

his death in our place. He gives his gift of life to all who place their trust in him. His victory becomes our victory. His perfect life covers our imperfect lives. We live in his victory simply by receiving it by faith from him.

Jesus lived a perfect life –
And gave that life to me.
Jesus died a gruesome death
alone on Calvary.
Jesus left the empty grave
his might, my victory!

Taking It Home

(Panel 7—*Impact statement: “Jesus’ life, death, and victory change everything . . .” [Find it by going back to panel 4 and looking at the opposite end of the cube]*) **Life. Death. Victory. Three powerful words.** Three powerful truths, truths that change everything! It’s a great story, but it’s more than a story. Much more! Think about it. What do these words mean for you? And what might they mean for someone in your sphere of influence who doesn’t yet know the story that’s more than a story? A friend. A cousin. A neighbor. A grandparent? How will you tell them? The “Life. Death. Victory. More Than a Story” cube is a great way to jumpstart a life-changing conversation with that person. Talk with your Savior about it!

(Panel 8—*Bible verse [Find it by going back to panel 1 and looking at the opposite end of the cube]*)

“Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

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#LDV9DF



Expanding the Impact of Your
Gifts of Encouragement

LIFE. DEATH. VICTORY. More Than a Story

Introduction

(Panel 1—*Life. Death. Victory. More Than a Story*)

Life. Death. Victory. Three powerful words. Three powerful truths. Maybe you rarely think about them. Life just happens without much thought. People don’t like to think or talk about death. And thoughts of victory might come only to the minds of those playing sports.

Does the meaning and importance of these three words change when you place the pronouns *His* (referring to Jesus) and *My* before them?

His Life. His Death. His Victory.

My Life. My Death. My Victory.

When we do that, we discover the great stories behind the words. **Jesus’ story and your story.** As you connect those two stories, you’ll realize they form more than a story. Much, much more than a story!

Getting to the Heart

(*Panel 2—His Life*) People love a good story. In some ways, the story of Jesus is a simple one. The Bible contains a one-sentence summary of his life and its meaning: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son [Jesus], that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Simply put, Jesus came from heaven to live on earth so that all who believe in him as their Savior will live with him forever—here on earth and after life on this earth ends, in heaven. He lived a life of humility, of service, of forgiveness, and of thanksgiving.

Born in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago, Jesus lived a perfectly ordinary life—and a completely extraordinary one. True man. True God. **Mary’s son. God’s Son.** Jesus left the perfection of heaven to live in an imperfect world. Sinless, he came to save sinners from an eternal death in hell so we can experience eternal life, life that begins now and never ends. As a true human being Jesus experienced sadness and joy, hunger and pain, friendship and rejection, loneliness and laughter—everything we experience. God became one of us! Humility!

Jesus lived a life focused on his heavenly Father and on the people around him. He miraculously healed the sick, drove out demons, and even raised to life some who had died. He offered forgiveness to sinners and always gave thanks to his Father in heaven for all the blessings that surrounded him. Mark 10:45 tells us, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Service! Forgiveness! Thanksgiving!

(*Panel 3—My Life*) Jesus lived a perfect life—obeying God in our place. Now, God has credited Jesus’ life to our account. And he invites us by faith to live a life of love like the life of our Savior. Jesus left us an example so we could follow in his steps (for example, John 13:12–17), his steps along the paths of

humility, service, forgiveness, and thanksgiving. In what ways would you like to do more of that in your own life? If you’d like to, you can use a permanent marker to answer this question—in words, symbols, or pictures.

(*Panel 4—My Death: It’ll happen.*) But Jesus’ story is much more than an example for us. For Jesus, as for us, death follows life. Most of us would rather avoid thinking and talking about death. But we can’t avoid its reality. Death happens because sin entered the world. And, as Romans 6:23 tells us: “The wages of sin is death.”

(*Panel 5—His Death: It happened.*) Still, there’s more to our story because there’s more to Jesus’ story. Jesus let himself be nailed to the cross, even though he had done nothing wrong. He allowed himself to taste the pain and bitterness of death, because it was the one way we could receive full forgiveness and know eternal life. Jesus died. That’s reality. (See Luke 23:46.) But there’s still more to his story. And because of Jesus, there’s still more to our story.

(*Panel 6—His Victory: Now Mine*) There’s also more to the Bible verse that tells us the wages of sin is death. It reads in full: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Death didn’t defeat Jesus. Yes, he truly died. But three days later, on a day we call Easter, Jesus walked out of his tomb, victorious over our fiercest enemy, death.

In his resurrection, Jesus offers us full forgiveness for all our sins and gives us the power to forgive others as we have been forgiven. He covers our imperfect lives with his perfect life. Seeing the perfect life he lived for us, we respond with thanks, humbly serving him and others. His life brings us life—a better life than we could ever imagine!

As followers of Jesus, we don’t have to connect death with fear. Jesus won the victory over death by his sinless life and