

SUBSTITUTION

Romans 5: 8

The thought of substitution—I think this verse brings this out. The apostle says ‘we’ including all men, we being still sinners. This ‘we’ is inclusive—sinners. He could say that Christ has died for all; that is how extensive it is. How great the glory of the gospel is to think that God is thinking of all men! To touch this matter of substitution should be very affecting to us, as of course all the truth connected with the cross should [be]. [There is] the teaching then in these chapters, involving the death of Christ; His blood, that is chapter 3 as we know—it is faith in the blood. Well, it is the Lord’s death, of course; the blood refers to His death, but to bring forward that idea, that it is an object of faith, that the blood is that, the life given up. So when it says here, He died for us, it is the life given up; but the point is, in one sense, substitution. The old man is inclusive of all, all men; the idea of the old man is inclusive of us all. The Lord gave a description of man’s heart, what came out of it, including all these wretched things. I would understand when Paul says, O wretched man, he would have in mind these things, the wretchedness that the Lord discloses that is in the human heart.

And so, as we think of the Lord on the cross, we begin with ourself: you say, When He hung there He included what I am. So it is a wide line of thought because of the myriads of men there have been, and all in a sense different, yet all bringing out some form of wickedness. And that that should strike home to you, that what you are, what I am, is what was included when the Lord hung on the cross. But think of the variety of persons in Scripture which are brought forward to just disclose or bring out the distinction of this point. You begin with Adam, what was in him; as sin came into him, how full it was! It is not that Adam brought out all the matter of the old man or of sin, it is not that; or Eve either; but what was there was set out in Scripture, and the fifth chapter of this book enforces it—disobedience. Well, that was what the Lord substituted for on the cross: disobedience. One would think of what that meant to Him, as the obedient One; that it was absolutely foreign to Him to be disobedient. But the substitution

involved that [and] all the varied things that happened in men since then. Further on we have the murder of Abel by Cain, then right on in Scripture, bringing out all the wretchedness that is in man. But the Lord substituted for everything. We say, O wretched man that I am! then you are thinking of yourself as being substituted for. A substitute could be the only one that could do it; there is no other substitute that could take this on and deal with it. So it brings out. I think, as we think on this line, our devotedness to the One who did it, being the substitute. Not only that He suffered, and not only that His blood was able to meet the requirements of God, but that He took all on what each one of us is. It is to penetrate into us.

As you run right down in Scripture you find all these varied things, especially as you come to chapter 6 of Genesis, where we have these further wicked things. Any one of them—take Cain, for instance—that the Lord was a substitute for that; the wickedness of Cain, hatred of a brother, that the Lord substituted for that, because it says, He took away the sin of the world. That includes the sin of such wicked people. It does not mean that they are saved at all, but the sin is taken away. He put away sin, it says, by the sacrifice of Himself. So there is the idea of sin and sins. The more you think of Paul's word, Who am chief, I am chief, he said—that is the present state of things in his mind, that the Lord was substitute for that. I think it's a very penetrating line of things for us, to think that there was One able **to** substitute for all.

I think that is the force of this chapter, from one point of view, that we being still sinners, Christ died for us: that is, the sinners have the objective of One who died for them, who substituted for them. So the Lord on the cross; chapter 8 of this book shows that we have such a law: The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free. The apostle changes from the thought of 'we' to the thought of 'me'; so you have been substituted for. How much of sin has developed in one—it would be the more [as] you would think of your forgiveness and what you have been forgiven—[it] is really in a sense how you measure what you have been. So it says, She was forgiven much, therefore she loved much. So I think the point of affection for Christ is in a way measured by your own measure of the, I am, or, I am chief, or, has set me free. This line, I think, will help us in ceasing from sin. Shall we continue in it, it says, that grace may

abound? Far be the thought—when you come to chapter 6, verse 1. And then that portion of chapter 7, O wretched man that I am! it is just to feel that that has been answered to in the Substitute.

So all the way down in Scripture you find certain persons outstanding in sin. Finally it will be the man of sin, the full development of sin in a man. But the Lord takes away all sin; every vestige of it will be taken away. How complete the gospel is, yet there are such persons that are not saved! Yet sin is taken away. We will be judged for them, we are judged for our sins. The judgment-seat of Christ is that you are judged for your sins, to receive the things done in the body, whether good or bad. The great white throne is for the persons who have died [in their sins, without Christ], as I understand it, because they are all dead there, and they stand, the dead stand before God: they are all consumed, they are consigned to the lake of fire. There is no salvation at the great white throne. Sin, I suppose, in a final sense is disposed of in the lake of fire; that is, the persons.

How important it is for us thus, as we have had the Supper, that these things have been the basis of our souls, that the Lord just is substituting! He suffered; He is substituting. He bore our sins—a substitute. All the way through it is. So it says, Our old man is crucified with Christ; that means the totality of man, the old man. It is not seen in its fulness in one person. The man of sin may be it. But we each have had our part in sin, and that you see, well, that the Lord just took that on. How He was able to view it, the power to do it, the view, what He took on. So we find, as you run through Scripture, these wicked persons, some more and some less; but everything, the Lord substituted for. Think of that wicked woman Jezebel—all that the Lord substituted for. Not that that person was saved at all. The Lord took that on, the whole thing, wicked men, wicked women. That woman that ordered the death of John the baptist, what wickedness, and the Lord took that on. She is not a saved person. The Lord, it says, appeared once to put away sin by His sacrifice of Himself. And so how full the gospel is that we should see the clearance, that it was through One that took our place, because there on the cross was our place.

So we rightly should take on this thought of being crucified with Christ, take that thought on. It will help you to understand more the dying of Jesus when you take on the facts of His crucifixion. You go, in a sense you go backwards, in reverse: from the grave to the cross to the dying of Jesus. You learn then that the One who substituted for you is the One that substituted for you in the grave and lay there. But, as we have said, what an honour it is to be buried in Christ's grave! What a grave it was! And God saw to it where He was buried. Man had some other idea, but God's thought was where He should be buried. So, as the truth begins to lay hold on you, I think you go in reverse. And the fact that you are buried, and perhaps starting with the fact that perhaps you know something about resurrection, and you know something too about ascension; take the reverse, and you go back all the way, through the grave to the cross, through the dying of Jesus, and that is, I think, how you are helped to bear about in your body the dying of Jesus. That you are not a worldly person; that you are not showing in any sense that you are, you are dying. The Lord then had no aspirations that man in the flesh had; absolutely a heavenly Person, therefore His thoughts were God's thoughts. We have the mind of Christ. What is that mind, but the mind of a Man that had God's thoughts in Him? It is possible then to have His mind. The Supper, if it does anything to you, you find [there] that your thoughts can be excluded that you have been in, your faculty of the mind is full of Christ, and in these connections; they are full of Christ **in** these connections, that is, the One who has ascended, the One who descended. How the thing goes in reverse, you see, in Ephesians; and we must do that continually.

We have got up, so to speak, to the presence of God this morning, right there where He is, where He has revealed Himself, that heaven from which the voice came—that is most interesting—such a voice from the heavenly glory. From the glory—I think that is the point in revelation, where the Lord went back to. If He came out from God, what does it mean but that, that He came out from a position that God took up in revelation? I do not think it has any force in regard to God being in the absolute, or that Christ goes back to the absolute; He never left it. The Lord is always absolute, but the condition into which He came involved the revelation of

God. So a Man in heaven is not only that we know that Christ is there as Man, that kind of man that was a substitute is now free of what He bore and there in all the blessedness of manhood, and men with Him. What a glory is in the gospel! And so we are rightly, I think—have been—will crown the day with it, that what He did is the force of the glad tidings. How delightful it is to God to go on with that! In one way you can understand that God is not terminating this time, you can understand that, in a sense you can, because God finds such delight in the proclamation of His Son, and also, I think, He finds great delight in the means whereby we get into His presence now. It will not be the same, I do not think, in the literal thought. And so I believe God is just delighting in the means He has in the Spirit to just get us to where this revelation is. So our hymns help us; we had that hymn this morning, it just seemed to touch the point as to what we had reached, and no doubt the other meetings found the same, as to something reached. And what you reach, then descend. The Lord descended; we can do it in our minds what He did actually. You can descend in the sense of resurrection, burial, the cross, the dying of Jesus, [it] will keep us right.

So what we might fill out in these things, if there is time, is how the feelings of a man would say, Who shall deliver me out of this body of death? You reach that in your soul, you want to be out—well, you get out. We were out this morning, what else was it? We are out yet in a sense, still out. Paul speaks about not knowing whether in the body or out, he did not know. Well, the point was, Where did he reach to? He reached into paradise, the third heaven. I think we touch that; even if it is only a glimpse of it, you have got it. Now it is for us to be in this day in the light of that, where Christ has gone, then descending; the descending mind is what is needed in our local meetings, you know. Something is brought to you; you might say, I do not want to do it—Oh yes, I will descend, Christ did. Not My will, He says, but Thine. That is the coming down mind which is so essential to the faculty of Christ, that we have His mind. The truth of union has been discussed many times, and it is, I can see, more and more that brethren get His mind. Then you get to the point of going out, and on the way it is this fulness that is in this conversation between Christ and His church, in which is equal terms. He says, You know

just what I think; you are answering just what I am thinking about, and that is the thoughts of God.

So there is much more, there is all this, you know, [what] the gospel is, and our brethren will fill out in their own way, as they follow. They will do it in their own way, but their own way is part of this matter, it is the way of Christ. The variety that God has in the twelve is extended to the company universally. So we have now at this time persons distinguishing themselves in the testimony. If it is a distinguishment at all, it is Christ coming out, that is all. That is what does come out where we find we are absent from the body but present with the Lord, in the sense that He is active in what is being done. So we have a wonderful order of things that we are in, and there is no comparison at all with anything else. We just find we are in a scene of things which is absolutely out of the world. You can understand that servant saying what he did. The out-of-the-world heavenly condition of relationship and being. That was a thing he was in, and these men were in it, and I think every minister gets into it. And so he is not in an old mould then; he is in this freshness of what Christ everything is. If that is a mould, well, stay in it. I think it is a good one to find, that Christ is becoming everything in your mannerisms. Of course, I do not know how the Lord would use His hands, but He probably did use them; but everything He did was to bring out something. That Christ is everything—that comes into the gospel; the Man is everything, Christ is everything in him, coming out in that way, God glorified.

So you see we get on to the truth of God, and that is such a condition that it is right to pause, pause in the area of the Spirit to what is ahead. What is ahead of us but these things of which Paul says, It is not allowed of man to speak? It is not that it can be conveyed, the things are so great. So that, I think, we are touched by the greatness of the day, the greatness of the crown of it. If Christ is dwelling in your heart, you know, by faith, that means He is the crown of the day; He is just leading everything to God, and leading everything out from God to men in the glad tidings.

Portland, November 19, 1967

J. Taylor, Jr.