

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Sunday, March 19th

During this season leading up to Easter, we will be sharing a devotional reading from John Piper's *Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die* for each week's Family Devotional Guide. A suggested plan would be to simply read the devotional one day, discuss it another day, and then spend a third day looking up and discussing the Scripture references he cites.

Note that the complete devotional is available for free:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/books/fifty-reasons-why-jesus-came-to-die>

"To Show the Wealth of God's Love and Grace for Sinners"

(Romans 5:7-8; John 3:16; Ephesians 1:7)

The measure of God's love for us is shown by two things. One is the degree of his sacrifice in saving us from the penalty of our sin. The other is the degree of unworthiness that we had when he saved us.

We can hear the measure of his sacrifice in the words, "He gave his only son" (John 3:16). We also hear it in the word Christ. This is a name based on the Greek title Christos, or "Anointed One," or "Messiah." It is a term of great dignity. The Messiah was to be the King of Israel. He would conquer the Romans and bring peace and security to Israel. Thus the person whom God sent to save sinners was his own divine Son, his only Son, and the Anointed King of Israel—indeed the king of the world (Isaiah 9:6-7).

When we add to this consideration the horrific death by crucifixion that Christ endured, it becomes clear that the sacrifice the Father and the Son made was indescribably great—even infinite, when you consider the distance between the divine and the human. But God chose to make this sacrifice to save us.

The measure of his love for us increases still more when we consider our unworthiness. "Perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:7-8). We deserved divine punishment, not divine sacrifice.

I have heard it said, "God didn't die for frogs. So he was responding to our value as humans." This turns grace on its head. We are worse off than frogs. They have not sinned. They have not rebelled and treated God with the contempt of being inconsequential in their lives. God did not have to die for frogs. They aren't bad enough. We are. Our debt is so great, only a divine sacrifice could pay it.

There is only one explanation for God's sacrifice for us. It is not us. It is "the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). It is all free. It is not a response to our worth. It is the overflow of his infinite worth. In fact, that is what divine love is in the end: a passion to enthrall undeserving sinners, at great cost, with what will make us supremely happy forever, namely, his infinite beauty.