

“Would You Take Timothy McVeigh’s Place?”

Romans 5:6-8

Preached by Dr. Robert F. Browning, Pastor

Smoke Rise Baptist Church

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Communion Devotion

In a couple of weeks, Timothy McVeigh will be executed for the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City where 168 people lost their lives. I have read reactions of several people concerning his execution, especially family members who lost loved ones in the blast. Some want to witness Timothy’s execution. Others do not want him to be executed because they want him to suffer for years in a lonely prison cell. A few have even said they do not want him to be executed because they are praying for his salvation.

There is one response I have not read, though. To my knowledge, no one has stepped forward and offered to die in his place. No one has offered to be his substitute so that he may go free and live. As a matter of fact, the idea is so preposterous that it has not even been mentioned as a possibility.

Has such a thing ever been done? Is this even beyond the realm of reality. Before answering, listen to these words.

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” Romans 5:6-8.

Yes, it has been done, hasn’t it? As rare as it is, and even Paul acknowledged that, it has been done and how grateful I am that it has. For you see, Jesus died in our place and paid the price for our sins. He died so that we may be freed from sin to live a new life.

I’ll never forget the words of an evangelist in a meeting I once attended, “I would not give my son on his worst day for you on your best day. And yet, God gave His Son on his best day for us on our worst day.” That’s what Paul was saying. Unbelievable? Preposterous? Incredible? Yes, but true. That’s why we call it “Amazing Grace.”

John also believed this when he penned those powerful words, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” John 3:16.

Will anyone step forward in the next two weeks and offer to die for Timothy McVeigh? I doubt it. But then again, someone already has done that for Timothy and all of us. His name is Jesus and as we take the Lord’s Supper this morning, let’s thank him for his rare courage and love.