Jesus paid the price of sin's penalty for all who seek Him and all who come to Him hungry for a pure heart, yearning for a life cleansed from the sinful stains of this vile world. In the cross alone is power to change us, and power to crack the grip of our selfish passions and tempers. In His rising again He trampled death underfoot, and opens the only way back to God's friendship and glory, even for us in all our inward ugliness.

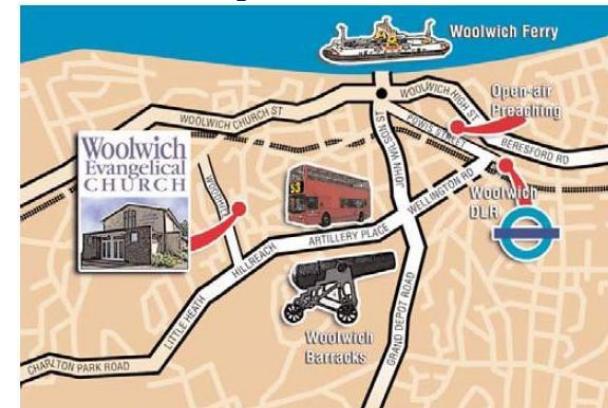
Jesus Christ came and died to secure liberty and life for those who find Him.

Don't let that life pass you by. Don't be seduced by the corrupting pleasures of a doomed and decaying world! Why neglect the glory and the richest goodness of God, displayed for us in His dear Son? Why allow Satan to ensnare your spirit in fleshly lusts and enslave you more

deeply in his chains? Why allow yourself to be deprived of the deepest of blessings?

We gently urge you not to despise God's free gift of life purchased by the pain of His Son to those who seek or His command to find out for yourself. Don't be frightened off by others. Don't put off such a weighty issue any longer. Please don't ignore the warning of Christ's own blood or His final call to find eternal life, before the opportunity slips away forever!

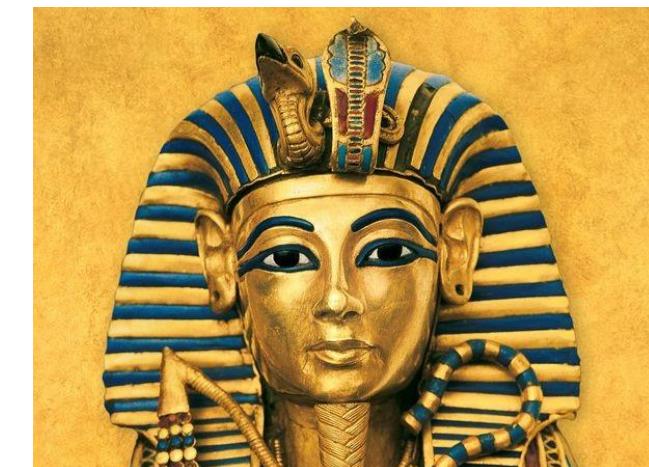
**Welcome to our**  
Good Friday Service, 10.30 am, 29<sup>th</sup> March  
Easter Sunday services, 11.00 am and  
6.30 pm, 31st March  
**Woolwich Evangelical Church**  
Evening Service 6.30 pm  
Morning Service 11.00 am



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## Death could not hold Him.

Death is the great inescapable. Harry Houdini, the greatest escapist of all time, eluded 1,000 snares and traps, but at 52 even Houdini could not keep escaping from death. Alexander the Great conquered vast realms at lightening pace, but at the age of 33, his last day arrived, and he also was bound to surrender his spirit.



The Pharaohs spent the best of their time and treasure preparing for the life beyond, by gilding their tombs and storing up bribes and companions for the ultimate destination. We might laugh at their masks, mummified cats and crocodiles, but will the Pharaohs instead wonder at us, when we fritter away our time without preparation for the greatest day of our lives?

Moses famously describes our brief lives as like 'a tale that is told', and writes that our life, even if it is eighty years or more, 'is soon cut off and we fly away'. His gentle conclusion warns us, 'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' However how few act on such advice?

James the Just wrote, for 'your life is even as a vapour', and Isaiah reminds us that though the

glory of man flourishes like a flower, it fades just as quickly.

Death has brought so many famous lives to nothing but a faint echo, a dim memory that easily fades. How

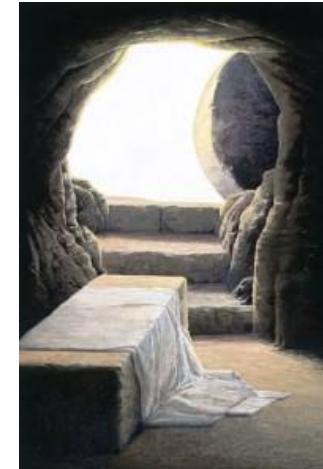
many young people now know the names of John Lennon, John F Kennedy, for all the stir when they lived? How much fewer will remember them in 10 or 20 years' time?

For the Messiah, the very purpose of His life was to *die*, and by death to remove the power of death. Paul the Apostle wrote, He has 'abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light'

His murder at the hands of the Roman and Jewish authorities was no mere accident or catastrophe. Quite the reverse, Peter boldly



declares to the crowds a few weeks later, that He was 'delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.' This ancient plan was conceived long before the beginning of time itself, and sprung into effect at a carefully chosen moment. Though the Lord Jesus had repeatedly told this to His disciples, they had failed to grasp the reality of this. He said for example, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' The moment and place of His death was His own selection.



Time and time again before, He had simply walked past a furious mob. This time He chose to face them.

The Apostle Paul sees the power of this so clearly, he describes how at Jesus' execution, the Messiah was actually executing *His enemies*. Here is what he writes, that 'which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.'

Like a grandmaster at chess, His sacrifice was a final master stroke. The New Testament writing about the hidden wisdom, puts it this way 'Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.'



So who were these fatal enemies to Him and to us? If they are so important, why are we so unaware of them?

Does a dead body feel or see or hear?

The Bible explains that whilst enslaved by indifference and hatred towards God, we are ourselves as good as dead. The one 'who lives for pleasure is dead' while he lives. It explains that we have become spiritual zombies - half living yet unable to pray, worship or even perceive the most important aspects of life. This addiction to our own senses and selfish pleasures, these sins, are our enemies.