

Bridge Over Troubled Water

Introduction:

- A. We've all had those who called themselves our friends, but they were not. When things were going well, they were there, but when the going got tough, they got going.
- B. In the 17th chapter of Proverbs the writer tells us that "A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17). A good friend is someone who knows us and loves us anyway. The love a friend has for us is not a superficial love, it is a love based on knowledge. This person knows us. They have had a chance to see our faults, yet they love us anyway. I suppose all of us have a fear that if people really knew us the way we are, they wouldn't love us, but a good friend knows us and loves us anyway.
- C. Everyone needs and wants friends. But as we have just looked at, friends in this world can desert and betray. Yet, we have a good friend, or at least one who wants to be our friend, who will not do those things. Again, the Proverbs writer says, "A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother (A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother)" (Proverbs 18:24). This verse is speaking about Jesus Christ. He can be that friend that sticks closer than a brother. Jesus loved us enough to give Himself as a sacrifice on the Cross for our sins. He literally laid His life down for us. And you know, He did this knowing all there was to know about each one of us.
- D. Paul Simon wrote a song many years ago that speaks of this kind of sacrifice for another. The song is called "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and the words go: "When times get rough, and friends just can't be found, Like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay ME down. When your down and out, when you're on the street, when evening falls so hard, I will comfort you. I'll take your part. When darkness comes, and pain is all around, Like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay ME down. Like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay ME down." I don't know if Mr. Simon had God in mind when he wrote the song or not, but it certainly fits God. When life gets bad and one else is around, God will be there, like a bridge over which you cross to safety. Think about that. God has done that numerous times for mankind, and that is what Jesus desires to do for you today. He laid Himself down by giving His life for you. I want to look in our lesson today at some bridges over troubles water.

I. Some Bridges Over Troubled Water In The Old Testament

A. Red Sea

- 1. The children of Israel had been in captivity for many years, yet they knew that God had promised to deliver them
- 2. Finally, the day arrived when God called Moses through the burning bush and instructed him to go back into Egypt and deliver Israel - Exo 3:2-ff
- 3. God had promised Israel He would be their bridge into the promised land, but they really didn't yet understand how literal that would be
- 4. The children of Israel find themselves at the banks of the Red Sea, with the Egyptians army right behind - Exo 14:2
- 5. God was their bridge over troubled water to safety - Exo 14:13-14

B. Jordan River

- 1. The account of the crossing of the Jordan into Canaan is less known than the crossing of the Red Sea but was no less amazing
 - a) The first generation out of Egypt forsook God at Kadesh Barnea and perished in the wilderness as a result
 - b) When the nation approaches the Jordan river a second time it is a new generation with the same old promise: God would be their bridge over troubled water into the promised land
- 2. Just as God said, when the priests walked into the water the water parted, stopping the flow of the river, and the nation again walked across on dry land - Josh 3:14-17
- 3. Again, God was their bridge over troubled water to safety

II. *Some Bridges Over Troubled Water In The New Testament*

- A. On one occasion the disciples were with Jesus - Matt 8:23-27
 - 1. In this account Jesus and His disciples have entered a ship for the purpose of crossing the Sea of Galilee
 - 2. On this occasion, as was common on this sea, a devastating storm arose, and the disciples are greatly afraid for their lives
 - 3. Jesus got up, spoke to the sea, "peace be still" (vs 39), the wind ceased and there was a great calm
 - 4. Jesus was their bridge over the troubled water of the sea
- B. On another occasion Jesus sent the disciples out into the sea alone to go ahead to the other side where He would meet them there - Matt 14:22-33
 - 1. Again, a storm arises, and is often the case in life
 - 2. This time the disciples fear is compounded by the fact that they are alone
 - 3. But the text tells us that when Jesus got into the boat with them that the storm ceased, and they were at the other side
 - 4. Again, Jesus is the bridge over troubled water for them
- C. Obviously these two accounts have been physical accounts, and they don't carry the weight of the lesson that we need today, so let's think about another account, that being the crucifixion of Jesus
 - 1. All have sinned, and death is due - Rom 3:23; 6:23
 - 2. But God is just as loving as He is just, and so He satisfied the divine justice of death for sin and at the same time provided an opportunity for life for us
 - 3. That was done through Jesus saying "Like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay ME down" - Jn 10:17-18
 - 4. The Romans didn't put Him there, the Jews didn't put Him there, we put Him there through our sins, but He went to the cross voluntarily to bridge the gap between God and man

III. *Today's Bridges*

- A. Low water bridges
 - 1. Nothing more than poured concrete directly into the bed of a creek or river, which usually is slightly under water, but you can drive across anyway
 - 2. The purpose of pouring the concrete into the bed of the creek or river is to prevent those who cross from creating ruts which will cause a vehicle to become stuck in the mud
 - 3. The reason they were made the way they were made was that it was cheaper, faster and easier. It was a shortcut
- B. Problems occurred when the water rose
 - 1. Bridges were great until the water rose, then they were useless
 - 2. The reason they threw in the "creek don't rise" is because of low water bridges (maybe)
 - 3. Where I grew up this saying went like this: "Lord willin' and the creek don't rise."
 - 4. When writing about not worrying about tomorrow but depending upon God's will James writes - Jas 4:15
- C. Here is my point: there are a lot of low water bridges in the religious world, but we don't need low water bridges, we need the bridge over troubled water
 - 1. The sinner's prayer is a low water bridge
 - a) This prayer is found nowhere in the Bible
 - b) Some point to the thief on the cross, and some point to the publican and sinner in Luke 18, but the thief on the cross does not include a prayer, and both accounts are under the Old Law which never included what the New Law includes
 - c) These are low water bridges which will not stand the test of time.
 - 2. Denominationalism is a low water bridge
 - a) In Matt 16:18 Jesus said He would build His church and He did so on Pentecost following His ascension in A.D. 33, as it is recorded in Acts 2
 - b) Any church that came along hundreds or thousands of years after that is a low water bridge

- c) Only crossing on His bridge will take us to safety
- 3. Salvation apart from the blood of Christ is a low water bridge
 - a) Belief and confession are "unto" salvation - Rom 10:10-11
 - b) Burial in water is "into" Christ, and therefore "into" salvation - Gal 3:27
 - c) That is why we look at Romans 6:3-5
 - d) Because His blood is needed for sins to be washed away

Conclusion:

- A. READ: Jeremiah 23:23-32 - God knew there would be those who would present low water bridges to the people and therefore cause many people to be lost.
- B. That's why Jesus stressed the need to be on the right road (Matthew 7:13-14), or for the purpose of our lesson today, the right bridge.
- C. A low water bridge may be okay now, but it will not endure through the troubled waters of death, only the bridge over troubled water can provide then.
- D. Why don't you walk over that bridge today? Be buried in baptism with Christ allowing Him to wash away your sins and cross over the Bridge over troubled water.