

The Dying Love of Christ

by Thomas Reade

The sermon explores the profound love of Christ as the Good Shepherd who sacrifices himself for our eternal salvation.

Scripture: Psalm 22:1, Isaiah 53:5, Zechariah 14:9, John 3:16, John 10:11, 1 Corinthians 15:57, Philippians 2:6, Philippians 2:10, Revelation 5:12, Revelation 19:6

Topics: "Christ's Sacrifice", "Divine Love"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches about the dying love of Christ, emphasizing Jesus as the good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. The sermon delves into the majesty and humiliation of Christ, reflecting on His sacrifice, redemption, and the eternal blessings He offers. Reade urges listeners to contemplate the immense love and mercy of the Savior, who willingly endured suffering and death for sinful humanity, and encourages a deep, heartfelt response of love, praise, and obedience to Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Transcript

10. THE DYING LOVE OF CHRIST

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep." John 10:11

The parable of the good Shepherd is beautiful and affecting. The Jews could fully enter into the character of a shepherd. They were well acquainted with the cares and hazards of a pastoral life, in a country where beasts of prey so often invaded the fold. This imagery was familiar to them from the Psalms of David and the writings of the Prophets. "The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name." What a lovely picture of a shepherd and his flock, applied with such exquisite feeling by David to himself.

"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you that lead Joseph like a flock; you that dwell between the cherubim, shine forth." Such was the prayer of the Psalmist to the God of Israel, that he would graciously vouchsafe to his people a shepherd's care. "Thus says the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep." "I will feed them in a good pasture." "I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost." What can be more gracious than this manifestation of the divine solicitude for his chosen people.

Jesus styles himself the good Shepherd, thus bearing the very character in which the God of Israel was revealed to his Church. Christ is Jehovah our Shepherd; the good Shepherd, who gives his life for the sheep. His work of love is sweetly described by himself. "I have come to seek and to save that which was lost." "I know my sheep and am known by them." "My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. So no one can take them from me. The Father and I are one."

That heart must be harder than adamant, which can hear unmoved these gracious words from the lips of eternal love. Oh! that my heart may be melted and subdued by these expressions of infinite mercy. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Blessed indeed are those who form a part of this redeemed flock, purchased by the blood of the good Shepherd.

The majesty and humiliation of Christ, his Godhead and Manhood, will form a subject for admiring contemplation, a theme for adoring praise, throughout the ages of eternity. How am I lost in wonder, when I begin to meditate on the grace of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty might be made rich. When I consider the dignity of his nature, one with the Father, by whom all things were made, and by whom all things held together; in whom I live, and move, and have my being- when I contemplate his transcendent greatness, his infinite perfections, his immensity, his eternity- when I reflect upon his unspeakable felicity, the overflowings of his love to myriads of angelic spirits who surround his throne, happy in his presence, and delighting to perform his will- when I thus contemplate the ever-glorious Jesus, how am I lost in wonder and amazement, when, bending down to earth, I behold him an infant of days, lying in a manger, working as a carpenter, not having a place wherein to lay his head, mocked, scourged, spit upon, and at last, with every aggravation that malice could invent, nailed to a cross, and pierced with a spear!

Great indeed is the mystery of godliness. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" that Word which was with God, and was God. How can we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? In the fullness of time Christ came, emptying himself of all but love, that, as the good Shepherd, he might give his life for the sheep. He came to magnify the law, by bearing the curse for us, by shedding his blood for us. He came to make it honorable, by fulfilling all its requirements in our nature, and by his sinless obedience, even unto death, to work out a righteousness for us. He came to reconcile us unto God, to save us from going down to hell, to purify our corrupted nature, and to make us partakers of his everlasting glory.

Oh my soul, never cease to love and praise this all-gracious Redeemer, whose love is unspeakable, whose riches of grace are unsearchable, whose purchased blessings are eternal. View him in his glory with profoundest adoration. View him in his abasement with deepest humiliation. Behold, by faith, the Lamb of God, that Lamb of God's providing, extended on the Tree, his body covered with bloody gore, his ears assailed with the scoffs of his executioners, his soul pierced with the sword of justice, which then awaked against the shepherd, against the man that is Jehovah's fellow. Behold this sacred victim bleeding on the altar, as a sacrifice for your sins, in dreadful conflict with the powers of darkness, groaning under the tremendous load of human guilt, which would have overwhelmed all except a God Incarnate.

Behold him in this most pitiable condition, at this mysterious hour, forsaken by his heavenly Father: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" O doleful cry! O mysterious exclamation! Sin, what have you done, you murderer of the Prince of life! For whom did Jesus bleed and die? for sinners, rebellious, ungrateful sinners; for me, the chief of sinners! Oh! my soul, melt into contrition at the foot of the Cross;

behold what terrible effects your vile apostasy has produced; and never cease to love this gracious Savior, who, in boundless mercy and compassion, divested himself of his celestial glory, which he had with the Father before the world was, that he might take upon him the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of man, might humble himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!

O blessed Jesus, increase my faith, inflame my love, animate my hope, and stimulate my obedience, until my frail endeavors here below are perfected in heaven. Then shall I sing your praise in purer strains; then shall I proclaim your dying love with all the ransomed throng, who, on their golden harps, forever strike the chord, "Worthy is the Lamb."

You men of the world, grasping after sordid gain; you votaries of pleasure, dancing on the borders of destruction; you aspiring souls, whose eyes are fixed upon the pinnacles of power; you self-righteous professors, who make your works the sole foundation of your trust- look at the suffering Jesus! You hear of his dying love, but you regard it not. Ah! for a moment listen to these moving words, prophetically issuing from the lips of the pale, tortured, agonized Redeemer, who, beholding your cold, your cruel indifference to his sorrows endured for your sakes, thus addresses you: "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look around and see if there is any suffering like mine, which the Lord brought on me in the day of his fierce anger."

O my soul, pray earnestly for those thoughtless, senseless beings, that the Lord the Spirit may smite every rocky heart, and cause the waters of godly sorrow to gush out in plenteous streams- yourself, the hardest rock of all!

Though Isaiah complained: "Lord, who has believed our report." Though Paul reiterated the complaint; still bright days are in reserve for the church of God. The prophecies glow with descriptions of glory. Language fails to depict the fullness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ. How rich, how varied, are the promises made to Christ, for in him, they are all yes and amen, to the glory of God. As the stars in the firmament, they shine throughout the pages of Holy Writ. Faith, standing like Moses on the top of Pisgah, views the length and breadth of Immanuel's Land.

While mourning over the world's dreary map, as presented to your view, cast your eyes, O my soul, over the predicted realm of the glorified Messiah! "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." "They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the Lord." "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "I shall give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession." "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before you." "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen says the Lord of Hosts." "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in: and so all Israel shall be saved." "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying; Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigns." "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

Truly, when this period arrives, it will be as life from the dead. The word is spoken, and cannot be reversed; for Jesus, who is the Truth, has declared, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." To his ancient Church, the Almighty declared: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." And what is his counsel? what is his pleasure? That the dying, risen, glorified Redeemer shall see his seed, shall prolong his days, shall see of the travail of his soul, shall be satisfied, shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities, shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul unto death, was numbered with the transgressors, bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The Man of Sin, with his anti-Christian power; the false Prophet, with his licentious code; the votaries of gods innumerable, with rites so bloody and obscene, shall fall before the Cross, shall vanish as the mist before the sun. The cry will then be heard- Babylon has fallen! has fallen, to rise no more. The Gentiles shall then cast their idols to the moles and to the bats. The proud crescent of Mahomet shall then wane and disappear from beneath these heavens. The Jews shall then embrace the crucified Messiah, as their long-expected king. Then truth and righteousness will prevail. "On that day even the harness bells of the horses will be inscribed with these words: Set apart as Holy to the Lord. And the cooking pots in the Temple of the Lord will be as sacred as the basins used beside the altar. In fact, every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be set apart as holy to the Lord Almighty. All who come to worship will be free to use any of these pots to boil their sacrifices. And on that day there will no longer be traders in the Temple of the Lord Almighty."

Then will all who worship God, worship him in spirit and in truth. Jesus will reign, the universal King, for "the King of the whole earth shall he be called." Lord, hasten your kingdom; take unto you your great power, until every heart shall crown you Lord of all.

Soon must I quit this transitory scene;

Soon will the sweetest bonds of love dissolve!

To cease from man, from earth my heart to wean,

Before death o'ertake me, be my firm resolve.

Great God! how just are your divine decrees;

How just the doom for man's rebellious sin;

The curse is uttered- and cold death shall seize

The race of Adam, until the world he win.

But You have said- Your right hand shall unbar

Sepulchral caverns through your Spirit's power;

Lord, we confide, amid this doleful war,

On You, whose grace shall bring Redemption's hour.

O blessed Hope! triumphant Faith divine!

'Tis Jesus calls us to partake his joy;
Christian advance- the Victory now is thine,
The conquering Savior shall your foe destroy.
He lives on high- we soon shall see his face,
Securely stationed on the heavenly plain;
Where, clad with beams of his reflected grace,
Our souls, with Jesus, shall forever reign.

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