

# The Shepherd's Sacrifice (Communion)

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[ 0 : 00 ]     10, John chapter 10, and I'd like to read again verses 17 and 18.

John 10, reading again, verse 17 and 18, on page 896 of your Bibles. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again.

No one takes it 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've received from my Father.

Now, last night at our pre-communion service, we were looking at what we might call the dual work of Jesus. Jesus, both as our great high priest, and Jesus also our once for all sacrifice for sin.

And as we saw last night, Jesus fulfilling all that we see in the Old Testament of the practice of the priests, offering sacrifices for sin, and sacrifices of course of thanksgiving, of fellowship before God.

[ 1 : 15 ]     And these sacrifices were offered continually, day after day, year after year. But they could never fully atone for the sins of the people.

And as we noticed as well last night, the priests themselves who offered these sacrifices, they lived and they died.

Other priests taking on the work that they'd left behind and offering up sacrifices. But the Lord Jesus is our ultimate high priest. If you like, the final priest.

And there are no more animal sacrifices to be offered because He is the once for all sacrifice for sins. The once for all sacrifice to atone for sins.

To atone for the sins of His people. And of course, that was seen and is seen ultimately on the cross. When Jesus gave Himself on the cross.

[ 2 : 11 ]     When Jesus as priest offered Himself up. And a sacrifice was offered up. Why? To satisfy God's righteous justice in relation to sin.

And this morning in the context of the Lord's Supper. When we remember the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. We're going to continue our thoughts on Jesus and His work of offering Himself up.

That offering up of Himself. That we're going to look at in three distinct, well not three, no, three connected ways. Offering up Himself. That was voluntary. Offering up Himself.

A substitute. Our substitute. Him for us. And thirdly, offering up Himself by His own authority. And again, we'll explore these headings. And I pray that, you know, as we are worshipping.

As we fix our eyes in Jesus. As we see Him and His voluntarily giving of Himself. As we see Him as our substitute. As we see Him by His own authority and no one else's authority.

[ 3 : 18 ]     Giving Himself for us. I pray that we'll the more worship Him. The more we'll rejoice. And give thanks for the finished work of the Lord Jesus that we read there in John's Gospel.

So, let's look at these three aspects of Jesus offering up Himself. These aspects that we find here in this passage. The first one being a substitute.

We read there in verse 17. I lay down my life for the sheep. I think it was a few Sundays ago we were in our evening services.

We were looking at Psalm 23. We saw how that psalm reflected the Lord Jesus Christ. As our shepherd. Our good shepherd. The shepherd that Jesus spoke of Himself there and earlier in John chapter 10.

And we noticed even in the psalm. The way the psalmist wrote. That David wrote of the Lord as shepherd. He wrote of the Lord as a shepherd. In a verba. A shepherding one. Someone in whom we have that absolute security for our souls.

[ 4 : 23 ] In Him we have that true protection from the enemy of our souls. Our souls nourished by the good shepherd. And we have that safety. That eternal safety.

That eternal comfort. In the one who cares for His church. The one who laid down His life for His sheep.

And you know as we were reading there in John chapter 10. Jesus is telling His followers of His love for them. He's telling His followers of that great love that He has for them.

A love so great that He was willing to lay down His life for them. Jesus is saying that He's not like false shepherds. You go to the book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament that speaks of false prophets.

False teachers. People who are only concerned for themselves and not for the people. Not for their flock. But Jesus loves His flock.

[ 5 : 22 ] Loves His people so much. But He was willing to give Himself in sacrifice for them. For you. Why? To protect you. Give you that eternal protection for your soul.

For your very life. And notice how Jesus is that substitute for us. I lay down my life for. For. On behalf of.

I lay down my life on behalf of the flock. On behalf of the sheep. In your stead. In my stead. Condemned. He stood. Jesus.

Him. For you. Him. For us. That's the element of substitution. And you see the way that Jesus explains this. And He speaks of His dying for His sheep as the good shepherd.

He speaks of Himself as our substitute. Look at how He explains this in John chapter 10. And certainly from about verse 10 onwards.

[ 6 : 23 ] He's the shepherd. He says He's the shepherd that owns the sheep. The sheep are precious to Him. He's not like the hired shepherds who. You know who didn't own the sheep.

So that when wolves came to snatch away the sheep. The hired shepherd. The hired hand just ran away. They weren't whose sheep. He didn't own them. He had no claim on the sheep. The owner is different.

The shepherd will protect his sheep from the ravenous wolves. And he'll protect them even to the very cost of his life. He's not going to run away from the enemy of the flock comes to take the sheep away.

The shepherd owner. He stands his ground. He's going to be attacked. He's going to be killed. But he'll have protected his precious flock. And his flock will be saved.

Yes. He will have died. Not the sheep. He will have died. The shepherd. Because the shepherd's been the substitute. He's died in their place. The shepherd will have sacrificed his life for the sheep as their substitute.

[ 7 : 29 ] And that analogy there. That way of speaking. Surely points you to the sacrifice of Jesus. Our substitute. Him.

He dying for us. In your place. In my place. Jesus dying for his church. And yes. We know the enemy of the church is prowling around like a lion.

Seeking to devour the sheep of the church. But only. And only our good shepherd. Only the Lord Jesus. Could have saved you from the enemy of your soul.

Could have saved you from Satan himself. And the only way that the church can be saved. The only way the church could be saved. Is by Jesus dying on our behalf.

Laying down his life. For his sheep. So you know. Even as we're worshipping now. Even as we're thinking. Or mind fixing the Lord Jesus. Even as you're preparing.

[ 8 : 32 ] Even now to remember his death. Give thanks. And give praise. That he was willing to be that substitute. That Jesus didn't flinch in the face of death for us.

And that death. That substitutionary death. It speaks of love. It speaks of the great love of Jesus. It speaks of Jesus and his great love.

That love that would not permit the enemy of our souls to devour us. But rather that love that speaks of salvation. Saving. And you know.

When we realise who the substitute is. This is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is him who gave his life for you. I mean. Again. We're lost.

We're lost in wonder. Love and praise. Because. Him. Jesus. The sinless son of God. The eternal one. That he should give his life for sinners such as ourselves.

[ 9 : 27 ] Truly in itself. Is a cause for praise and thanksgiving. Think of. You know. Just think of more. Of a substitute. If you go to a sports match for example.

You know there are substitutes. A substitute. At some time in the game will come on for another. But he'll come on for someone who's been chosen first. Someone who's been reckoned to be a better player.

The substitute. As it were. Has been relegated to. To wait for an opportune time. To take the place of that player. Who might be injured. Or maybe loses his form. But Jesus.

Our substitute. Isn't the lesser one. He's the greater. He's infinitely greater. He's our substitute. He's the chosen one. He's the one in whom there is.

And always has been that sinless purity. And we see his righteous credentials. He's the saviour. Who alone. Could save you from your sins. Could save you from Satan.

[ 10 : 24 ] Could save you. From that eternal death. That he saved you from. By his sacrifice. By his blood. God. God. So.

When Jesus speaks here. Of his laying down his life. For. On behalf of the flock. Where are we being led to? We've been led to Calvary. We've been led to the cross of Calvary.

Because of course there. On the cross. We see. Jesus. Our substitute. We see Jesus. Laying down his life. For. For his flock. We see there on the cross.

Jesus. There in his. In his act. Of substitution. Protecting you from the consequence of your sin. Protecting you from all that would have. Punished.

Given you punishment. Eternal punishment. Without Christ. But Jesus paid. The price. For your salvation. He did it as your substitute.

[ 11 : 19 ] So that you might know that eternal security of your soul. So that you can be never snatched away by. By the evil one. And you're never lost. Because Jesus has. Has died for you.

In a few moments time. We'll see. By sight. We'll see the bread and the wine. These. What we call these elements. That point.

That signify. Jesus' death. Point to Jesus' death. Well when you see the bread and the wine. Remember they're speaking to you. Of the Lord Jesus as your substitute.

So those of you who will be taking the bread. Give thanks that his body was broken. For you. For you. For you. And when you take the cup. Give praise and thanks that his blood was shed.

For you. On your behalf. So that you might not be lost eternally. So that you might not taste death for your sins. He's your substitute.

[ 12 : 15 ] He laid down his life. For you. But then. Secondly. We see Jesus. That's the great volunteer.

Look at verse 17 again. And take it into verse 18. For this reason the Father loves me. Because I lay down my life. That I may take it up again. No one takes it from me.

But I lay it down. Of my own accord. I lay it down. Of my own accord. That when we read here in verse 17.

Jesus laying down his life. Well. That's not the first time he's mentioned this of course. I mean. At this point. Jesus is fully aware that. That his death. Is his Father's will for him.

And that by his death. Jesus knows his Father's love. He knows that love. Yes. That he'd known from all eternity. Jesus the Son of God. Had known the Father's love.

[ 13 : 10 ] From all eternity. But he knows that. That the Father loves him. Because he's doing his Father's will. He's going to satisfy his. His Father's justice.

So. Jesus is in full control of his life. That life that he's. That he's lived to the glory of his Father. That life of perfect obedience. He's in full control of his life.

That life that he's going to lay down. That he's going to lay down. He's in full control of that life. That's going to be raised from the dead. Jesus says that he's going to take it up again.

So in other words. What we're seeing here. Is that emphasis. That Jesus. Is in full control. Is in full control. No one takes it from me. No one's going to take my life from me.

But I lay it down. My own accord. So in other words. Jesus is saying that his death on the cross. Is voluntary. In other words. It's not forced.

[ 14 : 09 ] It's not because others have somehow taken over the direction of Jesus' life. It's not because others have the power to kill him. And somehow be rid of him. No.

Jesus' death. Jesus' death. It's not going to be because he has more powerful enemies. And who will appear to have the power to crucify him.

Will appear to have dominion over Jesus. But no. No. Jesus. Will voluntarily give up. What's only in his power.

To give up. Just think of that for a moment. Now if you volunteer to do something. You're taking an initiative. You're not forced to do what you're volunteering to do.

You do what you do as a volunteer. Because you want to do it. And you do it freely. You don't have any thought of any kind of recompense. Any financial recompense.

[ 15 : 07 ] You're giving of your time. You're giving of your gifts. You're giving of your energy. You're giving what you give for the sake of others. You're all very well aware.

You're obviously very aware of wartime situations. Time of war. You know some of the bravest deeds done by those who were involved in conflict. Were actually performed by volunteers.

Those who volunteered for dangerous missions. Actions that demanded courage and conviction without any sense of reward. Other than knowing that what they were doing was for the good of the nation.

You go to the early months of the First World War for example. Tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of volunteers joined up in response to Kitchener's.

Your country needs you. And the sweep. Almost the euphoria of volunteering. This desire to defeat the enemy. To be involved in what was considered a righteous war.

[ 16 : 09 ] Not just of course in Britain's side. Other countries as well. Men went freely. Freely into the services. Some went for a sense of adventure. Many went out on a sense of patriotic duty for king and country.

Many of course lost their lives as a result of their involvement as volunteers. An incredible. An incredible amount of volunteers. Until of course conscription came in.

But one man volunteered. Not out of patriotic duty. Not out of some kind of sense of adventure. But for the sake of those for whom he came to give his life.

And to save by his death on the cross. When you think of Jesus laying down his life. Jesus laying down his life for the salvation of others.

Remember he did it freely. He did it without compulsion. He wasn't conscripted to give his life. He did it without force. He gave his life.

[ 17 : 12 ] He laid down his life. Not for self gain. But in self giving love. He gave his all. He gave his all voluntarily. So that you might have the blessing.

The benefits of salvation in him. You know even in the world that we see so often of voluntary service. And we quite rightly commend that kind of action.

But how much more should we commend and rejoice and give praise to the Savior. In his freely giving of himself. In that greatest act of self giving love.

When Jesus laid down his life for undeserving sinners. Such as me. And such as you. And you know we really do have to emphasize the voluntary aspect of Jesus giving his life for others.

And I think we do need to explore this far more than we normally do. Because remember when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. Remember just a few hours before his trial and execution at crucifixion.

[ 18 : 16 ] Remember what happened. It was Peter. Peter the disciple. And he drew his sword and he retaliated against. Well against those who were arresting Jesus. He struck out at the high priest's servant.

Remember what Jesus said to Peter. He said Peter. Put away your sword. Because nothing but nothing. Would prevent the fulfillment of scripture that Jesus must die for sinners.

I mean Jesus told Peter. You know. I could call in tens of thousands of angels to resist my arrest. But Jesus wouldn't do so. Because as far as Jesus' death was concerned.

As Jesus said. It must be so. It must be so. And then. Just move on a little further. To when Jesus was being mocked. When he was being falsely accused.

When he was condemned. When he carried his cross. And then he was crucified on that very cross. Remember. We hear wicked men who pass sentence in Jesus. They physically put Jesus to death.

[ 19 : 21 ] Because God overruled in that wickedness. Think of what Isaiah prophesied. That it was God's will. It was his will. To crush him.

It was the will of the Father. To crush the Son. Even when Jesus was in Gethsemane. Just even before his arrest. When Jesus' soul was in torment.

At the prospect of his sin bearing on the cross. We read of Jesus sweating. His sweat was so great. That it was like great drops of blood. Falling down. And Jesus bowing to the will of his Father.

And Jesus would drink from the cup of God's wrath. There on the cross. And in the garden declaring utterly convicted. With that utter conviction. Not my will but your will be done.

Jesus would set his face on Calvary. Jesus would lay down his life. Off his own accord. Voluntarily. And those of you who will go to the table.

[ 20 : 25 ] Who come to remember the Lord's day. Again give glory. Give praise. Give thanks to the Lord Jesus. For his willingness to go to the cross. For his being that ultimate volunteer.

That Jesus was prepared to suffer and to die for you. Yes again. When you see the bread. See the wine. Take the bread. Take the wine.

These elements that point to that great act of. The greatest act of voluntary service. Without Jesus being that volunteer. Giving of himself of his own accord.

He would not have known the saving work of Jesus. He would not have known the salvation that's yours in Christ. Him for you.

Your substitute. Jesus. Our volunteer. Here. Here. Here. Here. But there's something else that Jesus expresses here. That expresses the wonder of his.

[ 21 : 23 ] The beauty. When we even say of his giving of himself for us. And that's his authority. Jesus giving his life. By his own authority. I have authority. Verse 18.

I have authority to lay it down. And I have authority to take it up again. And this charge I've received from my father. Let's just try and think what Jesus is saying here.

And let's just bring into. Maybe I'll say present day context. Because. You know. We live in a very crazy. Mixed up. Upside down world. We live in a world where.

Goods. Considered evil. An evil good. One of the many evils that we see around. Is the perception that a person has the right. Has the authority.

The self styled authority. To decide when his or her life should end. We've seen that. Just the other day in the news. Big headlines. In the major news channels.

[ 22 : 20 ] The man who said. That he had expressed his right. To give his life. To end his life as he wished. Because that happened yesterday. And the chilling expression.

Given. By another of that man. Having. Had the authority. Or claimed the authority. To take his life away. The chilling expression.

That he was in control of his own destiny. No one has the authority. To end his life. As he wishes. Man doesn't have that right.

Doesn't have that authority over his life. Has no authority. To lay down his life. Whenever he chooses. But Jesus has. Because Jesus is the author of life. Jesus came from heaven to earth.

And in human form. He had that God given authority. To lay down his life. That authority to end his life. That God given authority.

[ 23 : 18 ] To take up his life again. At that resurrection. At his resurrection. When we think of authority. It tells us surely this. It tells us.

Of the majesty. And the power of our saviour. It tells. You know. When we think of his death. We'll know. And see.

That he has power. That power over life. He has power even. Over his life. He has that power. That authority. To give his life for you. As Jesus came.

In giving of his life. To give life. To give you eternal life. That's. You see. That's the wonder of. Of the gospel. The wonder of gospel provision.

Think of that. That sense of giving. God the Father. Gave. His one and only son for us. Jesus. The son of God. Gave. His life.

[ 24 : 16 ] He gave his life. As our substitute. He gave his life. Voluntarily. And he gave his life. By his authority. The authority. Over life itself. And.

So we've already seen. God the Father. Charging his son. Giving his son. That charge. To accomplish. Fully. The work. Of bringing sinners. Into his kingdom. And it was.

By the only way possible. It was only. By the death. Of the Lord Jesus. When Jesus came. In obedience. To his father. Jesus giving his life. In sacrifice. Jesus giving his life.

In love for his father. In love for sinners. And yes. You know. There are times. I pray many times. When the things of earth.

Do grow strangely dim. In the light. Of his glory and grace. You know. It's the privilege. Of the preacher. To study God's word. Maybe in a. A way. Maybe in a.

[ 25 : 12 ] Obviously a volume. In a concentration. That. That. Maybe most of the congregation. Aren't able to do so. Because of work. Because of other responsibilities. But whether you're a minister.

In a study. Whether you're a congregation. Sitting in. In the church. When we come to God's word. When we think of the Lord Jesus.

And laying down his life for us. Then we have that comfort. We have that hope. We have that. Yes. We have that joy. Amidst the tears. We have that joy. Amidst the pain.

We have that joy. Amidst even the sorrows. We have a joy. Even amidst. The world. That rejects. The one who came. As our substitute. As our volunteer.

Who came to give his life. By his own authority. When we study God's word. When we. Dwell in God's word. Surely we. We're. Given that.

[ 26 : 05 ] That. That. That joy in the Lord. To know what Jesus has done. In his laying down his life for us. And I pray that you have that comfort. Even now.

As we've been considering. All that we've read here. Of our good shepherd. Who's. Who's accomplished. All that was given him to do. By his father. And you who know the Lord Jesus.

As your savior. Pray that you know this peace. That you know. This joy. That only he can bring. And that's why. The Lord's supper.

That's why. Time of communion. Gives us this. This opportunity. To. To fix our hearts. To fix our eyes. And our. And our savior. Our Lord Jesus.

To. To dwell on the one who's. Who's won for you. That great salvation. Because of his great love. And knowing that.

[ 26 : 58 ] That great salvation. Even that. That. That salvation. Is rooted even in eternity. Itself. In a moment. We'll be. Singing from God's word.

We'll be singing of the comfort. That the believer. Has in the Lord. And you know. That comfort. That's got nothing to do. With any kind of. Psychological. Feel good factor.

That comfort. That the Christian. Has in Christ. It's because. Of the. Transforming. Grace. That. You know. In Christ.

Your soul. Is transformed. You've been changed. By the grace of God. You've been changed. Because of the one. Who came to lay down. His life for you. Because he came.

To bring you. Into his kingdom. That kingdom. Of all peoples. All languages. All nations. Jew. Gentile. You who know him. Have that promise.

[ 27 : 54 ] Of eternal life. In the kingdom of God. For the glory. Of the name. Of the Lord Jesus. For his. And to his. Eternal praise.

Amen. Let us pray. Our Lord and Savior. We give praise. And we give thanks. For your goodness. To us. Even as we have been.

Permitted. To consider. The truth. Of the gospel. The truth. Of the Lord Jesus. As our substitute. And Lord. May it be. As we dwell.

In him. For us. We pray Lord. That we will bow. In reverence. Before you. Our great God. And Savior. And Lord. May it be.

That as we think of Jesus. In his voluntary capacity. And giving of himself. Of his own accord. Again. Lord. May it be. That our hearts. Are. Are strangely warm.

[ 28 : 48 ] Indeed. Our hearts. Burning within us. As we think on. The. That great act of sacrifice. That Jesus gave. Of himself. Voluntarily. And again.

Lord. As we think of Jesus. And his authority. To give his life. We pray Lord. That we will bow. To no other authority. Other than the authority. Of our Savior. And so Lord. We pray that.

Again. As we. Are. Given this. Renewed opportunity. To remember the Lord's death. Through word and sacrament. May it be. That we know that peace. That peace.

That passes understanding. May it be. That that peace. That we know with you. Is a peace. That is eternal. So bless. We pray. All that has been. Considered this morning.

Bless your word. We pray. And bless all that. Is about to happen. In the. In the manner of worship. That we. Now are engaged in. Help us. We pray.

[ 29 : 44 ] Take from us. All distracting thoughts. Help us Lord. To know. That you are with us. And to bless us. Continue Lord with us. Now we ask.

And all these things we pray. Are in Jesus name. Amen. Now we're going to sing. In Psalm 125. On page 170.

It's a. Psalm and a version. We don't sing very often. But I pray the words. Will be relevant. The tune of St. Cecilia. And some of you will know that tune. I'm sure. All those who trust the Lord.

Like Zion. Are secure. You know. That security. That's yours. Who trust in the Lord. Which never can be removed. Never can be moved. But always. Will. Endure.

So Psalm 125. The whole of the Psalm. To God's praise. God. Amen. It's open. God. God. God's right. It's open.

[ 30 : 42 ] God. God.

God.