

Introduction

Sermon Introduction

Ezekiel 34:25-31 - ²⁵"I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. ²⁶And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. ²⁷And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. ²⁸They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. ²⁹And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. ³⁰And they shall know that I am the LORD their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord GOD. ³¹And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord GOD."

Last week we started looking at the first half of John 10

- We paralleled John 10 to two prophetic passages - Ezekiel 34 and the first part of Jeremiah 23
- We saw that Christ emphasized the same four themes as Ezekiel 34 and was making himself the referent
 - Christ says, "I am the good Shepherd."
- We went through the first three themes last week
 - An Accusation
 - A Distinction
 - A Judgment

This week we will finish the first half of John 10 and look at the fourth point - A Covenantal Sacrifice

- The verses I read a minute ago are the end of Ezekiel 34:25-31

Passage Introduction

We'll consider the entirety of the first half of John 10 this morning, but we're really focusing in on 5 verses - 14-18

(Read John 10:14-18)

Proposition and Outline

Proposition: Christ explains His sacrifice as part of His role as the Good Shepherd and the sheep must apply this role in several different ways.

We'll look at four aspects of Christ discussion of His sacrifice

- The Necessity of the Sacrifice
- The Description of the Sacrifice
- The Hope of the Sacrifice
- The Result of the Sacrifice

*Disclaimer - this sermon is on the topic of the sacrifice of Christ, but it in no way could possibly cover all of its aspects. So, this sermon is limited to aspects of the sacrifice that are found in the first half of John 10 and its parallel prophetic passages.

1. The Necessity of the Sacrifice

- a. In the current text - the sheep are going to perish
 - 10:12 - the wolf is coming to snatch and to scatter
 - 10:28 - the sheep otherwise would perish

- b. From the prophetic text - the sheep are enemies of God
 - Even though Christ does not explicitly say it, because of the parallelism between Christ's dialogue and Ezekiel 34, he is referencing the 'covenant of peace' of Ezekiel 34:25
 - **Ezekiel 34:25 - "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.**

 - There is a problem to making this covenant of peace
 - **Romans 1:18 - For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.**
 - **Romans 5:10 - For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.**

 - The solution is the covenantal sacrifice
 - John 10:15 - literally: I **lay down my breath** for the sheep
 - **Isaiah 53:10 - Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.**
 - ◆ literally: when you **lay down his breath** as a guilt offering
 - Breath = life and/or soul - translated differently in Isaiah 53 and John 10, but the same concept
 - **Romans 5:1 - Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

- c. From the prophetic text - because the sheep are slaves to sin
 - **Ezekiel 34:27 - And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them.**
 - **Jeremiah 31:10-11 - "Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.' For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.**

Application: We must recognize our personal need for the sacrifice

We are the ones who are perishing apart from the sacrifice of Christ

We are the ones who are enemies of God apart from the sacrifice of Christ

We are the ones who are slaves to sin apart from the sacrifice of Christ

2. The Description of the Sacrifice

1. An identifying sacrifice (vs 13-15)
 - We can know that Jesus is the true Shepherd because He laid down His life for the sheep - an action of a true shepherd
 - This is truly the main point of the discussion, that it identifies Christ as the true Shepherd, but we dealt with this last week, so we'll only cover this briefly
 - **John 15:13 - Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.**
2. A substitutionary sacrifice (vs 11, 15)
 - He lays down His life for the sheep - in their place
 - A picture of a shepherd running to the danger and losing his life to save the sheep
3. A willing sacrifice (18)
 - He lays down His life voluntarily - He wants to do it for the sheep
 - **Luke 9:51 - When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.**
 - **Matthew 26:53-54 - Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"**
4. An authoritative sacrifice (vs 18)
 - He lays down His life in charge of the situation - He causes it to happen for the sheep
 - **John 19:10-11 - So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."**
 - **Acts 4:27-28 - for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.**
5. An obedient sacrifice (vs 18)
 - He lays down His life in obedience to the Father - He obeys on behalf of the sheep
 - **Philippians 2:8 - And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**
 - **Hebrews 5:8 - Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.**
 - **Romans 5:19 - For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.**
6. A pleasing sacrifice (vs 17)
 - He lays down His life and pleases His Father

Summary (Ryle):

The plain truth is, that our Lord submitted to death of His own free will, because He knew that His death was the only way of making atonement for man's sins. He poured out His soul unto death with all the desire of His heart, because He had determined to pay our debt to God, and redeem us from hell. For the joy set before Him He willingly endured the cross, and laid down His life, in order that we, through His death, might have eternal life. His death was not the death of a martyr, who sinks at last overwhelmed by enemies, but the death of a triumphant conqueror, who knows that even in dying he wins for himself and his people a kingdom and a crown of glory.

Applications:

1. We ought to apply the sacrifice of Christ to ourselves
 - Christ willingly provided substitution for the sheep, have you no interest in that?
 - Ryle:
Let us only take heed that this office of Christ is not set before us in vain. It will profit us nothing at the last day that Jesus was a Shepherd, if during our lifetime, we never heard His voice and followed Him. If we love life, let us join His flock without delay. Except we do this, we shall be found at the left hand in the day of judgment, and lost for evermore.

2. We ought to love and serve Christ in a way that recognizes His sacrifice on our behalf
 - Christ claims here, "I willingly and intentionally give my life in order to provide a pleasing and obedient sacrifice to the Father on your behalf."
 - How ought we to respond to that?
II Corinthians 5:14-15 - The love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

3. The Hope of the Sacrifice

Verses 17-18

Christ claims to have both the authority to lay His life down and the authority to take it up again (vs. 18)

- Christ here links His sacrifice and His resurrection, primarily using the resurrection to prove the sacrifice
- Christ is saying, 'if I have the authority to rise from the dead, then I obviously have the authority to give my life.'
- The resurrection is the proof of the sacrifice
 - The proof that Christ was the sacrifice
Romans 1:4 - and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord
 - The proof that the sacrifice of Christ was sufficient
I Corinthians 15:17 - And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.
 - The proof that the results of the sacrifice have been obtained

Christ claims that the purpose for laying down His life was to take it up again (vs. 17)

- Not only does Christ link His sacrifice and His resurrection, He says that the true end is the resurrection
- The resurrection is not only the proof that the results of the sacrifice have been obtained, the resurrection is the result of the sacrifice!
- Christ is the firstborn from the dead!
I Corinthians 15:20 - But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Applications:

1. If Christ found the reason for His sacrifice in the resurrection, we ought to fix our hope on the resurrection of Christ

We find our hope of spiritual resurrection in the resurrection of Christ

- **Romans 6:4 - We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**
- **Romans 8:11 - If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.**

We find our hope of bodily resurrection in the resurrection of Christ

- **Romans 6:5 - For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.**
- **I Corinthians 15:12-23 - Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.**
- **I Thessalonians 4:14 - For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.**

We find our sustaining or living hope in the resurrection of Christ

- **I Peter 1:3 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

2. If Christ found the purpose of His suffering in His resurrection, we ought to imitate Christ in His purpose

If we find our hope in Christ resurrection, then we ought to be willing to lay down our life as Christ did

- Anytime we imitate Christ, we cannot do it in the same way
- But we are called to imitate Christ in this

- Hebrews says we ought to find our hope in a better resurrection
Hebrews 11:35, 40 - Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life...[but] God had provided something better for us

- Hebrews concludes that we ought to imitate Christ in His suffering then
Hebrews 13:12-14 - So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

- This ties back to our second application of point 2
 - ◆ Loving and serving Christ in a way that recognizes His sacrifice on our behalf

4. The Result of the Sacrifice

1. Unity of the flock (vs 16)

- This may seem like a surprising main result that Christ lists as the result of His sacrifice
- This was a theme of Old Testament Prophecy (Ezekiel 34, 37) - unifying the two kingdoms again
 - **Ezekiel 37:15-24 - The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take a stick and write on it, 'For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him.' And join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. And when your people say to you, 'Will you not tell us what you mean by these?' say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (that is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him. And I will join with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand. When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, then say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. "My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd.**
- Paul also, meditating on the cross, found unity in the sacrifice - unifying the Jew and Gentile
 - **Ephesians 2:11-22 - Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands--- remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**
- Unity is a main theme of the cross
 - First, unity of man with God
 - Then, unity of man with man under one man - one flock and one Shepherd

2. Eternal life (vs 28)

The substitutionary act of Christ was efficacious and gave life to the sheep

The pleasing act of Christ was efficacious and gave life to the sheep

The obedient act of Christ was efficacious and gave life to the sheep

If unity of the flock under one Shepherd was a main goal of the sacrifice, then unity of man with God was even more a main goal of the sacrifice

The sacrifice exhausted the wrath of God thus granting eternal life to the sheep

Application:

We must find our unity and our life in the sacrifice of Christ

Unity is something we must STRIVE after

But, we must strive after unity in the sacrifice of Christ

We must reject unity that springs from other sources

Life is also something we must obviously strive for

But, we must strive after life only in the sacrifice of Christ

We must reject any seeming life that comes from other sources

Conclusion

Christ describes His sacrifice in terms of its necessity, its description, its hope and its results. And we must apply this in six ways (roughly in order):

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| 1. Acknowledgement | acknowledge our need for the sacrifice |
| 2. Application | apply the sacrifice to ourselves |
| 3. Adoration | adore Christ because of the sacrifice |
| 4. Expectation | hope in the resurrection of Christ |
| 5. Imitation | imitate Christ in abandoning our lives |
| 6. Execution | seek our unity and our life in the sacrifice of Christ |