

Daily Devotional, June 23, 2021 Make Me a Willing Sacrifice

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.” John 10:11-12 (NIV)

Merriam Webster’s dictionary defines compassion as the following: “*sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with a desire to alleviate it*”. Hearing this definition echoes as a call to what Jesus suffered in His earthly ministry. Knowing all our distresses, knowing our failings, knowing our struggles, Jesus loves us and wants to relieve our pain and struggles. Jesus offers the chance for us to decide to accept His invitation of redemption through our Lord’s love and guidance.

In the story of King David we see a man in power with similar concerns for the people he is ruler over. David knows his own sins and knows that he must pay a price for them, but he also knows that the people he is ruling do not deserve the punishment that he has brought upon them. David recognized that he was like all of us, a sinner in desperate need of forgiveness and redemption. He also knew that the wrath that God would have could affect those whom he both cared for and ruled over.

In a most interesting segment of this story, God gives David a choice among three future outcomes: three years of famine on the land; David fleeing three months prior to his enemies pursuing him; or three days of pestilence in his land. David chooses the pestilence and from Dan to Beersheba the Bible tells us that 70,000 men died. Then the angel in charge of the destruction stretched his hand out to Jerusalem, and God stays his hand. God spared Jerusalem and relented in the punishment of David and his people.

What is most amazing is that David, not knowing that the entire destruction operation has been put on hold, goes to the Lord and lays himself bare before God. He begs for mercy for his people and asks for the punishment to be placed on him. David refers to his people as “sheep”. The issue here is that despite David’s remorse for his sin, despite his love for his people, and despite his desire to redeem them from all of this, it is outside of David’s job description. Only Christ and Christ alone can redeem, can forgive sin and can love us in a life-changing way.

The direction of David’s actions was well intended, but he isn’t able to see those promises through. Only Christ can do that. We should be convicted by the extent that David goes to protect and save those he loves. How do we react when those around us are threatened by the world around them? Do we speak the truth of God with love and patience into their lives or do we view that as too difficult and messy and move on?

Our Lord and Savior went through the messes in the Bible, and He goes through the messes in our lives. He speaks a saving and redemptive truth that leads to salvation and His glory.

How has the example of David and Jesus affected the length to which you want to share Christ’s truth? In what ways can the way we share Jesus’ love inspire those around us today?

Prayer: Holy God, You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; rich as he was, he made himself poor for your sake, in order to make you rich by means of his poverty. I don’t want to be selfish and prideful, and I don’t want to horde wealth in any way: physical or spiritual. I only want to be a blessing to everyone around me. Help me to be a generous giver. Give me a self-sacrificing servant heart: the heart of Jesus. In His name I pray, Amen.