

## Love's Great Sacrifice.

Text: Psa 69:7-12

Suggested Hymns:

401, 353, 81, 164, 61

1) An overview of the text

2) Was Prompted By His Love For God

3) Was Prompted By His Love For Sinful Man

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Psalm 69:7-12, <sup>7</sup> *Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Shame has covered my face.* <sup>8</sup> *I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother's children;* <sup>9</sup> *Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.*

<sup>10</sup> *When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, That became my reproach.* <sup>11</sup> *I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them.* <sup>12</sup> *Those who sit in the gate speak against me, And I am the song of the drunkards.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Unless men's eyes have been spiritually opened, the preaching of the Cross is offensive to them. *"Christ crucified,"* says the Apostle Paul, *"is to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness."*<sup>1</sup> Even those people who have learned the history of the Saviour's life and Passion often still do not understand its real significance.

It is for this reason that on hearing or reading the account of Christ's Passion they are merely filled with pity and compassion for the suffering Saviour. They see in Him nothing more than a martyr of the truth.

It is true, of course, that His standing up for principles caused His enemies to hate Him and to seek His death. But His enemies could never have killed Him if He had not voluntarily submitted to death. Jesus suffered and died to redeem the world, and the motive of His sacrifice, as we learn from our text, was His love.

Our theme is *Christ's Sacrifice a Sacrifice of Love*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### 1. An Overview Of The Text

Our text begins, <sup>7</sup> *Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Shame has covered my face.* This section of Psalm 69 can be given the title "*Messiah's Shame.*" Jesus' suffering did not begin on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Jesus endured scorn throughout His ministry. The people laughed when He said that Jairus' daughter was only sleeping. We read of this in Matthew 9:23-26, <sup>23</sup> *When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing,* <sup>24</sup> *He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping."* *And they ridiculed Him.* <sup>25</sup> *But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.* <sup>26</sup> *And the report of this went out into all that land.*

Likewise, the proud Pharisees sneered when Jesus rebuked their covetousness.<sup>2</sup>

Verse 8 of our text reads, <sup>8</sup> *I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother's children.* Saddest of all, Jesus own brothers looked on His work with scepticism and tried to interfere with His ministry.<sup>3</sup> We read in Mark 3:21 that *when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."*

Verse 9 reads, <sup>9</sup> *Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.* Both halves of this verse are quoted in the New Testament as prophecies of Christ. We read in John 2:17, <sup>17</sup> *Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."* John connects Jesus' zeal for his Father's house with the first cleansing of the temple.

Let us remember that both times Jesus cleansed the temple He incurred the hostility and reproach of the Jewish leaders.

The second half of verse 9 is quoted in Romans 15:3, <sup>3</sup> *For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."* This Scripture verse shows the willingness of Jesus Christ to suffer because of His loyal obedience to His Father's will.

During His suffering Jesus was scorned both by the best of Jewish society, the religious and political leaders, and by the least desirable people in society, like the criminals with whom Jesus was crucified. This concludes the brief overview of the text.

## **2. Christ's Sacrifice A Sacrifice Of Love Was Prompted By His Love For God**

Parents, fathers and mothers, love their sons and daughters. Even though the children have sinned and fallen into disgrace, their fathers or mothers are always looking for and awaiting the return of the wayward son or daughter.

The Saviour Himself so beautifully describes this in the story of the Prodigal Son. Thus, too, only much more, our heavenly Father loves the sinner, who rebelliously departed from his heavenly home. It is for this reason that our heavenly Father spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all that we, the wayward and prodigal, might again be returned to our heavenly home.

Jesus, our Saviour, suffered, as He states in the text, *“for Your sake,”* that is, for God's sake. Repeatedly He stated that the purpose of His coming into the world was to do the Father's will. Jesus said in John 6:38, *“I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”* That was His mission. It was all in accordance with the divine plan which from eternity had been decreed by the Triune God for the salvation of the sinner.

In His High-Priestly Prayer written in John 17 the Saviour declares, *“I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”* In our text the Saviour also refers to this when He states that the *zeal for Your house has eaten me up.* We can say that the Saviour was spending every ounce of energy in order to perform the work for which He had come into this world.

And regardless of the magnitude of the sacrifice that would be necessary, He was determined to bring that sacrifice, even if it meant His death upon the cross. For this reason we never find Him faltering. He never hesitates. The work had been cut out for Him, and He does it. This great task was, of course, the redemption of sinful mankind.

When Adam and Eve fell into sin, death and destruction came upon all men. There was no possibility of fallen man's ever returning to God again unless God

would have compassion on him and restore him. And God did mercifully intervene as we read in John 3:14-17, <sup>14</sup> *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,* <sup>15</sup> *“that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

God sent Jesus into the world that the world through Him might live. This meant that the Son would have to perfectly fulfil the Law of God for the sinners, who could not keep it. It meant that the Son would have to pay the penalty in the place of guilty man, who could not pay it.

It meant, in sum, that the Son would have to obtain righteousness and salvation for the sinner. And all of this He has done. Jesus has fully carried out God’s plan of salvation. We read in Galatians 4:4-7, <sup>4</sup> *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,* <sup>5</sup> *to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” <sup>7</sup> Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

And in Philippians 2:5-8, <sup>5</sup> *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,* <sup>6</sup> *who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,* <sup>7</sup> *but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

See how deeply the Saviour humbled Himself! In our text He says, <sup>8</sup> *I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother’s children. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.*<sup>4</sup> His brethren cast Him out, His people tried to stone Him, Judas betrayed Him, and Peter denied Him. As a criminal and an outcast He is sent from pillar to post, from Pilate to Herod. As one accursed He hangs upon the tree. And this Jesus did for you and me.

<sup>10</sup> *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*<sup>5</sup> For this sacrifice was made not only for

God's sake, to carry out God's decree of redemption, but also for our sake, to benefit, yes, to save us poor, miserable, sinful, and lost beings.

### **3. Christ's Sacrifice A Sacrifice Of Love Was Prompted By His Love For Sinful Man**

Our text says in verse 7, <sup>7</sup> *Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Shame has covered my face.* "Although shame has covered My face," the Saviour would say, "My Father in heaven, help Me to do Your will. You have promised that You would save all men through Me, therefore help Me to complete My work."

Throughout His active ministry the Saviour showed this great love to the sinner. He was accused of being a friend of sinners. This accusation was true and we thank God for that! We read in Luke 19:10, <sup>10</sup> *"for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

Whether it was a fallen Simon Peter, a Mary Magdalene, or even a Judas, the Saviour sought them all and endeavoured most earnestly to save them. This is how the Saviour feels toward each and every one of us. He seeks nothing more than our soul's salvation. And the chief purpose of our study of the Passion history is to inscribe deeply in our heart the conviction that Christ Jesus came into the world for the sole purpose of saving sinners.

But what a great sacrifice to pay! If our Saviour had come into this world to do something for creatures of God who were deserving, we might more readily understand and grasp the reason for His coming.

But we read in Romans 5:6-8 that *when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* <sup>7</sup> *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.* <sup>8</sup> *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Here we have a clear statement which shows us that Christ's sacrifice was one of love, love only. Why should anyone give his life for his enemy? And yet sinners are enemies of God. Christ, however, gave His life for His enemies. His prayer, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do,"*<sup>6</sup> was prompted by His unfathomable love for sinners.

But, perhaps, the thought may come to someone that Christ's sacrifice was indeed a tremendous sacrifice of love, but only inasmuch as He brought it for such sinners as helped nail Him to the Cross, or for Judas, or Simon Peter, or for the wicked Jews. It is frequently argued that these were very vile indeed, but this shall not and cannot be said of others such as ourselves.

However, listen to Paul's argument as written in Romans 3:9-10, <sup>9</sup> *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.* <sup>10</sup> *As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one.* And that includes you and me. And it is also written in Romans 3:23, <sup>23</sup> *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

A Sunday school teacher asked a little boy in his class, "Who is your best friend?" The little boy, without any hesitance, replied, "Why, Jesus is my best Friend, of course." The Sunday school teacher then asked, "Why do you say that Jesus is your best friend?" Again the little boy answered very promptly, "Because He knows all about me and still loves me." This little story shows, at least to a degree, in what real love consists.

Indeed, it is quite clear that Christ our Lord and Saviour was prompted only by the zeal of His love to make His supreme sacrifice for God and for the sinner's sake.

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,  
All Thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,  
Pure unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation,  
Enter every trembling heart. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 1:23

<sup>2</sup> Luke 16:14

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<sup>3</sup> John 7:5

<sup>4</sup> John 1:11

<sup>5</sup> 1 John 4:10

<sup>6</sup> Luke 23:34