

2/4/17

Exhort: Who gave himself for our sins

Reading: Galatians 1

Now once more brethren and sisters, as we come around these emblems of our Heavenly Fathers love. We are confronted and challenged to re-consider this costly demonstration of love for us. For here before us upon the table is the united love of the Father and the Son evident in the emblems of bread and wine.

For displayed here is a love that speaks volumes to us of the glory of our God and of the beauty of our Master's character. And yet for us this same sacrificial manifestation of love, is a very practical example, that we are each called upon to follow and to try and emulate in our daily lives.

Galatians 1 and verses 1 – 5

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the ecclesias of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen”.

Now by way of exhortation we want to saturate our hearts and our minds, in this opening paragraph of the Epistle. The key portion of focus in particular begins in verse three with: *“Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen”.*

These few verses powerfully highlight for us brethren and sisters, the reason we have each come together, in the remembering of that once for all sacrifice for our sin. That offering which is thankfully in the provision of our Heavenly Father totally efficacious, and sufficient.

Sufficient not only for our own personal & our collective sin, but also capable of covering the sins of the whole world. Now within that scope is the sin of every sinful son of Adam from the fall, who has ever lived? So we read then of the Lord Jesus *“Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1Tim2:6).*

Now the first thing we want to notice here is that we have the full title of our Lord Jesus Christ, **because**, as Philippians declares of him that he *“humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the stake. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name”*.

This exultation is more fully described for us in the epistle of the Ephesians, where we read. *“Having raised him Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the ecclesia”*.

Therefore the highly exalted status of the Lord Jesus Christ, brethren and sisters ought to give us comfort in that which, our Father has promised, he is more than able to perform. Because, of the position and status that the Lord Jesus Christ now holds. As we read elsewhere, *“ he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”*.

But, we are getting ahead of ourselves here. Returning to that passage from Philippians, where we read that our Master, *“**humbled himself** and became obedient unto death, even the death of the stake”*. Here we have our first point of exhortation in that like our Lord, we are too **humble ourselves**. This humility is to be displayed in two ways, firstly in relation to his Lordship personally & collectively over us, because he is the head of the ecclesia.

Then secondly we are to follow his example and walk in his footsteps humbling ourselves in obedience to the truth. That we each brethren and sisters, may come to *“know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”*. Because as we read later in Galatians, *“they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts”*, that we should no longer live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God, our Father.

*Brother / sister how **humbled are we**, as each one of us sit before this supreme example?*

Returning to our text in Galatians one, it continues to speak of our Lord, *“who gave himself for our sins”*.

Don't let us just read past the pronoun "who" here, this is intensely personal and relational. In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us collectively and for us each one of us personally!

Out of his love for the Father, he sought a relationship with each one of us through his sacrificial work. Here is the complete submission of the son to the will of the Father, who freely and willingly choose to lay down of his life for the sheep. No wonder then, the Apostle records in John ten that "*therefore doth my Father love me*". Here is our second point of exhortation; *do we truly love our Lord? Do we really appreciate and fully grasp, what has been done for us personally?*

Luke 7 and verses 36 – 47
Turn with me - Pause & read

*How much do we each then love? How much have we each been forgiven?
Do anyone of us honestly believe we have little to be forgiven for?
And consequently therefore little love to give in response?*

The double exhortation in the gospel through John is apt here, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments and ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*".

Again returning once more to Galatians (1:4), the Greek here is very instructive, for the word "gave" in the Greek, is what is called an ongoing participle. In other words, this word "gave" describes a **habitual principle** that governed the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. In that the **giving** of himself, was not a once only event, but, rather it was the operating principle of our Master's life.

For the spirit through the Apostle is emphasising for us the completeness of the **giving** of the Lord Jesus Christ. Firstly he totally gave himself unreservedly during the three and a half years of his ministry that was then finally crowned, in his sacrificial death.

This point **challenges** us brethren and sisters by way of exhortation, to be so equally willing to give of ourselves one for another. For we read, elsewhere "*hereby perceive, we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*".

Therefore the example of the Lord's sacrifice is supposed then to enthuse and orient our fellowship and our interactions one with another.

Because in the putting of ourselves out for one another in loving service. We are showing to each other and indeed to all men that the atoning work of our Lord, which we shall shortly remember, is truly efficacious in our daily lives.

But are you or indeed am I, brethren and sisters, gladly so willing to give and to be spent one for another?

Fascinatingly we have two natural family relationships designed by our Heavenly Father to teach us this very spiritual principal, marriage & parenting. But looking at my own example and experience, after 20 years of marriage & 15 years of parenting, it doesn't appear I have learnt this lesson very well. For our culture, the present evil age is fiercely independent and values personal autonomy over everything else.

Now this **habitual principle of giving** evident in our Lords life is powerfully illustrative, not only of his earthly ministry and his atoning death for our sins. It also relates to his ongoing work as our High Priest, as was hinted at earlier in that we read, *he ever liveth to make intercession for us.*

For the literal Greek translated in our Authorised version, as “*who gave himself*”, is better rendered, as “*the one giving self*”. The sense is that our Lord is still giving himself and being spent for us, as he ministers in our daily lives, through prayer, angelic ministration and providential circumstances and through his directing the ecclesia.

And this ongoing nature of the work is equally to be evident in our reasonable service in ecclesial life. In our loving response to that ongoing love and care, he has for each of one of us brethren and sisters. For as our Lord stated to his opponents, “*my Father worketh hitherto, and I work*”, **therefore** so we should do likewise.

Now the spirit continues in Galatians (1:4) to give us the reasoning and the purpose behind that united costly demonstration of love for us. We who were before our reconciliation styled the ungodly. Two negative motivations are given; namely in he gave himself “*for our sins. Then secondly to deliver us from this present evil world*”. Sin of course is the root problem for why our world or age as the Greek is here can be termed truly evil.

So then this deliverance through the Lord Jesus Christ is complete salvation in that it deals specifically with the evil within each one of us, endemic to our defiled nature. For the Lord Jesus Christ, destroyed sin at its root. Then it also deals with the evil generated by other sinful sons of Adam in the age in which we currently dwell.

Now this fourth verse in Galatians one spells out for us the negative implications of the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereas in its companion passage in Titus, we are given the positive motivation for the sacrificial work of our Lord.

Titus 2 and verse 14

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”.

From this we see that we are delivered not only from this present evil age, but also importantly we are delivered too and for a godly purpose in Christ Jesus to the glory of God our Father.

But let us come back to this word “*deliver*” (in *Galatians 1:4*), it carries the idea of being forcibly rescued and being taken to ones self. Now this is an important word and in the Greek it describes for us an ongoing potential possibility, but one that is subject to a choice. This is conveyed for us in the English here by the phrase “*that he might*”.

Now the choice and the possibility brethren and sisters we must come to understand was that of our Master, recorded for us in the garden of Gethsemane. When in the midst of enormous trial, he resolved and choose to willingly give himself to his Father’s will, “*nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done*”. *What greater act of love could there be?* In that he personally choose to lay down his life for his friends.

Romans 8 and verses 31 – 34

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”.

For as both verses three and four make abundantly clear our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ are totally united in their desire and outworking to redeem us to themselves.

But for us, we too have a choice to make will we each submit our will to that of the Father's and be delivered from this present evil age?

Now once more returning to this word “*deliver*”, the root word for it appears twice in the gospels and it gives us a powerful picture of what is meant by the concept of being delivered.

Matthew 5 and verse 29 (18:9 same verse repeated)

*“And if thy right eye offend thee, **pluck it out**, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell”.*

Then this word is used a further five times (*grace*) in the book of Acts to describe exactly how we are to be plucked out and rescued from the present evil age.

- It is used of Joseph being delivered from all of his afflictions to stand before Pharaoh in Acts 7:10
- It is used again in Acts 7:34 to speak of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt
- It is used of the angelic rescue of Peter from prison in Acts 12:11
- It is used twice to speak of Paul firstly being snatched away from an angry Jewish mob in Jerusalem by the Roman centurion in Acts 23:27.
- It is used finally then again in Acts 26:17, where the Apostle recounts the promise of the Master to him to deliver him from out of the hands of both the Jews and the Gentiles until he has finished his work

In each of these cases brethren and sisters the deliverance has been dramatic and timely and the same is true of what we remember here this day. In that we have been snatched from out of our present evil age.

Colossians 1 and verses 13 - 14

*“Who hath **delivered** (different word from Gal 1:4) us from the power of darkness, and hath **translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son**: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins”.*

Indeed now in relation to our Masters imminent return, it is evident from the New Testament that our Lord will come at a point that should he tarry no flesh would be saved. But for the elect's sake we read, those days will be shortened, so there will be for those alive at his coming a literal snatching away from this present evil world.

Therefore there is a need for us brethren and sisters to fully grasp this deliverance achieved through the sacrificial and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. For again when we examine the Greek text, it gives us a present application.

In that it literally reads, *“He may be lifting us out of the having stood in eon wicked”*. In other words, the Lord Jesus is currently working in each one of our lives to extricate us personally out of this present wicked age. Let us recall of the ancient Israelites that it was easier to physically deliver them from Egypt than it was to take Egypt literally out of them.

Sadly my dear brethren and sisters this reality is equally true for every one of us, for we are made of the same flesh. Our need to be plucked out of the world, which completely lies in wickedness, is only too real. Indeed our need of the covering of his righteousness for our ongoing sinfulness cannot be overstated. But we brethren and sisters **therefore**, need to be united with him and our Father, to be equally committed to what he did for us and why he did it. We need to exercise our loving choice, which is our only reasonable response:

Galatians 6 and verse 14

“That I should glory, save in the stake of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”.

Here is the first of three passages later in the epistle that has a bearing upon this verse we have been soaking in brethren and sisters. Going backwards through the epistle we must ask the question - *is the world impaled to us and us personally to the present evil age? Is this our understanding our worldview of our position in Christ Jesus?*

Galatians 5 and verse 24

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts”.

Our passions and feelings that so often drive us are the issue we need the truth to overcome and bring into subjection, as our Lord did. *How indeed are we each doing at mastering those driving forces within us brethren and sisters?*

Then finally in the 2nd chapter the Apostle provides us with his personal insight and motivation towards the outworking of the crucifixion in him.

For we live in the age of emotism, where feelings trump all!
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Galatians 2 and verse 20

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith (or the faithfulness) of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me”.

Again the terms *“loved”* & *“gave himself”* are still ongoing, as the Greek makes clear.

The Apostles motivation to so crucify his flesh came out of the realisation of the continuing love care of the Lord Jesus Christ for him. We brethren and sisters need to follow the Apostles example and imitate him allowing this ongoing act of love in the personal giving of the Master first in his sacrifice we remember now.

Then in his continuing High Priestly intercession for us that it might direct our heart, minds and our wills. That we beloved might keep ourselves in the love of God, ever looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life in his imminent return.

As we come now to these emblems of bread and wine. Let us see in the bread then that sacrificial body prepared to bring us nigh. Let us see also in this bread the word made flesh that we might learn to imbibe this word and that it might direct our lives to crucify the flesh.

Likewise in this symbol of the wine, let us see the great price that was paid in the pouring out of his precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Let us also see the love shown and the example given to us that we might be motivated by it to give of ourselves willingly for one another brethren and sisters.

The Apostle having considered this costly united demonstration of love initiated by the Father and carried out willingly by the Son can do nothing but extol our God in that fifth verse of chapter one. We brethren and sisters after our consideration of these monumental truths can come to no greater response than to affirm with the Apostle:

“To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen”.

Brother Wayne Marshall