

Christ's Atoning Death

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[0:00] Isaiah 53, verse 1. We're going to read the first six verses. Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

! He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. Yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way.

[1:10] And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. In this series on back to basics, I am seeking to set before you certain fundamental, key aspects of the Christian life that we need to pay more attention to so that we do not drift away from them, as the writer to the Hebrews exhorts.

And I just want you to know something of the method of my selection of these topics. I am being very selective. We are not just methodically moving right through all the fundamentals of the faith, nor in any particular order.

That would be a very long series indeed. So what I am doing is seeking to highlight certain basics that receive repeated emphasis in the scriptures themselves.

Or those basics that I perceive are most needed by us due to the down drag of our own flesh. And so we've learned of the two greatest commandments, to love God and neighbor, and the need to walk humbly with our God.

Sometimes the down drag of the flesh requires us to remember certain basic things. Other times it's the atmosphere in which we live, whether we're thinking of the world outside and the way that they are rejecting and ignoring certain important things, or even if it's the church of Jesus Christ herself, the professing church that has come to neglect or reject certain truths of the scriptures.

[2:56] So that gives you some idea as to the method of my selections. I'm not sure how far we'll go. But the whole series has forced me to ask this question, what is most basic to the Christian life and faith?

What's most basic? And certainly one of the first things that we think of is the cross of Christ. It's not without reason that for 2,000 years now, the cross has been the universal symbol of the Christian faith.

Have you thought about that? Why would a religion select for its symbol a Roman form of execution? Well, one reason.

Because 2,000 years ago, the Lord of Glory died on a Roman cross. And that death on the cross lies at the very heart of the Christian message, at the heart of the good news.

It's the climactic event of the ages from which so much in the Old Testament pointed to it. And now that we look back to.

[4:05] It's the very reason the Son of God, the eternal Son of God, came into this world. And so while most professing Christians today will agree with us as to the central place of the cross, there is by no means agreement as to what happened on that cross.

Well, sure, Jesus of Nazareth was nailed to the cross by Roman soldiers and died. But what actually transpired during those hours on the cross?

What did it accomplish? Was there anything going on that could not be seen by mortal eye? What is so important about the cross?

About this death? And so on this most basic question, there's been, sadly, much drift, even within the Christian community, professing Christian community.

And we must pay more careful attention lest we drift away. The basics we are getting back to then are not only basic things for us to be and to do, but some of them are basic things for us to believe.

[5 : 15] And such is our study today of God's Word. What are we to believe happened on the middle cross of Calvary? Now, you can be wrong about many things and still make it to heaven.

You cannot understand some of the finer points of eschatology and still make it to heaven. You cannot understand a lot of things in the Bible and still make it to heaven.

But you better be right on this one. What happened when Jesus, the eternal Son of God, died on the cross? Well, God is not, because it's so important, He's not left this event unexplained.

He's made it clear, though not all at once. Rather, what we find in the Bible is a progressive revelation. Over the space of hundreds of years, it becomes clearer and clearer.

And what that means is, as we stand here with a completed Bible of 66 books, it is most clear to us. It is more clear to us than it was to the Old Testament saints.

[6 : 22] But God gave enough light to each generation so that their faith would rest on this coming Savior's death. But in the Old Testament, this death was revealed under types and symbols and pictures.

And these Old Testament symbols were shadows of the coming reality of Christ crucified. The cross cast its shadow clear back to Genesis.

So here's the Bible's basic truth about the cross of Christ. It was a substitutionary, curse-bearing sacrifice. Substitutionary, curse-bearing sacrifice.

Now, we'll unpack that as we go along. But why is it necessary at all? Well, let's learn, first of all, that sacrifices were made to God because of sin.

Sin is offensive to God's nature. And He can do nothing but recoil against it with wrath and hot displeasure. And so sin leaves us guilty before God.

[7 : 34] It leaves us exposed to His wrath, to His condemnation, to the punishment that our sin deserves. It forfeits God's favor and blessing and it wins for us God's curse and damnation.

That's sin. Now, what is the punishment for sin? What's the penalty? It's death. It's death. The wages of sin is death.

Physical death, the separation of body and soul, but spiritual death, the separation from God, that alienation from Him that lasts forever and ever in the torments of hell.

And so the Bible calls the lake of fire the second death. It's part of this punishment for sin. And so it's in this needy situation that God revealed a way to take care of the sin problem.

And it's sacrifice. Sacrifice is God's way to cover sin, to take away guilt, to restore a right relationship with Him, to take away what separates man from God, sin itself, so that man might live in harmony with God.

[8 : 50] And that sacrifice is substitutionary in that the innocent dies in the place of the guilty. It's a curse-bearing sacrifice in that the curse of death is born and carried out in full.

All that the sinner had coming is done to the substitute. He bears the curse and condemnation for sin. It's substitutionary curse-bearing. What's the result of the sacrifice?

Well, God's justice is satisfied. The penalty of death is paid in full, so there's nothing left undone.

God's wrath is pacified because it fell on the perfect substitute for the sinner.

So there's no condemnation left for the sinner to pay. God's forgiveness is granted. No outstanding debts. His favor and blessing is restored.

Fellowship with God is once again possible and actual. And all by way of a substitutionary, curse-bearing sacrifice.

[9 : 58] That's just a quick summary of what the Bible teaches happened on the Middle Cross at Calvary. And that's what is being denied by many inside the church today.

They look at this idea of substitutionary curse-bearing. Someone dying in the place of another and they say, that's absurd. Furthermore, it's immoral. It's immoral to punish an innocent one.

And it's just as immoral to let a guilty one go. No one can die instead of another. No, the cross has some other significance.

And so they turn their back on substitution and curse-bearing and come up with other explanations of Calvary. Well, sacrifice is something that occurs quite early and quite often in the Bible.

So let's just do a quick survey. We're in Genesis 3. We're in the Garden of Eden. And Adam and Eve are there, the first two people created. And they've sinned against their Maker by eating fruit from the one tree in the Garden that was forbidden to them.

[11:05] And by taking of the fruit, they have forfeited the blessing that had been promised, promised eternal life. And they had brought upon themselves the curse that was threatened for disobedience, which was death.

In the day you eat of it, you will surely die. And so there was an immediate separation spiritually from God as sin came between them. And from that day on, physical death was at work in their bodies.

And one day, indeed, Adam died, Eve died. The wages of sin, the punishment of sin. It was death. But there was another death that happened that very day due to their sin.

It's a death that a speed reader might miss, but it's surely there. Because after they both had eaten the forbidden fruit, the Bible says that the Lord, or says that the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

That's the reflex response of guilt to cover up, to hide, to deny. And then the Lord comes and finds them out, hiding in the trees and exposes their sin and sets forth the curses for their sin and the gracious redemptive promise through the male seed of the woman.

[12:34] And then verse 20 of chapter 3 says, The Lord made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. In other words, their self-made coverings were insufficient.

God Himself made clothes for them. But notice, He didn't take some of the plants, the cotton, and make clothes for them. He didn't take the wool of sheep and make clothes for them.

But it was garments from animal skins. And the last I've checked, animals do not surrender their skin without first dying. In other words, there was a death that day in the Garden of Eden.

The first recorded shedding of blood was to cover the guilty pair. Now that's not man's idea of trying to earn God's favor.

How do we repair this problem? Well, let's think. Let's think real hard. Maybe if we killed an animal and shed blood, maybe God would be pleased with it. Not at all. This was God's idea.

[13:39] It was something He did. His provision for poor, helpless, guilty man. And now, a little later, we're in chapter 8 and we're inside a big boat, kids.

Outside. Well, outside is nothing but water. Because all the people of the earth had become so wicked that God said, I will cleanse the whole earth. And with a flood that covered the whole earth, He wiped out every living thing.

Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Because death is the punishment that our sins deserve.

And the only survivors on the whole earth were eight people on board this big boat. Noah and his immediate family.

And a whole lot of animals as well. Two of every kind. A male and female of every kind. And so there you are walking along and Noah's showing you what's in his boat.

[14:47] And there's two pigs. And there's two dogs. And there's two elephants. And then you come along and what is this? There's seven animals in this pen.

And seven in this pen. The Bible says that there was seven of every kind of clean animal.

And you say, why? Why this? And you wait a year for your answer when the waters had receded and the earth was dry and God called Noah and his family and the animals out of the ark.

The very first thing that Noah did. Did I say Adam? I don't know what I said. But when he called Noah and his family off the ark, the very first thing that Noah did was to sacrifice burnt offerings.

And he did so by taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds. That's why there were seven in those pens. Because they would be used in sacrifice.

[15:55] And we are to know that Noah and his family were spared from the curse of death at the flood. Not because they were better than everybody else. Not because they didn't deserve to be punished and only all those people out there did.

No, they deserved to receive the punishment of God as well. But the reason they're spared is because animals died in their place.

God was pleased to accept a sacrifice. A substitute life was taken instead of theirs. And on this basis, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord through sacrifice.

And we flip over to chapter 22 and now there's a man and his son climbing up a mountain. God had told Abraham to sacrifice his own son Isaac.

And as they're going along, Isaac says, here's the fire and here's the wood, but where's the lamb for burnt offering? Father? And Abraham said, God himself will provide the lamb for burnt offering, my son.

[17:02] And when they get to the top, the place of offering, he builds an altar and ties Isaac to the altar and reaches for the knife to put him to death.

And he's interrupted with the cry, Abraham, Abraham, do not lay a hand on the boy. And Abraham looks up and he sees a ram caught in the thickets with his horns caught in the thickets.

And the Bible says he went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering, listen to this, instead of his son. Instead of his son.

And again, we have an animal dying in the place of instead of another. That's substitution. And thereafter, it was said, on the mountain of the Lord, it will be provided.

The Lord will provide the lamb, pointing forward to some lamb that would be provided, some sacrifice, to die instead of others. We come to the next book of the Bible, the book of Exodus.

[18:10] And we're in chapter 12. And we're in Egypt, the same Egypt that's in the news these days. And Abraham's descendants are there. And they've multiplied into a large number.

And for hundreds of years, they've been captives there. They've been oppressed under slave labor. And God has come to set them free, to take them to the land of Canaan that had been promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But there's just one problem, and that's that the king of Egypt, Pharaoh, does not want to let them go. They're his labor force. Did you see that letter that was sent to Egypt?

From the Jews? Don't expect, you know, protect the pyramids because we're not going to come back and build them again.

From the Jews, the note was. Well, they were the labor force of Egypt. And they were oppressed.

[19:09] And God's come to make Pharaoh and the Egyptians willing to let them go. And the land is in ruins after experiencing nine plagues of judgment from heaven.

And the tenth plague that broke the back of Pharaoh's stubborn will was that the Lord himself would draw near in judgment. And again, it was death.

Death. At midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon.

Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night. And there was loud wailing in Egypt for there was not a house without someone dead.

Except, that is, for the houses of the Israelites there was no death there. But that's not exactly right either, is it?

[20:13] For actually there was a death in every house of the Israelites. the death of a slaughtered lamb whose blood was shed and smeared over every house, every doorway.

For God has said, when I see the blood I will pass over you. And we are to know that the lamb died instead of them. And God accepted its death instead of theirs.

These Israelites were not better people than the Egyptians. They too worshipped idols. They too turned their back on God. And if they got the penalty they deserved it would be death along with the Egyptians.

No, the reason they're spared is because another died in their place. And God was pleased to accept that in their stead. Because Israel, the whole of them, were God's firstborn.

And they're spared because of the death of a substitute. Now these pictures of sacrifice are not only piling up in number, they're also becoming clearer as to the meaning of a substitutionary curse-bearing sacrifice.

[21:31] And nowhere in the Old Testament is this point made more often and more clearly than in the book of Leviticus. Now this book was given to address a timeless problem.

How can a holy God dwell in the midst of sinful people? If that's not a problem to you, then you don't know how holy God is and you don't know how sinful you are.

But whenever you come to see those two realities, my sin, His holiness, you will be perplexed with the biggest problem in all of history, in all the Bible, how can this holy God ever live in the midst of sinful people?

And if ever that problem knocks on your door, you won't quit until you find the answer. Because there's nothing more important than that you should be in fellowship with this God and not under His wrath, but under His favor.

And so, that's the problem. And it's seen. He brought, God brought the Israelites out of Egypt.

[22:41] He says, I carried you on eagle's wings and brought you to Myself. I brought you to live in relationship with Me. Me to be your God, you to be My people. But they were sinful and God is holy and He hates sin and He curses sinners.

How's this going to work out? Well, the Lord told Moses in chapter 34 of Exodus, you go on up to the land flowing with milk and honey, but I will not go with you because you are a stiff-necked people and if I were to go with you, even for a moment, I might destroy you.

Do you see the problem? Do you sense it? God is not a safe traveling companion for sinners. If I go with you even for a moment, your stiff-neckedness will make me destroy you.

What's the answer to the problem? Well, God gives the answer. It's sacrifice. In the book of Leviticus is the how-to manual explaining the whole sacrificial system for His people and even the layout of Israel's camp had this lesson stamped on it.

God told them precisely how to lay out their tents and they'd move from one place to the next, but wherever they set up camp, it was always the same. You had all the tribes told where they were to pitch tent camp and right in the center was the tent of meeting, the tabernacle of the Lord where God Himself dwelt in the most holy place of that tent.

[24:22] You had God dwelling right in the midst of Israel, but He's holy and they're sinful. How's this going to work? I'll tell you how, He says. Read the book of Leviticus.

It's all about sacrifice. That's how it's going to happen. And it will only be that because of the continual sacrifices going on in the temple, in this tent of meeting, that I will dwell in the midst of you.

So, we look into this tent and it's a messy slaughterhouse. There's blood and guts. There's fires, burning animal carcasses. A sacrifice after sacrifice is being made so that sinful men could continue to live near the holy God without being consumed.

And the central purpose of the sacrifice was to make atonement, Leviticus tells us. To make atonement, at-one-ment, to bring God and men at one.

Whereas sin separated them. It's by sacrifice that they're made one. And one of the constants, you'll read many different kinds of animal sacrifices, but one of the constants in the many sacrifices was that the guilty sinner was to lay his hand on the head of the animal being sacrificed and God says, it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

[25:55] This is God's provision, you see. And when you lay your hand upon that sacrificial animal, I will accept it instead of you. Now, what's going on with his hand laid on its head?

Well, it's symbolically transferring the sin and guilt of the Israelite onto its substitute. And from that point on, that lamb, bull, goat, whatever it is, is treated as the Israelite deserved to be treated for his sin.

Because now the sin is transferred onto the substitute. And once the sin is transferred onto the substitute, what immediately happens is he's slaughtered. His throat is slit, blood, the life, blood is drained out of him.

He's chopped up and put on the altar and consumed. And all right in front of the Israelite who can only come to one conclusion, that's what should have happened to me.

And the only reason it didn't happen to me was because God was pleased to accept a substitute in my place. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

[27:20] And this sacrificial system then went on for hundreds and hundreds of years. And then when the time had fully come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, born under the law.

to redeem those under law. And after a life of perfect obedience to that law, he went to the cross, laid down his life and died.

And the New Testament does not leave us to guess as to the meaning of that cross and of that death. it presents it over and over to us as a substitutionary, curse-bearing sacrifice.

And that's precisely what we were meant to expect because we've read the Old Testament. And we've seen in Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and right on through, that's what God is saying. You see, what he was saying there was just a shadow cast back from this event at Calvary, Christ's death. So this death's meaning has been shined back into the Old Testament types and pictures.

[28:31] And that's why we would expect to find that this death is substitutionary and that it's curse-bearing. Those shadows were not misleading us.

They were rather leading us to the true substitute, the true curse-bearer. So whereas Abraham said to Isaac, the Lord himself will provide the Lamb, John the Baptist takes his finger and points and says, behold the Lamb.

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Yes, the Lord God has provided the Lamb. He did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all.

And whereas in Exodus God told the people to slaughter the lambs and apply the blood on the doorposts and when I see the blood I will pass over you in judgment.

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5-7 says, Christ, our Passover Lamb! that causes my judgment to pass over you.

[29:51] And the book of Hebrews drives this home over and over again. Christ's death is the real sacrifice to which these Old Testament sacrifices pointed. His is a better sacrifice with better blood speaking a better word bringing a better hope by which we draw near to God.

Here's the answer to man's problem of sin before a holy God. It's the substitute sacrifice of Jesus bearing the curse. And the New Testament just abounds in this language when it says Christ died for us.

That word for means on behalf of us. He wasn't dying for himself. He had no sins to be punished. No, he died for us. And when Jesus says in Matthew 28 and Matthew 20 and verse 28 that I came not to be served but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many.

That preposition for means instead of in the place of. I came to give my life in the place of many. To lay down my life on behalf of instead of many.

The whole idea of substitution is the innocent dying in the place of the guilty. And that's what Peter says. 1 Peter 3:18 Christ died for sins once for all the righteous for the unrighteous.

[31:26] The innocent for the guilty. It's substitution. We have it in basketball don't we? You've got your starters and then your substitutes.

We call them subs don't we? And at some point in the game the coach will say to one of these substitutes you go in for number 15. Maybe he's tired and needs a break.

Maybe he's not playing well. For whatever reason he goes in and he takes his place. He's now playing instead of him. He's back on the bench and his substitute is in for him.

he takes the place of the other. That's the idea of substitution. And believers we are to know as we look at the center cross on Golgotha that he went in for us.

When did he go in for us? He took our place. When our place was damnation he took it. And he suffered it.

[32:38] We were on death row. We were on hell row. Where God's justice was being poured out. And he went in for us and took it himself.

In my place condemned he stood. Sealed my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah. It was the place of God's judgment and Jesus said give me what he's got coming.

Leviticus alert. Leviticus alert. Remember how the sins of the guilty were transferred onto the head of the sacrificial victim and at that point the sin was transferred and the substitute was treated as the guilty Israelite deserved.

That's what happened at Calvary. what happened to our Savior for all of his people. Isaiah 53:6 we heard it read the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all.

He's laid them on the head of Jesus. There's a transference that has taken place and exchanged so real that my sins were no longer mine but his and that's not just true of my sins it's true of all of God's people of all time they were transferred onto this substitute's head what was the load that he bore to Calvary when he was made the sinner's substitute notice it's something God did to Christ the Lord God laid on him the iniquities of us all Paul puts it this way in 2nd Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us you see this transference is not something that we do it's what

[34:48] God does Luther says when our sins were placed upon him he became the greatest sinner that ever lived the greatest blasphemer the greatest adulterer the greatest thief because he becomes sin for all of his people and all their sins that they ever committed our merciful father sent his son into the world Luther says and said to his son you be Peter that denier you be Paul that persecutor blasphemer and cruel oppressor you be David that adulterer and murderer!

who ate the fruit in paradise you be the thief that hanged on the cross for his sins you be the one who committed all these sins of my people he became sin for us brothers and sisters he stood in our place Peter has it this way 1st Peter 2 24 he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so as you look at that middle cross and you see the son of God hanging there you must know that he is there bearing the sins of his people and once they were placed upon him he he himself was treated as I deserve to be treated for all eternity he got what I had coming for my sins and that's why he was pierced for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities and the punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his stripes we are healed you see it's substitution isn't it and it's curse bearing because the cross is a cursed place the cross is the place of the curse and we must ask then what is the holy

Jesus doing in a place like this a cursed place and Paul says in Galatians 3 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us as it is written cursed is everyone who is hanged!

a tree when you see him on the cross you're looking at someone who's cursed by God why did he go there for us that we might be spared of the curse saved from the curse you see he took my place not when I was just about to hear well done thou good and faithful servant enter in John no wasn't then he took my place when I was just about to hear depart from me you cursed and Jesus says I'm in I'm in for you John and he took the curse to rescue me from it he's drinking the cup that the sinner will drink forever in hell that's that's what he's feeling on the cross he was not play acting when he cried my God my

God why have you abandoned me he felt as abandoned as any sinner in hell feels and abandoned by the one who had loved him perfectly for all eternity and delighted in him he's now feeling abandoned forsaken it's as if hell came to calvary that day and all of its God forsakenness and agony and there's a veil held over do we understand everything that happened on that cross no even the sun grew dark hiding the scene as the earth grew dark with shades of hell there's much that's mystery that we don't understand the hymn writers speak of it we may not know we cannot tell what pains he had to bear but we believe it was for us he hung and suffered there none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed or how dark was the night that the [39:06] Lord passed through ere he found his sheep that was lost we don't know all that he suffered but he we do know that he suffered all that I would have suffered forever it takes hell to exegate calvary because he stood in and received it for me that's what it took to save me I learned something about my sin at the cross I learned that I am so bad that it takes the eternal son of God being damned by God in my place to make me right with God yes that's how I'm saved he takes the punishment and I get forgiven he satisfies God's wrath by taking it upon himself and I go free and he did it willingly here's my peace here's my security to know that all my sins past present and future have already been paid for in full the sacrifice is over friends it's not going on it's once for all it's a finished work isn't that a wonderful thing my sins have been paid for they're on the cross it's over the one sacrifice by my substitute bearing my curse he's taken away sin once for all here's my peace here's my access to

God this is how I can dwell with the holy God forever and ever through the blood of my sacrifice do you realize dear Christian as we were introduced at the beginning of this service that it's it's only because of Christ's sacrificial death on Calvary that we have any business being here today drawing near to God sinners just can't meet with God it's only through the blood of a sacrifice John says in 1st John 1 that's how we can walk in the light with him who has no darkness darkness! the blood of Jesus God son keeps cleansing us from all of our sin every step in fellowship I take with God is blood bought ground Jesus shed shed his blood that I might live in fellowship with him Christ died for sin once for all the righteous for the unrighteous to bring me to God and I enjoy that fellowship today and tomorrow every day because of what happened 2000 years ago on the cross that finished work here's my peace my security my access judgment's already fallen and he will never demand payment twice once at my dear substitute's hand and then again at mine this is the heart of the gospel you notice it's not about what we do or have done or should do the heart of the gospel isn't about even faith and repentance that's your response to the gospel the heart of the gospel is what

Jesus has done for sinners and it's over he's already done it he's done it all that's our resting place we can rest on that he died in their place and rose again and promises that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life this is the heart of the gospel and your response is but to

believe and faith is just the empty hands that receive this Jesus and his sacrifice faith is not some work that you get rewarded by eternal life no faith is just the empty hands saying oh God be merciful to me a sinner for Jesus sake and give me what he won and what he worked for on Calvary that's faith it's all looking away from anything in me and continually looking to what he's done for me and it's all a demonstration of

God's love so we're looking at the center cross and we're saying why is he in a place like this well he's standing in for people and he's getting what they had coming the curse of death spiritual physical he's getting it all and we say why and the Bible answers because of love God demonstrates his love for us in this and that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us folks this is the greatest demonstration of the love of God this is how we know what love is Jesus Christ laid down his life for us the father gave his own son to be the propitiating sacrifice for our sins it's the love of the father and giving the son it's the love of the son how can we not love him who first loved us to the death of the cross that's what

[44 : 31] Paul says this love of Christ compels me to no longer live for myself but for him who died and was raised to life and who died for me I'll live for him who died for me you know when you think about it true and false religion grow out of two different motivations there's guilt driven religion and there's a lot of it going on today people are in church because they'd feel guilty if they weren't they're afraid you see they know they're headed to judgment and they want to try to make themselves a little better in God's sight and so they're there in church today and they might have even thrown some money in the plate and done something kind for a neighbor it's all driven by guilt and fear but there's a whole another religion that's called saving religion and it's grace driven it's grace driven we do things because Jesus saved us period he's paid it all for me and that's why

I'm here to praise him today and that's why I want to give of myself because of what he's given to me it's driven by a sense of what he has done and if that will not move us to love him and serve him and obey him and trust him what will if you bought a Hebrew servant he was to be he was to be your servant for six years and then he was to go free but if after six years of service the servant declared I love my master and do not want to go free then the master was to take him to the judge and take him over to a door or to the door post and drive an awl through his ear and forever he would be the servant of that master earmarked as his servant Christ dying love has made us willing servants for life we love our master we count his service to be perfect freedom I cannot work my soul to save for that my Lord has done but I can work like any slave for love of God's dear son do we know anything of that love compellingness living under the spell of Jesus dying love so you're guilty of high treason against the king and the sentence is pronounced execution by hanging you're brought to the scaffold and just before they lower the noose over your neck another steps onto the scaffold and says

I'll die for him you're pushed aside the noose comes over his head his life is taken and you go free how do you feel at that moment do you feel like your life has just been given back to you you feel like one alive from the dead you know you should have been dead and here I am alive how do you live this new life well you live it to honor the one that gave his life for you let me take care of his widow and his children let me do what I can for his cause who gave everything for me and that's it all that we do driven by grace Paul says I can never get over this fact that the son of God loved me and gave himself for me let's give ourselves afresh to him let's bring our hearts our ears to the door post even as we sing this closing hymn and offer ourselves up afresh to our Lord Jesus number 195 alas can it be true could this possibly be that my savior bled and died for me let's stand as we sing 195 let's pray for our father in heaven how gracious you are to have sent your son and to have met us again with this this old old story we confess lord that thou considering it often this is reality that we drift from and though we've heard of the cross hundreds of times before that our hearts are not melted in love and thanks and praise as we ought so don't abandon us don't leave us to ourselves bring this message home to us and hold us in its grip that we would be men and women boys and girls controlled by the dying love of Jesus who now ever lives again because he rose victorious for us bring some to trust today in that blood that will cause your wrath to pass over for all eternity we ask in Jesus name and for his praise amen