

“THE SON OF MAN HAS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST”

Presented by

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As Tyler pointed out in his sermon, “I Always Do Those Things that Please My Father,” for the past several months he, Blake, and I have been studying the life of Christ in our Sunday-morning Bible class. During the course of that class, we have learned many fascinating things about the Son of God. For example, we have learned about Christ’s unusual entrance into this world by being born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). We have learned of His keen interest in spiritual matters, even at a young age—as is evident from the fact that He talked with the learned scholars of the law in the temple at the tender age of twelve (Luke 2:42,47). We have learned of His desire to be a humble servant to all people—a point that He emphasized when He said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). And we have learned about how He taught His disciples that they, too, needed to possess exactly the same attitude of servitude—which He admonished them to do when He told them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

But there also is something else of importance that we have learned about Jesus. We have learned that “the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10), because “God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17). People were lost because “there is no one who does not sin” (1 Kings 8:46). Or, as Paul put it in Romans 3:23, “All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). And because we **had** sinned, we were what Paul referred to in Romans 5:10 as God’s “enemies.” What a horrible thought that is—to be the **enemy of God!**

But God did not **want** us to be His enemies. Nor did He want us to **remain** His enemies. Rather, **He wanted to redeem us** “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:10). As the apostle Paul explained to his young protégé, Timothy, it was God’s desire that “**everyone** should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). In fact, God wanted that **so much** that He “foreordained before the foundation of the world” that Christ should be slain so that His blood could cleanse us from our sins (1 Peter 1:20). Peter had made this point crystal clear when he preached the first Gospel sermon on the Day of Pentecost following Christ’s resurrection. In Acts 2, in the course of presenting his comments to the Jews who had been responsible for Christ’s death at the hands of the Romans, Peter spoke of Jesus, “who, being delivered by **the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God**, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it” (Acts 2:23-24). These passages affirm that the life and death of Jesus were part and parcel of God’s predetermined plan for humankind’s salvation through His Son, Who lived a sinless life in order to set a perfect example for us (Hebrews 9:14). As Paul put it, “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, **we shall be saved by His life**” (Romans 5:10).

I think that, of all the things that Blake, Tyler, and I have learned in our class about the life of Jesus, this is the most important point of all—that “we shall be saved by His life.” In fact, I think it is safe to say that this is **really** what our study of the life of Christ is all about—to help us fully comprehend all that God and Christ have done for us. Before God ever created the Earth, He set in motion a plan to send His Son to Earth to live a perfect, sinless life, and then to die a cruel death as a substitutionary sacrifice **for our sins** because, as the writer of the book of Hebrews put it, “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (Hebrews 9:22). But, because “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4), God “gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

One of the things that our teacher has tried to impress upon us in our class is that we must **always** “look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, disregarding the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2). In that one verse, the writer of the book of Hebrews summarized so very well **everything** that Christ did for us. He “endured the cross.” He “disregarded the shame” that the cross brought. And He went to that cross “with joy”—because He knew that by His death He would succeed in being “the Savior of all men, and especially those who believe” (1 Timothy 4:10). **What an amazing thing Christ did when He willingly gave Himself to die on the cross for us!**

But what should be **our** response to all of this? The Bible teaches that our response must be two fold. First, as Jesus Himself said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.... You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 14:15; 15:14). Thus, if Jesus tells us to hear Him (Revelation 13:9), we will. If Jesus tells us to believe that He is God’s Son (John 3:16), we will. If Jesus us tells us to repent of our sins (Luke 13:3), we will. If Jesus tells us to confess Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 10:32-33), we will. If Jesus tells us to be baptized for the remission of our sins in order to be saved (Mark 16:16), we will. And if Jesus tells us to “be faithful even unto death” (Revelation 2:10), we will.

Second, as Paul explained in Philippians 2:3-7, we likewise must “do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave.”

Look at the critically important phrases contained within those few verses: (1) “in humility regard others as better than yourselves”; (2) “look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others”; (3) “let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus”; and (4) “taking the form of a slave.” Such comments tell the story in its entirety regarding how we should live our lives, do they not? But perhaps Jesus Himself put it best when He remarked, “I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15). Enough said, eh?