

# Weeping for the Lost

by D. Matthew Brown

Being that most of the persons who read my posts are of the reformed persuasion, that is the belief that God is totally sovereign in the salvation of sinners, I will address all the readers as such. Often times we are charged, and many times justly so, with having a lack of compassion for the salvation of sinners. Why is that? I must confess that lack of compassion primarily burgeons from the same wicked notion that we accuse others of having, that is, taking human reasoning above the testimony of Scripture. We proclaim, and rightly so, that God is the savior of sinners--that he chose those whom he would save before the foundation of the world, that he called those sinners from their paths of wickedness and placed in them a new heart that sees Christ as precious, that he justifies those ungodly persons by the Spirit's imputing to them the righteousness of Christ through his blood, that he sanctifies those who he justified by the Spirit of God, and that he will one day glorify our entire souls and have us dwell with him forever in the eternal bliss that is himself. All those things which God most sovereignly and wonderfully accomplishes in the salvation of sinners are gloriously true, being they accord with the testimony of Scripture. The wicked problem that often rises (I, if anyone, am most guilty of this problem) is sinful notions attach themselves to these glorious truths, causing us to apply human logic to those truths and to become passive in the proclamation of the Gospel. We look at God's sovereignty and say to ourselves, "God will save whom he will, therefore I do not have to do anything to bring about God's will." While that is good human logic and philosophy, it is nevertheless a philosophy that has its origins in the pit of hell. God has not called us to be passive in the preaching of the Gospel to the lost, and he has not called us to be passive in our longing to see sinners come to Christ for salvation. How then can we cast aside these wicked tendencies of our flesh?

*Firstly, know the depths of your own former sinfulness and the nature of your own salvation.*

Knowing well our own former wickedness is the cure for many ungodly thoughts and actions. That knowledge promotes humility in that when we look at ourselves in light of Christ and his righteousness, we are stripped, by the work of the Spirit, of any forms of self-righteousness. That knowledge promotes an absolute dependency on the work of Christ, on the imputation of his righteousness, and on the Holy Spirit's sovereign work of sanctification, because, in light of our sinfulness, we know that if we were left to ourselves we would choose sin over God every time. That knowledge, of our own sinfulness, also promotes compassion for the lost. The man who meditates deeply on his own former sinfulness and on the sovereign grace of God that delivered him from that sinfulness is not quick to look down upon those who are in the same state of blindness in which he was once himself. Instead of proudly declaring as did the Pharisee, "God, I thank you that I am not like this sinner," the man who is well-acquainted with his own former sinfulness will be too busy crying for mercy from God to entertain thoughts of righteous accomplishments. Therefore, the man who beseeches God to impart undeserved mercy to him will not begrudge any soul that is need of that same mercy.

*Secondly, see the Gospel as Gospel.*

If we contemplate the depths of our sinfulness as we ought, the Good News (i.e. the Gospel) is not merely good news, it is great and glorious news. If we see the Gospel as something that is divinely great, as something that is supernaturally splendid, we will wish to proclaim that Good News as often as we are able, especially to those on whom the Gospel can have the most miraculous impact. For we know, in the Gospel of sovereign grace, no soul is too far in the depths of sin, for what blindness can be blinder than blind, or deadness deader than dead? Every unregenerate person is bound by the same yoke of bondage to the same god of this world and can just as easily be set free by the divine impartation of the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ by the Spirit of God (cf. 2Cor. 4:4). Therefore, we should not only attest to the greatness of this Gospel by sharing it with an unbelieving world, but we should also tearfully petition the Holy Spirit to show the Gospel as Gospel to those who are blind.

*Thirdly, and most importantly, desire to glorify God in the proclamation of his Gospel.*

I as I wrote fairly exhaustively in my previous writing on Romans 8:28, we who love God should seek above all that God would be glorified, especially in the proclamation of the Gospel. The salvation of souls is not the chief end of the Gospel. The chief end of the Gospel is the manifestation of the glory of God in the proclamation of Jesus Christ—the proclamation of his living a perfect life, of his dying the perfect death by being the perfect sacrifice for sinners, of his rising from the tomb victorious over the schemes of the devil, of his ascending to the right hand of the Father in glory, and of his pleading the case of the elect before God the Father as our High Priest, King, and Savior. When we proclaim that message to sinners, regardless of how they respond to it, we glorify Jesus Christ and live a life that is pleasing to our heavenly Father.

*Lastly, pray that God will impart to you a desire to proclaim the Gospel to a lost world.*

When all is said and done, only God can grant holy affections to your soul. Therefore pray that God will make you see the greatness of your once desperate state; pray that God will make you see the Gospel as Gospel; pray that God will above all give you a passion for his glory; pray that God will grant you tears for the lost that you know and love. If then God is gracious to you and grants you all of those things, preach the Gospel in season and out of season, for the Holy Spirit only regenerates souls in conjunction with the hearing of the Gospel so that in all things Christ would be glorified. For Paul, after his chapter on the absolute sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners, writes:

*But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (Romans 10:14-17).*

May God, according to his wisdom and grace, grant us his heart. Amen.