

# Highly Favored in the Beloved, Ephesians 1:5-6

by Tim Conway

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*We are highly favored by God because we are in the beloved, and this favor is a result of God's intense love for His Son.*

**Duration:** 58:26

**Scripture:** Psalm 22:16-18, Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 27:46, John 3:16, Ephesians 1:6, Colossians 1:13-14

**Topics:** "Divine Love", "Redemption Through Christ"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the profound love of God as seen through the term 'Beloved' used for Jesus Christ, emphasizing the intense divine tenderness and the sacrificial nature of Christ's redemption. It explores the depth of God's love in sending His Beloved Son to suffer and die for the salvation of sinners, highlighting the high cost of redemption and forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

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## Transcript

Well, if you would, turn with me in your Bibles to Ephesians 1. I want to complete v. 6. We began to look at it last week as we thought about to the praise of the glory of God's grace. We talked about praising. We talked about God seeking worshipers.

Let's read Ephesians 1, v. 5, and 6. Picking up the last two words of v. 4. In love, He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace. We looked at that. That's not an adjective.

That's a noun. The glory of His grace. These are the words I want to deal with today.

With which He has blessed us in the Beloved. With which. What is the which referring to? His grace is that with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

And what I want us to think about right here in the first few minutes is the word blessed. He has blessed us. But I want us to think.

I want us to do a bit of a word study here. Blessed. Now listen to this.

And I know not all of you have the ESV, the English Standard Version. The New American Standard says this, speaking about His grace. The glory of His grace.

Which He freely bestowed. The ESV says blessed us. The New American Standard says He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Now it's interesting. I cut my teeth on the King James Bible. Listen, The King James reads this way.

Wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. Now accepted. That sounds a little bit different than blessed or freely bestowed.

The translators of the King James Version basically followed Tyndale right here. But you know what's interesting? They also followed Tyndale in his translation of Luke 1.28. This word is only used twice in all of our Bibles. It's used here in Ephesians 1.6 and it's used in Luke 1.28. The translators of the King James Bible followed Tyndale there.

Where the King James Version reads this way. Hail, thou that art highly favored. Why they departed, highly favored in one place, accepted in the other.

It's interesting. I think the KJVs should have stayed consistent. Highly favored.

You know what's very interesting is I could not personally find a single lexicon that gave a meaning to the word here as accepted. And what accepted does is it makes it sound like we're perhaps dealing with the doctrine of justification. We're accepted in Christ on the basis of Christ's merits.

But this is not speaking about necessarily our acceptance. There's a fuller meaning here. Listen to how the Holman Christian Standard Bible renders Ephesians 1.6. To the glory of His grace that He favored us with in the Beloved.

It's the word karitoo. Now what's interesting about that is grace is karis. It's a word that is in the same word group as grace.

I mean you could almost literally read it. To the glory of His grace with which He graced us in the Beloved. Listen to Thayer's lexicon.

It means to pursue with grace. It's the idea of somebody's over there and God sets His sights on them and says, I am going to go after them with my grace. I'm going to track them down.

You see that's really what happened with Mary, right? I mean brethren, isn't this what Christianity is? It's God coming to us. Scripture says there's none that seeks God. We need to get this idea out of our head of Christianity being that people just woke up one day and said, you know, well I think I'm going to go after God.

As though they're initiating this whole thing and are going to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. They're going to reach out to Him. They're going to search Him.

This isn't how Christianity is. Christianity is us. We heard it from Hector, dead, Ephesians 2.1, dead in trespasses and sins.

We're out there in our deadness. And you know what the truth is? He loved his sin. I loved my sin.

Pete loved his sin. We loved it until He came and made us not love it. We loved it and we despised Christ until He came and by His grace He caused us to behold loveliness in the Beloved because we didn't care for Him at all.

We liked our sin much better. Brethren, the picture is Mary going along in life. Mary did not have, you know, somebody's even got some herbal stuff up here, hand sanitizer.

She wasn't going along and saying, you know, I think I'm going to take the herb that might make a virgin pregnant. Make a virgin pregnant with the Messiah. You know what was happening? She's going along in life and suddenly there is Gabriel.

She's terrified and he says, Hail, highly favored. That's how it happens. God comes to us.

He surprises us. I mean, isn't that what happened? I was going through life in 1990 and I was loving my sin and loving that life. And when God, the truth is when God first came and began to convict me, I wanted Him to leave me alone.

In fact, I think I said as much. Just leave me alone. But see how it is? He pursues us with His grace.

Even though I was saying, back off! I don't want that. Just let me be happy with my old life again. He says, uh-uh, I'm pursuing you with my grace.

That's exactly the kind of... It means to pursue with grace, to compass with favor, to honor with blessings. The commentators, Jamison Fawcett Brown, say that this word means that God has embraced us in the arms of His grace. One other commentator says He freely engraced us.

This verb only appears twice. Once, with Mary, hail, highly favored one. That's the King James.

But they really should have brought that over because that is exactly the meaning here. Hail, highly favored ones in the beloved. The Lord is with you.

That's what was said to her. Paul is using the same exact word that was used with Mary to describe those of us who are predestined for adoption. Same word that the angel used there.

What does that mean? What does it mean when it's used with Mary? It means Mary, highly favored. God has singled you out. Singled you out of all the women in the world to carry and give birth to the Messiah.

It's the same thing. Highly favored. Because brethren, I'll tell you this, to be saved by Christ is a greater favor than to give birth to the Christ.

Christ, highly favored. One of the commentators actually would translate that to the glory of His grace with which He graciously favored us in the beloved. He favored us.

He did it. This is what makes the salvation offered in our Bibles so absolutely unique and separate and different from everything else. So I just want you to get a feel for that word as we take off here and we're going to look at another very important word.

Brethren, it's interesting, online, I have all these commentaries available to me. I love studylight.org. If you have never checked that out, it is a list of all these commentaries. Now, for whatever reason, the guy who puts this together, he actually throws in like one Catholic commentator and he throws in one Church of

Christ commentator.

I read the Church of Christ guy and he's talking about being highly favored in the beloved and he's got to talk baptism. I thought, he totally missed this. He totally missed.

I mean, he's talking about faith and baptism. Brethren, we're as saved by faith and we should be baptized. And Peter even says we're saved by baptism.

It's an appeal to God with this conscience that is right before God and it's calling out. But brethren, I'll tell you, that's missing it even to go to faith and repentance right here. The idea is that what he's showing us is our highly being favored doesn't have to do with us.

It has to do with being in the beloved. That is the issue. If you lose sight of Christ in all this, you're really losing sight of what the emphasis is.

Brethren, my focus right now wants to go off this word favored, accepted. In your Bible, however it comes out, highly favored, freely bestowed, blessed us with. I want to move to the word beloved.

I come to Scripture and I'm constantly, before I prepare to preach, I'm asking questions of the text. Why? I'm asking questions why? Like verse 6, in the beloved. Well brethren, if you look back at verse 1, Paul doesn't address Christ as the beloved, but as Christ Jesus.

And he talks, you see Christ Jesus. You see Christ Jesus again in that verse. In verse 2, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 3, you see the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ. In 4, there's a pronoun, in Him. In 5, He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.

In 6, why doesn't He just say the same? Why doesn't He say that He has blessed us or highly favored us in Christ? I mean, I wonder that. He's been using it so frequently. And let's just talk about that a second.

Do you notice how much He keeps going back? You know what's interesting to me? Is in the first part of this, and we dealt with this in the past. How important it is that we start with God the Father. Because that's what Paul does here.

He shows us the Father. He shows us God the Father. And God the Father has a purpose and He has a will.

And in the beginning, He is choosing and He is predestinating who will stand before Him in love and purity. And who's going to be adopted into this holy, divine family. And we see this.

We see God the Father is behind this. And He is the one that is coordinating this whole plan. But even when the focus goes to the Father.

And what the Father is doing in the part He's playing in our salvation. Paul is hitting us with Christ over and over and over and over again. Has that jumped out at you? I think sometimes we can become so... I mean, there's so much of it that you almost can read and begin to miss it.

But it's as though Paul is saying to us here, you don't want to forget Christ in your salvation. He's not letting us do that. He just keeps striking the same note over and over and over.

Why? Brethren, there's a text in Acts chapter 4 that says that there is salvation in none other. There's none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. Brethren, this is the issue.

He keeps bringing us back again and again. He's setting an example for us. You know what it tells us? We must never speak of salvation except we speak much of Christ.

Don't talk about coming to God without speaking much about Christ. Don't talk about making it to heaven. Don't talk about these things except you bury it in all manner of reference to Christ.

We've got to go there. Brethren, there is no standing before God without being in Christ. There is no blessing, every blessing in the heavenly places, unless we are in Christ.

There is no holiness and blamelessness before Him unless we're in Christ. There's no adoption except it's through Jesus Christ. There is no, call it acceptance, call it being highly favored, unless we are in the Beloved.

And brethren, what it makes me recognize is this, don't talk to people about faith and leave Christ out. Don't talk to people about Christianity and leave Christ out. Don't talk to people about the church and leave Christ out.

Don't talk to people about repentance and leave Christ out. You know what Paul shows us? You know what he will not allow? It's a Christless Christianity. Not at all.

It's in the Beloved. But here's the thing, what makes verse 6 so unique is that instead of speaking of Christ or Jesus Christ or the Lord Jesus Christ or using a pronoun like in Him, here at the end of verse 6 we have this, that He has favored us or He has blessed us in the Beloved. Now here's what I find, I already told you, this term is found nowhere else in our Bibles except Luke 1. Paul doesn't use this term anywhere else in Ephesians or in any of his writings.

You see, that strikes me. As I'm studying and preparing, here's a name of Christ, a title that Paul in all of his writings only chooses to use right here. And I recognize this.

This isn't like you and me writing where sometimes we're kind of reaching for something that might seem nice. This is a man under inspiration. This is a guy sharing the very truth of God with us.

His use of terminology is not random. And so I'm asking the question, why Paul? I mean, why here? Why would you do this? Why only once? Now I don't know brethren, but I'm kind of surmising that it's almost like this title is too sacred even for an inspired apostle to use in a common fashion. I mean, let's think about this word.

God speaks from heaven only three times in our New Testament. And I'm not counting the stuff that you find in Revelation. But I'm just saying, when Jesus walked this earth, God audibly spoke three times.

Once, He spoke in John 12. You remember? That's where Jesus said, Father, glorify Your name. And how did the Father respond? Anybody remember? I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.

Now what's interesting about that is that He doesn't address His Son specifically. I mean, He's speaking to Him, but He doesn't use a title or a name in addressing Him. On the other two occasions, He does.

Do you know what those two occasions are? At His baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration. And I'll tell you this, those early Christians knew. The Apostle Paul knew.

Those early disciples who had walked with Christ, they told the story over and over again. You can go to... I mean, you see there when Peter's writing his epistles, he's talking about the glory they saw up there on that mountain. He never forgot that.

Those disciples told the story everywhere. That when they wrote the Gospels and when they wrote their epistles and when they were talking to Christians around this world, when they were telling what happened, when they were telling what they observed when they walked with Christ, they never forgot. Because you see, there were certain seasons when suddenly the veil would be pulled back and some glory.

Could you imagine the Father speaking? They're there with Christ, and suddenly a voice comes from heaven. And in those two accounts, God used this term in addressing His Son. Either in speaking directly to Him, You are My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Or speaking to His disciples, He is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him. The Father uses this.

And you know what's interesting to me? The Father has at His disposal... God, the Father has a perfect command of every language. And out of all the terminology at His disposal, He uses this term to describe His Son. Beloved.

Beloved. When two people... Just think about it. I was thinking about this.

Have you ever seen a situation where two people are really fond of each other? They love each other. Intensely love each other. And they have a pet name for one another.

Or we call them terms of endearment. And one uses it to address the other. If you as an outsider come along and use that term, you better be very careful.

In fact, often it might not be appropriate at all. Have you ever seen that? Where somebody from outside actually comes along and uses one of the terms that is a term of endearment among these two, and somebody from the outside comes and addresses one of them with such terminology? It's almost like you get the feeling it's like that here. Where Paul, in all of his writings, will only reach out and pull in this term once.

And I think it is so significant as to why he did it. At first, I was kind of grappling for why. Why? Why here? You know, he could have done it anywhere, couldn't he? But then I saw it.

I saw it as I was searching Colossians. Colossians is very similar in many ways. It's a similar letter to Ephesians.

You find some of the same ideas over there. And it was in cross-referencing them that it really came to light. It jumped out at me.

Brethren, I view this as kind of like a picture of treasure. And imagine all these precious stones. A great treasure, but in the midst of that treasure is one stone more rare than all the others.

That's what this word beloved is like. And Paul reaches out and he grabs that stone of rarity because he only uses it this one time. The thing that I want you to understand here is the term beloved is not a noun.

It's actually a verb participle. And it implies a noun that isn't there. It's like saying that you could take the B-E off of this.

Instead of saying beloved, you could say loved. It's like saying that we have been blessed in the loved. The loved what? There's a noun that's implied.

It's just not there. Beloved is loved with a B-E on the front. The B-E is an intensification.

It's old English. It intensifies a word. Maybe you're familiar with other words that have the B-E on the front like beware or bewail or bestir or bemoan or bedazzle.

When you add that, it intensifies it. Its meaning is to eminently love. It's an intensification of love.

But a noun is assumed. We're highly favored because we're in the loved or the beloved. The beloved what? I mean, certainly the term that is implied is son.

Because like I say, Paul well knew. He well knew what the voice from heaven spoke. He well knew that when the term beloved was used, it went hand in hand with this.

In fact, there's a similar usage. Paul doesn't use the same term, but he uses a similar terminology over in Colossians. We're going to look at it in just a few minutes.

But where that idea comes out, God speaking, this is My beloved Son. My beloved Son. Paul is undoubtedly taking his cue from what he knows is there in the Gospels, from what he knows those disciples that were in the Lord before him, what stories they would have told about what they heard and how God addressed the Son.

Paul well knew those accounts. He well knew of the baptism, and the Spirit descending, and the voice that came, and Peter, James, and John, and how they were just amazed. Brethren, each time the veil was drawn back and the voice of God audibly echoed across this landscape, they were given a glimpse into glory.

And you have to recognize, when God speaks about the Son, it's like there's an intensity of love. It's like you get this feeling of the Father looking with such delight with Him. I am well pleased, My beloved.

This is the object of My love. My Son. My beloved Son.

You are My beloved Son, or My Son, the beloved it can be. Well pleased. Paul knew that God had chosen this terminology out of all the language that could have possibly been chosen.

And you think about the beloved Son. You think with me about the terminology that we find. In John 1.14, you don't need to turn there, but at times Scripture uses a term.

Monogenes. Sometimes we translate that begotten. The KJV, the New KJV translate that the only begotten Son.

It's extremely contested whether the begotten should be there, but that's not the issue. I don't, some places, some translations say the only Son. But I'll tell you this, what this draws us to is that Christ is the

only one of His kind.

He's in a class by Himself. Utterly unique. There is none other like Him.

When you drop down to 1.18, like the ESV says, He's the only God in the bosom or at the side of His Father. He makes Him known. The KJV calls Him the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.

He declares the Father. Brethren, if you just think about that term bosom. I mean, maybe, I don't know, if you're not familiar with it, maybe you almost want to smile or laugh when you hear it.

It is a precious term. It is the Son, I mean the bosom. You just look at that term.

It calls it the area between the arms. And I don't imagine the arms like this. I just imagine the arms out like this.

It's the area between the arms. That's where the Son has eternally dwelled. And He comes into this world.

He leaves that. He leaves the glory that He had with His Father before the world began. There was a glory.

You think of what Scripture says. He is the radiance of the glory of God. He radiates.

He declares the Father. When you see Christ, what you see is God declaring Himself. Behold Him.

I'm well pleased with Him. Look at Him. When you look at Him, what you're beholding is Him in whom the whole fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell bodily.

This is the very image of God. Beloved. Loved.

My Beloved. Well, brethren, in fact, you find terminology about Him that describes Him as the eternally generated One. Origen was the first to use that kind of terminology in describing Christ as though He was eternally generated by God from eternity past.

Eternal generation. Eternally begotten. How do we even describe that? We think about a man and a woman coming together and a child is conceived and there's a begetting of a child.

Obviously, we don't want to bring in some human construction behind this. But what you do want to imagine is this. What it intends to imply.

Listen, those early fathers were grappling. See, we've got Robert Raymond on our shelf and we've got this systematic theology over here. We can go look at Hodge and what he said.

Brethren, we've got resources from 2,000 years. But imagine in the beginning. They're going into Scripture and they're saying, in the beginning, He was with God.

And He was God. He's with God. He was God.

Okay, what do we do with that? He was in the bosom of the Father. He declares Him. He came into the world.

He took upon Himself flesh. He's God. He's the Son.

The Father delights in Him. Did He have a beginning? He had a beginning as a man, but before that, He was with the Father. They're looking at this and they're trying to... Father, Son, but He's God.

God can't change. They're trying to find definition. And somebody like Origen says, you know, eternal generation.

That's how we'll describe it. But it's this. My Son, not too long ago, we went to the restaurant where He works.

And the girl working behind the counter said, oh yeah, I can see it. He looks like you. You see, I beget a Son and I beget to Him my humanity, many of my characteristics.

In the same way, God the Father begets a Son, though it be eternal because you can't go to a date when He came forth. But He's begotten by the Father in such a way that in the same way I communicate to my Son, my humanity and characteristics and attributes about myself. So in the same way, the Son is begotten or eternally generated by the Father so that God the Father communicates His deity to His Son.

The Nicene Creed says, God of God, light of light, very God of very God. This is the Beloved. He's none other than the substance, the very substance of eternal substance of God.

The only Son, the only begotten of the Father, the eternal Son. And it's like when God would express what He feels. Because the terminology you use when you talk to one another, it's expressive.

And when God expresses as completely and as perfectly as human language allows just what this One is to Him, the One who is a reflection of His own glory, no other terminology does God the Father find more fitting in the divine mind than this, my Beloved Son. Brethren, what we need to remember is who it is that came to rescue us from our sin. Because I'll tell you this, I'm asking the question, why at the end of verse 6? Why there? And of course, we have a tendency, especially because we're preaching, I'm preaching this in order.

There's a real tendency to think most about what's gone before. But you know what happened? I got to looking over at Colossians where the next closest expression to this is found in Paul's writing. Anything close to this, just these two times in all of his writing.

Look over in Colossians. I want you to see this. Hold your finger there in Ephesians 1 because I want you to compare this.

Keep a finger in Ephesians 1 and with your other, go over to Colossians 1. You see, the significance isn't so much what's already been said. It's that Paul is coming to a transition in Ephesians where he's going to turn the focus now. Up to this point, he has primarily been focusing on what the Father does.

At the end of verse 6, the transition is coming. It's taking place to begin to talk about the Son's primary place in our salvation. It's got to do more with what's to follow than what has preceded in the fact that this terminology comes.

Why here? Why, beloved, here? Well, notice Colossians 1 verses 13 and 14. Because you have almost the same thing that's happening in Ephesians. God has delivered us from the domain of darkness.

Colossians 1 verses 13 and 14, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. Now, this is literally the Son of His love. The ESV has beloved, but it's not an adjective.

It's a noun. It's the Son of His love. It's the closest terminology in Paul's writing to the Beloved that we find over in Ephesians 1 verse 6. But now notice this.

As soon as he uses this terminology, he says almost precisely what he says after he uses it in Ephesians 1 verse 6. Notice this. The Son of His love in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Now notice that.

Redemption and forgiveness. Now go back to Ephesians and notice this. Ephesians 1 verse 6, with which He has blessed us or highly favored us in the Beloved.

Verse 7, in Him we have redemption through His blood. The forgiveness of our trespasses. It's almost identical.

Brethren, you know what it's telling me? I mean, I recognized in all of Paul's writings, he uses this terminology to introduce redemption and forgiveness. And brethren, what he's doing undoubtedly is he means to show us the measure of God's love for us. He takes the choice gem, I mean the rarest, of all the gems in the terminology by which he may call Christ, and he sets it forth.

And see, you look at it and you see the first thing you do is look at it and you recognize, wow, that is a valuable gem. And then the next thing he says is, He gave it for you for your redemption and for your forgiveness of sins. You've got to be kidding me.

In all of his writings, he uses this term Beloved once. He uses the Son of His love, which is almost the same thing. And in both cases, immediately after the rarity of such a name, the preciousness of the very terminology, the term of holy endearment and divine tenderness used by the Father for the Son.

It's like communicating, look at the preciousness between, look at the intensity of the divine love for the Son. You were redeemed and forgiven because God didn't spare Him. This is meant to throw you in the back of your seat.

This is meant to floor you right at this point. Beloved, what this does is it shows, it's contrast. It's glory and you, the leper, ransomed, redeemed, pardoned.

Your iniquities washed away. Paul would have us to think of the sweet intimacy between Father and Son, the intensity of which God loves the Son with all of His divine being. And then this, God has a Son of His love.

God has a Beloved in the bosom and He let Him go. He didn't spare Him. God didn't spare the Beloved for a leper between His arms.

And He didn't hold the Beloved, He didn't hold Him back. I mean, when John comes along and he says, in this the love of God was made manifest, that God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. Or he says, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

Brethren, we have redemption and forgiveness, not from some cheap gesture by God. I'll tell you this, the people that just think God just sweeps sin under the rug, they have no idea what God did. None.

Because the Beloved Son came from heaven, a Lamb for the sacrificial slaughter. If you want to know how to properly estimate God's love for us, behold the Beloved, bosom, God held Him tight. The Beloved, eternally in the bosom of the Father, enjoying the love, the glory, the joy, the smile.

There was such delight. Brethren, if anything this tells us, God didn't save us because there was some void in His bosom that He needed to fill. It was full.

The Son of His love. That eternal Trinity was quite happy, and content, and full without us. I mean, He was in the embrace of the Father when Scripture says, if He didn't spare His only Son, He didn't spare Him.

How can that even be? He didn't spare Him. In the fullness of time, the Beloved is sent forth to be born of a woman, of a virgin, to be born under the law, and we can just hasten right past the manger, and we can hasten past Him stooping, becoming weak, taking upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh. Brethren, can you see Him? I mean, you have to think, brethren.

Think! This God from heaven who spoke to Christ and called Him His Beloved Son, or the Son, the Beloved One. He's watching. He let Him go.

He sent Him. He didn't spare Him. He's watching.

You see Him there in the garden? And here is one distressed. Bloody sweat. This is the Beloved.

And you need to see Him. The Beloved, He's contemplating the horrors of Golgotha, and His body can't keep its own blood inside because of the strain. And the Father lets Him endure that.

That's not even the cross yet. That's just anticipation. This is the Beloved.

And why is He doing this? He's doing this for the joy that's set before Him. He's doing this to redeem a people that they might be adopted sons of God, that they might be brought to stand holy before God. It's the Beloved.

And God the Father is watching. He's tracking. He's well pleased with Him.

He's watching every motion of this. He's accused. I mean, He's taken.

He goes out of the garden. He's captured. He's taken away.

He's accused. Brethren, they spit on Him. They spit on Him.

The Father is looking. This One whom He held in His arms and His bosom, the Beloved, they're spitting on Him. This is the only begotten Son of God.

Glory. All it took was slightly pulling back. That glory burst forth there on the Mount of Transfiguration.

They spit on Him. They hit Him. They put a bag on His head.

They accuse Him. They condemn Him. They ship Him off to Pilate.

Pilate sends Him to Herod. Herod just berates Him. It's the Beloved.

You have kings and governors, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, the crowd. Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Brethren, you think. Those Roman soldiers, they nail Him to the cross.

No, they mocked Him. They put a crown of thorns on His head. This is the Beloved.

And He goes to that cross. He goes there. The Beloved.

The Father looks down upon Him. He sees all this. The crowds are coming by.

They make fun of Him. Even the thieves. The thieves have spikes through their hands and their feet.

And even in their agonies. It was no fun deal. Can you imagine? It's one of the most horrendous, torturous deaths you can imagine.

And while both thieves on either side of Him are in the throngs of their own suffering, one of them turns. They've got enough detestation for the Beloved to mock Him. One turns.

But in the beginning, the other Gospel accounts tell us He was just as vile a mouth as the other one. Nobody. Everybody's forsaken Him.

Everybody's against Him. And then God Himself lets loose. With His hand.

Christ. He says in Psalm 22, I'm poured out like water. My bones are out of joint.

My heart is like wax. It's melted within my breasts. My strength is dried up like a potsherd.

My tongue sticks to my jaws. You get this. You lay Me in the dust.

It's like the Father takes the head of the Beloved by the hair and drives His face into the dirt. You. This is Christ.

This is the Beloved. You. This is the same One who said, My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Christ is saying, You. You lay Me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass Me.

Company of evil doers encircles Me. They pierce My hands and feet. I can count all My bones.

They stare and gloat over Me. They divide My garments among them. And for My clothing, they cast lots.

God pours Him out like water. Just melts Him. We know Isaiah 53.

We sing it. Stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. God does not spare His Beloved.

Though He's loved Him. He's loved Him. He's Beloved Him from all eternity.

But God pierces Him. He's pierced for our transgressions. He's crushed for our iniquities.

There's the Father with all of His intensity of love that He has for His Beloved. But though He is the Beloved, His own Father will not spare Him. Because I'll tell you this, if He spared Him, you and I wouldn't be saved.

He didn't spare Him. He crushes Him for our iniquities. If the Father's hand had been in any way held back, there's no hope for us.

He cried out on that cross, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? And what is this? Is this the cry of a forsaken man? Who could that be that would say something like that? And see, this is what Paul wants us to come back to. Don't you know who that is on that cross? Don't you know who it is that's crying out, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? It's God's Beloved. If I'm going to talk to you about redemption, if I'm going to talk to you about a price being paid, if I'm going to talk to you about your

forgiven sins and iniquities and transgressions, then I'm going to have you behold the Beloved before we go there so that you can recognize.

Brethren, you've got to recognize what this salvation costs. As I said before, this is no cheap gesture on God's part. None.

It's the Beloved. Get the tape measure out. Let's measure His love correctly in all of this.

To the lost, if you don't know Him, I would just admonish you in this. If all of this is true, I would say this, open your own heart to the Beloved. Let Him be your Beloved.

Fall down to Him. And He is worth trusting. He is worth loving.

None. None. You won't find none who has done so much.

So much for sinners as the Beloved has done for sinners. Redeeming sinners with His own blood. We sang the song.

My hope is built on nothing less. And it's the Beloved. It's His blood.

It's His righteousness. He poured out His blood to redeem sinners. He did that.

He made a way for sinners to be forgiven that they might stand before God holy and blameless before Him as children in the Beloved. Highly favored in the Beloved. Father, I pray that we might just be impressed.

May we feel this. Lord, may You cause the glory. I know there's so much about this that we have to have our eyes open, the scales removed.

We have to feel the weight in our own souls. Bring this reality home to us. I pray, Lord, I pray that You would help us.

Help us, Lord, to do what You tell those early disciples. My Son in whom I am well pleased. My Beloved Son.

Hear ye Him. Oh Lord, give us ears to hear. Give us eyes to see the altogether loveliness.

Touch us, Lord, with a touch of Your hand that we might all the more embrace these realities. Lord, I know we could even cry out as the songwriter, what language shall we borrow to thank Thee, dearest Friend? We thank You. Father, what have You done? What have You done in giving the Beloved for wretches like us? What have You done? Thank You, Lord, we thank You.

Father, we thank You. Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You. Spirit of God, we thank You for any enlightenment You give us, for any eyes that are opened to behold the glory.

We thank You, Triune God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. You're dismissed.

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