

God's Loving Substitution

by Erlo Stegen

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who took the punishment for our sins on the cross.

Duration: 1:02:21

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Substitution"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker tells a story about a father named John who is faced with a difficult decision. John is responsible for operating a bridge that a train with 400 passengers is about to cross. However, his son, Greg, accidentally falls onto the gears of the bridge and is in danger of being crushed. John realizes that the only way to save his son is to stop the bridge from lowering, but this would result in the train and its passengers being killed. Despite his love for his son, John makes the heartbreaking decision to sacrifice his son's life in order to save the lives of the 400 passengers on the train. The speaker uses this story to illustrate the concept of sacrifice and the depth of God's love for humanity.

Transcript

We'll read two portions. The first is from John chapter 3, verse 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

And then the second portion is from Isaiah chapter 53, verse 5. But he was pierced through for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the chastening for our well-being fell upon him, and by his scourging we are healed. This is something amazing, that God should send and give his only begotten son, that he be punished and pierced for our transgressions. And he was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment was upon him, and by his scourging we are healed. There's absolutely nothing that can be compared to the gospel. And there's absolutely no position, nothing that can be compared to being a Christian and comparing with the gospel.

Even if you had to be the president of the whole world, it would be nothing in comparison. Politics is worthless, means nothing in comparison to the mystery of the kingdom of God. The things of the world come and go.

And you can gain the whole world, that everyone honors you for your position in this world, but it is nothing in comparison with the secret, the mystery of the kingdom of heaven. Even education and success here on earth, cars and marriage, all that is absolutely nothing. In fact it's like dung in comparison to the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

It's not understandable one can't understand how people can forsake such a gospel for something which is worthless, which means absolutely nothing. And one just sees how the devil has got it the gospel and about God sending his only begotten son. And let nothing distract you, be it education, your job, your business, whatever it is.

In you from that which is most important. The first portion we read where it says, for God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son. That is true love, that's real love, love that gives.

And this love is there to help you, to give you life. And it's not the love that a boy has for a girl, someone who lives an immoral and loose life, that love is like a cat has for a rat, just to eat it. And then you girl, you walk around, you're quite proud of the fact that you can walk around with this big young man, this cat in your life, and you don't realize that it won't take long and you'll be like that rat which has blood red eyes from fear because of what the cat is doing to it.

You'll end up with that illegitimate child, or perhaps even with AIDS. And that love is there to help you, to give you life, to give you life. That love he has for you doesn't give anything good.

It's not a blessing. In fact, that love he has will rob you of anything good that you had, that purity, that innocence, that wonderful life you had. He'll rob you of it, even though he promises you the earth and says he'll give you all the best things you could desire.

But it's not true. Now, young people, don't think like children. Be mature in your thinking.

Be grown up and think like you should. In Namibia, there was. In Namibia, there was a young man.

He had a relationship with a girl. Eventually, she fell pregnant out of marriage. And when the child was born and she let him know, he said, what? You, you're just a prostitute, you're worth nothing.

The man who had promised to everything now didn't want to know anything of her. But you, young man, remember, if you live such a life, you will mislead that girl, but you will be held accountable for her life and maybe for that child that comes into this world. God says the soul that sins will die.

And that won't ever change. And it won't just be the first death, but the second death as well, where you're thrown into the lake of fire. There where the fire's not quenched and the worm won't die.

Many years ago in Germany, when there was still kings that ruled there, there was a certain king. His name was Shamil. This was a powerful, a great man who overcame other nations.

One day he went out to war, he waged war against another nation, overcame it, he was victorious and he came back with all the bounty from battle. And all the spoil from that battle he brought back and put into a great heap. And he said, no one is allowed to touch what we have brought back.

Who does, will be beaten with a hundred strokes. And he said, those will be real strokes, such that his whole back will be ripped open like a field that is plowed open. And so that was made known throughout the nation, that no one dare touch any of the spoil.

on mother came and and wept and said oh my son that was my punishment I should have been punished like that you did it for me but she loved that son more than ever before and she was permanently healed from that sin of stealing but for the rest of his life that King carried those wounds

on his back but the mother also never forgot what her son had done for her how he had saved her from certain death and so this King carried the punishment and in the same way our Lord Jesus carried our punishment we should have been punished for our sins our transgressions but he did it on our behalf and in our place reminds me of another man from America 1929 1929 1929 1931 1932 it was in those years of the Great Depression 20 1929 to 33 in the countryside they lived a man John Griffiths he was working out there he was married and I had one son whose name was Greg and they eventually didn't have any food anymore in desperation he said to his wife he said my wife we've got to leave our place here in the countryside going to go to the city and see whether we can't find some work there and

John Griffiths went and looked for a job eventually he found work overseas and in other countries and continents you find rivers not like the rivers here in fact when they come and see our rivers here they sometimes have to smile because their rivers are sometimes so wide you can't see from one side to the other and on many of these rivers ships even go up and down so great are they and then they have bridges over the rivers and then they have these lifting bridges where the ships can pass through and that's where he had got his job he was responsible for lifting the bridge when the ships came through he would press the button and that would set the wheels in motion those huge cogs and gearboxes which would lift the bridge now this particular bridge that he was responsible for was

not one for motor cars but for the railway line the train now he had a timetable he knew exactly when to lift the bridge or to let it down again for the trains or the ships to come through his office was and down below his office were the huge cogs that worked this bridge that was lifted and there was just a plank across this huge maze of gears and cogs across which you walked towards the office and then in 1937 he was working there in his office at that time his son Greg was eight years old and one day when they were at home having a meal Greg said to his father father wouldn't it be possible for me to go with you one day to see where you work I've never been there and the father said yes tomorrow you can come the boy said I want to go and see this bridge you've told me about which lifts

up and which is lowered again for the trains to go through and so it was agreed and the next day the mother prepared some sandwiches which they took along it was in summer the sun was shining brightly there were some big trees outside and at lunchtime the father said to the son let's go and sit under those trees and we can have a bit of a picnic and have our lunch there the ships had come through and he had lifted the bridge and they could all sail through and so they were enjoying their lunch under those trees and the mother had also sent along a flask with some hot tea and then suddenly at 12 minutes to 2 they heard the whistle of the train as it was coming through the forest at great speed the father jumped up he said to his son you stay here I've got to let the bridge down he ran one

two steps over that plank up into his office and pressed that button to lower the bridge and this train was on its way with 400 passengers on board but what John didn't realize was this his little son Greg was following him in spite of the fact that the father had said to his son you just stay and wait for me I'll be back now the little boy had followed him but this little boy as he ran across the plank he lost his balance and he fell onto these huge wheels which lowered the next thing John heard was someone screaming and he thought but that sounds just like Greg but where is he and when he looked out the window from his office down there where he looked down into this huge gearbox where these cogs were turning he saw his little

Now let me close with this story. It happened in Great Britain. Now the sea and the shoreline there is not like we know it down here with a beach and a lot of nice sand on it.

But there you find cliffs which fall straight down into the sea, into the water, sometimes a cliff of up to 100 meters. the sea. And God loves you with such a great love, that love which doesn't deprive you of anything good, but only gives you what is good.

He was punished, he was scourged, and by his stripes, we are healed. It happened in Great Britain. Now you can ask Ian Engelbrecht, he knows about these places.

And there's one place where on top there was a lovely green field where the boys were playing soccer, and the ball headed towards the cliff. One boy ran after it, didn't realize that he had got to the edge of the cliff, he overstepped and he fell down into the ocean with the ball. That was his end.

Now in these regions there was another boy, he didn't love soccer so much, he didn't run after soccer ball, but he used to run after birds, he loved birds. He had cages where he bred birds. And then one day he came across some beautiful birds, the most beautiful feathers, and he said, but I've never seen this type of bird before, I'd love to find out where they breed, that I can get some of the little ones and I can breed them.

And he thought, well if I can just get some of these and breed them, I'll become a wealthy man because I'm sure no one else has got this type of bird. And so he would follow the birds, trying to find out where their breeding place was, and sure enough one day he discovered it, it was down one of these cliffs. He could see them flying over the cliff down towards the bottom and he thought, they must have their nests down there.

He said, well I'll get hold of them. And he decided that he'd get a rope tied to a tree at the top of the cliff and he let himself down by this rope until he'd get to where the nest is. Now, he said, well I'll get a rope tied to a tree at the top of the cliff and he let himself down by this rope until he'd get to where the nest is.

And he let himself down by this rope until he'd get to where the nest is. And he said, well I'll get a rope tied to a tree at the top of the cliff and he let himself down by this rope until he'd get to where the nest is. And as he was letting himself down this cliff face on his rope, he suddenly saw the birds and their nests on a ledge on the cliff itself.

But the cliff wasn't vertical, it actually sloped inwards, so he was just hanging mid-air away from the cliff and from the ledge. And as he was hanging he thought, now how will I get there? Then he decided just to start swinging himself on this rope. He started swinging backwards and forwards and gained more and more momentum until he got to the cliff face.

You get children like that, they see no danger. They fear nothing. And even if you try and warn them, they don't see the danger at all.

Even some children, they want to put their finger in the fire. They don't understand why you don't let them. Maybe one day you should just let them and then they'll know why you don't let them.

Like some girls, you warn them of the dangers in this life, they don't seem to understand. Maybe they need to knock their heads against the wall and only then come to their senses. And so this boy swung himself until eventually he was close enough to the ledge.

He let himself go and jumped onto the ledge. But in doing that, he lost hold of the rope. And so this boy swung himself until eventually he was close enough to the ledge.

And his heart almost stopped beating when he realized the rope swinging away from him. And he realized he was there all on his own. No one knew where he was.

He was way from the top. It was still many, many meters down to the bottom, to the water. And he knew no one would ever find him.

That would be his end. But he knew that that rope would swing back like a pendulum, but it would lose momentum. And he knew this was his only chance that when that rope swings towards him again, even if it won't get quite to him, but that he just jumps from the ledge and tries to grab it in mid-air.

Now or never. He said to himself, now or never, when this rope swings back, I'll have to jump and I must make sure that I don't miss it. And if I get hold of that rope, I must hang on for dear life and tie it around myself that I don't lose my grip.

Now or never. Now whether you are 8, 12 or 15, you also need to say now or never. For now God is throwing the rope of salvation to you.

You need to jump and grab hold of it. Like this boy did. He hung on for dear life.

Pulled himself up to the top of the cliff. When he got to the bottom, he fell on his knees and he said, Oh Lord, I thank you, I praise you for saving my life. Let us stand to our feet.

He said now or never. If you haven't jumped to grab hold of this rope of salvation, you need to do it now. And that applies even to the older people in our midst.

You need to stretch forth your hand to that rope that has been stretched out to you, to the Lord Jesus who was scourged, who was punished on our behalf. So I want to invite you now my friend to give your life to the Lord. And that you do it now.

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