

The Death of Christ

By Peter Gray

Dr. Christianson, a teacher of religion, had a special student named Steve. Steve was studying with the intent of going onto seminary for the ministry. He was popular, he was well liked, and he was imposing physically. He was on the school football team, and was the best student in the professor's class.

One day, Dr. Christianson asked Steve to stay after class so he could talk with him. "How many push-ups can you do?"

Steve said, "I do about 200 every night."

"200? That's pretty good, Steve," Dr. Christianson said. "Do you think you could do 300?"

Steve replied, "I don't know... I've never done 300 at a time."

"Do you think you could?" Dr. Christianson asked again

"Well, I can try," said Steve.

"Can you do 300 in sets of 10? I have a class project in mind and I need you to do about 300 push-ups in sets of ten for this to work. Can you do it? I need you to tell me you can do it," said the professor.

Steve said, "Well... I think I can...yeah, I can do it."

Dr. Christianson said, "Good! I need you to do this on Friday. Let me explain what I have in mind."

Friday came and Steve got to class early and sat in the front of the room. When class started, the professor pulled out a big box of donuts. Now these weren't the normal kinds of donuts, they were the extra fancy BIG kind, with cream centres and frosting swirls. Everyone was pretty excited it was Friday, the last class of the day, and they were going to get an early start on the weekend with a party in Dr. Christianson's class.

Dr. Christianson went to the first girl in the first row and asked, "Cynthia, do you want to have one of these donuts?"

Cynthia said, "Yes."

Dr. Christianson then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten push-ups so that Cynthia can have a donut?"

"Sure."

Steve jumped down from his desk to do a quick ten. Then Steve again sat in his desk. Dr. Christianson put a donut on Cynthia's desk.

Dr. Christianson then went to Joe, the next person, and asked, "Joe, do you want a donut?"

Joe said, "Yes."

Dr. Christianson asked, "Steve would you do ten push-ups so Joe can have a donut?" Steve did ten push-ups, Joe got a donut.

And so it went, down the first aisle, Steve did ten push-ups for every person before they got their donut. And down the second aisle, till Dr. Christianson came to Scott. Scott was on the basketball team, and in as good condition as Steve. When the professor asked, "Scott do you want a donut?"

Scott's reply was, "Well, can I do my own push-ups?"

Dr. Christianson said, "No, Steve has to do them."

Then Scott said, "Well, I don't want one then."

Dr. Christianson shrugged and then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten push-ups so Scott can have a donut he doesn't want?" Steve started to do ten push-ups.

Scott said, "HEY! I said I didn't want one!"

Dr. Christianson said, "Look, this is my classroom, my class, my desks, and these are my donuts. Just leave it on the desk if you don't want it." And he put a donut on Scott's desk.

Now by this time, Steve had begun to slow down a little. He just stayed on the floor between sets because it took too much effort to be getting up and down. You could start to see a little perspiration coming out around his brow.

Dr. Christianson started down the third row. Now the students were beginning to get a little angry.

Dr. Christianson asked Jenny, "Jenny, do you want a donut?"

Sternly, Jenny said, "No."

Then Dr. Christianson asked Steve, "Steve, would you do ten more push-ups so Jenny can have a donut that she doesn't want?" Steve did ten, Jenny got a donut.

By now, a growing sense of uneasiness filled the room. The students were beginning to say "No" and there were all these uneaten donuts on the desks. Steve also had to really put forth a lot of extra effort to get these push-ups done for each donut. There began to be a small pool of sweat on the floor beneath his face, his arms and brow were beginning to get red because of the physical effort involved.

Dr. Christianson went on to the next person and the next and the next. Near the end of that row, Steve was really having a rough time. He was taking a lot more time to complete each set. He started to worry if Steve would be able to make it

Dr. Christianson finished the fourth row, then started on those visitors seated by the heaters. Steve's arms were now shaking with each push up in a struggle to lift himself against the force of gravity. Sweat was profusely dropping off of his face and, by this time, there was no sound except his heavy breathing.

The very last two students in the room were two young women, both cheerleaders, and very popular. Dr. Christianson went to Linda, the second to last, and asked, "Linda, do you want a doughnut?"

Linda said, very sadly, "No, thank you."

Professor Christianson quietly asked, "Steve, would you do ten push-ups so that Linda can have a donut she doesn't want?"

Grunting from the effort, Steve did ten very slow push-ups for Linda.

Then Dr. Christianson turned to the last girl, Susan. "Susan, do you want a donut?" Susan, with tears flowing down her face, asked; "Dr. Christianson, why can't I help him?"

Dr. Christianson, with tears of his own, said, "No, Steve has to do it alone, I have given him this task and he is in charge of seeing that everyone has an opportunity for a donut whether they want it or not. When I decided to have a party this last day of class, I looked at my grade book. Steve, here is the only student with a perfect grade. Everyone else has failed a test, skipped class, or offered me inferior work. Steve told me that in football practice, when a player messes up he must do push ups. I told Steve that none of you could come to my party unless he paid the price by doing your push ups. He and I made a deal for your sakes. Steve, would you do ten push-ups so Susan can have a donut?"

As Steve very slowly finished his last push up, with the understanding that he had accomplished all that was required of him, having done 300 push-ups, his arms buckled beneath him and he fell to the floor.

Dr. Christianson turned to the class and said. "And so it was, that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, on the cross, said to the Father, 'into thy hands I commend my spirit.' With the understanding that He had done everything that was required of Him, he yielded up His life. And like some of those in this room, many of us leave the gift on the desk, uneaten."

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Now that's a terrific and emotive story, the problem being it's not entirely accurate. You see, Steve did something FOR his classmates, but he didn't do anything TO his classmates. Jesus Christ has done something TO humanity. Unless each individual

member of the class makes a decision to pick up and eat the doughnut, they have not been affected in any way by what Steve has done. But Jesus Christ's Incarnation, Life, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension has affected every human being who has ever lived – regardless of whether or not they choose to eat their doughnut!

When God took up human existence, lived, died and rose again, human existence was decisively altered, forever changed. Without our knowledge and without our consent.

We are always very quick to tell people about Adam. About how, in Adam, the entire human race was plunged into sin and death. We put Adam at the top of the pyramid of human existence and say that the entire landscape of human existence is under Adam's influence. Every man, woman and child affected by Adam. And then we propose a Jesus Christ that rescues only some. We propose a Jesus Christ that does not undo the mess that Adam made.

Everybody went down with Adam, some of us will be saved in Jesus. We are therefore required to conclude that Adam, a mere man, has had a greater influence on the human race than Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has.

The great early church father Irenaeus would not allow this. In his most profound phrase - What was lost in Adam was restored in Christ.

We were not given a choice when Adam plunged us into death, alienation, and corruption. And we were not given a choice when God in Jesus Christ rescued us from that.

What Adam did, Jesus Christ has undone. We give ourselves too much credit, and nowhere near enough credit to Jesus Christ.

Every man, woman and child that was plunged into ruin and alienation by Adam, has been rescued by the Incarnate Son, for that is why He came. And it was completed on the Cross.

What was lost in Adam was restored in Christ.