

God's Glorious Grace

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Preacher: Roy Davidson

[0 : 00] Well friends, there's nothing in that passage to preach on for a year I'm sure, but we won't do it this morning. Now's the time to have a think about the passage, think about what stands out to you, what questions you have, to continue conversations now and over and after church.

But do that now and then things that might stand out to you might think, oh that's something I need to take a hold of straight away. So here we go, that's the kind of time now, a couple of minutes to think about the passage, talk about the person next to you, what stood out to you, what questions do you have, what didn't make sense and what might be something that you need to think about changing in life straight away.

There should be a slide to remind you of that as well. Okay, well let's pray and ask God to be at work. Let's do that now, let's pray.

Our Father in Heaven, thanks for your word and we ask now that as we study and consider and dig deeply into some of it, that you'd be at work by your Spirit changing us more and more into the likeness of your Son.

For we pray it in Jesus' name, Amen. Well people do some crazy things, I know you're probably thinking you've done some crazy things as well in your life. You see the extreme sports, don't you?

[1 : 08] You see the motorcyclists, they jump over these long places over mid-air and way up in the sky at the Eka and they let go of the handlebars and let go of the bike and then grab it and land it and don't kill themselves.

Absolutely crazy. You see it in extreme sports. You see the triple somersaults as people go down the mogul runs and then do the triple backflip and land and next thing you know they're doing okay still.

Well you see the, you hear about the climbing of Mount Everest without oxygen, they get up there and somehow they survive. People dive down 100 metres under the ocean just holding their breath and come back up and somehow they can do it.

Some people do other strange things, don't they? Some people become their own medical guinea pigs to prove some medical theory, like they'll take some new treatment like this fellow did who is an oncologist who trials some melanoma treatment on himself and it seems to be working.

Or like Copernicus challenges the status quo and says you know I think the sun is the centre of the solar system and not the earth. Some might think you're a little crazy actually, just for turning up here Sunday morning.

[2 : 28] At one level being out of your mind is all relative. The Apostle Paul was considered crazy when he met before King Agrippa.

He was accused of being out of his mind. Let me read to you why he was considered to be out of his mind. In Acts chapter 26 Paul says, to this day, he speaks to Agrippa, to this day I've had the help that comes from God and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophet and Moses said would come to pass, and that Christ must suffer and that by being the first rise from the dead, he proclaimed light both to our people and to the Gentiles.

And as he was saying these things to his defence, Festus said to him with a loud voice, Paul, you're out of your mind.

Your great learning is driving you out of your mind. But Paul said, I'm not out of my mind, most excellent Festus. I am speaking true and rational words.

To believe that the Christ is the Lord Jesus, that God's anointed King should suffer death on the cross and rise from the death seems madness. But it is actually the truth.

[3 : 49] And it's a madness not to believe it, for our eternal destiny is determined by it. And I'm going to ask us all to get a little bit crazy today, that we might be crazy in the eyes of the world around about us.

And so we're going to look at 2 Corinthians, just a bit of it. Picking up at basically 13, 14 and 15, there's only those verses this morning. But we heard, didn't we, in the reading, that Christ died one for all.

That's what we heard. Which picks up the idea of sacrifice, and picks up the idea of the Old Testament things of Leviticus chapter 16 at least. The idea of sacrifice for sin is something that runs through the whole Bible, begins in Genesis, it's actually codified in Exodus, it's then detailed in Leviticus, and then required to be practised from then on.

Right? The essence of sacrifice is death of something, in exchange for the forgiveness of another. That's what it is. Most often it's a perfectly good lamb that was sacrificed for people.

And in Leviticus chapter 16, we have the annual Day of Atonement. Let me remind you of what it was. A sacrifice of a bull is made for Aaron, who is the priest, and for his household, and then two goats are chosen.

[5 : 12] One is chosen to live, one is chosen to die. The tabernacle is then purified by the sacrificed goat, and sacrifice is made for all the people.

And then the live goat has the hands of the priest laid on it, symbolically laying on the goat, that's the scapegoat, to run off into the wilderness, and take the sin far away.

And the priest makes a burnt offering of the bull and the goat that was sacrificed. The big thing here is, it's sin breaks our relationship with God, our rebellion against God, cuts us off from God, and the consequence of sin is necessarily death.

And sin requires sacrifice in order for there to be forgiveness. And one sacrifice is made to cleanse the whole people of Israel for their sins. And it's done annually, every year.

It's called the sacrifice of atonement. The make you at one sacrifice with God. The death of the animals in the place of the people. Now when we come to the New Testament, in John's Gospel, we hear that John the Baptist calls Jesus, he says, Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

[6 : 30] And so we're going to dig deep into 2 Corinthians chapter 5, and look at verses 14 and 15 only really. So come with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 14 and 15, particularly.

For in it we see that Jesus, the Lamb of God, dies as a substitute for sin, in our place, and that is the glorious Gospel of Jesus.

And that will shape all that we do. And we see here love, for the love of Christ, verse 14, controls us. The us in the first instance is Paul and Timothy, but the love of Christ is the love that Christ has for us.

That's what it is. He has made us in his image. He loved us to the point of death, death on a cross. But Paul was once a Pharisee of Pharisees, who was against Jesus.

A Jew of Jews, and in his zeal had hated Jesus, but came to recognise that Jesus is not a blaspheming liar, but Jesus is his blessed Lord.

[7 : 48] He had a complete change of heart and mind towards him. And he came to see that Jesus had bled and died as a sacrifice for him. And Jesus had sought him out on the road to Damascus, knocked him off his horse, as it was, and shown him that in his persecution of believers, he was actually persecuting no one less than Jesus, his Christ, the Lord and God.

the one he should meet as his judge and executioner. But now Jesus has brought him to confess Lord and Saviour.

That is glorious grace to Paul, glorious loving grace that Paul did not deserve. Paul deserved death for his opposition to Jesus, but instead received forgiveness in life.

Paul deserved wrath from God, but instead he got forgiveness, something he'd never earn, could never deserve. That is the glorious grace, the love of God.

And you see what this does then? The love of Christ controls us. It's this glorious grace that controls and constrains him, compels him to do his work.

[9 : 15] So great is this love that Jesus demonstrated to him that he must do what he is doing. It's not just an emotional response, fair enough, that the emotion is involved, it's appropriate, but it's also a considered and reasoned view.

It is the love that God has for him that compels him to do what he does, motivates him, drives him. But not just him.

He is convinced that this has been done for all. Christ was one, died for all. His sacrificial death was for all people.

It's universal in its scope. It's John chapter 3 verse 16, for the world. It's for all time, past, present and future generations. And it was necessary, if there's any other way that God could bring about forgiveness of sins without the death of his son, he would have done it.

I'm sure I would have. His death was sufficient for all people. Being the very son of God, God himself, his death is of infinite worth.

[10 : 25] And his death is a substitute for, see, for the world. It was in my place and it was in your place for us. He bears our sin, carries our sin, and not only carries it, but he also bears the consequence of it.

Death in my place. It's a one sacrifice for all. All people, all time, all nations, all generations. Now, this is the hardest part to get a hold of.

The next sentence, the next three words or four words, therefore all died, is strange, isn't it? One has died for all, comma, therefore, all have died.

In fact, I could just leave that out and read the next sentence, couldn't I? The love of Christ controls us because we conclude this, that one has died for all and he died for all, but those who live might no longer live for themselves.

Why is it, therefore, that all have died if Christ Jesus has died? How could that possibly be? It's hard to argue that this is not for all, right?

[11 : 43] No? If it's all universally in one breath beforehand, it's hard to say it's not universal in the next for all people, isn't it? This verse is hard to argue that those who could be just for some have died.

So let me tell you what I'm pretty sure it's saying this. This verse is not saying that only those who trust in Christ have been rescued from death being the wrath of God.

That's true, don't get me wrong, that's true, but we don't get it from this verse. And this verse is not saying that only those who trust in Christ have undergone death, being the death of our sinful selves.

Well, that's true, don't get me wrong, true in itself, but it doesn't come from this part of the Bible. Romans chapter 6 will teach those two truths, right? But better to understand it, that all died is like this.

If one died for all, it means that all must have died. And so the phrase is reinforcing things from another angle.

[12 : 59] So the truth that Jesus died for all is another way of emphasising that death was necessary for all people.

since Jesus' death was necessary for all. It means that all have died in the first place to require his death.

I'll say it again. It means that all have died in the first place to require his death for all and gain life. Okay, well that asks the question then, how is it possible that all have died?

How is it possible that all have died? I'm still breathing. Because all people have died in Adam's sin at the fall.

Since the sin of Adam, every human being faces death and every human being dies. And if they haven't died yet, they will.

[14 : 00] Unless the Lord Jesus returns first. Right. Like a cut flower is the best illustration we can come up with really at one level.

People, from the time they are born, we are born, we are born cut off from the source of life and so dead.

So even when the rose is in full bloom in the vase, it's cut off from the rose bush, it's dead and guaranteed it's just going to be dead leaves very soon.

Even in full bloom we are dead. We are born dead in sin. So Jesus' death is sufficient for all, it was also personally necessary for everyone so that we could be made right with God by his glorious grace.

Now, we can come back to a question and clarify that some more if you like. but so that, verse 15, Jesus died for all then, has necessary consequences.

[15 : 24] Look at verse 15, and he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Who is it that are the living ones? Obviously, it's not the dead ones.

He died so that all might be reconciled to God. His death is sufficient for all but it's only efficient for those who rely on it. We who rely on it are the live ones.

I'll say it again, his death is sufficient for all but it's only efficient, effective for those who rely on it who are the live ones, the really live ones in this world.

Everyone should live for Jesus but clearly most of the world doesn't. Those who rely on his death are the ones who benefit from his death and are given new life.

[16 : 37] How? Because Jesus didn't stay dead, he was raised to life again. Now we who live for him who will for our sake was died and rise again, his death is in our place, raise us from the dead and that's our doorway from death to life.

Totally undeserved. Totally undeserved. and in God's glorious grace has given us eternal life. Now that's something and the only appropriate response is a massive change in living arrangement.

No longer does Paul live for himself, he lives for the one who died for him. More than that, this is not just appropriate for Paul.

This is the appropriate response for everyone who has benefited from Jesus' sacrificial death. The reasonable and appropriate response to having been given life in Christ Jesus is to live for Christ and not ourselves.

Living for self is the natural way of life, living with ourselves as Lord, living without regard to what Jesus has done for us. Living without care for others who Jesus cares about.

[18 : 07] But I want you to notice something. We started at verse 14 and yet verse 14 and verse 15 are the reason for something that comes beforehand.

So come back. Some people considered Paul and Timothy crazy, beside themselves for doing what they do. they don't appear that attractive, they don't appear that wise, they don't appear that powerful, influential.

Their outward appearance has no resemblance to their heart. Paul gave up a great career as a Pharisee in the Judaistic life world, in Judaism.

Have a look at 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 7. 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 7. This is the kind of life he lives now.

We have this treasuring jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. Listen to this. We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifest in our bodies.

[19 : 21] For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus may also be manifest in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us but life in you.

And so chapter 5 verse 13 if we are beside ourselves that is if we are crazy if we're out of our minds it's for God if we're in our right mind it's for you.

The very reason that Paul and Timothy are living this crazy lifestyle is because they are compelled by Christ Jesus because of what he's done for them.

They're not living for themselves but for him who died for them. And so if the world considers them crazy beside themselves then it's because they are ambassadors of Christ Jesus willing doing what is strange in the eyes of the world and about them.

The world sees no purpose in suffering for Jesus. I met a man in the park just recently the other week who just couldn't see the point because he didn't see the glorious gospel.

[20 : 35] Suffering for Jesus what's the point of doing that? Even after I told him as clearly as I could he's still crazy in his eyes. Actually if you're crazy in the world's eyes let me tell you you're in your right mind before God.

So the reason that Paul is like this is for the sake of his hearers for the sake of others for the sake of the people in Corinth but notice what Paul says what has constrained him verse 14 is the love that Christ has for him and that should constrain all who have come to know that Jesus died for them.

Those he's writing to the Corinthians and to us you and me everyone in this room so I want to draw a few threads together now by way of application I want to talk about losing your life first of all for some here today this could be revolutionary you could be convinced this is right and the appropriate response for you is to start becoming a little bit crazy changing your mind about Jesus currently you may be breathing but actually you recognise that you're living in life in ignorance of God and failing to recognise Jesus the Lord and if what I'm saying is true you're dead living life merely without him but by the very nature of being human like the rest of us are facing death death and have been cut off from God however God's Holy Spirit is at work in you opening your heart to see the things the great love that Jesus has for you as a sacrifice for our sins to rescue from the coming wrath of God and you'll obey his call to submit to him as

Lord convinced there's only one thing you'll do and that is bend the knee to him bend the knee to Jesus Lord rely on his death for you and your place this could then be the first day of your new life trusting in Jesus Lord and Saviour and some people will think you've lost your mind they may but actually you've gained it and received eternal life that is the most sane thing anyone could ever do there'll be opportunity to respond later on with connect today well the other thing is to continue right others here will have come to faith in Jesus already and you've been reminded again of God's glorious grace we hear those words no longer live for ourselves but for him who died for us and was raised to life what does it mean to live with Jesus as Lord it will mean we go on living for his glory and not our own it means that we'll live for the good of others not just ourselves and what better thing can we do for others than help them come to faith in the

Lord Jesus as well bringing honour to Jesus for all he's done by dying for others and bring blessing to those as they come to believe it as well we'll be on about making disciples that's what we'll be on about of our Lord Jesus we'll continue to be growing more like him and giving ourselves to the work of the Lord sacrificially serving in all kinds of ways always with an eye to helping people come to know Jesus Lord as we walk around the streets we talk to our kids as we live in our neighbourhoods as we work in our workplaces we'll be aligning ourselves with the efforts to grow the gospel of Jesus making it a priority to serve him and his people doing our little bit to grow the gospel willing to go out of our way in the service of others we'll not be ashamed of being known as Jesus people and we'll be leading our families in godly priorities putting priorities on anything that will promote the gospel in our family putting priorities on growing the gospel in a neighbourhood supporting gospel initiatives praying for gospel initiatives and particularly supporting and raising up generations of gospel workers brothers and sisters they don't get tired of that but some here will be convicted right that living for Jesus would mean one more thing using the gifts and abilities joyfully spending all my time in his service dependent upon others and God to provide for my living to be leaders of gospel mission trusting him to provide for my daily needs

[25 : 24] I'll gladly give up my small ambitions we have for living for self and carrying the cost and motivated by the glorious grace of God and seeing the glorious goal of God's kingdom being convicted that Jesus has what he's done for me and seeing the truth of 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 15 that Jesus died for all and those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake was died and raised make it your ambition to be leaders of taking the gospel to the ends of the world as your life's work that'll be the thing that's appropriate for you so let's pray our father in heaven we do pray that you help us be a little bit crazy crazy in the eyes of the world as we give up our small ambitions and receive the great blessing of being your children as we give up our small ambitions for our own little kingdoms to be on about your kingdom and its growth and as some give up their small ambitions and devote all they have that you've given to them to be leaders of gospel work here

Brisbane Australia and the world for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ the one who died for us Amen