

Soul Trouble: Part II

by Samuel Rutherford

Christ's love for us was motivated by his infinite goodness and love, and it is the foundation of our salvation and the motivation behind God's providence.

Topics: "Gods Love", "Redemption Through Christ"

Description

Samuel Rutherford preaches about the incomprehensible love and tender mercy of Christ, who, despite our sinful nature, was moved by a bottomless river of love to leave heaven and die for us, showcasing infinite goodness and grace. Christ's love was not private or mercenary but a bold, daring, and venturesome act of love that outran wickedness in man. Rutherford emphasizes the profound wisdom and love in Christ's sacrifice, highlighting the deep mystery and beauty of redemption through the union of God and man in the person of Jesus.

Transcript

It were possibly no less edifying to speak a little of what love and tender mercy it was in Christ, to be so troubled in soul for us. Self is precious, when free of sin, and withal self-happy. Christ was both free of sin, and self-happy. What then could have made him stir his foot out of heaven, so excellent a land, and come under the pain of a troubled soul, except free, strong and vehement love, that was a bottomless river impatient of banks? Infinite goodness maketh love to swell without itself, John 15:13. Goodness is much moved with righteousness and innocence; but we had a bad cause, because sinners. We were neither righteous nor good; yet Christ, though neither righteousness was in us, nor goodness, would dare to die for us, Romans 5:7-8. Goodness and grace (which is goodness for no deserving) is bold, daring, and venturesome. Love, which could not flow within its own channel, but that Christ's love might be out of measure love, and out of measure loving, would outrun wickedness in man.

Had Christ seen, when he was to engage his soul in the pains of the second death, that the expense in giving out should be great, and the income small, and no more than he had before, we might value his love more. Christ had leisure from eternity, and wisdom enough, to cast up his counts, and knew what he was to give out, and what to receive in. So he might have repented and given up the bargain. He knew that his blood, and his one noble soul, that dwelt in a personal union with God, was a greater sum incomparably than all his redeemed ones. He should have in little, he should but gain lost sinners; he should empty out (in a manner) a fair Godhead, and kill the Lord of glory, and get in a black bride. But there's no lack in love; the love of Christ was not private, nor mercenary. Christ the buyer commended the

wares ere he bargained, Song of Solomon 4:7: Thou art all fair, my love, here's not a spot in thee. Christ judged he had gotten a noble prize, and made an heaven's market, when he got in his arms his wife that he served for, Isaiah 53:11: He saw the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. He was filled with delight, as a full banqueter. If that ransom he gave had been little, he would have given more.

It is much that nothing outside Christ moved him to this engagement. There was a sad and bloody war between divine Justice and sinners. Love, Love pressed Christ to the war, to come and serve the great King, and the state of lost mankind, and to do it freely. This maketh it two favors. It is a conquering notion to think that the sinner's heaven was bred first in Christ's heart from eternity, and that Love, freest Love was the blossom, and the seed, and the only contriver of our eternal glory, that free grace drove on from the beginning of the age of God, from everlasting, the saving plot and sweet design of redemption of souls. This innocent and soul-rejoicing policy of Christ's taking on him the seed of Abraham, not of angels, and to come down in the shape of a servant to the land of his enemies, without a pass in regard of his sufferings, speaketh and crieth the deep wisdom of infinite Love. Was not this the wit of free grace to find out such a mysterious and profound dispensation, as that God and man personally should both do and suffer, so as Justice should want nothing, mercy be satisfied, peace should kiss righteousness, and war go on in justice against a sinless Redeemer? Angels bowing and stooping down to behold the bottom of this depth, I Peter 1:12, cannot read the perfect sense of the infinite turnings and foldings of this mysterious love.

O Love of heaven, and fairest of beloveds, the flower of angels, why camest thou so low down, as to bespot and underrate the spotless love of all loves, with coming nigh to black sinners? Who could have believed that lumps of hell and sin could be capable of the warmings and sparks of so high and princely a love? Or that there could be place in the breast of the high and lofty One, for forlorn and guilty clay? But we may know in whose breast this bred; sure none but only the eternal Love and Delight of the Father could have outed so much love; had another done it, the wonder had been more. But of this, more elsewhere.

Use. We may hence chide our soft nature. The Lord Jesus' soul was troubled in our business; we are startled at a troubled body, at a scratch in a penny-broad of our hide. First, there is in nature a silent impatience, if we be not carried in a chariot of love, in Christ's bosom, to heaven. And if we walk not upon scarlet, and purple under our feet, we flinch and murmur. Secondly, we would either have a silken, a soft, a perfumed cross, sugared and honeyed with the consolations of Christ, or we faint. And providence must either brew a cup of gall and wormwood mastered in the mixing with joy and songs, else we cannot be disciples. But Christ's cross did not smile on him, his cross was a cross, and his ship sailed in blood, and his blessed soul was seasick, and heavy even to death. Thirdly, we love to sail in fresh waters, within a step to shore; we consider not that our Lord, though he afflict not, and crush not, from his heart, Lamentations 3:33, yet he afflicteth not in sport. Punishing of sin is in God a serious, grave, and real work. No reason the cross should be a play; neither Stoics nor Christians can laugh it over; the cross cast a sad gloom upon Christ.

Fourth, we forget that bloody and sad mercies are good for us. The peace that the Lord bringeth out of the womb of war is better than the rotten peace that we had in the superstitious days of Prelates. What a sweet life, what a heaven, what a salvation is it, we have in Christ! And we know the death, the grave, the soul trouble of the Lord Jesus, travailed in pain to bring forth these to us. Heaven is the more heaven, that to Christ it was a purchase of blood. The cross to all the saints must have a bloody bit, and lion's teeth; it was like itself to Christ, gall and sour, and it must be so to us. We cannot have a paper cross, except we

would take on us to make a golden providence, and put the creation in a new frame, and take the world and make it a great leaden vessel, melt it in the fire, and cast a new mold of it.

Fifth, we can wrestle with the Almighty, as if we could discipline and govern ourselves better than God can do. Murmuring fleeth up against a dispensation of an infinite wisdom, because it's God's dispensation, not our own; as if God had done the fault, but the murmuring man only can make amends, and right the slips of infinite wisdom. Sixth, we judge God with sense, not with reason; the oar that God rolleth his vessel withal is broken (say we), because the end of the oar is in the water. Providence halteth (say we), but what if sense says, a straight line is a circle? The world judged God in person a Samaritan, one that had a devil; if we misjudge his person, we may misjudge his providence and ways. Suspend your sense of God's ways while you see his ends that are underground. And instead of judging, wonder and adore, or then believe implicitly that the way of God is equal, or do both, and submit, and be silent. Heart dialogues and heart speeches against God, that arises as smoke in the chimney, are challengings and summons against our highest landlord, for his own house and land.

If Christ gave a soul for us, he had no choicer thing. The Father had no nobler and dearer gift, than his only begotten Son. The Son had no thing dearer than himself. The man Christ had nothing of value comparable to his soul, and that must run a hazard for man. In this giving and taking world, we are hence obliged to give the best and choicest thing we have for Christ. Should we make a table of Christ's acts of love, and free grace to us, and of our sins and acts of unthankfulness to him, this would be more evident. Thus (1) there was before time in the breast of Christ an eternal coal of burning love to the sinner. Christ began with love to us, we begin with hatred to him. (2) Christ gave his soul to trouble, and to the horror of the second death for you. Consult with your heart, if you have quit one lust for him. Christ laid aside his heaven for you, his whole heaven, his whole glory, for you, and his Father's house. Are you willing to part with an acre of earth, or house, and inheritance for him?

In calling us out of the state of sin, to grace and glory, oh I must make this sad reckoning with Jesus Christ. Oh, Christ turneth his smiling face to me, in calling, inviting, obtesting, praying, that I would be reconciled to God. I turn my back to him. He openeth his breast and heart to us, and saith, Friends, doves, come in and dwell in the holes of this rock, and we lift our heel against him. Oh what guilt is here to scratch Christ's breast! When he willeth you to come and lay head and heart on his breast, this unkindness to Christ's troubled soul is more than sin; sin is but a transgression of the law. I grant it is an infinite but. But it's a transgression of both law and love, to spurn against the warm bowels of love, to spit on grace, on tenderness of infinite love. The white and ruddy, the fairest of heaven, offereth to kiss black Moors on earth; they will not come near to him. It's a heart of flint and adamant that spitteth at evangelic love. Law-love is love; evangelic love is more than love: it's the gold, the flour of Christ's

wheat, and of his finest love.

Song of Solomon 5:6: I rose up to open to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone, my soul passed away when he spake. There be two words here considerable, to prove how wounding are sins against the love of Christ. 1. My beloved hath withdrawn himself; the text is, and my beloved had turned about. Christ being unwilling to remove, and wholly go away, he only turned aside. This intimateth so much as Christ taketh not a direct journey to go away and leave his own children, only he goeth a little aside from the door of the soul, to testify he would gladly, with his soul, come in. Now what ingratitude is it to shut him violently away? 2. My soul was gone; the old version is, My soul melted, at his speaking, my soul passed over, or went away; to remember his ravishing words, it broke my life and made

me die, that I remembered a world of love in him when he knocked, saying Open to me my sister, my love, my dove. To sin against so great a bond as grace must be the sin of sins, and amongst highest sins, as is clear in these that sin against the Holy Ghost. Then it must be impossible to give grace anything, we but pay our debts to grace; we cannot give the debt of grace to grace in the whole sum.

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