People looked at Jesus from their own point of view. The religious leaders saw Him as a threat to be eliminated. The sick and demonized saw Him as a healer and deliverer. Many saw Him as the Messiah Who would rout the Romans and reestablish the Jewish Kingdom. The disciples and apostles saw Him as teacher, friend and master.

But it seems that everyone saw Him from a more or less selfish perspective: His enemies wanted to get Him out of their way and the followers wanted what He could do for them and give to them.

Those anti-Jesus and pro-Jesus perspectives led to a chain of events I am calling Tragedy Turned To Triumph.

Look to the Scripture and we will see those events unfold. "From Tragedy To Triumph" Luke 22:47-24:9 (NASB).

1. JESUS WAS BETRAYED AND DENIED: 22:47
A. “While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’ When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, ‘Lord, shall we strike with the sword?’ And one of them struck the slave of the high Priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, ‘Stop! No more of this.’ And He touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? ‘While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours.’ Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, ‘This man was with Him too.’ But he denied it, saying, ‘Woman, I do not know Him.’ A little later, another saw him and said, ‘You are one of them too!’ But Peter said, ‘Man, I am not!’ After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, ‘Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.’ But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are talking about.’ Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.” Luke 22:47-60.

B. Earthly friends may prove fickle and faithless: Jesus was aware of the defection, and who would be the wrongdoers, it cut to the depth of His spirit.
C. There is little lower than stabbing a friend in the back by some betrayal. Solomon said, “Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble.” Proverbs 25:19 (NIV).

D. To be a follower of Christ there is a need for fidelity and loyalty and dependability, regardless of gain or loss. Let us be faithful to Him even unto death.

E. There was a time when the bishops of the church outlawed translating the Bible into English. William Tyndale did so anyway and had to go into hiding. He was finally found by an Englishman who pretended to be his friend but then betrayed him to the authorities. After 18 months in prison, he was brought to trial for heresy -- for believing in the forgiveness of sins and that the mercy offered in the gospel was enough for salvation. He was condemned and on October 6, 1536 he was strangled and his body burned at the stake. His last prayer was "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." The prayer was answered in part when three years later, in 1539, Henry VIII required every parish church in England to make a copy of the English Bible available to its parishioners.

II. JESUS WAS CHARGED AND CONDEMNED: 22:66:

A. “When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, tell us.’ But He said to them, ‘If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask a question, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.’ And they all said, ‘Are You the Son of God, then?’ And He said to them, ‘Yes, I am.’ Then they said, ‘What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.’” Luke 22:66-71.


C. Have you ever been falsely accused? Have you been misjudged? Have you ever been the victim of injustice? So has He – and He understands it well. “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:15-16 (NASB).

D. There was a young evangelist, just barely 21, but in great demand from local churches. He was invited to a revival as the main speaker.

The first night of the crusade he was counseling those who made decisions and a teen-ager asked if she could speak with him personally. He agreed for her to wait until he was finished counseling the others. An hour after the meeting had ended, almost everyone had left, and he was alone with the girl.

A few minutes later she burst from the room, screaming, "He made a pass at me!" The pastor of the host church and a small group of the crusade planners confronted the young preacher and demanded an explanation. He denied the girl's charge but had no witnesses.
It was agreed that the young woman should be asked to face the young preacher in their presence. She showed up with her parents at a private board meeting. The pastor asked if she would care to speak about her charges against the preacher. "She has already said all she has to say," her father said, glaring at the accused.

The pastor said, "Would you, son care to share your version of what happened in that room the other night?" "No, sir," the evangelist said. "I see no future in that. Only she and I know the truth, and I cannot defend myself. I'd just like to say this to her. Cindy, you know what happened and what didn't happen in that room. If you don't tell the truth, I will be branded and may never preach again. This will damage my reputation and that of this church, and even that of God. If I'm guilty, I deserve no better, but we both know that is not the truth. I'm begging you in the name of Christ to set the record straight."

The silence was heavy as the board and her parents watched her face contort into a grimace before the tears began to flow. "I lied," she said quietly. "I'm sorry. I lied. He didn't make a pass at me; I made a pass at him. When he turned me down I was so embarrassed and ashamed and angry that I made up that story. I'm so sorry!"

E. Jesus had no such a confession from His accusers and He suffered condemnation.

III. JESUS WAS DEAD AND DELIVERED: 23:33
A. “When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. .... It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.' Having said this, He breathed His last.” Luke 23:33-34 & 44-46 (NASB).  
B. That was Friday – earth’s darkest day – a day darker than the attack on Pearl Harbor or the terrorist act on 9-11-01.  
C. But Sunday was coming – earth’s gladdest day – gladder than Christmas or any other joyful day. He had died, “But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’ And they remembered His words, and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.” Luke 24:1-9 (NASB).  
D. He died and was delivered from death! And that news was the best the world has ever heard!
E. We all hate bad news and desire good. Let me illustrate. At the height of Operation Desert Storm, Ruth Dillow received a very sad message from the Pentagon. The message stated that her son, Clayton had lost his life. Ruth later wrote these words, "I can't begin to describe my grief and shock. It was almost more than I could bear. For 3 days I just wept. I expressed anger and loss. For 3 days people tried to comfort me but nothing worked ... the loss was simply too great."

But 3 days after she received that message the phone rang. The voice on the other end said, "Mom, it's me. It's Clayton. I'm alive." Ruth couldn't believe it at first but then she recognized his voice and realized he really was alive. The message was all a mistake. She said, "I laughed, I cried, I felt like turning cartwheels because my son who I thought was dead was actually alive."

The disciples, family members, those who were at the cross have all received the news that Jesus has died. AND HE HAD! “But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”  

Acts 2:24 (NASB).  

What does all this mean to you and me? It means we don’t have to fear death since He has defeated it. It means He is alive to be our Savior, our advocate and intercessor to the Father. It means that there is life after death and it is His gift to give. Because He lives, we, too, shall live. PRAY

Because He lives, the past is forgiven, the present is blessed, and the future is safe and hopeful. Because He lives I have forgiveness for yesterday, I have purpose for today and no fear of tomorrow.

For those who trust Him as Lord and Savior, the best is yet to come – because He lives!