

Purchased With Blood

by William MacDonald

The sacrifice of Christ is a voluntary act of love by the Creator God, who gave himself for his enemies, demonstrating the depth of God's love for us and the cost of our salvation.

Duration: 40:46

Scripture: Matthew 27:33-34, Acts 20:28, Romans 5:8, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 1:1-3, Hebrews 9:22

Topics: "Blood Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of four key facts that lead to a full commitment to Jesus Christ. The first fact is understanding who Jesus is - the center and hub of existence, the source of satisfaction, and the embodiment of reality. The second fact is recognizing what Jesus did on the cross - a unique and overwhelming event where man murdered his Creator. The third fact is understanding who we are - sinners at war with God, in need of rescue from sin. The final fact is acknowledging the blessings that flow to us from Calvary, where Jesus purchased the church with his own blood. The speaker encourages listeners to bravely and willingly face these facts, which may lead to revolutionary changes in their lives and a deep commitment to Christ.

Transcript

It's great to be back at Greenwood Hills again, of which I am now a fixture. I don't blame the people if they say, oh, it's you again, because I seem to be here so regularly. It's great to be here with Brother Allen and his lovely family.

Week before last we were together. I had the privilege of sitting under his ministry at the Yosemite Conference. They celebrated their fiftieth year at Yosemite National Park, a Bible conference this year, and it's always a time of great blessing there, too.

The subject of my messages this week will be, My Heart, My Life, My All. And this morning I'd just like to read a verse from Acts 20, verse 28, and when I read it you'll say, what has that got to do with it? It will not seem to come to the subject at all, but just be patient and hopefully we will come to Acts chapter 20 and verse 28. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood.

There's a statement there that should really blow us away with astonishment. We read the verse, we're used to it, we know what it says, but we've lost a sense of wonder. And the expression is, the church of

God which he purchased with his own blood.

I was pleased that Norman gave out that hymn this morning. I stand amazed at the presence of Jesus in Nazarene. I wonder how he could love me, a sinner condemned, unclean.

Nothing has ever happened in the history of the universe that can compare with what happened 2,000 years ago at a place called Calvary. Compressed in a few hours was an event that absolutely overwhelms us and leaves us breathless. Nothing like it ever happened before, and nothing like it will ever happen again.

And all the literature in the world can comprehend the reality of what took place there. Lewis Thomas in a book called *The Lives of a Cell* said that the human cell is so marvelous that if people really understood it, they would go around talking about it all day to people. They would tell about it to anybody who would be willing to listen.

And he's not a believer, of course, and he just goes on and raves about the marvels of the human cell. Dear friends, we have a greater marvel than that. The marvel of what took place at Calvary.

What would happen if believers really stood before the cross of Christ and really comprehended what was really happening there? They would be overwhelmed by the dimensions of their salvation, the drama of their redemption would be absolutely astonishing, surprising to them. They would become compulsive worshippers, no question about it. They would never stop marveling at the wonderful grace of Jesus, and they'd talk about it to anybody who would listen.

That's what we want to talk about this week. Day and night they would be wildly enthusiastic about the Savior who died there on the middle cross, the one who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. Worldly ambitions would perish as they gave themselves without reserve to the Lord Jesus and his service.

And I said to a young man recently, what would happen if we really comprehended what took place there on the cross? And I kind of reviewed him. You know what he said? He said the world would be evangelized. The world would be evangelized.

Every once in a while a flash of light does come upon a man and a woman. It's as if God draws back the curtain, and they realize in a fuller measure than they ever realized before what was really transpiring there. Here is a believer, he wants God's best in his life, and he's open to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and as he stands there before the cross, the sacrifice of Christ has become compelling to him, and he can never be the same again.

He says, I have seen the vision, and for self I cannot live. Life is worse than worthless unless all I give. People like that will never be satisfied with a bland Christian life.

They determine that they will never lower themselves again to the chill of their environment. A new drive controls them. They're like Toyota.

Toyota, they're driven. They have a passion that absorbs their waking hours. They may be what some people call a fanatic, but it doesn't deter them in the least.

They're a fanatic for Jesus. Some may say they're out of their mind, but they found the mind of Christ. Some say that they're beside themselves, but it's for God, as the Apostle Paul said, and if they seem to be odd and out of step, it's because they're marching to the beat of a different drummer.

They tend to be intolerant of anything that stands between the soul and full commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. What is it that has made the difference in their lives? I would suggest to you this morning there are four facts. Four facts.

Who Jesus is, what he did there on the cross, who we are, and the blessings that have flowed to us from Calvary. And we want to go over those four facts and just look at them in detail this morning. As we do, they'll lead us down a one-way street that leads to commitment to Christ.

It may mean revolutionary changes in our lives. It may mean a career change. Be it so, let us face these facts bravely and willingly.

First of all, who the Lord Jesus is. The Lord Jesus is the center and hub of existence. Life without him is absolutely meaningless.

He's the fountain of satisfaction and the embodiment of reality and the central fact of life. The Lord Jesus is unique, but nobody ever liked him. Nobody ever liked him.

He was born to die. Others are born to live. When he was born, a baby, the king was troubled, and the people of Jerusalem and the environment there were troubled too.

Usually the birth of a baby causes joy. It produced troubling thoughts when he was born. Throughout his life, people were either for him or against him.

There was no neutrality. The Lord Jesus was absolutely unique. And the Lord Jesus was a true man, really human, really human.

He knew what thirst was. He knew what weariness was. He knew what hunger was.

And to his contemporaries, as they rubbed shoulders with him, he seemed just like one of themselves, didn't he? And they said that. We know who he is, the son of Mary and Joseph of Nazareth. He was a carpenter in Nazareth.

He was indeed. At the age of 30, he began his public ministry, preaching, teaching, healing, and no one had any valid reason for doubting his true humanity. And of course, it's borne out in the genealogy from Mary in Luke chapter 3. But he's not only unique and he's not only a true man, but he's a sinless man.

Just think of it. Somebody walked the dusty lanes of this world who was absolutely without sin, hard to take in. There was once a man on earth who had no stain of sin upon him.

Never an evil thought, never a mixed motive, never a sinful act. He was tempted from without, but he was never tempted from within. He always did the things that pleased his father, and that precluded the possibility of his ever sinning, because it would never be the will of his father that he should sin.

Even people who didn't claim to be his particular friend had to agree that he was different in this regard. Pilate said twice, I can't find any fault in him. Pilate's wife said, don't have anything to do with this just person.

And Herod said, I don't see any reason why he's guilty of death. And the thief on the cross spoke of his just righteous life. This man has done nothing amiss.

The centurion bore testimony to the fact that he was a just man, and Judas said, I have betrayed the innocent blood. I think it's wonderful the way the Spirit of God draws those testimonies together of people, I say, who did not particularly claim to be his friends, and they all bore testimony to the fact of his sinless character. Yes, the Lord Jesus is unique.

He's human, he's sinless, and he's sinlessly human, but that's not all. You never comprehend a fraction of the meaning of Calvary until you remember truly God, fully God. The one who died on the middle cross is the incarnate God.

The one who died for you there two thousand years ago is the one who flung the farthest galaxies into space. He's the one who created you. He's the one who gives you breath at this very moment.

He's the one who upholds all things by the word of his power. Isaiah witnessed to that fact. He called him the mighty God, prophetically looking forward to the coming of the Messiah.

He called him the mighty God. God the Father addresses him as God unto the Son. He said, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.

Scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. John bears testimony. The word was God, and then thirteen verses later he said, The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glorious of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, a description that could only refer to one who was equal with God.

Our Lord insisted that everybody should honor him even as they honor the Father. And there are over a hundred other scriptures that bear testimony of the fact that Jesus Christ is God, and in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. I think John Wesley caught something of the wonder of his person, of the incarnation, when he said, Our God contracted to expand, incomprehensibly made man.

The babe in the manger, our God contracted to expand, incomprehensibly made man. And William Billings, who was a tanner by trade and an amateur musician, he invites us to come see your God extended. Really marvelous, isn't it? An unknown poet wrote, Lo, within a manger lies he who built the starry skies.

And yet another anonymous author wrote, Cold in the cradle the dewdrops are falling, low lies his head with the beasts of the stall. Angels adore him in slumber reclining, maker and monarch and ruler. And a British writer, Booth Cliburn, wrote that hymn that you're familiar with, Down from his glory, ever living story, my God and Savior came, and Jesus is his name.

The young Jew of Nazareth is the ancient of days. It was God the Son who wore that carpenter's apron in the dust of that shop in Nazareth. It was the God-man who wore the slave's apron when he got down and washed his disciples' feet.

It was the Creator who was washing the feet of his own disciples. It was the Son of God who created optic nerves for that man born blind in John chapter 9. And nobody but God could quell the stormy waves on the sea of Galilee as the Lord Jesus did. Only he could take a Lazarus from the grave after he had been dead four days.

And I want to tell you this morning, friends, words are contemptibly inadequate when we try to describe the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the mysterious union of God and man, and one person passes human language. We mustn't stop there. Who he is, an added wonder boggle to mind as we now consider what he did for us.

If the person of Christ is enough to blow you away, what he did for us is even more staggering. It just blows the fuses in your brain when you stop to think of it. Just think of it.

We have been died for, and not just by a man like ourselves. The one who gave himself for us there on the center cross is the second person of the Trinity. It's surprising that we aren't more surprised, isn't it? It's amazing that we aren't more astonished.

Does the Bible really say that, McDonnell? That's why I read that verse in Acts 20, 28. Did you notice that Acts 20, 28, shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood? Who is he? Who's blood? His own blood. Now, I know, brethren, I know, and the antecedent of who in that verse is God.

Now, I know Darby says, with the blood of his own, which he purchased with the blood of his own. Of course, that's true, too. But I just wonder if the Holy Spirit hasn't put the verse like this, and this is the way it's translated and all other versions that I know of, the one who hung on the cross.

When you say, is that the only verse in the Bible that teaches that? No. Turn to Colossians chapter one, chapter one of Colossians, and it's really interesting when you see this. Here the spirit is dwelling at considerable length on the deity of the Lord Jesus.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, verse 15. The image of the invisible God. Look at that thing.

He's equal with God. The firstborn of all creation. Does that mean he was the first created being? No, it doesn't mean that.

It means he's the firstborn. That's a title of honor over all creation. Not part of creation, but he's over all creation.

The one who is before all things and by whom all things consist, verse 17. No question what Paul is speaking about here in Colossians, the one he's speaking about, the Lord Jesus, the deity of the Lord Jesus. And yet in that same context, verse 14, it says, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin.

I think he's on a great length to set forth the deity of the Lord Jesus and the glories of that deity. And then he says, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness. And then in Hebrews chapter one, it's very similar, very similar.

Hebrews chapter one, God who at sundry times and in diverse ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son. Notice, whom he has appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the world, who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. What are those words? It means he's equal with God.

He's equal with God. God the Father. Upholding all things by the word of his part.

Notice, when he had by himself purged our sin, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on earth. He goes at considerable length again to extol the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then says, when he had by himself purged.

Sometimes I think, when we think of Calvary, we think of the man Christ Jesus. He was man. Dear friends, in some religions, men, women, we never really come to grips with the meaning of Calvary until we stand before the cross and gaze on the dearest and best realized that he is God.

Now, you're justified if this raises questions in your mind. For instance, God is spirit, and a spirit doesn't have blood. That's true.

And how could God die? Well, the answer is given in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. God the Son took on him a human body with flesh and blood, so that he could die. I mean, it's marvelous that I can stand here and say that without shouting.

That I can just maintain my composure. I wonder if that's something the matter with me. Second, God is immortal.

You know, that's one of the attributes of God. He's immortal. What does immortal mean? It means subject to death.

You stand there, MacDonald, and you say that God incarnate died on the cross of Calvary, as I say that. How can that be if God is immortal? Well, once again, the answer is found in the incarnation. He came and he took humanity upon himself.

Christ is not God minus something. He's God plus something. That something is humanity.

He veiled his glory in his human body, so that he might die for us. Jesus was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he, by the grace of God, might take death for everyone. Now, I know some of you are going to tackle me afterwards, but I want to remind you that you sing this truth.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ. We don't really take it in. We don't understand what we're really singing.

All the vain things that turn the most. You sing it when you sing Charles Wesley's hymn, which I think is one of the greatest hymns ever written. He faced the fact, and then he wrote, "'Tis mystery all, the immortal dies.

Who can explore his strange design? In vain the first-born sheriff. Sheriff tried to sound the depths." I want to tell you, dear friends, that the first-born sheriff, that is the sheriff of highest rank, can't explore the depths of love divine. Better that we should just bow in wonder and thanksgiving and repeat the words of Wesley's amazing love.

How can it be that thou my... A third question arises. If God died on that middle cross, who ran the universe during the three days when he was in the tomb? No problem. At one moment, the Lord Jesus is running the universe from a cross.

Only his body went in. Didn't he say to the thief, today thou shalt be with me in paradise? His spirit and soul went to paradise, which is the same as the third heaven. There was no interval when he was not in complete Christ.

The question of where he was running the universe, that really isn't a major problem. The amazing truth is that the supreme being gave himself for you. I want to tell you, the most brilliant efforts to describe what happened at Calvary, it just strains the brain to realize that what happened there was not homicide.

That's when one human being kills another. It wasn't genocide. That's when men try to wipe out race or a class of people.

It was attempted genocide. Charles Spurgeon asked, Who would have thought of the just ruler dying for the unjust rebel? This is no teaching of human mythology or dream of poetic imagination. This method of expiation is known among men only because it is a fact.

Fiction could not have devised it. God himself ordained it. It's not a matter which could have been imagined.

And that's true. I like that. It's not a matter which could have been imagined.

If you could sit down, if you were a suspect, and you could set your brain to motion, you never could have come up. Never could have come up. There the truth lies.

The trouble is that we develop such a deadly familiarity with the and we think, well it says that in the Bible, we think that he's just one. We create our God in our own image and gave himself. We neither gasp or we reel off similar verses with little or no emotion.

We preach the truth, and I'm convicted, we preach the truth so blandly and matter of factly that it doesn't bring our listeners to their knees. Hmm? We get up and we talk about a lot of the obvious. People have heard it all down through the years.

But where is the sense of wonder in it all? We're guilty of what someone called the curse of a dry-eyed Christianity. The curse of a dry-eyed Christianity. Constantly we have to come back, have to come back to the awesome realization that it was our creator God.

F. W. Pitt captures something of the wonder of it all in a poem I'm sure you're familiar with. The maker of the universe has manned for man that made a curse. The claims of law which he had made unto the uttermost he paid.

His holy fingers made the bow which grew the thorns that crowned his brow. The nails that pierced his hands were mined in secret places he designed. He made the forest whence there sprung the tree on which his body hung.

He died upon a cross of wood that made the hill on which it stood. The sky that darkened o'er his head by him above the earth was spread. The sun that hid from him its face by his decree was poised in space.

The spear that spilled his precious blood was tempered in the fires of God. The grave in which his form was laid was hewn in rock his hands had made. The throne on which he now appears is his from everlasting years.

A new glory crowns his brow and every knee to him. The maker of the universe has manned for man who he is, what he has done for us, who we are. I think the whole drama of redemption becomes even more amazing when we think of the people for whom the Lord died, the ones he purchased with his own blood.

I'm speaking of course of ourselves. We're insignificant. In the world of the Hubble we're microscopically, that's an exaggeration.

We live in a planet that is not the biggest thing in the universe, much as we might think it is. Actually, planet earth is a speck of cosmic dust. And if the earth on which we live is a speck of cosmic dust, we are microscopic midgets.

And he never talks like that about it. I can say that because I'm one of those specks. I'm one of those midgets.

He never says that. No wonder the psalmist, realizing this brought forth from him that breathless question, what is man? The power mindful of him. Not only insignificant, but frail.

We're made of nothing more substantial than dust and water. And one day we're there in our full athletic strength and the next day a non-filterable virus enters our system and we're as weak as water. We're not very much really.

One day we're able to cope with problems as they arise and the next day in the face of some accident or crisis we're emotional basket cases. And we're not only frail but we're perishable. We're transient in the light of eternity and we don't even figure on the time chart.

We really don't. Our poets have likened human life to a breath, a swift ship, an eagle, a dive, a shadow, a hand breath, a sleep. Life is like smoke, vapor, grass, flowers, a weaver's shuttle.

And Spurgeon reduced our biography to four words. Sown. Grown.

Blown. The worst of it is we're really not very nice people. Sinners and sin has affected every part of our being.

And although we may not have committed every sin in the book, we're capable of every one of them. We're shocked by the behavior of others but we forget that we're capable of everything. And what we are is a lot worse than anything we've ever monstrous.

The prophet Jeremiah reminded us that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. And I would say no one of us fully realizes the depth of depravity of the human heart. We're unclean.

I really had to chuckle when I read this verse by Bildad in the book of Job the other day. Bildad was writing about man and he says that in the sight of God the moon does not shine, the stars are not pure in his sight, how much less man who is a maggot and the son of man who is a worm. You feel flattered.

We were God-haters in our unconverted days. We didn't love God with all our soul, mind, heart and strength. We said depart from us, we desire not a knowledge of your ways.

We were only happy when we could forget him and only sad when we remembered him. We were ashamed to talk about him. I was reminded of that last night when the quartet was singing.

I wasn't saved through a male quartet but I was convicted of sin through it. Years ago I was a boy and a quartet stood up and sang ashamed of Jesus. Can it be a mortal man ashamed of thee? Ashamed of thee from angels praise.

We were God-haters. No cosmic deity was going to run our lives for us. To be blunt about it, we were at war with God.

In the words of Major Andre, against a God who built the sky I fought with hands uplifted high. Despised the mention of his grace over the depth of deep gravity of our hearts until we stand before the cross of Christ and see man murdering him. That's really bad.

Thoughts overwhelming, breathtaking, unimaginable. God comes to earth in the person of the Lord Jesus and then turn around. He comes to rescue them from sin and to take them home to heaven for all eternity.

That's what he wants and they can think of nothing but killing him. Of course that wasn't the end. He rose from the dead.

He ascended back to heaven and he's there today, Prince and Savior. We're forgetful. If we constantly remembered that the Christ of Calvary is the God of eternity, we'd be lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Here full hearts can only weep. It would be such an astonishment to us that we'd want to share it with everybody we meet. We wouldn't want to talk about anything else.

We'd bow in worship and service for the Lord and motivate us in witness. But we don't remember. We commit the awful sin of taking it and then we're unmoved.

We've lost the titanic wonder of it all. We've recited the scriptures to others so mechanically that they become dull for us. The older we get, the older we get, the harder it is to maintain that first love when we came to the Savior.

Too often we have to ask the question, Am I a stone and not a man that I can stand, O Lord, beneath thy cross and number drop by drop thy blood's slow loss and yet not weep? Too often we have to admit, O wonder to myself I am a living, loving, bleeding lamb that I can stand the mystery o'er and not be moved to love thee more. We have to recapture the immensity of Calvary, the suffering Savior, the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Lord of Glory, God Manifest. The difference I want to say just in closing this morning is that when we really do consent this truth, it must be everything for Christ or nothing, with no middle ground.

No longer can we fitter away our lives in trivial pursuits. No longer can we be content, as J. H. Gowett said to be, minor officials in transient enterprises. Henceforth, we must determine that love so amazing, so divine, will have.

Blessed Lord Jesus, we pray this morning that we might indeed stand before the cross and have a fresh realization who you are and what you've done for us and the people for whom you did it. And we pray that we might never be the same again. Pray that it will transform our lives, that we'd be able to go from the conference, talking to everybody we meet, about the awesome fact, amazing love, how can it be that thou, my God,

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