

The Power of Life

John 10:17-18

17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 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. This command I have received from My Father." NKJV

In this passage we have such a wonderful picture. Jesus the shepherd will lay down His life for the sheep. As Matthew Henry says, "Thousands of sheep had been offered in sacrifice for their shepherds, as sin-offerings, but here, by a surprising reverse, the shepherd is sacrificed for the sheep."

The pagans worshiped gods that required sacrifice, even in some cases, human sacrifice from their petitioners. But here we find God offering Himself as a sacrifice for His followers. Could anything seem so unbelievable?

Many a man or woman has died so others might live. But I dare say that few planned it to be so. And also Paul tells us that Jesus did not die for good godly, righteous people. Ro 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Which one of us would lay down our lives for those who have opposed us and worked against us all of our lives? Would we die for people who had aligned themselves with our arch enemy and cared nothing for us or our standards?

So let us look at this marvelous amazing statement made by the Son of God.

- I. Because I lay down My life that I may take it again, Therefore My Father loves Me
 - A. It goes without saying that the Father loves the Son and we have that testimony many times in Scripture.
 - B. But Jesus is saying is that this willingness to lay down His life for those that the Godhead has determined to bring into the one fold, was a particular source of affection on the part of the Father.
- II. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.
 - A. No one takes it from Me.
 1. It was long ago foretold.
 - a. Zech 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion," Says the Lord of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones. NKJV
 - B. I lay it down of Myself.
 1. Matthew Henry again says, "See here the power of Christ, as the Lord of life, particularly of his own life, which he had in himself. 1. He had power

to keep his life against all the world, so that it could not be wrested from him without his own consent. Though Christ's life seemed to be taken by storm, yet really it was surrendered, otherwise it had been impregnable, and never taken. The Lord Jesus did not fall into the hands of his persecutors because he could not avoid it, but threw himself into their hands because his hour was come. No man taketh my life from me. This was such a challenge as was never given by the most daring hero."

2. And again he says, "He had power to lay down his life. (1.) He had ability to do it. He could, when he pleased, slip the knot of union between soul and body, and, without any act of violence done to himself, could disengage them from each other: having voluntarily taken up a body, he could voluntarily lay it down again, which appeared when he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost."

III. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

- A. Unlike any other man as Matthew Henry says, "He had power to take it again; we have not. Our life, once laid down, is as water spilt upon the ground; but Christ, when he laid down his life, still had it within reach, within call, and could resume it."
- B. I love the way that A.W. Pink puts it, "The pre-eminence of Christ was fully manifested at the Cross. In birth He was unique, in His life unique, and so in His death. Not yet have we read aright the inspired accounts of His death, if we suppose that on the Cross the Savior was a helpless victim of His enemies. At every point He demonstrated that no man took His life from Him, but rather that He laid it down of Himself. See the very ones sent to arrest Him in the Garden, there prostrate on the ground before Him (John 18:6): how easily could He have walked away unmolested had it so pleased Him! Hear Him before Pilate, as He reminds that Roman officer, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). Behold Him on the Cross itself, so superior to His sufferings that He makes intercession for the transgressors, saves the dying robber, and provides a home for His widowed mother. Listen to Him as He cries with a loud voice (Matthew 27:46, 50) — no exhausted Sufferer was this! Mark how triumphantly He "gave up the ghost" (John 19:30). Verily "no man" took His life from Him. So evident was it that He triumphed in the hour of death itself, the Roman soldier was made to exclaim, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54)."

IV. This command I have received from My Father

- A. In His death and resurrection Jesus and the Father are in total agreement.
- B. There are only different offices in the great plan of redemption.

How should this then affect us?

We should praise God the Son for His great love, that He would lay down His life for us.

If we truly have been touched by His sacrifice for our sin, it will affect our whole lives.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

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