

# At the Price of God's Own Blood

by John Piper

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*Jesus' blood is precious and valuable, and we must pursue holiness, zeal for good deeds, and commitment to world evangelization as the reward of his sufferings.*

**Duration:** 27:39

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:13-14, Acts 20:25, Acts 20:28, Romans 6:11, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 1:18

**Topics:** "Giving All"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor John Piper emphasizes the importance of holiness, zeal for good works, and commitment to world evangelization. He highlights that Jesus bled and died to purchase our holiness and to ignite a passion for good deeds that goes beyond mere avoidance of sin. Furthermore, he emphasizes that Christ's sacrifice should fill us with a fervor for spreading the gospel to the world. Piper acknowledges that we all fall short in these areas and encourages the congregation to seek God's forgiveness and redirection in their lives. He also reminds them that beneath these three aspects lies the foundational purchase of forgiveness, justification by faith, and reconciliation to God through Christ's sacrifice.

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## Transcript

The following message is by Pastor John Piper. More information from *Desiring God* is available at [www.DesiringGod.org](http://www.DesiringGod.org) You will see in the texts of the morning the immense value that the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter attach to Jesus Christ, and the awesome privilege of belonging to Him by faith. And so I invite you to turn first to the book of 1 Peter, 1 Peter chapter 1. And when you have found that place in your Bibles, put a finger there and flip back to Acts chapter 20.

And I'll begin reading at Acts 20 verse 25. And now, behold, I know that all you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will see my face no more. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of you all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians to feed the church of the Lord, which he obtained with his own blood. And now to 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 18. You know that you were ransomed from the feudal ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

He was destined before the foundation of the world, but he was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake. Through him you have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so

that your faith and hope are in God. Amen.

I've been moved very deeply in recent days by reading about the life of Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Some of you know who Zinzendorf is and others of you may not. He was a German and was born in 1700 and is perhaps best known as the founder of a community in Germany called Herrnhut of about 300 people in the early days, around 1727, when it got going.

And he became famous as part of the Moravian Church for its unparalleled missionary zeal, this Herrnhut community. In 1727 it started a round-the-clock prayer watch, they called it. And of those 300 people, people signed up to make commitments to pray one hour in the 24-hour period.

And that round-the-clock prayer watch lasted 100 years unbroken. In 1792, 65 years after it began, they had sent out to the unreached peoples of the West Indies and Lapland and Greenland and Turkey and North America, 300 of their own people as missionaries. These people were utterly, radically sold to Jesus Christ, given away.

They were not their own. They belonged to Jesus. And the reason I mention this is not only because I dream that Bethlehem might be a church that's saturated with prayer, not only because I would love us to have that kind of heart for world evangelization, especially among those who have not had any witness in their culture at all, but mainly I mention this because behind this movement, behind this community, there was an experience of the blood of Jesus that Zinzendorf had.

And I want to mention it to you, and I want us to focus on the blood and the purchase of the blood of Jesus this morning as we prepare to take the Lord's table and drink this sacred cup this morning. Zinzendorf was a count. He was royalty.

He was rich. And the one article that I read entitled it The Rich Young Ruler Who Said Yes. And he did.

He ultimately gave it all away and renounced his title as count. But he was rich when he was 22 years old and he took a trip through all the high spots of Europe, looking at the cultural excellencies of his day. And he came to Dusseldorf and he went to the art museum there.

And as he was walking through, he saw a painting by Domenico Fetti entitled Ecce Homo, Behold the Man. Portrait of Jesus with crown on his head and the blood running down his face. Beneath it were the words, I have done this for you.

What have you done for me? And all of his life after that, Zinzendorf said that experience, standing there watching that painting and as it were beholding the sufferings of Jesus for me. Changed my life. Never again could I view myself as my own.

Never again could I walk through the day without asking the question, whose am I and what did it cost to get me? And for what was I purchased? And it revolutionized his own life and it became the foundation of the missionary zeal of that little Herrnhut community so that the blood and wounds of Jesus Christ enslaved them to a kind of dedication that is rare today. In fact, it's illustrated in a story. I don't know whether this story is true or not, but it could easily be true.

I like to think it's true. It ought to be true. It isn't of two of the first missionaries that went out.

Their names were Leonard Dover and David Nichman. They left Herrnhut and went up to Copenhagen where they were to catch a ship and go to the West Indies. And they had no idea how they would make a living there.

None of their missionaries were ever supported at home. They always supported themselves on the field. They were ready to become slaves, to minister to the slaves if necessary.

The people thought they were crazy in Copenhagen, but a few gathered around them to support them. And they kept the faith and got on the boat. And as the boat was ready to disengage and pull out to harbor, their few friends standing there saying goodbye, perhaps to never see them again.

Twenty out of the first twenty nine who went to the West Indies died. They lifted their hands as in sacred gesture and said very loudly across the waters, may the land that was slain receive the reward of his suffering. They were referring, of course, to Revelation five, nine, that he shed his blood to ransom men for God from every people and tribe and town and nation.

And I want to talk this morning about the reward of the sufferings of Jesus. And whether or not you are letting him have those rewards in your life or resisting. Letting those rewards be.

It's a short message so that we can go to the Lord's table. It's intended just to help you do some self soul searching. Acts 20, 28 says.

At the end. That we are to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood, literally, or with the blood of his own son. So Zinzendorf was right to stand there and look in the face of Jesus, as it were, and feel himself as part of the church of God to be blood bought.

And not his own. But I want to move beyond the text that David read and look at three others. And here's the question I'm asking.

And I know from the response I got at the end of the first service, this is jarring to some people. It surprised me in a sense. But I guess now that I think about it, it shouldn't be.

We are very prone. I'm going to preface this so that I can sort of head off at the past, the feedback that I got at the end of the first service. We are very prone to only think of one dimension of the purchase of the cross, namely our forgiveness, our justification, our reconciliation, our propitiation and our cleansing in conscience.

And we stop there and we don't ask, how shall the cross master my dedication and create in me a zeal for God? Did Christ in his sufferings purchase for me more than forgiveness? And I think the reason it came across as jarring was because maybe I didn't make it clear enough that when he purchases something, he gets it. When he purchases something, he gets it. Now, there are three things that he purchased for you as part of his body that he will get.

But you must ask, am I with him in the pursuing of those things or am I striving against him in his effort to get those things? Let me mention these three things. And they're for you to examine your soul with. You're welcome to look these texts up with me in Ephesians, chapter five, verses twenty five to twenty seven.

We have a picture of the purchase of the Lord Jesus. So what I'm doing with each of these texts now is asking this question. Practically speaking in your daily life, what is the reward of the sufferings of Jesus?

So that if you were to get up in the in the morning and lift your hand in sacred gesture to the king of kings and say, may the lamb that was slain receive in my life today the reward of his sufferings, what would that be? Let's read verses twenty five to twenty seven.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Why now? What is he purchasing? He gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water in the word so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish. Now, I ask you, what did he bleed to purchase? What was the reward of his suffering? According to verse twenty six, he gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her.

Your holiness is what he died for. He died to purchase the holiness of the church. Or the beautiful words following on in verse twenty seven, he died to make his bride splendid, glorious with her wedding garment ironed, not a wrinkle in it, no spots anymore.

And so the question to ask yourself is, all right, if he valued my holiness, my splendor, my spotlessness and my wrinkle free attire of righteousness so highly as to bleed to get it, to die to get it. How valuable is the pursuit of holiness to me? Is there a commensurate value in your heart as was in God's heart? He paid the blood of his son to make you holy. And we're talking real holiness here, not simply the declared righteousness through justification.

We're talking real day to day. Don't return evil for evil holiness. That was one of the misunderstandings in the first service, I believe he bought not only free justification, he bought sanctification.

That's what verse twenty six says loud and clear. And he will have it from his people. If he doesn't get it, you're not his person.

He will have holiness. Holiness. Hebrews 12, 14.

There is a holiness without which we will not see the Lord. He bought it. He'll have it.

He will perform it. But he was another misunderstanding. Preaching two sermons.

You can hear here and we're going to go too long if I do this all the way through. People draw the conclusion if he bought something for me, I don't need to pursue it. Wrong.

It's written all over the New Testament. You are dead with Christ. Therefore, what? Reckon yourself dead.

The pages of the Bible are replete with pursue the holiness without which you won't see the Lord strive to enter at the narrow gate. And if I preach that people walk out and say, believes in works. And if I don't preach it, it's easy.

Believe isn't. I'm I'm trying to be holy biblical. I believe every sentence written in the holy book.

And I must say to you, are you with Jesus in what he died to achieve in your life or are you against him? That's the first thing he died to achieve your holiness. He bled that you might be splendid. Are you pursuing splendor in your life? With the same zeal that God pursued it when he gave his son.

Second, this text is Titus chapter two, verse 14. And the answer to the question, what is the reward of Christ's sufferings in this 14? Verse 14 is this. The reward of his sufferings is zeal for good deeds in your

life, zeal for good deeds in your life.

Let's read verse 14. He gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to pursue to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. Now, let's just break it down simply into the first and the last part of the verse.

He gave himself for us. He bled. He suffered.

He died. He was wracked with pain. Picture him now stand with Zinzendorf before some painting of the heaving Christ.

And then finish the verse. He did it all that you might have a flame of zeal for good deeds in your life. And now I ask you.

Is it there? Is the reward of his sufferings there in your life? If what does it mean if you have no zeal for good deeds, but Jesus bled for your good deeds to be zealous? What does this mean? Examine yourselves as you come to the table, because I'm going to say at the table that the only people who should eat are people who can say this. There is nothing that I want more in my life than what Jesus bled to obtain. There is nothing that I want more in my life than what Jesus bled to obtain.

And the first thing is my holiness. And the second thing is zeal for good deeds. And I'm not talking here about getting up in the morning, going to work and coming home and saying, oh, I didn't lie.

I didn't steal. I didn't kill. And I didn't commit adultery.

So I'll watch TV and I'll go to bed. That's not a zeal for good deeds. That's an avoidance ethic, an avoidance ethic that plagues the church.

I had lunch with the Jewish rabbi this week. And the most powerful thing he said to me was, you Christians have no right to try to convert us Jews. The only thing you have a right to do is ask for our forgiveness.

That's a direct quote. And what he meant was 1800 years of anti-Semitism does not commend your faith very highly. And he's right.

There's some of it in this church. I've heard it slurs, racial slurs, Jewish slurs. Zeal for good deeds is the only way we will commend Christianity to the Jews today.

He said very plainly, we don't listen to talk. We look. And the third answer to the question is the reward of Christ's sufferings is.

The ransom of a church from every people, tongue, tribe and nation. A global redeemed and ransomed people out of every cultural group, every language group, every ethnic group on the face of the earth. Now, this is the one I referred to earlier, Revelation chapter five, verse nine.

And I want to read it again. This is what Leonard Dover was referring to. When he raised his hand and said, may the lamb that was slain receive the reward of his sufferings.

He was basically referring to Revelation five, nine. Worthy are thou talking to Jesus to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou was slain. And by thy blood is ransom persons for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

You know, it would be not at all unwarranted to paraphrase it like this. Jesus died to give you a commitment to world evangelization. Jesus died to secure in your heart a commitment to world evangelization, because it is impossible psychologically to say I love the blood of Jesus.

I cherish the purchase of the cross, but I'm not I'm just not committed to gathering in the children of God from every people and tribe and tongue and nation. Even though he died and bled to purchase people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, that's not my interest. Can't say it can't do it.

I'm not saying you all got to be missionaries. OK, you shouldn't. The Bible doesn't teach that.

I'm saying commitment, care, prayer, support, zeal. And so we've got three answers now to the question. We could have a longer list, but let's just take these three.

They're enough to put us on our face, I think, before this table. One, Ephesians five, Jesus bled and died to purchase my holiness and yours to he bled and he died to purchase a zeal for good deeds that goes beyond the easy avoidance ethic of not stealing, lying, killing and committing adultery. And three, he died to fill me with a passion for world evangelization.

And so I just ask now, how are you doing? And the answer, of course, is we're not doing very well. I told the first service that my preparation of this message was a kind of rending thing yesterday afternoon as I worked my way through this. And I don't want to give the impression to anybody here that I've got these three things nice wrapped up in a package and I'm pointing my finger at you.

It's the devastating thing to read text after text in the New Testament. And I've got a whole page of them. I haven't chosen to talk about text after text that says what he bought to achieve in my life, what he died to achieve in me and how far short I fall.

And so I want to remind you, and maybe I didn't say this loud enough in the first service. So as to give cause for misunderstanding beneath these three things, holiness, zeal for good works and commitment to world evangelization, there is the purchase of forgiveness. Ephesians one, seven, the purchase of justification by faith.

Romans five, nine, the purchase of reconciliation to God for the ungodly. Romans five, 10. The cleansing of conscience from dead works.

Hebrews nine, 14. It's all there. That's just not been my message this morning because the other one we need so badly.

If we're going to be like the Moravians of Herrnhut. We need to have the blood of Christ not only soothe our guilt so that we can just be. We need to have the blood of Christ do that and then just master us so that we say, if he bled for my holiness, I will give anything for my holiness.

If he bled to give me a zeal for good deeds, I'll get up in the morning and plan a hundred good deeds. If he bled to make me have a passion for world evangelization, I'll do anything. Read biography, study, pray, go to conferences.

I'll do anything to have that passion because his blood paid for it. It cost that much. It was worth that much to the father to have my holiness, my zeal and my commitment.

Now, we're going to worship the Lord together. We all have confessing to do. We all have redirection of our lives to do.

We're going to worship the Lord for about seven to ten minutes here as we prepare for the table. And here's what I want to do. I want to give you some opportunities.

One, you can go to the Lord in the privacy and solitude of your own heart and just deal with him. We've all got to do that. Two, you might be sitting near somebody or beside somebody and things aren't right and you just want to put your hand over on their hand and say, I'm sorry.

Or let's pray and whisper a prayer right there in your pew while we sing. Or I'm going to stand right down here with Noel and David's going to stand right over there with Karen. And we're there simply if the Lord puts it on your heart that there's something you want to pray with us about.

And the reason we've asked our wives to stand with us is the thought has just occurred to me. It might be that some women have something they like to pray with another woman about and not with me. And so they're willing to do that with you.

Or we'll both pray. Or if no one comes, we'll assume God's doing a great work there in the pew. So let's go to the Lord now, deal with him, get our hearts ready for the table in a few minutes.

Dean's going to come lead us in worship. Thank you for listening to this message by John Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Feel free to make copies of this message to give to others, but please do not charge for those copies or alter the content in any way without permission.

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