

SONGS:
CLOSE:

From The Cradle To Cross **Christmas - Part 1 of 2**

TEXT: Hebrews 2:9

INTRODUCTION

A. *It hath been said, "you can give without loving but you can't love without giving."*

God's love is not regulated by emotion, passion, or sentiment—BUT by the very fibre of His Person! —God is LOVE and this Love is morale attribute of what makes Him a person and how He relates to His creation. He seeks the highest good for His creatures.

It is because God loves us that He gives and His greatest gift was the offering of His Son for our salvation.

B. *As the world's Saviour the Word of God says that Jesus gave His back and His face.*

We read in **Isaiah 50:6** – *"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."*

1. When they spat upon Him, He did not turn His face away, He took their spit right in His open face.
2. Smitters lashed His back with a whip. Others took hold of His beard and ripped it out of His face. Still yet others would have cuffed their hands or balled their fists and hit Him in the face.
3. Rabbis and clerics did it then and clergymen do the same now—only now they don't use whips, fists and spit, they preach from perverted messages from perverted translations denying His blood atonement, and rejecting salvation by grace alone.
4. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His back. He gave His face. He gave His dignity ... but ultimately He gave His very life.

C. *Jesus knew before His mother ever laid Him, as a Babe, in the manger on that first Christmas night, that He was born to die.*

1. May I hasten to say, I am constantly bewildered at some Christian's who struggle to serve the One who took the world's spit, and other indignities—and took all that contempt, suffering and disrespect FOR YOU.
2. You and I ought to consider it a blessed privilege to serve such a precious Redeemer!

D. *On that first Christmas, earth multitudes were for the most part unmindful of the great events that were unfolding. BUT HEAVEN WASN'T.*

1. I can just picture it in my mind's eye.
 - a. On that winter's eve, the holy angels waited in abated breath to break forth in praise and worship and adoration at the physical birth of their own Creator.
 - b. **MOST of those on earth** were not interested—BUT the angels of glory were interested for sure! They were looking on with outstretched eyes as they gazed toward Bethlehem.

You ask how do you know that preacher?

1 Peter 1:10 says, The prophets of Scripture, of the gospel of our salvation, have enquired and diligently searched *“of the grace that should come unto”* the world. The search what time and what manner the sufferings of Christ would bring salvation and **vs. 12 reveals**, *“Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; **which things the angels desire to look into.”**”*

E. Why did Jesus come to this earth?

Matthew 1:21 – *“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for **he shall save his people from their sins.”**”*

1. Jesus knew in order to save people from the condemnation of their sins He would have to die!
2. When someone leaves home, perhaps a son or a daughter, there is always a bit of a ceremony.

Empty Nest Syndrome

Most parents eventually face the day when their child or children leave home to start a new page in their life never to return to their room and familiar seat at the table. Many a tear is shed seeing your kids to further their education, seeing them off as they depart to places, people and events yet unknown. What is known is that once that last child spreads its wings and leaves for parts unknown that hole in our life is what we call the empty nest. It is that empty place in the home they once occupied. They’ve left home but have not vacated our hearts.

I can only wonder how it was in glory, that first Christmas Eve, as the Son, prepared to depart the heavenly ivory palace He had always known, surrounded by love and adoration. He left the comforts and warmth of home to come to a cold and unreceptive earth that had turned its back on Him.

3. I imagine what the Son of God might have said to God-the-Father. Do you think it might have been something like, “Good-bye Dad, I love you”. And the Father to His only begotten, “I love you Son.”
 - a. We do have part of the conversation recorded in the Word of God. In **Hebrews 10:5-7** – *“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: **6**] In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. **7**] Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.”*
 - b. He said, Father, I must go now. It is your will that I do this. I must go and take up residence in the special body Thou hast prepared for Me.
4. What a remarkable glimpse into the heart of the Saviour even before His birth.
 - a. He knew He was entering the world to be the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin.
 - b. God had divinely prepared his body specifically for that purpose.
 - c. Jesus was going to die for the sins of the world, and He knew it. But He did it all willingly, cheerfully, and gladly because it was His Father’s will.
 - d. I do not wish to put a damper on your Christmas spirit but it isn’t just the **cradle**, it isn’t just His sinless life, but it was His substitution DEATH on the **cross** and His Bodily resurrection that saves us!
5. **Why did Jesus come to this earth?**

- a. I know Jesus came to declare God.
 - b. I know Jesus came to teach us glorious truth.
 - c. I know Jesus came:
 - To fulfill the law
 - To show us how to live and treat one another and how to love one another.
 - To reveal God’s love for us as sinners.
 - d. I know Jesus came:
 - To bring peace to warring hearts.
 - To reveal His power by raising the dead and healing the sick.
 - To minister to the destitute and impoverished.
6. **BUT** all of these wonderful truths, and as glorious as they are—they were incidental to His real purpose in coming—

He came to SAVE US FROM OUR SIN

- a. To do that He had to die!
- b. I’m convinced, you and I have never grasped, just what a sacrifice it was for the Father to make to give His Son for our salvation.
- c. And His Father did love Him... just read all about it in **John 17**.
- d. And oh the capacity of God to love! Where does a mother get her ability to love a child? God put that in the heart of a mother.

Mother’s Sacrificial Love

No matter if you have just one child or a dozen they are all precious and especially to the mother.

On August 16, 1987, Northwest Airlines flight 225 crashed just after taking off from the Detroit Metropolitan Airport Michigan, killing 154 passengers with crew with two people on the ground.

Almost immediately after the plane lifted off the runway it began to roll from side to side. Having serious trouble with lift off the plane’s left wing struck a light pole in an airport rental car lot and then struck the roof of an Avis car-rental building. The plane crashed inverted onto a road striking travelling vehicles. The plane then broke apart, with the fuselage skidding across the road, disintegrating and bursting into flames as it hit a railroad overpass.

One person survived the crash: a four-year-old little girl from Tempe, Arizona, named Cecelia. When rescuers found Cecelia they did not believe she had been on the plane. Investigators first assumed Cecelia had been a passenger in one of the cars on the highway onto which the airliner crashed. But when the passenger register for the flight was checked, there was Cecelia’s name.

Cecelia survived because, even as the plane was falling, Cecelia’s mother, Paula Cichan, unbuckled her own seat belt, got down on her knees in front of her daughter, wrapped her arms and body around Cecelia, and then would not let her go.

Nothing could separate that child from her parent’s love—neither tragedy nor disaster, neither the fall nor the flames that followed, neither height nor depth, neither life nor death.

Before the Lord Jesus Christ’s crucifixion, God the Father in heaven stood by, while the jeering crowd spat upon His Son, slapped and punched His face, plucked out His beard,

crushed a crown of thorns on His head, drove nails through His hands and feet culminating their abuse with a spear thrust in His side.

WHY WAS THIS SO? —BECAUSE JESUS LOVES YOU – THAT IS WHY!

He doesn't want ONE soul to die without redemption.

2Pet. 3:9 – *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance.*

Hebrews 2:9 – *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should **taste death for every man.**”*

I have no idea what the soul-limiting Calvinists do with do with this verse either.

F. When we think of Jesus' birth you might bring these thoughts into focus...

- † Think on those soft little hands, fashioned by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb, were made so that nails might be driven through them.
- † Those little tender baby feet, not having taken a first step and unable to walk, would one day walk up a dusty hill to have those feet nailed to a cross.
- † That sweet infant's face with sparkling eyes and eager mouth was formed so that someday men might spit and smite them, those shining lock budding forth from that delicate head would one day have a crown of thorns forced onto it.
- † That tender body, warm and soft, wrapped in swaddling clothes, would one day be ripped open by a spear.

Jesus was born to die.

But never think, my friend, that Jesus death was a senseless tragedy—**OH NO!** It represented a great victory over evil – a victory, whose depth, we have yet to probe.

Let's explore this matter further and for our text we want to look at several things in **Hebrews chapter 2**, but this morning we shall on cover the first of 5.

1. THE PAYMENT
2. THE PIONEER
3. THE PERFECTION
4. THE PLUNDER
5. THE PRIEST

I. THE PAYMENT

I call your attention once again to **Hebrews 2:9** – *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should **taste death for every man.**”*

A. Little Lower Than Angels

1. Jesus was the One who created the angels but in His incarnation, our Lord made Himself lower than them.
2. He remained God, in totality, but for a little while, He stepped down to a level that was lower than the angels – He became flesh!
3. What do you mean preacher LOWER? He was made **lower** in order to die.

Look at it again at **Hebrews 2:9** – *“But we see Jesus, who was **made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death**, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”*

4. Angels, as ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), they can't die.
 - a. In comparing resurrected saints to angels Jesus said in **Lk. 20:26** – *“Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels....”*
 - b. Death is reserved for mortals, therefore, Jesus had to die.
 - 1) *But why you ask? Hebrews 2:9 – “ ... that He by the grace of God should taste death **for every man.**”*
 - 2) Jesus had to taste death for whom? *“...For every man...”*
 - 3) I wonder what the Calvinists do with that statement!
 - 4) Notice, it was *“...FOR every man...”*. I.e. He was our substitute – He was man's redemption.

B. Notice also it says there was suffering in His death.

Hebrews 2:9 – *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels **FOR the suffering of death**, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”*

1. It was not an easy, gentle passing of the Lord Jesus from this world. It was excruciating agony and torture of the worst kind, for it was on a cross.
2. The Scripture says He *suffered* in His death.
3. He drank the bitter cup at Calvary in its fullness – We can thank our Lord God that He drained it to the last drop.
4. He experienced all the pain, all the loneliness, and all the torments that have ever been associated with death.
5. Yet He did it voluntarily. **Are you getting this? He took YOUR PLACE!**
 - a. We're gathered here this morning to sing about, to teach about, to preach about, to glory in, to get excited about the FACT that we have our sins forgiven and that we are going to heaven as God has promised *because SOMEONE TOOK OUR PLACE IN DEATH!*
 - b. Jesus Christ took unto Himself, the full force of God's wrath on sin.
 - c. This wrath is that WRATH that the lost will know forever – IF THEY STUBBORNLY REFUSE to repent from sin and trust Christ as personal Saviour.

C. Jesus has offered Himself and gone through all the humiliation and suffering that was necessary for man's salvation – He has done all of that as a volunteer!

John 10:17-18 – *“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18} No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”*

1. Would you like to know, in one way, just how far the Lord Jesus Christ's love and grace extends?
2. I spoke earlier of those who spat upon Him, pummelled Him with their fists, ripped His beard from His face.
3. Do you know what Jesus said about them?

Luke 23:34 – *“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...”*

4. God has mercy on ignorance. He has no mercy on unbelief!

CONCLUSION

How is it with you my friend? Have you been saved?

Now, I am not asking you if you believe in God, or if you have been baptised, or if you are religious or if you live a good moral life in helping others, or if your parents were / are Christians?

TURN >> John 1:12-13 says, *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13] Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

These two verses basically say **two major things** are required for being a child of God and to know you are going to heaven: 1) believe, i.e. rely on trust with you whole heart that Jesus is the Lord God and 2) experience the new birth from God’s Spirit.

A. NOTE: The New Birth

1. It is supernatural and therefore it is completely distinct from natural birth that brings every one of us into this world.
2. It is not of blood, i.e. it contains no human element. It is not a product of being born into a family where the parents are genuine Christians. There are NO grandchildren in the family of God—God only has children!
3. The New Birth does it lie within the scope of human achievement
 - a. It is not of the will of the flesh, i.e. “willful desire.” You just don’t decide one day I am going to be a Christian and start living the life.
 - b. It is not of the will of man, i.e. it is not something any human instrumentality or design can accomplish. It is not a means to an end like getting baptised or joining a church or reaching the achievements and expectations of Godparents or anyone else for that matter.
 - c. The new birth has God as its source and God alone.
 - d. It, again, is accomplished as people are willing to *“believe on his name”* – the name of Jesus. **TURN >> 1Jn. 5:10-13**

B. Saint of God, are you a bit cold toward the One who took your hell?

1. If so might I say how shameful and how dishonouring this is to Him!
2. I plead with you to draw nigh to Him. **James 4:8** – *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”*