

THE SON DOES THE FATHER'S WILL BY DYING

Psalm 40:1-10

INTRODUCTION

When we speak of a person willing a particular thing or desiring something, we necessarily mean that the person is pleased by or takes pleasure in or is delighted by that which he or she wills. For example, if I will that my children rake the leaves up off our yard it necessarily means that their raking the leaves will give me pleasure, that I will in some measure delight in them for raking and the result of their raking, a clean yard. The reason I begin with this thought is because the central idea of our text today is a description of what God wills, that is, what he delights in.

What does God delight in? What makes him happy? If you will look at Psalm 40:6 you can see something he does not delight in. Literally it says, "Sacrifice and offering you do not delight in...Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required." Anyone who has read the Bible has to wonder at such a statement. There are literally chapters full of God commanding the people of Israel, through Moses, to make sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings. He most definitely does require these offerings and sacrifices. In addition, 38 times in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers God calls the various animal and grain offerings that are placed on the altar and burned up a "pleasing" or "soothing" aroma. What is going on here? How can the same OT that commands these sacrifices and calls them pleasing say that God does not delight in them or require them?

In order to answer that question, let's ask my original question. If God does not delight in all of the offerings he has commanded then what does he delight in? In order to answer that question we are going to turn to the NT, to Hebrews 10 where the author to the Hebrews quotes vv. 6-8 of this psalm. In vv. 1-4 the author makes the point that all of those animal and grain offerings were only a shadow of what is real. Because they are only a shadow they did not ever take away sins. If sins were atoned for by these offerings then the offerings would have been stopped because the people would have been made fit for God. But the fact that they were continually offered for thousands of years proves that they did not take away sin but only reminded people of their sins. It is at this point that the author quotes from Psalm 40, "Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book."'" Thus the author to the Hebrews, by the inspiration of the HS, tells us that the person speaking in Psalm 40 is not simply the human king David, but actually his greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This psalm is a record of the Son of God addressing his Father. Jesus, God the Son who became a man, is the one who says that God is not pleased with the animal and grain sacrifices. So what does please God the Father? First, he was pleased to prepare a body for Jesus, that is, it pleased the Father to send the eternal Son of God into the world as a man. Second, it pleases God the Father for this embodied Christ to come into the world to do his will. God the Father delights in his obedient Son. Now notice the mutual delight that is expressed in these verses. Not only is the Father delighting in his obedient Son but the Son delights in obeying his Father.

Notice that the will of God for the Son is "all that is written in the scroll of the book." All that is written in the OT is what Jesus obeys. This is not only the moral commands of God and the prophetic words about the Messiah but it is the fulfillment of all the ways the person and work of Jesus are illustrated in the OT. The reason that Hebrews quotes these verses here is because the point being made is that all those sacrifices were not what pleased the Father but rather the reality to which they point is what pleases the Father and that reality is Jesus and his once for all death on the cross. This is the point to which the author of Hebrews directs our attention when he interprets these verses from Psalm 40. He says that when Jesus, through David, utters his prayer to the Father he is explaining what the will of the Father and the will of the Son is: "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Instead of a system characterized by numerous offerings which cannot take away sin, Jesus offered his body once for all and by that

offering made a group of people holy to the Lord, that is, cleansed them of their sins and made them perfectly righteous. Therefore, God the Father and God the Son both delight in the once for all death of the Son because it results in our being made holy, that is, fit for God. The death of Jesus is no accident. It was the settled, predetermined plan of both the Father and the Son. Each one desired the death of Jesus. Now the question is this: why do the Father and the Son delight in the obedient death of the Son? I want to show you three reasons from Psalm 40:1-10 as to why the death of Jesus pleases the Father and the Son.

MAIN POINT

The Father and the Son delight in the death of the Son because...

I. The Father is glorified in raising the Son from the dead (vv. 1-3a)

We have in vv. 1-2 one of the most succinct descriptions of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, which is here poetically described as the pit of destruction, a miry bog. Throughout the act of betrayal by Judas, the abandonment of his disciples and the denial of Peter, the false accusations during his "trial" before the Sanhedrin, the beatings he received at the hands of Herod, the hate-filled crowds screaming for his death, the cowardly sentence of Pilate, the mockery and torture of the soldiers, his physical suffering on the cross and finally the Father himself turning his back on his sin laden Son and condemning him to hell, to that pit of destruction, Jesus waited patiently for the Lord to deliver him. He continually cried out to the Lord for help. At no point did Jesus doubt that his Father was going to come to his aid. He knew that he was going to be raised from the dead as he had repeatedly told his disciples prior to his betrayal and so he endured all the suffering and waited upon his Father to answer his cries for help to bring him out of the pit of destruction and the miry bog. God the Father heard the cries of God the Son and answered him by bringing him out of hell and setting his feet on a rock. He raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.

When the Father raised the Son from the dead, what happened? Verse 3 says that the Father put a new song of praise in the mouth of the Son. This is exactly what Paul says happens as a result of the Son coming into the world in Philippians 2:6-11. He says that Jesus, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The result of the death and resurrection and ascension and return of Jesus is that God the Father is glorified.

Jesus now leads the chorus of praise in heaven to the glorious Father. It is the ambition of the Son of God to exalt and glorify God the Father throughout all of eternity for his raising him from the dead and setting his feet upon a rock. The Son waited through the suffering for the Father to hear and deliver and as a result of the Father's deliverance the Son now leads the choir of praise in heaven and will do so for all of eternity. The Father delights to rescue the son from death and hell and the Son delights to glorify the Father for his rescue.

The Father and the Son delight in the death of the Son because...

- *The Father is glorified in raising the Son from the dead*
- *And because...*

II. Many are saved by this death and resurrection (vv. 3b-4)

Jesus now declares that the result of his suffering the pit of destruction and God's delivering him from it by raising him from the dead is that "many will see and fear and trust in the Lord." What a marvelous description of what it means to be a Christian. Every person who is a Christian, whose sins are forgiven, who has been made righteous by Christ's death and resurrection has done this. First, each Christian has seen the glory of the

crucified and resurrected Christ. Each one has seen that the death of Jesus was because of his or her sins. Each Christian has seen that he or she is a hell-deserving sinner whose only hope is that God would count the righteousness of Jesus to be his righteousness and would consider the death of Jesus to be the payment for her sins. Second, when a person sees these realities she fears God. We are terrified by the fact that we have opposed such a great and gracious God. We have indulged in God-despising sins our whole life long. We have ignored this great Savior who went into the pit of destruction for our sakes and depended upon our own goodness to make us fit for God and so as we see who God is and what he has done, we tremble at our God-belittling lives. This fear then leads us to trust in this Jesus. We depend upon him to do for us what we can never do for ourselves, to make us fit for God by his death and resurrection on our behalf.

Verse 4 is then a description of these “many” who have seen, feared and then made the Lord Jesus their trust. First they are called “blessed”. This term is used throughout the Psalms to describe people who have been the recipients of God’s grace. To be a blessed person is to be a person who God has not dealt with according to your sins but according to his love and mercy. The many who see and fear and trust do so because of God’s gracious work in their lives. They do not see and fear and trust because they are smarter or better or more spiritual than others but because they are blessed by God. All those who have made Jesus their trust have also turned away from trusting in proud men and those who pursue lies. You cannot trust in Jesus and his saving work on your behalf and trust in the false religions and false ideas taught by people who are proud of, confident in their own goodness and righteousness. There is no such thing as a proud Christian. Humility is the mark of everyone who has made the Lord his trust because we know there is nothing good that dwells in us. All goodness dwells in Christ and we are made good in, with and by Christ.

Thus God the Father and God the Son delight in the death of the Son because it is by this death and resurrection that many see and fear and trust in the Lord and thus show off the grace and power of God to transform rebellious humans into loyal lovers of God.

The Father and the Son delight in the death of the Son because...

- *The Father is glorified in raising the Son from the dead*
- *Many are saved by his death and resurrection*
- *And because...*

III. God’s incomparable grace is revealed in it (vv. 5 & 9-10)

The subject of the Son’s proclamation was in the days of his flesh and now is through his church the wondrous deeds of his Father; the deeds of God which are too numerous to count or to tell (v. 5). He made known during the course of his life on this earth and now through the work of his church the saving works of God and his lovingkindness and righteousness (vv. 9-10). The glory of God in his works of creation and providence and redemption are the theme of Jesus’ proclamation now and forever. Listen to how the NT records this same fact about Jesus: Luke 10:21-23, “In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” And then in Ephesians 3:8-11 God says through Paul, “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,”

All of God’s love and grace and power and salvation is focused in and revealed by the suffering, death and resurrection of the Son of God. Jesus aims to make the glory of God’s righteousness, of his grace, of his

salvation known through his church as we proclaim and rejoice in and seek to live out the wonder of this cross. It is the cross of Jesus alone that manifests the unfailing love of God and his faithfulness. No one can know if God is for them apart from this cross. No one can tell from the circumstances of his or her life whether God loves them and is going to save them. We can only see and know God's love for us in what God has done by preparing a body for the Son to come and obey him by dying on that cross. The Triune God rejoices in the death of the Son of God because it is the highest and best revelation of his glorious love and grace towards unworthy sinners like us. Since this is God's delight, then this cross out also to be our delight. As Paul says about himself, "far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is my desire that we be a church that boasts always and only in this cross which reveals the great love of God for sinners. Right now we are going to boast in that cross first by singing "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" and then by celebrating communion together where we will remember the cross in the bread and the fruit of the vine. Let's pray.

The Father and the Son delight in the death of the Son because...

- *The Father is glorified in raising the Son from the dead*
- *Many are saved by his death and resurrection*
- *God's incomparable grace is revealed in it*

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