

The Beauty of the Cross

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[0 : 00] Please open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 27. We're continuing our survey of the book of Matthew and we're in chapter 27 and today we're looking at verses 45 through 54.

So please look there with me as I read. And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom and the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, truly, this was the Son of God.

Let's pray together. Oh Lord, we again ask for your spirit's help in the preaching of the word today.

[1 : 58] We pray that our response would be like those who witnessed it. Jesus's death in the cross firsthand, that we would be in awe and acknowledge that. He truly is your son.

So Lord, we pray that as your words open, that you would lead our hearts to worship you through what we see here. We pray that Christ would be exalted as we examine the cross.

We pray this in his name. Amen. So last time we were in Matthew, we were we looked to this same passage. So I know I'm going back to the same passage.

If you're worried about me that I'm preaching the same passage again, it's intentional. We're going back and looking at this one more time. I thought it would be good for us to consider again the death of Jesus, to consider again the cross.

Last time we focused really on the details of Jesus's death, we spent some time talking about what it meant for Jesus to cry out that God the Father had forsaken him.

[2 : 59] We talked about as well some of the miracles, in particular the temple veil being torn and what that meant for us. Why did that happen? What were the implications of that? But before we move on, I want us to again look at the cross.

In some ways, this is a little bit less exposition than last time. I really tried to work us through the passage. Maybe you could consider this part two of the application of the sermon from before.

And what I really want for us to do is to look at the cross of Jesus and consider the beauty of the cross. The love of God that's displayed in the cross before we move too quickly over this.

Knowing what we've seen in Matthew has been moving up to this point. This really is the climatic moment that I don't want to just rush past this. So I want us to look again and consider, again, the love of God displayed in the cross.

So there are a few things we can focus on to do that. And I realize when we think about the cross and God's love displayed at the cross, there are probably a hundred different ways we could approach this.

[4 : 00] Different things that maybe come to your mind that express God's love in the death of Jesus Christ. And so I know I'm not going to cover all those. I just wanted to look at a few that I think are related to our texts that come to my mind.

One, in light of all that we've seen in Matthew, we've talked about Jesus' willingness to go to the cross. And I want to revisit that again now that we're at the cross and say, Jesus is a willing substitute.

He's willingly going to the cross for a purpose. Secondly, I want us to consider what he accomplished. Let's look at what Jesus accomplished at the cross and why that matters.

And again, I think there's some relevance to that in the text itself, especially as it relates to some of the other gospel accounts. And then finally, the biblical testimony to the fact that the cross is a display or a manifestation of God's love for sinners.

And hopefully that will encourage us as we look at application to think about the fact that God's love has been displayed for us here at the cross and what we're reading. So first, again, the idea of Jesus being a willing substitute.

[5 : 05] We have to see as we look at the cross that Jesus chose to give his life for sinners. He willingly gave himself over to the suffering and the death that was needed to redeem sinners, even the death of the cross.

It was his desire to go through this. He willingly submitted himself. We can look back at this in a few ways. One, I thought, was just think about the sacrificial system in the Old Testament.

I know sometimes we think of history in the way we experience history in terms of we're involved in it. But I think of God outside of time. God knowing that there's going to be redemption through his son.

That he's going to send his son to die establishes for us the sacrificial system. That there would be this reminder for us of the fact that sin requires a sacrifice and a covering for the sin.

And one thing that struck me as I looked at this this week is the fact that there are no examples of Old Testament willing sacrifices. There's an animal sacrificial system.

[6 : 11] And the animals aren't volunteering to go and die for man. Probably there's some ignorance of what's going on. When they are aware of what's going on, I imagine there's some fighting against that.

But here we have Christ who willingly submits himself to be a sacrifice. And likewise, that Old Testament system as it was developed was never full atonement. It covered the sin temporarily. It, as it were, allowed God to overlook the sin until an appropriate sacrifice came. And so all along, the sacrificial system is pointing us to a greater sacrifice to come.

It also exposed the need that, if this is only temporarily covering my sin, when can sin be atoned for? When can the price be paid finally and fully?

But as I said, it established a principle for us. The truth that the death or blood of another is necessary if there's going to be any kind of atonement, any kind of forgiveness of sin.

[7 : 09] There has to be a blood sacrifice. There has to be a blood covering. And so we read in Hebrews 9.22, Under the law, almost everything is purified with blood. And without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

So going way back in the Old Testament, we see there's a need for the forgiveness of sins. And how do we get forgiveness of sins? It's through sacrifice. It's through blood. We need blood to cover us.

And as we move closer to the cross itself, what we saw already and we see in the other Gospels is that Jesus directed his movements to Jerusalem, to the cross.

Jesus has set his face to go to the cross. He's working his way to that moment in history. And over and over again, though there was opportunity, he never acted to prevent it.

This was his desire to go. So for example, Luke 9.51, When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And so two parts of this.

[8 : 13] When the days drew near for him to be taken up. So what do we see there? God in his sovereignty has established a day for Jesus to be taken up. Both literally to the cross, ultimately in his ascension to God the Father.

But God's appointed a day. And Jesus, knowing the day is getting near for that to happen, what does he do? We read it says, He set his face to go to Jerusalem.

We always see a stubborn, obstinate desire. I'm going. This is the way I'm going. I'm setting my face. I've got my eye on the goal. This is where I'm headed for. And we understand the connotation of that.

Maybe you remember as we were going through the Gospel of Matthew, we saw Jesus for a time remove himself from the area of Jerusalem and Judea. Because the persecution was increasing.

And remember what he said, My time has not yet come. And so he goes off somewhat in an obscure ministry for a while. But now that the time is drawn near, he sets his face to go to Jerusalem.

[9 : 18] Because what's going to happen in Jerusalem? Jerusalem, Jerusalem. The city that kills the prophets. Right? He knows that's the center of persecution. And he knows that the cross awaits him there.

Back in our last chapter in Matthew 26, verses 53 and 54. Jesus said, Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father?

And he will at once send me more than 12 legions of angels. But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so? So here's Peter drawing a sword, willing to fight to keep Jesus from the cross.

As we saw in that message, Jesus almost rebukes, What do I need your sword for, Peter? I can have all the angels I need to fight this battle if that's what I chose to do.

But how then could the Scripture be fulfilled that it must be so? What must be so? Jesus must die. And again, that's what he set out to do. John 10, 18.

[10 : 22] Jesus said, No one takes it, speaking of his life, from me. But I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

This charge I have received from my Father. And again, Isaiah 53, 7. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before it shears is silent.

So he opened not his mouth. And so Jesus set his face to Jerusalem, to the cross. And though there was opportunity, he never acted to prevent it. This was the desire.

How else could it be fulfilled? In John 10, 18, we saw him say at the end, This charge I have received from my Father. And so I thought it good for us to understand as well that this is the unified will of the Trinity.

I want to be careful. It's weird even to speak of a unified will of the Trinity because in no way can we imply that the will of the Father or the will of the Son or the will of the Spirit could ever be separated from the will of the other.

[11 : 27] We have one Trinity. They're not as persons of the Trinity acting in different wills. They are one in the Trinity. And so this is a unified desire, purpose of God all along, that Christ would go to the cross and die.

And so Jesus, as again I said in John 10, 18, said this charge I have received from my Father. This is what God the Father desired. And then speaking of the Father, in Galatians 4, 4-5, it says, When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

And so it's God who sent his Son into the world. And let's not forget there was a purpose in his birth, in his coming. Jesus came to earth for this reason, that he might die on the cross.

And I've mentioned already about the will, but we see over and over again that Jesus always did the will of the Father. Psalm 48, I think, speaking beforehand or prefiguring Christ, I delight to do your will, O my God.

Your law is within my heart. In John 5, 19, Jesus said, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.

[12 : 49] For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing. And again, John 6, 38-40, for I've come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

So there in John 6, verse 40, makes it clear what it is he raises up. He's going to raise up those who will look to Jesus and put their faith in him. And that helps us understand verse 39.

This is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me. What has God the Father given to God the Son? A people of his own, who he's chosen out of the world to be saved and to be redeemed.

And so the will of the Son is not to lose that which the Father has given him, but to raise them up on the last day. And how's he going to do that? Well, there's only one way.

[13 : 56] It's through the cross. He has to give his life that he can redeem them, that they may be raised up to be with God the Father one day in heaven. I didn't go into God the Spirit.

I think God's Word intentionally doesn't focus so much on the Spirit, but we understand as well that the Spirit applies the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross to those whom God the Father has chosen that they might be saved.

I think there's obvious ways we can see the Spirit's willing participation in that same salvation in the cross. And so the cross shows us that whatever it took for our salvation, Jesus was willing to do. Jesus undertook what was necessary. He willingly gave himself to be that substitute. Now, I want to consider what he accomplished. Let's do so by looking at verse 50.

There we read, And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. I mentioned this briefly last week. I think probably most of you are familiar with what Jesus cried out, but Matthew doesn't focus on that.

[15:08] I really was careful to stick to the text last time. If you'll give me some leeway to say, it's at least implied as we look at the other Gospels, we know what it is, Jesus cried.

John 19:30 tells us, When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, It is finished. And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. And so there we see the close connection of exactly what we see here in the passage.

In verse 48 of Matthew, he's given the sour wine and they wait to see if he's going to be delivered. And then 50, he cries out with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

So again, the cry and the yielding up the spirit are together. And I think it's enough for us to easily conclude that this cry here in Matthew is the one that John also speaks of. It is finished.

And so I want us to briefly consider, what does it mean that it's finished? Why did Jesus cry out, It is finished? Or another way of asking this is, What was finished when he cried out, It is finished?

[16:12] What is the it that's being implied here? And I think the answer for us is what's accomplished. The it that's spoken of is the work that God the Father had given God the Son to accomplish.

His work in this life, in this world, in the incarnation, the work the Father had given the Son to do was accomplished. And there's a few sides to this.

One we could say, we've talked about before, you've heard me speak of, the act of obedience of Jesus Christ. Perfect righteousness has been accomplished for God's people. He perfectly obeyed the will of the Father, not just in his actions, not just in not doing what he's not supposed to do, like obeying the Ten Commandments, but positively doing everything God the Father desired for him to do, and not sinning even in thought as well as in deed.

I mean, oftentimes we get really caught up and we want to obey God in ways that other people see so that outwardly we look to be obeying God.

God did it when others didn't see. God did it in the mind, not just in the outward behavior. He was perfectly righteous. And we understand as well that that perfect righteousness is then attributed to or given to the sinner who puts their faith in Jesus Christ so that God the Father would look on them and see them as righteous.

[17:37] So we're righteous not because of what we do, but because of it is finished. Jesus has accomplished perfect righteousness. But I think we understand that as well, not just the perfect righteousness that he accomplished, but the full atonement he made on the cross.

Especially as we couple this with what we saw last time with the fact that Jesus would cry out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? We talked about for there to be that forsaking indicates to us that the Son has become sin.

That he has taken upon himself the sins of his people. Not that he's committed sin, but that all who would trust in him, their sins have been placed on Jesus Christ and so that there's a separation that has never existed before between God the Father and God the Son.

And so that now when he comes to the cross and he dies on the cross, atonement has been made. All that we spoke of and we longed for in the sacrificial system, but that it never supplied, now has been supplied.

I think even you heard me pray earlier, but even what we see from the proto-evangelion, the first giving of the gospel in Genesis 3:15, God the Father promises that the serpent would be crushed, his head would be crushed by the seed of the woman.

[18:56] That crushing is happening. He's accomplished the purpose for which God the Father has sent him, both positively in terms of righteousness, negatively in terms of taking upon himself our sin and paying the price for it.

And so we prayed earlier, I prayed earlier about the faithfulness of God. God is holy. He cannot overlook sin. God is just. Sin must be punished.

But we understand that sin is punished either in the sinner himself or in the substitution, in Christ as our sacrificial lamb. And so he cries out at his finish because he's paid that atonement.

He's accomplished that. And so along with that, we could say not just atonement, the concept of redemption, the concepts of propitiation, are both, or excuse me, are all three of these are concepts that I see Jesus accomplishing here on the cross.

So let me just pull a few other scripture passages that point to this. Ephesians 1.7. In him, that's in Jesus, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.

[20 : 14] So redemption through his blood, by the blood of Christ, we've been redeemed. I know we've spoken of this before, but what does it mean to be redeemed? I think redemption points to the fact we use the term redemption maybe in terms of things like someone being kidnapped today, that you might redeem them from that.

Or maybe a situation in which they're in that could be abusive or a bad situation. They're redeemed out of that situation. And so we understand as well that we are born dead in sin, that we are in bondage to Satan.

And so Christ has redeemed us from that. And how's that done? God, it's through his blood. And so it's accomplished again at the cross. And I could get ahead of myself a little bit with the display of love and say, notice that Ephesians 1, 7 says, according to the riches of his grace.

I really want to end by focusing on that some. Hebrews 2, 17. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

So here we see Christ as that great high priest. And the high priest would go and he'd make atonement for the people. He'd make propitiation for them. There'd be a sacrifice that would be offered. But here we see Christ both as the high priest and as the Passover or the Paschal Lamb.

[21 : 41] So he offers himself that we might have forgiveness of sins. One more, Romans 3, 24-26. It says there that we are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance, he passed over former sins. He was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

And I know this is a little bit complicated, but what's being communicated to us here is this. God the Father looked unjust because even though he said the wages of sin is death and his physical death, there are some whose sins were overlooked.

And how can God be just and not punish sin? Let's take, for example, a man like Abraham, who we know had faith in the coming Messiah, but the Messiah had not come yet.

And yet Abraham doesn't face the full consequences of his sin. He's not condemned for his sin. How could God be just if he overlooked sin? Well, Christ came to make clear that God doesn't overlook sin.

[23 : 04] Again, God punished sin either in his son or on the sinner. And so he shows himself to be righteous at the present time through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who again we see God the Father put forward to be a propitiation by Christ's blood.

And so we understand from all this that the condemnation that we deserved was put on Jesus Christ. He took upon himself our condemnation. As he paid the price for that, that then meant that for the sinner who puts their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, there is no condemnation.

And that is exactly what we see in Romans 8.1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And so when Jesus Christ it is finished, I think he's pointing us to that.

The price that we deserve, the condemnation that was on us, he took upon himself. And it's finished now for us. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

I think as well we can understand that it is finished means that the enmity between God and man has been done away with so that the Christian can have peace with God and he can have all the spiritual blessings that are his in Christ Jesus.

[24 : 30] So we see in Romans 5.1-2. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And so, through Christ, through his blood, through his sacrifice, we have peace with God. I think sometimes for us as Christians who maybe are used to the idea of peace with God, this doesn't sound so amazing, but I think again of that Old Testament believer.

I think again just looking at God's Word, what we see revealed for God, a holy God, how might he respond to the sinner? I think, how do we respond when people wrong us?

And we understand that from the fall, there was a separation between man and God. There was no peace. There was enmity between them.

And so God, now in sending his Son, has brought peace between himself and man. The enmity that was there is finished. It's done away with. Again, for all who trust in Jesus Christ.

[25 : 48] It says, through him, we also have obtained access by faith into the grace in which we stand. I think again of the veil that access to God the Father, but here, in the grace in which we stand, and it says, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

So this is future hope even. One day we will be in the presence of God in his glory. Christ has accomplished even that future destiny for us. I told you, there's a lot of different avenues. We could have spent a great deal of time talking about that and what Christ has accomplished.

Ephesians 1.3 says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. So I'd love to spend more time of that, but I think far more than just there being peace between us.

Right? You could have maybe a neighbor or a co-worker that you don't get along with and you say, you almost call a truce. Well, let's just be at peace. Let's not go there anymore.

And you get along with each other as long as you don't see each other. As long as you build a big enough fence in between your houses and you can kind of zone them out, you can get along with it. That's not what peace with God means.

[26 : 56] This peace with God means that now in Christ every spiritual blessing is ours. Why? Because we've been united to Jesus Christ by faith. And so where we once stood, and we've talked a little bit already about being under the authority of Satan, maybe we could put it in terms of the way Romans 5, 12 through 21 does, being united to the first Adam.

But now we've been united to Christ Jesus. And so all that is His is ours. And so the position we once were in is finished. We now stand before God in a completely new relationship and position. Now my hope is that as we've gone through this, that all of this has been obviously a display of God's love. But I want to just bring that point home, again pulling from Scripture elsewhere to say, what does God's Word tell us about the cross as a display of God's love?

Well first we have 1 John 4, 10. In this is love. Not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

So we've seen already that the cross is that moment of propitiation. He is, or Christ is our propitiation. What we see specifically here in this is love.

[28 : 17] We want a definition of what is love. What does love look like? It's not that we love God. Our love for God is not the measure of love. What is the measure of love?

God the Father sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. There we see a display of God's love. That Christ would come, that God the Father would send His Son to die for our sins.

And then we have something very similar in John 15, 13-14. Jesus here speaking says, Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends. And then He goes on to say, You are my friends if you do what I command you.

So greater love has no one than this that He lays down his life for his friends. And here's God the Son saying, You are my friends. And of course, the implication is, and therefore I'm going to lay down my life for you.

And the further implication is, and there's no greater love than that. Romans 5, 6-8 says, For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

[29 : 29] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

First, notice the display of God's love. God shows His love for us. Here to us is God's manifestation of His love. His love is manifested for us in what?

In the death of Jesus Christ. And we're going to see this again, but let me point out to you that the way Romans 5 emphasizes this is to say, not that we were deserving.

Far from it. We were undeserving of this. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

So here's God incarnate dying for those who are ungodly. We see again that enmity, that opposition. Those who are opposed to Him, those who are ungodly, are the ones for whom Christ came and died.

[30 : 32] It says, scarcely will someone die for a righteous person. Perhaps for a good person one might dare to die, but God shows His love for us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

This opposition of God and His holiness and the enmity He has for the sinner and yet the love displayed for the sinner in His sending His Son to die for them. so that the cross, and I think we can include in that, the spiritual life that we receive through the cross are both displays of God's great love.

This is a longer passage, but really, I think, illustrates the point very well. Ephesians 2, 1-7. I said I would highlight this again, but let me go ahead and point it to you before we get there.

Verses 1-3. Listen again to the state in which man's in. What are we like? How deserving of God's love are we?

So listen to the Scripture in verses 1-3 and then I'll make a point of when we get to verse 4 of that transition. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

[32 : 11] Verse 4. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, he made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. And he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the measurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

And so I hope you caught that contrast. Our state of being dead in our trespasses and sin, following the patterns of this world. We were worldly. And it says, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, following Satan.

I know we don't like to think about this, but we are either in bondage to Satan or to God. And so here is where all mankind is, he says, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

And so without exception, all people apart from God are children of wrath. And then that contrast, but God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, he made us alive together with Christ.

[33 : 50] And so I think Ephesians does such a great job of contrasting how undeserving we are. And why? Why have we received this great love? It's because of God.

It's because of his mercy, because of his love, not because of anything in us. God's done. And I was also struck in Ephesians 2 by the reality that he's not done.

So maybe a great transition even as we think about the cross to think how great that is and yet, God's not done. What do I mean by that? Well, we're given the reason for the cross.

So Paul here has this understanding that even though we have not yet died and been in the presence of the Lord spiritually, Christ has not yet returned, our bodies have not been raised up and glorified, and yet our spiritual position is that we're seated in the heavenlies with God right now.

So spiritually, that reality is true for us already. So he's done this. He's died for our sins. He's redeemed us.

[35 : 10] He's raised us up, and verse 7 says, so that in the coming ages, in eternity, in the new earth and new heavens, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

So God has displayed his love by redeeming us from our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, through the cross, so that he might have eternity to display his love upon sinners.

Isn't that beautiful? We see something very similar in Romans 8, 32. It says, he who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

I've told you before, this is an argument from the greater to the lesser. If God has given us the greatest thing possible, his own son, will he withhold from us any spiritual blessing? No. Those things are minor compared to what he's already done at the cross. And so how do we respond? How do we apply these truths? I want to say first that for any of you who have not trust in Jesus Christ, I think the obvious way we apply these truths is by faith in Jesus Christ.

[36 : 33] There is salvation, redemption, forgiveness of sins, even the eternal aspects of the spiritual blessings, the measurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us throughout all eternity that are offered for us on the cross if we would put our faith in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 2, 3 says, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? I think, is that not appropriate for us right now in light of what we've just seen in the cross?

Can we expect to escape the judgment of God if we ignore, if we reject so great a salvation?

There's no hope outside of that.

love. Secondly, I think for the Christian, there should be a response for us of love, of service, of obedience to God the Father.

There's a hymn that we sing when I survey the wondrous cross. It says, love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. It's one reason I want to highlight for you the love of God the Father, displayed in the cross, the love of Christ to go to the cross, because I think as we see such amazing love, it moves us naturally to respond in certain ways, to correspond with love, even in a willingness to serve.

[38 : 10] Last week, I wish I would have thought of this quote last week, but last week we looked at the veil being torn. And I saw again this quote from Thomas Watson that says, Jesus Christ went more willingly to the cross than we do to the throne of grace.

We talked about the veil open for us, that throne of grace. And there was more willingness in Christ to go to the cross than it is for us sometimes even to pray. And I could extend that to all kind of areas of service.

Pastor Tripp had ordered us earlier for Wednesday night corporate prayer. I think, could we not ask the same question? Did Christ go more willingly to the cross than we are willing to go and pray with God's people to approach that throne of grace?

And again, though I'm not going to spend the time, we could extend this to so many other ways. I've said already that we're either, I could say bond servants, slaves to Satan or to God.

God, but I enjoy looking at the way that Paul views that bond service to Christ Jesus. It's a joy. It's a pleasure. It's not like the service we had before.

[39 : 25] We were bound to the prince of the air, to the ways of this world. That love should move us to willingly and joyfully serve him.

And thirdly, I think probably the most important and what I want us to think about as we go from here is we should be amazed. We should be in awe of what we see displayed for us at the cross of Jesus Christ.

And so, when we're in awe of things, how do we respond? When something amazes us, what is the response? Praise. In one form or another.

I said before, you're watching a sporting event. And we pray obviously that's soccer, football, real football. You're watching a sporting event and they do something spectacular. Maybe you applaud it.

You get out of your seat, you scream. There's praise that naturally overflows when we see greatness. You step before the Green Canyon for the first time. And you're in awe of it.

[40 : 24] And you go back and you take pictures, you tell everybody how beautiful, I mean, you want to talk about these things. What we see at the cross is the love of God displayed in saving sinners.

We ought to be in awe of that. And so our response ought to be one of worship. And so I encourage you, as we sing our last hymn, contemplate, work over in your mind what we've seen in God's word today.

May that motivate us not just to go through the motions of singing, but to worship God. And then what do we do? We go from here and forget it, right? Right?

Don't we just go home and we go about our work each week and then we'll go back Sunday and we'll do it all again and we'll feel like worshipping God for a few minutes and then we go about it. No! In fact, I think we could argue God saved us from the patterns of this world.

This ought to change our whole life and how we go about worshiping our God for so great a salvation that we have received. Let's pray together. Generally, Father, we thank you that you are a God who has great mercy and great love that you would send your son to die for our sins.

[41 : 41] We pray that there would be in this room no one who would reject such a great salvation, would neglect so great a salvation. We pray that for everyone in this room that they would put their faith and trust in Christ.

That they would know this great salvation, that they would know the love of God displayed there.

Lord, we pray that there would be none who would stand before the judgment seat of God one day on their own merit and expect to be led in to heaven and into your eternal presence.

That we would stand in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Lord, we thank you that Christ willingly went to the cross. that he laid down his life that we might have life instead of death.

And we pray that we would trust in him and know that life. And Lord, we ask that you would be with us and help us because we know that we are weak in our flesh. And so we pray that you would help us to be in awe of the cross.

And as we go from here today, this week, Lord, even for years, that our hearts would overflow in your praise and your worship. Lord, even earlier we prayed that we would be willing to share the gospel with our co-workers and our friends and our family, that we have a burden for the loss.

[43 : 04] Lord, if we understand the cross rightly, how could we not? As our heart overflows in what you've done for us, the love that we've known, would we not want others to know that same love?

And so we pray that worship would overflow in our hearts at work this week, around our family, and that it would overflow in speaking the words that they too might know that love and forgiveness.

We ask all this in the name of our great Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.