

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Sunday, March 26th

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 His Own Love for Us"

(Ephesians 5:2, 25; Galatians 2:20)

The death of Christ is not only the demonstration of God's love (John 3:16), it is also the supreme expression of Christ's own love for all who receive it as their treasure. The early witnesses who suffered most for being Christians were captured by this fact: Christ "loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). They took the self-giving act of Christ's sacrifice very personally. They said, "He loved me. He gave himself for me."

Surely this is the way we should understand the sufferings and death of Christ. They have to do with me. They are about Christ's love for me personally. It is my sin that cuts me off from God, not sin in general. It is my hard-heartedness and spiritual numbness that demean the worth of Christ. I am lost and perishing. When it comes to salvation, I have forfeited all claim on justice. All I can do is plead for mercy.

Then I see Christ suffering and dying. For whom? It says, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25). "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

And I ask, Am I among the "many"? Can I be one of his "friends"? May I belong to the "church"? And I hear the answer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). "Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43). "To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). "Whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

My heart is swayed, and I embrace the beauty and bounty of Christ as my treasure. And there flows into my heart this great reality—the love of Christ for me. So I say with those early witnesses, "He loved me and gave himself for me."

And what do I mean? I mean that he paid the highest price possible to give me the greatest gift possible. And what is that? It is the gift he prayed for at the end of his life: "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory" (John 17:24). In his suffering and death "we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). We have seen enough to capture us for his cause. But the best is yet to come. He died to secure this for us. That is the love of Christ.