



The Sermon

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Genesis 44:18-34

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"Love That Sacrifices"

TRANSCRIPT

We are in Genesis chapter 44. And if you take your Bible and turn with me to Genesis 44, beginning in verse 18. And if you're new to Trinity, just know that we're preaching through books in the Bible here on Sunday mornings, and we're in the Book of Genesis. And you can imagine, we've been in it for quite some time, because we're only now coming to chapter 44. And just to set the scene before I read this, the scene is this. Judah is standing before Joseph in Egypt, and he is pleading with Joseph that Benjamin his younger brother would be able to return back to his father, and he's willing to take his place, if need be, and stay in Egypt and become a slave, if only his younger brother could be released. So, yeah, thank you so much.

So that's what's going on in this passage; and beginning now the reading in verse 18. The Word of God reads, and I think you can follow along with me, "Then Judah approached him," – referring to Joseph – "and said, 'Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?'" We said to my lord, "We have an old father and a little child of his old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him." Then you said to your servants, "Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him." But we said to my lord, "The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die." You said to your servants, however, "Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again." Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, 5622 Dyer Street, Suite 200 | Dallas, Texas | 75206 | 214.972.9679 | TrinityBiblechurchofdallas.com

we told him the words of my lord. Our father said, "Go back, buy us a little food." But we said, "We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face" – that's referring to Joseph – "unless our youngest brother is with us." Your servant my father said to us, "You know that my wife bore me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, 'Surely he is torn in pieces,' and I have not seen him since. If you take this one also from me," – and that's referring to Benjamin – "and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow." Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow. For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, "If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever." Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me – for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?"

This is the reading of God's Word, as fresh, as relevant as the day it was written, as it applies to our lives this day. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, this is Your Word that has just been read. We need insight, we need understanding that only Your Holy Spirit can bring to us as believers. So we pray that You would open our eyes that we might see what this means, but also what it requires of us. Let us be transformed, even in this hour, yet further into the image of Christ. Make us more like our Savior as a result of this passage of Scripture.

Bless my brothers and sisters who are gathered here today. Open the windows of heaven, pour out the fullness of Your blessing upon them. May their cup be filled to overflowing. May they leave here with the abundance of Your riches of grace in their lives. Continue to shape them and mold them as trophies of grace. May they stand out as bright shining stars on a dark night as they live in this world. Father, we pray this for Your glory, for Your honor, in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

The title this message is "Love That Sacrifices." In these verses we see the passionate speech of Judah as he stands before Joseph who's Prime Minister of Egypt, as Judah speaks on behalf of his youngest brother Benjamin. Here is one brother willing to sacrifice his life for his other brother. What we see in this passage is this is what true love looks like.

God puts a high premium on love. "The greatest of these is love." And God desires that each and every one of us be fountains of love that comes flowing out of us into the lives of other people. And what we see in this passage is the love of Judah for his father and for his younger brother. And what we see here is what we need to implement into our own lives, and it is very simply this, that love is more than a feeling. Love is more than just an emotion. Love is more than just goosebumps. Love, at its very epicenter, involves the choices of the will, many times when our feelings aren't even there, that we choose to love others who may even be hard to love.

True love costs. True love is never easy. True love pushes us to the very perimeters and beyond of what we're capable of doing; and that is why we have to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to love as we should. To love others, sometimes especially in our own family, requires dying to self, so that we might live for others. It involves carrying a cross, which is an instrument of death. I must die to myself if I am to love others as I should.

And true love gives. True love gives what is costly. True love sacrificially gives of itself to seek the highest good of the one who is loved. There really is no love without sacrifice. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." True love does not give what is easy, it gives what is hard. Love is measured by the sacrifice that it makes for others. Love is not just words, true love are deeds in action that arise from a heart of love. But there must be the demonstration of this love in order to meet needs in the lives of other people. That's precisely what we see in this passage. We see the love of Judah for his father and for his brother.

Now a couple of things we need to know as we look at this passage. This is the longest speech in the entire book of Genesis, and everything that is in this passage has already been said in the previous chapter and earlier in this in this chapter. So this is a recap that Judah makes before Joseph. And we would have to ask the question, "Why would we take up so much valuable

space in the book of Genesis to repeat what's already been stated?" And I think the answer should be very obvious to us, that God is wanting to draw our attention and our focus to what is being said here; but not just what is being said, what's behind what is being said, which is what true love looks like.

This is an amazing speech that Judah makes. One noted commentator of the book of Genesis calls it "one of the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever delivered." That may sound like hyperbole, and it may push the boundaries of that; but nevertheless, this is a manly, straightforward speech. I don't want any of us to miss this. And none other than Donald Grey Barnhouse the great expositor has called this "the most moving address in all the Word of God." So this is a significant passage of scripture. And another noted commentator has said, "Nothing in all literature is more pathetic" - and the word "pathetic," I had to look it up, because that sounded bad to me. But pathetic, meaning arousing of pity, arousing of compassion. "Nothing in all literature is more arousing of emotions and affections than this appeal." So I don't want us to miss what is here.

Even as I just read through it, you have to pay attention who is the "he" and who is the "servant" and who is the "lord." And there is a lot going on here; and as we walk through it, I hope we'll be able to gather up what the Lord would have us to gather up with this. But this is true love in action. And I think one more thing to say, what makes this so powerful is that this passionate plea is made by Judah, who 20 years earlier sold Joseph into slavery. And now here he is 20 years downstream. He has matured, he's grown, he's been transformed by the grace of God, and now he is willing to be made a slave for his younger brother. What a change of character. What a change of heart and life. And I trust that God is at work in your life as well, that you're not the person that you once were 20 years ago, that you're not the same person that you were 10 years ago, but that "God is at work within you both the will and to work for His good pleasure," Philippians 2:13.

So let's examine this speech made by Judah that so many have said is the most passionate speech in literature; and certainly it's the longest speech in the entire book of Genesis. Obviously God is wanting to draw our attention to gather the gold that is in this passage. So let's walk through it together.

First thing that I want you to note is "Judah's submission." That's in verse 18. This speech begins with Judah humbling himself before Joseph and assuming a lowly posture. That's a good place to be. Every one of us needs to be where Judah is here – in a very lowly, humble posture. And you may say, "Why?" Because God is opposed to the proud, He gives grace to the humble; that's why. If you want grace, God only gives grace to one kind of person – a humble person. And God stiff-arms the proud and sends them away empty. But those who come with empty hands and a bended knee receive much grace.

So we see Judah assuming such a posture. Notice verse 18, "Then Judah approached him and said," – stop right there. Judah who's one of the brothers, one of the sons of Jacob, he steps out of the circle of the brothers, out of the band of brothers, and he is the spokesman. And so he takes steps forward, and he approaches Joseph, and now speaks to Joseph and said, "Oh my lord." This word "oh" is very difficult to translate. It's just like there's an Artesian well bubbling up inside of the depths of his soul and it just comes, "Oh." Deep emotion, deep affection. And he addresses him as "my lord," not as a title of deity, but as a title of respect and honor, because Judah recognizes he is approaching one who is of higher position and higher authority than he.

"Oh my lord, may your servant speak a word in my lord's ear?" He humbly asked for permission to address him. He doesn't come with a commanding, demanding voice, he's clothing himself with humility and asks for permission to speak. And notice, "in my lord's ear," meaning the words will be soft and gentle, a low tone. Rather than in his face, he wants to speak a word in his ears.

"And do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh." He realizes his life is in the hands of Joseph to dispose of him however he would so please. "Do not be angry with me." He seeks that Joseph would smile upon him with the request that he has. And I think we need to ask ourselves, "What would God have us to learn from this?" before we even move on. Beyond just the facts and the details, "How does this intersect with my life?"

And the answer is this is how every one of us should address someone who in our lives is of a higher position, a higher authority over us. This is how every employee should approach an employer – very humbly, graciously. This is how every child should speak to his parents. No matter how old or young that child is, that parent is forever your parent. This is how every citizen should speak to a law enforcement officer. This is how every church member should address an elder in the church or a minister of the Word of God, as someone who has been placed in your life with authority over your life, depending upon what this realm is. Is how every student should address a teacher or a professor. We all are to live our Christian lives with a humble posture and a lowliness of mind. And we see that here in the life of Judah. It speaks volumes to us, to speak into the ear not, blast into the face.

The second thing I want you to note is "Judah's reflection," verses 19 to 29. It's the major swath of this passage. And Judah now chooses to remind Joseph of everything that has transpired. And everything that we will see in verses 19 through 29 has already been stated in chapter 43 and chapter 44, there's no new material here. But what Judah is doing is walking Joseph back through how we got to this point, retracing the steps that involved Joseph, that involved Judah, that involved the brothers, that involved Jacob, that involved Benjamin. He's getting it all back onto the table, if you will, turning all the cards back over to put it out in front of Joseph, so that the proper decision can be made.

So beginning in verse 19, "My lord asked his servants, saying." The first thing I would draw to your attention is the word "asked." Please note, it's in the past tense. This is a looking back at what has already been stated. He is reminding Joseph of the conversations that have already transpired. "My lord asked his servants," – my lord refers to Joseph; his servants refer to the brothers, the sons of Jacob – "saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?'" I mean, that was stated in chapter 43, verse 7. And so it shows Joseph's keen interest in two people, who at that time were not there. That would be his father Jacob and his youngest brother Benjamin.

And so he narrows his focus, and their response in verse 20, "We said to my lord," – again, past tense; and this was in chapter 43, verse 8 – "We have an old father and a little child of his old age. Our father is still alive, and he's very old." In fact, as we see later in this passage, he has gray hair. And Benjamin is alive, and he's the youngest of the litter. And it's amazing

how parents can become very attached to their youngest child, you know. You have multiple children, and there comes a point when the older leaves home, goes to college, and you're left with the caboose, you're left with that last child, and you now are an expert in parenting, as you've been practicing all these years with the older ones; but your heart just becomes unusually meshed with this youngest child, as he is the only one that is left at home; and that's only natural.

And as they continue, he says, "Your brother is dead." And so he assumes that Joseph is dead. The irony is they're speaking to Joseph. "And so he" - Benjamin - "alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him with deep affection." I mean, their lives, the old father and the youngest son, their hearts are just welded together, and certainly the father's affection for his youngest is just wrapped around his youngest son.

And so as a result, verse 21, Joseph says this: "Then you said to your servants," - and Judah is reminding Joseph what he said to the brothers - 'Bring him' - referring to Benjamin - 'down to me' - down from Canaan to Egypt - 'that I may set my eyes on him.'" Joseph has not seen Benjamin for 20 years, and no doubt in his mind, he has replayed again and again and again and again his young brother and laughing with him and probably playing with him and maybe teasing him and working with him, and he remembers his father, and he wants Benjamin to be brought down to him so he can set his eyes upon him. We can understand that.

Verse 22, "But we said to my lord," - the brothers said to Joseph - 'The lad' - referring to young Benjamin - 'cannot leave,' - he can't leave Canaan, he can't leave his father - 'for if he should leave' - and the idea is leave but not return - 'his father would die.'" That's no hyperbole. His father would not be able to withstand the emotional shock and jolt to his system if he lost another son.

Those of you who have children, those of you who have sons, you can put yourself vicariously into this narrative if you got the report one of your children was dead and that you would never again hold him or her. And so Jacob, Judah says, would die of a broken heart. He would. And people do die, they just give up, they don't want to go on living. They stop eating, they stop caring for themselves, they stop exercising; they just give up on

life, because the reason to live has been taken away from them. And Judah says, "That's what's going to happen to our father because his heart has been so immersed in Benjamin."

And so, verse 23, "You said to your servants" - Joseph, you said to us, the brothers - "however, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again. Oh, you can come down, you can travel down from Canaan and come down to Egypt all you want, but you're not going to sniff me, you'll never see me, because I will never give you an audience with me unless you bring your youngest brother with you, Benjamin." And so they need to come down and buy grain and corn, because there is a famine in the land that is up in Canaan. But Joseph holds all the cards. Joseph has the leverage. Joseph says, "You can come down here and try to buy grain all you want, but you will never have access to me; and I am the authority here in Egypt. You'll just starve to death."

So, verse 24, "Thus it came about" - and please note, it's still in the past tense. This is just a relaying of what's already transpired. "Thus it came about when we" - the brothers - "went up" - referring north to Canaan - "to your servant my father," - that's Jacob - "we told him the words of my lord." My lord here refers to Joseph. "So on our first trip down here, when we first bought grain and corn, and when we returned back home with the goods, we said to our father exactly what you said to us, that, 'Don't bother coming back down unless you bring your youngest brother with you.'" And we need to remember now that Joseph and Benjamin are blood brothers, they're from the same mother. They're brothers from the same mother, and he is just bonded to Benjamin.

And so, verse 25, "Our father said, 'Go back, buy us a little food. We're on the doorstep of death. We are starving to death, we're out of food. You've got to go back now,' - it's going to take them three weeks to travel back, and then three weeks to come back - 'you've got to go now.'"

Verse 26, "But we said," - the brothers pushed back - 'We cannot go down.'" They're not being obstinate, they're not being disrespectful, they're just saying, "Father, it's pointless for us to go back if we don't have Benjamin with us, because the Prime Minister has already said that we will not see his face. It will be a total waste of time and energy for us to make

this trek down. We cannot go down to Egypt. If our youngest brother is with us though, then we will go down, because it'll be successful. Doors will open. We will have access into the palace, and they will open the treasure vaults containing the grain and the corn, and it will be measured out to us if we have Benjamin with us." He says, "For we cannot see the man's face" - I'm in verse 26; that refers to Joseph's face - "unless" - here are the terms - "our youngest brother is with us." There's no negotiation here. There's no leveraging by the brothers to counter the proposal of Joseph. Joseph has the advantage. And so they must decide; specifically, Jacob must decide.

So, verse 27, "Your servant my father" - and he speaks of him in such a gracious way; every time he says "my father" or "your servant my father," there's a tenderness - "said to us," - still in the past tense, an earlier conversation - 'You know my wife bore me two sons,' - the wife is Rachel, those two sons are Joseph and Benjamin, verse 28 - 'and the one went out from me.' - that's Joseph - 'He went out from me never to return, and I've never seen his face since,' - and he explains why - 'and I said, "Surely he" - Joseph - "is torn in pieces. He's torn in pieces surely by wild animals," - because his brothers had staged this whole shenanigan, and they showed him old tattered clothes as though a wild animal had torn up Joseph, when in fact he'd been sold to slave traders and taken down to Egypt. You know that. But Jacob says at the end of verse 28 - 'And I have not seen him since.'" He has no hope of ever seeing Joseph.

And so now he's down to just one son, Benjamin, born of Rachel, and supply and demand: the shorter the supply, the greater the demand, and the greater the value with a smaller supply. And two sons are now one son that appears to be alive, and it makes Benjamin all the more precious, all the more eliciting his love and affection.

So, verse 29, Jacob says this: "If you take this one" - referring to Benjamin - "also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow." He's not playing on the emotions of his father, this is just the fact. This is not overstating the case. He's now old; he will produce no more sons, making Benjamin all the more valuable, "and if you take him and he doesn't come back, I'm going down to Sheol," which is a reference for death and the grave, "and I will go to the death, my death,

not with a smile on my face, not singing a hymn; I will go down in sorrow, in misery, and in distress. I will die an old man with a broken heart."

So we need to ask ourselves why eleven verses just to repeat what's already been said. What's the application for us? What am I to draw from this on how I am supposed to live? How should this affect Monday morning? How should this affect Tuesday night in your life? And I believe the answer is this, that as Judah has replayed this entire scenario, he has not twisted the narrative. He hasn't left parts out, he hasn't added parts in to fit his own agenda. He has spoken very truthfully. He hasn't manipulated the narrative. Instead, Judah has given a truthful and faithful recounting of what has occurred, and he becomes an example to us that truth is always its best defense, its own best defense.

I think all of us, when we are put in certain situations and we're having to give an account to someone else can be easily tempted to shade how we replay something, to put us in good stead, to give us the advantage, or to put someone else at the disadvantage just by the way we present how this happened, and then this happened, and then this happened. I think that's a temptation we all face. And Judah shows us here what it is to be a truth-teller, to lay it out, to put it out in front of Joseph exactly as it happened: "This is what you said, this is what we said. This is what our father said, this is what you said in response." He's very truthful. And you and I need to be very truthful as well. As we talk among ourselves, as we talk within families, as we talk within relationships, we need to be careful not to cook the books and make it appear something other than what it actually truly is.

Well, this leads us to verse 30, "Judah's prediction." And so what we do here is we go from the past, looking back to the past; now Judah will make a prediction about the future. And so beginning in verse 30, "Now, therefore, when I come to your servant, when I, Judah, come to you, Jacob, as your servant, and the lad is not with us, if I come back without Benjamin, since his life is bound up in the lad's life," – this verb "bound up," I probed around a bit and looked it up, and it really means to tie two things together, almost like you'd tie shoelaces together to make a knot where it's tightly attached. And the word is used in Deuteronomy 6:8 where God says, "You shall bind them" – referring to the Commandments – "as a sign on your hand and on your frontals," how the word of God was to be so etched into the mind and thinking of the Jew in the Old Testament that

it's just almost like there's a rope tied around your forehead and those verses are just right there, not literally, but metaphorically - "and that it's bound to your hands," - that the word of God is just engrafted into you, and you are grafted into the word of God. That's the word that's used here. And Judah is saying, "I know that my father's heart and Benjamin's heart, they've just been fused together, they're welded together, they're tied together."

Verse 31, "When he" - Jacob - "sees that the lad is not with us, he will die. It's going to kill him. His heart will stop beating." Notice it's in the future tense. So he's laying this out for Joseph. "Thus your servants" - referring to the brothers. And again, throughout this whole time, the most repeated word in this whole passage is "servants." He continues to present them as servants. "Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant Jacob, our father, down to Sheol in sorrow."

This has been repeated just even in this portion of the speech again and again: "It's going to kill my father. It's going to take him down to the grave. He's going to die with a broken heart. He's going to die with sorrow." And that is true. And it shows even a believer can die with a broken heart. Charles Haddon Spurgeon died with a broken heart, the prince of preachers, because he was enmeshed in theological controversies that weighed heavily upon him. David felt that he was going to die several times from just the crush of the emotion of a rebellious son and the challenges that faced him.

So, verse 32, "For your servant" - Judah - "became surety." It means a guarantee. And that was back in chapter 43, verse 9, "For your servant became surety," Judah referring to himself as servant. And let me bring this out right now at this point. Judah never mentions his own name in this whole thing, he just refers to himself as "your servant." That too is a very humble posture.

And I'm reminded of the apostle John, who never mentions his own name in the entire gospel of John. He just refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. It's an expression of self-deprecation and self-humility just to hide behind the Lord Jesus Christ. And in 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, John never mentions his name. It's not until the book of Revelation in chapter 1 that he writes, "I, John." And even in that it's a sense of wonder and

amazement: "I, John, am able to write the final book in the Bible? Who am I to be writing this?"

And so what we see here even with Judah in his humility, he's not an infomercial about himself. He's not talking about himself. The compass is not pointing back to himself. He won't even mention his own name in all of this. I have to keep my eye on the ball as to when Judah is even referring to himself.

So, verse 32, "For your servant" - that's Judah - "became in the past" - past tense - "surety for the lad" - referring to Benjamin - "to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him' - referring to Benjamin - 'back to you, let me bear the blame before my father forever.'" What we see here is a brother's love for his father and a brother's love for his other brother. That just comes shining like the sun through the clouds in this whole narrative, and I think it speaks to how each one of us should love our father and love our mother. Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and your mother." You may not approve of all that they do and even are, but you're to love them, and you're to honor them. And that's what we see Judah doing here.

And there may be here some young people in their 20s or 30s even frustrated with your parents. Don't let that become an acid inside of you. That will eat your lunch, and there's going to be holes left in your soul. You love your father, you love your mother, even in spite of them. I mean, even Jesus said, "Love your enemies," in Matthew 5, for heaven's sake. How much more so the one who bore you and brought you into this world, or the one who sired you, and you carry their DNA inside of you. You love them, if you want to be right with God. You honor them, which is an attitude that produces actions, if you want to be right with God. You cannot be right with God if you're not right with mom and dad.

The last thing I want you to see is in verse 33, "Judah's substitution," because Judah now steps forward and puts his own life on the line and his own neck on the chopping block. Verse 33, "Now, therefore," - it has a summation feel, doesn't it, coming to the end of this speech that he makes to Joseph. "Now, therefore, please let your servant remain." Notice the word "please." He's not demanding, he's not commanding, he's not barking, he's not ordering. He's humbling himself. He's making an appeal to Joseph,

"Please let your servant" - and your servant here refers to Judah again. Again he continues to refer to himself autobiographically just as "your servant."

"Let your servant remain here in Egypt instead of the lad." What Judah is saying here is incredible. Judah is saying, "I will take Benjamin's place and stay here in Egypt, and I will be your slave for the rest of my life, if you will but let Benjamin return to my father, because it will bring such joy and pleasure to my father." This is a huge, a huge evidence and demonstration of genuine love, because true love sacrificially gives of itself. A liberal is someone who gives away someone else's money. That's not love. True love is when you reach into your own pocket and you give, or you reach into your own life and you give of your time, and you give of your support, and you give of your encouragement, and you give up whatever it is that is costly and valuable to you; and in this case, it's literally Judah's own life. "I will give up my life for my younger brother." That is the greatest demonstration of love.

Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this," - you know what the rest of this verse is - "that one lay down his life for another." That's what Judah is doing here. And this is why Bible commentators are just drawn to this passage, not necessarily because of its literary beauty, but because of the emotion and the passion that just bleeds out of the pores of Judah to step forward and to make this sacrifice on behalf of really his father and his brother. "It's going to kill my father, and it will leave Benjamin here in slavery. Let me be a slave in his place."

Verse 34, "And how shall I" - Judah - "go up to my father if the lad is not with me. There's no way I can return home. There's no way I can show up empty-handed without Benjamin - for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father." The word "evil" here can be equally translated as distress or misery. It can be translated injury or calamity. And Judah says, "Such is an unbearable thought. I'm willing to pay any and every price to keep from breaking my father's own heart."

I think you can see what a supreme example of love this is that Judah is demonstrating here. This is no play acting, this is for real. In essence, he has signed his life over as a blank check and handed it to Joseph and said,

"You fill in the amount; I'll pay whatever price is necessary for the good of my father and for the good of my younger brother, even if it costs me my own life."

We see here how you and I are to live, in a self-denying, cross-bearing manner, yielding to others. Considering the interests of others is more important than our own. But as I bring this to conclusion, we also see a beautiful picture of the gospel here, do we not – Do you see it? – as Judah willingly chose to be the substitute for his brother Benjamin.

You and I have an elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has stepped out of heaven, out of the celestial palaces of glory, and has come down into this black hole of sin in order to be our substitute, to die in our place. The wages of sin is death; and either you and I are going to die for our sins, or someone else will have to die for our sins. Every sin in the history of the world will be punished in full. Every sin that you and I will ever commit for the rest of our lives will be punished to the full extent of the Law by the Judge of heaven and earth. Don't think any sin in your life will ever be swept under the carpet or will escape the all-seeing eyes of God and the inflexible justice of God. Every sin will either be punished in you in hell forever – Do you get that? – or it will be punished in Christ upon the cross, as He bore our sins, and suffered and bled in our place.

You need, I need, we need a substitute. We need for someone to step out and to stand in our place, to suffer in our place what is deserving to fall upon us. But there's a certain qualification. He must be a man, and not just God, because God cannot die; and the wages of sin is death. He must be a man who is subject to death and who can die; that is why Jesus had to become the God-man, eternal deity joined to sinless humanity, so that Jesus in His humanity could die and pay the penalty for our sin.

But the other qualification is this person who would be our substitute would have to live a sinless and perfect life, otherwise he would be dying for his own sins. The only person who could possibly stand in our place and be our substitute is the God-man the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, in order to bear our sins in His body upon the cross. And if I was to reduce the gospel to one word, that one word is "substitution," that Jesus died in our place for our sins as our substitute.

First Peter 2:21 says. "Christ suffered for you." First Peter 3:18, "the just for the unjust." First Corinthians 15:3, "Christ died for our sins." Galatians 1:4, "The Lord Jesus gave Himself for our sins."

And so to reduce it even to a shorter word from substitution, to boil it down to just three letters in the English language, it is the word "for" - *huper* in the original language. Jesus died in our place for our benefit so that we would have our sins taken off of us, and Jesus bore the wrath of God in His body as He bore our sins. He became our sin-bearer, and He became our wrath-bearer upon the cross.

Surely you know this. Surely you have come to believe in this substitute, Jesus Christ. Surely you have come to see there is no other hope. You have no other alternative. Either you burn in hell forever, or you embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered in your place upon the cross. There are no other options. And it is the love of God for sinners that He sent His Son, His only begotten Son, into this world to suffer in our place, to die in our place, and He became the infinitely greater Judah who became surety for us. He made the payment for our sins upon the cross.

This is the gospel, and there is no other gospel. There is no other way of salvation. There is no other hope for mankind. There is no other path that leads to the Father but through this substitute who died for sinners upon the cross. Is He your substitute? Is He your Savior? Is He your Lord? Have you taken that decisive step of faith and believed in Jesus Christ, not just think about it, not feel emotion about it, but as a choice of your will? Have you repented of your sins, and have you believed in Jesus Christ? That is the question for each and every one of us.

Sudden death means sudden glory for the believer. Sudden death means sudden hell for the unbeliever. Which will it be three seconds after you die? Will you wake up in heaven? Will you wake up in hell? You need a substitute, one who has stood in your place, who bore your sins to provide the only atonement for your transgressions. May God have mercy upon each and every one of us here today through this perfect substitute, our advocate, Jesus Christ. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father, our hearts are full. Our hearts are full with thoughts of Christ and His love for us, and Your love for us. Thank You for the example of Judah. But more than that, thank You for the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, Father, as we now prepare to take the Lord's Supper, use it for its intended purpose, in Christ's name. Amen.