

## God's Love

Romans 8:32a

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Campus Church started about six years ago at the end of 1970 and there were about 200 of us who were under 20 and there were about four of us who were over 20. Stan and Emma Halverson were over 50, and I was 36. And today, you know, the elders are maybe 26 or 27 and we regard them as venerable wise old men because they're that age. But it was good in some ways because we saw some truths more clearly, simply on account of the fact that we were often looking at them from the viewpoint always of sons and daughters and it was good in a way.

For instance, we took Jesus' words at their face value when he said, "You have to leave your nets and follow me, or if anyone wants to come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me, or any of you that will lose your life for my sake will save it." It was good, we really believed that, and we really felt that we did have to take all our training, and our education, and our degrees and lay them at his feet and ask him what he wanted us to do with them. We did see the issue wasn't ignore education, ignore training, ignore degrees -- but what are you using them for? Are you using them for your own advancement or are you using them for Jesus' advancement?

The mums and dads here will excuse me saying this but the interesting thing was that the opposition to that approach came not from our peers at college. And that's true, the opposition we got was not from our peers at college, strangely enough it was from our moms and our dads because they kind of took the attitude, "Why do you think we sacrificed to get you a good education and a good training and now you are going to become a nothing. Why don't you get a good paying job, marry some nice girl or guy and gather some security for yourself for the future." And it was kind of surprising to us you know because we were such a young body, it was surprising to get that often coming from our homes, not from all our homes, but many of our homes.

And of course we began to think, "Well, we are pretty holy people when even these wise men and women who are our dads and mums begin to think that even before we are sacrificing." Of course, it wasn't long before we discovered we were just as sick as they were and our personalities were just as sick because we were brought up in prosperity and not in the depression, so we weren't eager all the time to get material things but we discovered that we were just as eager to get status among our peers or to get enjoyment out of life. We began to realize that the idea that they had sick personalities was ridiculous, our personalities were pretty sick. We found that the problem wasn't knowing what was right to do or what was wrong, but the problem was that we seemed to have personalities that were bent and twisted.

And we could see these statements of Jesus, "Make nothing of yourself, take up your cross and follow me," but we found there was something inside us that didn't want to make nothing of ourselves. There was something inside us that wanted to make a great deal of ourselves and wanted to splay ourselves all over everybody else's life and wanted everybody to see us and glorify us. So we saw that our personalities were the things that were at fault. There was something selfish and carnal, and something twisted and perverted and irrational inside us and we could not change. We could look away and admire a truth or we could want to do something, but our personalities seemed themselves to be radically twisted out of joint and those we couldn't do anything about.

And, that's why Jesus of course, was so precious to us because we saw that God had taken all the dirtiest part of our personalities, all the most copious part, all the greediest part, all the most obnoxious part, the part that we couldn't do anything about, the part that tried to grasp for attention when we knew we should be humble, the part that tried to grasp for things when we knew we should give to the other person, the part that tried to tear the other person down when we knew that we should actually be building them up. That God took the worst part of our personalities, the dirtiest most rotten part and put it into his son Jesus and destroyed it there and that in fact our old self was crucified with Christ. And that the moment we believed that all of that garbage was buried with Jesus forever and we didn't have to live with the results coming up like a smell in our lives continually every time we tried to do something good, the moment we believed that had been destroyed by God and his son Jesus and the moment we submitted to the Spirit of Jesus we were free from it all. That was the miracle, loved ones, that we began to experience.

Now what God says to us this morning is, "In the light of all that, what do you think is my present attitude to you?" And that is really what the verse says so would you look at it loved ones, it's Romans 8:32. "He who did not spare his own Son," -- and it is interesting you know the Greek word I think is "osge" and it's emphasizing 'this very one, the very same God who did not spare his own son' -- "but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" Really what God is saying through Paul is, if I give up my own son for you, wouldn't I give you everything else that you need?

Really like a father who gives his kidney, one of his kidneys, for his son because he knows that transplant will save his son's life and then several weeks later on his son cuts his finger and asks his dad for a band-aid, will his dad not give him the band-aid? Sure, no question. So if God gives up his own son and gives really part of himself for you and for me then surely he is going to give you any band-aids you need, he's not going to stop at that if he did this for you. Old Martin Luther puts it like this and maybe it's good especially for all you miserable old Lutherans to listen, ah that dear fellow you know, he was just so great wasn't he. If we read Luther as God's man and not as the head of some church, we'd get so much from it.

"Picture well to yourself this dear own son," writes Luther. "Then you will feel intimately this flow of divine love. If you had a son, who was not only your own bodily son but also your only son, an intelligent, wise, sensible, pious, good and very dear son and for the sake of a miserable strange servant who in addition was your debtor, you now spared not this son, but you send and let him go and endure even death just in order to redeem that servant, how great a love you had for that servant." Or you know if you think of it that God had a dear son who loved him with all of his heart and who trusted him completely and who submitted his will utterly to his Father, a son that had committed his life to doing nothing but expressing his father's life and his father's love that his father wanted throughout the whole universe. That this son was the most beautiful being in the whole world, the last thing that ever needed to be destroyed in the whole universe. On the one side you have that dear beautiful son and on the other side was Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler, heartless, relentless destroyers. You had Bluebeards, and pimps and perverts that used men and women's bodies like cattle. You had railroad barons and kings who used cheap labor to make as much profit and money as they could.

On the other side, you had that ugly mass of humanity and us here. Us miserable creatures here with our dried up, little hearts grasping for everything that we can rasp from everybody else. With our own clever little minds always working out how we can keep ourselves on top and keep everybody else underneath. With our own miserable little emotions wanting to get all the enjoyment we possibly can

strain from other people. And God looks on one side at this most beautiful Son and at this miserable ugly mass of humanity on the other and he says to his son, "My son you see them, they have so perverted their own natures that if I offered them my Holy Spirit they are not even free to make a choice and to receive it and if I destroy that miserable, perverted nature and those carnal personalities of theirs, they'll be destroyed with them. My son, will you let me put that into you and destroy it in you so that they at least have a free opportunity to receive your Spirit of life?"

That was the choice here.

Have you ever cleaned up anyone's sickness? Have you ever cleaned up anyone's sickness? Have you ever had anybody spit in your face? We talk a lot about that, but have you ever had anybody spit in your face? Probably it is few enough of us actually have. Would you think of the worst thought you have ever had when you're alone? Would you think of the worst thing you have ever done in your whole life? Would you think of the rottenest, dirtiest thing you have ever said? Now would you describe that to me so that I can think that thought, or do that deed, or say those things for the next year of my life. You know what you think, even those of you who have not talked to me, you know, you just recall it, you just recall it.

Now loved ones, that's what happened. The worst, most critical, most dirty, most lustful, most domineering part of you, God transferred into his own son Jesus, and destroyed it in him. The worst of you, the part of you that you can't even bear to look at, that part God the creator put into his son Jesus. Because you see that thing that you have done would otherwise go on throughout the universe forever. It would. Time and space are infinite and somewhere in the universe the things that you and I have said and done go on and can be observed and their effects can be felt somewhere in the universe forever, if it weren't for this miracle of God. It's obvious that many of the stars that you see now no longer exist. They don't exist. Those stars, many of them that we see at night, they're no longer in existence, they died years and years ago. It's their light that we see continuing to come towards us.

Now in the universe every act, and every word, and every thought would ricochet through the universe forever intensifying its hold on you and spreading its pollution throughout the whole place had it not been for the fact that God took that part of you, that twisted, miserable personality under which you are prepared at this moment to continue living and he put it into his son Jesus and he destroyed it there. And so, there isn't a dirty word that you have spoken, there is not a wretched temper fit that you have had, there is not an unclean thought that you have experienced that Jesus who never had any of those things himself, has not taken into himself and tasted fully so that his Father could destroy it forever. That's why God says, "Jesus tasted death for every man." Jesus tasted that destruction for you. For whom? Ah, the verse says you know, "God gave his own son for us all." That means for you, and that means for you, and for you, and for you, and for you, and for me.

God took the worst that each of us have and put it into his son Jesus and destroyed it there. Why? Because they both wanted us to be free from these miserable, selfish, carnal personalities that are always standing up for their own rights and wanting their own way and they both knew that we could never overcome them by all the psychology in the world and that only if they destroyed them themselves, would we have any chance of being free. And the whole purpose of it was so that we could receive the spirit of Jesus into us, that spirit that makes him the most beautiful person in the whole world. The real purpose in him taking the worst of you into himself and having it destroyed there was so that you could receive his Spirit into your life and submit yourself and your life to that Spirit and become like him.

Will God give you that Spirit, loved ones? Yeah, the question is foolish. Will he who did not spare his own son, will he not give us all things with him? Of course he'll give you the Holy Spirit, that's the whole purpose in Jesus dying. God is not unwilling to give you a spirit that can change your life and then you say, "But brother, I've tried a hundred times to change, can I ever change, can I ever submit my will to God?" Loved ones, if you answer no, you deny what I described ever happened on Calvary. You deny that God took the worst of your personality, took you yourself and put you into Jesus, destroyed that personality there and has killed it. That personality of yours that loves to be proud, that loves people to look up to it, that loves to be respected, that loves to criticize others, that was taken and put into Jesus and destroyed there. If you say you cannot submit to God because you have tried a hundred times and failed, you deny that God in fact ever took your old self and destroyed it in Jesus and you cast yourself into a moral morass in Romans 7:15 which reads, "I do not understand my own actions. Because the good that I would I cannot do, and the evil that I want to avoid that is the very thing I do." And you throw yourself into a hellish world where people continue to destroy themselves with their selfish personalities forever in darkness.

No loved ones, the truth is that it is because God has destroyed that perverted, irrational streak in your personality in Jesus on Calvary that you can submit to him. And love ones I'd repeat that, don't you see that the whole trend of even today's – most of today's psychology, most of today's sociology is bent on reinforcing Satan's lie that you cannot. So a 100 of you, 200, 500 of you here this morning, 500, 700, maybe 800 of us here this morning are struggling with something in our lives that we cannot overcome and loved ones the truth is you cannot overcome it on your own, but you can believe that God your creator has destroyed that personality in Jesus and you don't need to live under that kind of power any longer. And, loved ones it is possible to take a mighty leap and to leap into cleanness this morning by faith, it is.

If you keep on with this pit-patching and trying to do your best and working at it with little aids and little help-yourself techniques, you'll get nowhere. You'll be in a deeper sinking sand than you were when you started. The only way loved ones, is to believe that this man that died on Calvary was not simply a political criminal, he was not simply a substitute for you; he was you. When he died, you died. When he was crucified and cried out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was not the weight of his selfishness, it was not the weight of his lust that made him feel far from God, it was the weight of your lust, and your selfishness, and your pride and my ambition, that was what made him feel that. But, do you see the beauty of it? If that's why he died, then that thing is finished with and that is destroyed and crucified.

And if you say to me, "Well, why am living under it?" Because love ones, you're believing a lie, you're believing that this life is still very much yours to do what you want with. You're believing that you have not been crucified with Jesus, you're believing that this life is yours to do what you want with and while you are believing that, you are believing a lie and you live under the effect of that lie. But, loved ones this morning it is possible, honestly, anything that is done by faith can be done in a moment. It is possible this morning to see it in a new way and to see that that personality that you're struggling with was destroyed in Jesus and that he can give you that sweet spirit that fills his life and makes it beautiful and it can change your life. But it takes a step of faith. A declaration this morning, "I'm going to no longer live under sin as if I have to live under it. I'm going to no longer live under the power of my own greed as if I have to live under it. Lord I step out of that this morning and step out of those graveclothes and into yours."

Loved ones I know it is amazing, I know. I know as you sit there you think, "Will that do it?" The power of thought will not do it, it's the thought that follows what God has done in history, that's what does it. It's you aligning yourself with what God has done in your life and it's possible, really it is. It is, it's possible to be delivered this very morning.