

GOD'S LOVE FOR YOU

If we have stepped into the holy realm and have burning questions like, "Why me?" "Why my family?" "What did I do to deserve this?" "Woe is me!" and many more, we must realize that all the questions in the world could not compare with, **"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"** Stop and think just how the Father in heaven answered Jesus. The Eternal One answered with silence! Why? Because God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him would be saved (John 3:16). Silence was the Creator's greatest answer to the heart-piercing cry of God-forsakenness screamed from the lips of His only begotten Son.

If we would dare to think in holy terms, we would begin to understand that all of our questions, problems, heartaches and depression become insignificant, and we would be ashamed to complain for any reason. The Son of God was forsaken by the Father for our sake, so that we might have access into His presence. Jesus shed His blood to pay for our sins, and died that we might live forever. Food for thought: in His dying moment, it says in Matthew 27:50 "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit." John 19:30 documents the words Jesus said, "It is finished: and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit." What is strange about this is the order of events. When people die, they don't bow their heads first and then die. When life is taken away, they die and then bow their heads. This shows that the death which our Savior died was voluntary, in that He bowed first and then gave up His spirit! John 10:17-18 says, "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." John 10:11 "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

Is it any wonder, my brothers and sisters, that a shepherd named David would and could put all his trust in the Lord, that Good Shepherd, for his total security in life and eternity? David writes in the Twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd." The **"Lord is."** Yes, the Lord was everything to David. Who could trust the Good Shepherd more than one who was a shepherd himself, watching, protecting, leading and feeding the sheep under his care, even to the point of death, just to save the flock? David made his relationship with the Good Shepherd very personal. The next two words confirm his commitment and confidence — **"My Shepherd"** — two words that are extremely personal. It is because of this close relationship that God the Father states that David was a "man after My own heart." What an acknowledgment by God the Father to a shepherd! David knew the importance of His word as he said in Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Notice that it is the word of God that is a guide and illuminator of our steps.

Let's look at this word for a moment. In the Gospel of John 1:1, we read "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:14 then goes on to say that this "word became flesh and dwelt among us." This living word of God is Jesus, who came to earth to show by demonstration how mankind was to act toward God the Father, through obedience, fellowship and love. That's right, this living word of God was in eternity past with God, and was with God during the creation. In fact, John 1:3 states that "all things were MADE BY HIM, and without Him was not anything made that was made." And verse 10, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world did not know Him." Colossians 1:16, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible." Yes, this Jesus (Emmanuel, "God with Us") came bodily to earth to set an example of how we, a fallen, sinful people, were to act in this world. The Bible states "He was tempted in every way, but was without sin." (Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15). Yes, He continued His example to the

age of 33, when He finally bore our sins on Himself as He was nailed to the cross for you and me on Calvary.

God the Father in His boundless grace not only provided for us by example, but also through the written word of God (II Timothy 3:16 "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God," and II Peter 1:20-21 "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation..... but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."). It is in scripture that Jesus is revealed to us (Psalm 40:7-8 "Then I said, 'Lo, I come; in the volume of the Book it is written of Me.'"). Beloved, the Bible is a collection of 66 books or "love letters" given by a loving God to His creation, that we might get to know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit better. Remember, Jesus only lived to be 33 years old, and His ministry was only three years. Listen to what John says in the last verse of his gospel, John 21:25 "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Amen.

With love in Christ Jesus,
Pastor Tom