

The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

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Scorned By The Ones He Came To Save

(Unrequited Love - The Greatest Spiritual Tragedy)

There's an exceptionally beautiful hymn our current generation of young people, in the Lord's church, love to sing. The song carries the title: "*In Christ Alone*." The song's lyrics and music were the collaborative effort of two European songwriters, Stuart Townend and Keith Getty. The theme of the hymn concerns the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as the substitutionary atonement for man's sin. The haunting lyrics may well bring tears to your eyes:

“In Christ alone my hope is found; He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all — Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid — Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine — Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death — This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home — Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.”

One particular phrase of their lyrics caught my attention - "spurned by the ones He came to save." Does that not most aptly describe the spiritual tragedy of "unrequited love" - love extended to us by Christ at Calvary, but not respectfully reciprocated to Him, in gratitude for "His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). Imagine the ingratitude of the child of a single parent mom, whose "uneducated" mother worked two menial jobs to put him through college, only to have him fail to invite her to his graduation ceremony for fear she might embarrass him in front of his "educated" peers. The word "despicable" comes to mind.

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Magnify such wretched ingratitude a thousand times over and you have the ugly picture of an impenitent sinner who wallows in the mire of sin because he scorns the love Christ, which was shed abroad in our hearts at Golgotha (Rms. 5:5). The Apostle John wrote, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19). But what if we don't love Him back like we should out of pure gratitude for His substitutionary sacrifice?

The result of such unrequited love is horrible to contemplate, as it voids the promise of "salvation through the shedding of His blood (Eph. 1:3-7)." The Apostle Paul wrote: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rms. 5:6-11).

How sad that some do not recognize the magnitude of His love and thus scorn the only One Who can save them from the horrible consequences of sin. One of the saddest indictments of the Jewish nation is that found in John 1:11, where the Scripture says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." As always, though, there's a ray of hope for those who will wake up and not scorn His love, mercy and grace, when it concludes: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn. 1:11-13). Truly, salvation is "in Christ alone."

David A. McCain