

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

Fundamentals of the Faith

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LESSON #35 — JESUS IS OUR BEST FRIEND: HIS DEATH (PART 1)

But taking it a step further, we'd like to look at a third reason that we know that Jesus is the best friend that we could ever have, and that is His death and shed blood. His death and shed blood. Let's look at several passages of Scripture along that line. The first one that we'd like to look at is in John 15, verse 13. John 15, verse 13. Jesus is the speaker. He said to His disciples, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." There's the true test of love. The purest form of love, is the willingness to die for your friends. And of course, Jesus was foreshadowing, He was looking forward to the time when He would do just what He said in this verse, lay down His life for His friends. And there you see the thought, He is our friend. We need to always keep in mind verse 14 that tells us how God defines the friends of Jesus. He said, "You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you." But Jesus died, lay down His life for us, showing He is the best friend that we could ever have.

Another passage that conveys this thought very beautifully is found in the book of Romans. In Romans chapter 5, verses 6 through 8. Romans 5, verses 6 through 8. This is one of the most beautiful passages of Scripture in the New Testament. "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Can you see the beautiful love of God and His beloved Son in this passage of Scripture?

Notice how God describes mankind in these verses. First of all, He says in verse 6, that we were without strength, that we were powerless, powerless to save ourselves from our sins. So we know that we cannot save ourselves from the standpoint that we demand from God our salvation, because we can't live perfectly. We were powerless to save ourselves. And then he says, that Christ died for us in due time, He died for the ungodly. That is, those who were opposed to God. Those who were not showing honor and respect and reverence and fear of God. That's what godliness is, is showing honor, and respect and love and reverence for God. But ungodliness is those who are opposed to that, who are just the opposite. So God demonstrated His love for us in the willingness, His willingness to give His Son, and His Son's willingness to die for us, in spite of the fact that we weren't righteous. We weren't good. We didn't deserve for Him to die for us. We didn't place Him under obligation by our good behavior for Him to die for us. But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

What a tremendous gift the Father and His Son have given to us in His willingness to die, not because we deserved such a death, but because Jesus is our best friend. And best friends lay down their life for their friends. And He did that, in spite of our powerlessness to save

ourselves, in spite of our ungodliness, in spite of the fact that we were sinners, those who were living in sin, and dedicated ourselves to that kind of life.

Then another passage, this passage found in the book of John, actually 2 verses, John chapter 10, verse 11, and verse 15. John 10, verse 11, and verse 15. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for His sheep...As the Father knows me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." Jesus brings to our mind the picture of a shepherd. One who loves and cares for the sheep, which had been entrusted to Him. Will go to great lengths to ensure that the sheep are protected, taken care of, provided for, have the food, the water, that they need, the safety that they need. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the best Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep, who laid down His life as a sacrifice, the once for all sacrifice, for our sins. What tremendous friendship He demonstrated in His willingness to give the best. He didn't give a sacrifice, an animal or the blood of an animal. He gave Himself, He laid down His own life, not the life of a substitute.

Then also, in the book of John, John 1, verse 29. John 1, verse 29. The very beginning of John's account of the gospel. We read these words: "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" Jesus is God's lamb. And of course, as we study the Scriptures, and we think about how lambs are portrayed, particularly in the Old Testament, lambs were those animals who were sacrificed for the sins of others. Jesus made Himself the Lamb of God. Willing to be sacrificed for my sins and for your sins. What a friend we have in Jesus, what a Savior we have in His willingness to become the lamb, the sacrificial lamb, who died for our sins.

Then in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 2 verse 9. Hebrews 2, verse 9. Here, the Hebrew writer says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone," or for every man. Notice the beautiful words that the Hebrew writer revealed to us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We see Jesus, we picture Him in our minds, we keep Him in our minds. And we see Him made a little lower than the angels. What did the Hebrew writer mean? Well, we believe that he was talking about angels are spirit beings. Jesus was a spirit, being God. But Jesus decided that He would come and take on flesh and blood. He would live as a human beings like you and like me. And thus He subjected Himself; He made Himself a little lower than the angels by taking on human flesh.

We see the humility of the Lord Jesus Christ. But then he goes on, and he talks about the suffering of death. Jesus was willing to suffer that painful and horrible death, excruciatingly painful death that we've talked about. And God says that by His grace Jesus tasted death for everyone. He experienced death. He died, just like you and I are going to die. And He did that for us. He did it because He loves us. He did it because He is our best friend. He experienced the pain and the separation, momentarily, of death, that you and I might have life and have it abundantly. So Jesus is our best friend, because He tasted death for you, and for me.

And then in 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 6. 1 Timothy 2, verse 6. God through the Apostle Paul said this concerning Jesus: "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Here we see the sacrifice of Jesus portrayed again. Notice, He gave Himself. He didn't give an animal, or the blood of an animal, as we've mentioned before. He gave Himself. He gave Himself as what? As a ransom. What is a ransom? A ransom is a price that is paid to

win back another, to win back the freedom of another who has been captured by someone. Jesus gave Himself to pay the price, to make it possible for us to be freed, liberated, delivered, from our bondage to sin, and our service to Satan. Jesus loved us enough, He is a great enough friend for us, that He was willing to give Himself as the ransom price. What friendship was shown in that wonderful sacrifice of Himself.

Then in the book of Galatians, in Galatians chapter 1, verse 4. Galatians 1, verse 4. "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." Jesus, again, the picture being portrayed by God through His inspired spokesman, gave Himself, not for His sins (He didn't have any), but for our sins. The truly selfless love that Jesus had for us as demonstrated, in that He was willing to give Himself for our sins. And again, we see the idea of deliverance portrayed so beautifully in Galatians 1:4. Why did Jesus give Himself for our sins? That He might deliver us from this present evil age, or world. That He might provide the means by which you and I can be released from this world to live in heaven eternally, in eternity, with the Father and His Son, and the redeemed of all ages. He is our great friend. He is our great deliverer. He has provided the means by which we can be freed from this life, to go to a better life. That's why He is the greatest friend that we could ask for.

Then another passage, this also in the book of Galatians, in Galatians the second chapter this time. Galatians 2, verse 20. Galatians 2:20. "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I live now in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." What a beautiful picture Paul paints by inspiration there. He talks about the wonderful relationship he had with the Lord. Can you see that to the apostle Paul, the life and death of Jesus was not some faraway thing, some abstract thing just on the pages of a book? It was real to Him. And He lived daily with the thought in His mind, "Jesus loved me, and He gave Himself for me." And God wants you and me to live with that thought in our hearts and minds, because it will help us to be better Christians. To be those who are dedicated to the Lord, who are selfless and willing to serve the Lord, and willing to serve others. Paul knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that Jesus loved him, and gave Himself for Paul. And He gave Himself for you, and for me.

We realize that we have looked at many passages of Scripture. Some of these thoughts are repeated in more than one verse. But our hope is that each one of us, as we study these things, will keep in our minds that Jesus is our best friend. He has proved it by His life, His humiliation and suffering for us, and by His death. May we live with that thought in our mind until we meet again. May it fill our hearts with joy, and peace, and give us meaning and purpose in life, that we might live for Him, Who died for us.