

Jesus Christ Died for Us

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the profound significance of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the necessity of total commitment in response to His love and grace.

Duration: 35:52

Scripture: Romans 12:1

Topics: "Death Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of absolute surrender and total commitment to God. He highlights that God is not only the creator but also the sustainer of the universe. The sermon focuses on the mercies of God, which are listed in the first eight chapters of Romans. The preacher emphasizes that following a formulaic approach to Christianity is not enough; instead, believers should surrender everything to God and allow Him to be in control of their lives. The sermon concludes with the reminder that surrendering to God is not a one-time event but a daily commitment.

Transcript

Back in Romans chapter 12, 1 and 2. First of all, we're going to review what we went over last week, something that we're all very well acquainted with, but I sometimes think that the reality skips us. Jesus Christ is God. Oftentimes when we think of him, we think of his humanity, don't we? But the Lord Jesus came down from heaven and took upon himself God, something he never had before, and that was humanity.

It's astounding, really. Astounding. Nothing like it in the history of the universe.

But what really is astounding is that God, in a body of flesh, went to the cross of Calvary and died. That man hanging on the cross, bound by nails, feet and hands, was God. It's amazing.

In fact, I think it's a thought beyond all thought, probably the greatest thought that's ever entered the human mind. It's true. My dear friend here today, get yourself into that equation, because he died for you, and he died for me.

I tell you, we're grappling with great truths when we come to the word of God, aren't we? He didn't have to do it. He could have just brushed us off the table into hell. But in marvelous grace, he decided to die for us anonymous nobodies.

That's what we were. We deserved eternal death. You know, the Lord Jesus was the only person in the universe who was qualified to be our Savior.

He had to be God, he had to be man, and he had to be willing. And the marvelous thing is that the God-man was willing to go to the cross, pour out his blood, his lifeblood, for you and for me. Wonderful, wonderful Jesus.

He paid too high a price, don't you think so? He paid too high a price. Lord, even to death thy love could go, death of shame and loss, to vanquish for us every foe and break the strongman's force. Now today we face a tremendous question.

What would be a suitable response to the Lord Jesus for what he did on the cross of Calvary? We've been singing some hymns that were very appropriate this morning for that purpose. What is the suitable response? I think a lot of Christians think along these lines. They say, well, the first thing is to get saved.

The second thing is to be baptized. The third thing is to be in fellowship in a local church and be active for the Lord. After that, just go with the flow.

Isn't that about it? We have a little formula that we follow. That's not enough. In the light of Calvary, there's a certain everything or nothingness about it.

Really, in the light of Calvary, there's a certain everything or nothingness about it. I'd like to share those two quotes I gave with you last week, because they're so meaningful to me. Harold St. John said, you'll never appreciate Calvary until it takes your breath away and becomes the most important thing in your life.

Isn't that good? You'll never appreciate Calvary until it takes your breath away and becomes the most important thing in your life. The second quote was by Dorothy Sayers. She said, from the beginning of time until now and on into eternity, Calvary is the only thing that ever happened.

You have to think about that one for a minute, don't you? I'll read it again. From the beginning of time until now and on into eternity, this is the only thing that ever happened. Nothing else is important.

Nothing else can ever touch that in its importance. In Isaiah, it speaks of a response to the goodness of God. It said, if you take all the cedar trees of Lebanon and all the animals of Lebanon and make a burnt offering to the Lord, it wouldn't be enough.

It wouldn't be enough. In the Song of Solomon, it says, if a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised. And we can say that if we took all the gold and silver and platinum and diamonds in the world, made a mountain of them, it wouldn't be a suitable response for what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross of Calvary.

The truth of what God did for us, dying for us, it should leave us speechless, astonished and amazed. It beggars description and strains the mind. Nothing can ever be as important as this.

Nothing in the history of the universe, love so amazing, so divine, demands our soul, our life, our all. The marvel is not just in what happened, although that's enough to defy the imagination. The marvel is that the one who played the leading role was God, himself the eternal God.

The one who died on Calvary's cross was the creator of the universe. He was not only the creator of the universe, he was the sustainer of the universe, the one who keeps matter together, for by him all things

consist. Dear friends, I want to tell you this morning that the drama of our redemption leads down a one-way street, and it ends as total commitment, absolute surrender.

And if you think otherwise, you're kidding yourself. Nothing you can do or ever say would come up to that. That's why we're turning to Romans 12, and I wish you'd turn in your Bibles to have your Bible open to it.

It says the mercies of God require absolute surrender. The mercies of God. You say, what are the mercies of God? Well, there are 15 of them in this passage.

That doesn't exhaust the subject, but there are 15 mercies here, and they're all listed in the first eight chapters of Romans. Dear friends, listen to this. These are some of the mercies of God that require total commitment to him.

The first is justification. If you're a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ today, God reckons you to be righteous, and that fits you for heaven. It's wonderful.

Justification is a legal term. I'm not just in myself. I'm not righteous in myself, but God sees me in Christ, and I'm fit for heaven because I'm in Christ.

How much is that worth? How many dollars is that worth? Redemption. Redemption means bought back, buy back from the slave market of sin. That's where we were before we were saved.

What was the price? The precious blood of Christ. And of course, the blood is the life. He gave his life to buy me back to himself.

Peace. I was enmity with God, but he has made peace through the blood of his cross. The enemy is now his worshiper.

Hope. Hope in the New Testament always refers to the heavenly state. It's wonderful, isn't it? Hope has to do with being with the Lord Jesus forever in the glories of heaven.

How much is that worth? And there's no doubt about that hope either. When the word is used in the world today, well, it could be, but we're not quite sure. But hope in the New Testament is absolutely sure because it's based on the word of God.

How much is that worth to you today? Reconciliation. We reconcile to God through the wonderful work of our Savior. Righteousness.

It was a righteous thing for God to do because Christ died for us. God had to do it righteously. Somebody had to die as a substitute for us.

Jesus turned out to be that someone, didn't he? Freedom from sin as master. The mercies of God. Freedom from sin as master.

Sin shall not have dominion over you. You're not under law. You're under grace.

That's a wonderful deliverance, isn't it? Freedom from the law. The believers free from the law, though not lawless. Doesn't mean you go around doing what you want to do, but it means you're free from the law because where the law is, there's bondage.

And where the law is, is a curse. The curse is death. Freedom from condemnation.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. How much is that worth? How much is it worth to be able to put your head down on your pillow at night and say, there is no condemnation. There is no death for me.

The torment and the fire, my eyes will never see. Reach my blessed Savior first. Take him from God's esteem.

Prove Jesus bears one spot of sin and tell me I'm unclean. Wonderful. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

This is something you accept by faith. These things you accept by faith. And this especially, I think, people say, I wasn't conscious of the Holy Spirit coming into my life.

You accept it by faith. When you were saved, if you are saved, actually a person of the Trinity came in and indwells your body. Wonderful.

How much is that worth to you? The help of the Holy Spirit in our prayers. I think that's wonderful. We don't know what to pray for, as we should.

But he helps us. It's something to have the Holy Spirit, one of the members of the Trinity, praying for us. Do you like that? Predestination.

That is, we're predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. Honestly, God could have done a lot less than that for us. Predestined to the image of God's Son.

We're going to be like Jesus someday. We're far from it now. Oh, to be like him.

Oh, to be like him. Glorification. The mercy of God.

We're not only justified, we're not only sanctified, we're glorified. And God speaks of it in the past tense. It's so sure that he can speak of it in the past tense.

And then assurance of God's love forever. What can separate us from the love of God, Paul says. And he ransacks the universe to see if he can find anything that could ever separate us from the love of God.

And he comes up dry. He can't think of anything that would separate us from the love of God. Dear friends, the mercies of God demand our full surrender.

Are you with me? Notice what it says about the sacrifice here in Romans 12 and 1. First of all, it's a total sacrifice. A total sacrifice. He said, you give your body a living sacrifice.

When God uses the expression body, he means the body in the sense of the whole person. The person is more than the body. I know that.

But he uses the word body to take in the whole person. Spirit, soul, and body is total. No ifs, ands, or buts.

No conditions at all. It's a living sacrifice. The Old Testament sacrifices were largely dead animals.

God wants living persons in the Bay Area as sacrifices. It's a holy sacrifice. Don't come with sin in your heart.

It's got to be a holy sacrifice. No doing it for something you would get out of it. Doing it because of what he did for you.

It's one that's acceptable to God. Isn't it wonderful that there are things we can do here that actually please the God of the universe? And there's one. Give your body a sacrifice to God.

It's our reasonable sacrifice. This verse may be read in two different verses. It can say our spiritual exercise, our spiritual worship, or our reasonable sacrifice.

It's true both ways. It's the most reasonable, rational thing you can do. If Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for me, the least I can do is give my life to him.

It's reasonable. It's sane. It's rational.

I should do it. Or it can be our spiritual worship. Think of this.

The highest form of spiritual worship is surrendering yourself to Jesus. Sometimes I think in our assemblies we think of the worship meeting, the breaking of bread. But they're closely linked.

Because at the breaking of bread we hear the Savior say, this is my body given for you. And we should be saying, Lord Jesus, this is my body given for you. The highest form of spiritual worship.

It's the surest way of knowing the guidance of the Lord. Doesn't it say that here? I think it says that here. That you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The surest way to know the guidance of God. Lord Jesus, here I am. You bought me.

I belong to you. Use this life any way you want to use it. Does it seem hard? Was it hard for him to go to the cross? We don't know what's best for us.

God knows options for your life. And it would make reason dizzy, honestly. But you won't know them.

You won't know them until you make that surrender to him. The love of Christ commands this total surrender. 2 Corinthians 5, verses 14 and 15.

The love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge. Listen, if one died for all, then all were dead. And he died for us.

Those who live should not live the way they want to live, but live unto him. God didn't die for Bill McDonald so that Bill McDonald could live the life that he wants to live. He died for me so that I might live for him who died on the cross.

Simple gratitude demands it. Think of the lepers that came to Jesus and they were all healed except one. And he was a Samaritan.

He came back and said thanks. Gratitude demands that I turn my life over to him. He owns us.

1 Corinthians 6, we're bought with a price. That's marvelous to remember that, that a transaction took place on the cross where he paid his blood for you and for me. So I don't belong to myself anymore.

If I take my life and use it the way I want to use it, I'm a thief. God doesn't like thieves. Jesus is Lord.

You know, we're kind of glib in saying Jesus is Lord. What does that mean? It means in control. He's in control.

We belong to him. He's our master, we're his servant, we do what he tells us to do. Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not the things that I say? We don't know what's best for us.

These things demand total commitment of ourselves to Jesus Christ. It's a definite transaction, a definite action by which we turn our lives over to him. We turn the reins over to him.

Our personal desires and ambitions go by the way, and then we ask that his will be done. No reserve, no retreat, no regrets. But it's not enough to do this once, is it? Because if you're like me, you do it today, and to me, the next day, that wretched thing is crawling off the altar.

It has to be bound with cords to the altar. That means every day of my life. Let's just repeat it.

Lord Jesus, for the next 24 hours, take control of my life. Show me what to do. Give me the words to say.

Let me be subject to you in all my life. Daily. It's possible to commit your life to the Lord for salvation and not commit it to him for service.

It certainly was possible in my life. I was saved when I was 18, and then one day I read a statement by CT studies that if Jesus Christ be God, and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him. That night at midnight, I got down on my knees, and I turned my life over to the Lord for service.

I'd already done it for salvation. Actually, they should both occur at the same time. They should both occur at the time we're saved.

It should be a total commitment, but it isn't always. It isn't always. That was the night I got rich, when I did that.

If we really took this all in, it would shape all of our lives. It would really shape our lives. Our lives would be psalms of endless praise to the Lord.

We would be lost in love, wonder, and praise, and drowned in love's mysterious deep. We would count all things lost for Jesus. He did.

Paul did. In Philippians, he reads that. I count all things lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

Refusal to do it is, get this, refusal to turn my life over to the Lord is like looking up into his face and saying, you haven't done anything that makes it incumbent on me to turn my life over to you. Refusal to do it, that's what it means. Stand up and say, you haven't done anything for me that would warrant my turning over my life to you.

It would shape our lives in such a way that we would wish we had a thousand lives to give to him, a thousand hearts to love him, and a thousand tongues to praise him. I like it the way David calls on all creation in the Psalms, especially in the last Psalm 2, calls on all creation to worship the Lord. He's got quite a choir there in the Psalms, quite an orchestra, too.

If I really gave the Lord the place in my life he deserves, there'd be no competitor for my time or talents. We would all be like high-voltage Christians telling anyone who would listen that God died for them two thousand years ago to save them from hell. Earth's gold and treasures would have no attraction, no attraction for me.

We would sell things that we don't need and put it to work for the Lord. The world's honors would mean nothing to me. Why go after the honors of the world that gave our Savior nothing but a cross and a grave? I don't want the honors of the world, do you? I want my honors to come from higher than that.

Don't be honored where the Savior was put to shame. I think if we felt that, we would take our degrees and lay them adoringly at the feet of Jesus. Christians would not, Christian parents would not hold out worldly ambitions for their children.

It would be their greatest joy to see those children seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And young people, get this young people, they would not think it below their dignity to serve Jesus on a foreign field. Lives in full-time service for the best of masters.

It says that those who have wives should be as though they had none. That sounds pretty difficult, doesn't it? Those who have wives should be... What it means is this. Christ must come first in the marriage, and the wife has to play second fiddle to Jesus.

That's what it means. But it works the other way, too. The husband has to play second fiddle when it comes to dedication to the Lord.

We would not spend the best part of our life doing what an unsaved person could do just as well. It doesn't mean you wouldn't have a secular occupation, it doesn't mean that at all. It means the passion of your life.

Okay, okay to have a secular job. It can be very honoring to the Lord. It says that in Colossians, knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance who serve the Lord Christ.

That was true of slaves when Paul wrote it. So even if you're a slave, you're not cut off from the best blessings of the Christian faith, but that's not the passion of your life. If this truth grabbed us today, Calvary would be the center of the universe for us and the axis of history.

We must recapture the immensity of Calvary, that the suffering Savior is none other than the God of creation, the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent Lord of all. I want to tell you, when we lose the titanic wonder of it all, we will just succumb to the chill of our environment. We'll develop a deadly familiarity with the truth of God's Word.

That must not be. Henceforth we must say, love so amazing, so divine, shall have our souls, our lives, our own. In the light of Calvary, the hard sayings of Jesus don't seem so hard.

A lot of things in the New Testament are difficult. Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rusteth, corrupt as thieves break through and steal. It's hard.

But when you think of what he did for us, it's not hard. It's just tiddlywinks. He said, forsake all.

Well, if your eyes have been opened by heaven, that's okay. That's okay. He forsook all for me.

David Livingstone said, it's just too bad I don't have more to give him. That's good, isn't it? Just too bad I don't have more to give him. It's a pity I don't have more.

He said, hate your own life. Of course, hate your life. You do that by turning it over to him, the one who bought it there at the cross of Calvary.

It's amazing, isn't it? Just amazing. He said, love me more than your earthly relatives. Of course, all of the loves must be hatred by comparison.

We must be done with a Christianity light, a light version of it, a cream puffed, candy faith will not do. Life is more than fun and games. It's time to put away the toys.

Homer Grimes expressed his commitment in this chorus. Jesus, my Lord and master, thou hast given all for me. Shall I give less than all I possess, or shall I give all to thee? Jesus, my Lord and savior, thou hast given all for me.

Not just a part or a half of my heart, I will give all to thee. And Frances Happergale, who's him we sung this morning, she said, take my life, my God, I pour at thy feet its treasure store. Take my self, that I will be ever only all for thee.

I don't know who wrote this, but I like it. Poor is our sacrifice, whose eyes are lighted from above. We offer what we cannot keep, what we have ceased to love.

When you turn your life over to the Lord, you're going to turn over something you can't keep anyway. We offer what we cannot keep, what we have ceased to love. Once you turn it over to Jesus, there's a new relationship there altogether.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God, all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood. Jesus, Lord and master, love divine has conquered. I will henceforth answer yes to all I will.

Free from Satan's bondage, I am thine forever. Henceforth, all thy purposes in me fulfilled. And we sang this next one, and it's really beautiful.

I'm so glad we sang it. Oh, Jesus, Lord and master, I give myself to thee, for thou and thine atonement didst give thyself for me. I own no other master.

My heart shall be thy throne. My life I give henceforth to live, O Christ, for thee alone. One day a brother was speaking to George Mueller, and he said to him, he said, Mr. Mueller, how do you account for the fact that the Lord has used you so wonderfully in his service? And George sat there and his head went down, so it was almost between his knees.

And he said, there was a day when George Mueller died. He died to the world. He died to fame.

He died to fortune. He died to do the will of God. And he has been different ever since, been different ever since.

Turn his life over to the Lord. Shall we pray? Blessed Lord Jesus, we've been dealing with tremendous truths this morning. We write them deep in our hearts.

Lord, never let us be comfortable until we come to you and just turn our lives over to you and let you do with them what you want to do. And we know that's the best. We just pray for everyone in the room today.

We believe that if we were to take this seriously, blessing would go out from Fairhaven to the far corners of the earth in a way it has never gone before. We ask it in the Savior's precious name. Amen.

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