

## **What the Therefore is There For**

Romans 12:1-2

August 31, 2014

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### **Introduction**

Yesterday, I went for a hike around ten o'clock on Mt. Falcon, just west of town. I hiked for a long time and came back all sweaty and gross. I remember while I was hiking I thought, "This is going to be so awesome tonight because I don't have to do anything; I just get to go worship. Then Susan said, "Everyone has been trying to call you. You need to call Michael." I called Michael, he picked up the phone on the other end and there was a raspy voice, it sounded like he could barely talk. It sounded like he was dying and he said, "I've got a fever of 102, and I was just at the doctor, I have strep throat and I can't do anything."

That was at two o'clock and I had to leave to get up to the Saturday night service at three o'clock. We didn't have any music, we didn't have a message, we didn't have anything, so I thought: "Holy. ...something...." I got in the shower and Susan said, "You should show one of those DownSide Up videos, and I thought, "We've shown those." But there is one that we showed the short version, and I thought, "Well, we could show the extended version." Then, as I was showering I thought, "This is the Altar service, and I do have something to say about altars, and I do have a verse that I'd love to talk about that I think is really important." Then I realized that we really do have something important to talk about. So, this morning, let's open our hearts and hear what God has to say to us because I think He's got something to say.

Would you pray with me?

### **Prayer**

Father, I thank you that you are sovereign and Lord over all of these things. You know what you are doing when we do not know what we are doing. We surrender our hearts to you now and we ask that you would speak to each one of us, including me. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

### **Message**

For 1500 years, Jews were told to sacrifice. That was the way that they were to worship the Lord. No one understood – except that God laid out elaborate details about how they were to sacrifice, and that they were the judgments of God. There were different types of sacrifices. One of the sacrifices was called the *Olah*—the burnt offering. That's what Noah offered right after the ark landed and the rainbow came out. The *Olah* usually gets translated burnt offering. It's something like a good gift. We always think of the sacrifices only as these painful, terrible things, but the *Olah* was like if you made a roast lamb for your husband. He would enjoy the fragrance filling his nostrils. That's what the Bible says about the burnt offering; it was a gift.

They also had some sin offerings, where if you had sinned or violated a law or something, supposedly that offering somehow carried that sin, and paid for that sin.

But there are all sorts of offerings. It's really elaborate, but with all of the offerings, all of the sacrifices, the worshiper would come into the outer sanctuary with the sacrificial animal, the victim. They would lay their hand on the animal, symbolizing that they were somehow connected to the animal. Then the priest would come and take the animal, slit its throat, drain out the blood (because the life was in the blood), and then they would sacrifice the animal on an altar. *This* is called an Altar Service. The Altar Service is our quarterly service focused on the worship arts.)

The sacrificial animal would then be received by fire. In the Old Testament, fire comes down from Heaven and ignites the fire on the altar. It's an eternal fire. And the fire was a symbol that the sacrifice was received and taken up into Heaven. Well, that means that worship in the temple for 1500 years was this bazaar event. So, you can imagine the pain, the struggle, the fear that was involved with it. And keep in mind that God never explained all of this.

Have you ever noticed that in your life, God has you go through things and He doesn't explain why? Well, for 1500 years He had the Jews go through all of this, so this was terrifying! And yet, it was one other thing. This is kind of weird: It was like a barbecue. After they would cook the animals, they would have a party with the priest in the temple courts, in the outer sanctuary, in front of the inner sanctuary where the Ark of the Covenant was. That was worship.

For 1500 years that was worship and people wondered: "What does it all Mean?"

Then 1500 years later, Jesus came. Jesus is our Passover Lamb. Jesus was "sacrificed", and Scripture says He fulfilled all righteousness. The book of Hebrews talks about how Jesus fulfilled all the sacrificial law. I think we American Christians, in particular, think: "Good thing Jesus did that so I don't have to."

In the high point of Romans, in Romans 12:1-2 Paul writes,

*I appeal to you therefore brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Your logical worship) Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern (or prove) what is the will of God. What is good and acceptable, and perfect.*

So this is the Altar Service. Our acceptable worship is to present ourselves as a living sacrifice. It's like picking up our cross. Jesus picked up His cross, and we are to pick up our cross. After this scripture, Paul goes on to say, in Romans, what it is to live a holy life, what it is to love people the way God loved us, what it is to live out our Christian testimony. It's all to be sacrifice.

I don't know about you but that's kind of terrifying. God can be terrifying. The gospel can be terrifying. Worship can be terrifying. You've been to services where people say, "You need to present yourself as a living sacrifice." That's terrifying! Yet, Paul is the one who wrote, "*Rejoice*

*in the Lord always...” Have no anxiety about anything. “But in all things, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” But gee Paul, I’m a bit stressed about the “living sacrifice thing!”*

It kind of feels like we’re missing something sometimes. Like something’s been cut out of the story. SO, I want you to hold onto those thoughts and watch this:

[At this point, the short film, *The Cutting Room floor*, one of the Downside Up films is shown. You can watch the film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEE5jK6Relc> or read the script (included at the end of this transcription).]

So, she just needs some time. Maybe that’s why we exist in time. Maybe God is a great Lover who is pursuing us. You know, that story is really the story of Hosea, from the book of Hosea. Nate, who is playing the drums in our worship band today, wrote that.

When we edit out part of the story, the greatest love story, the romance of God turns into a threat. You know, a whole lot of what I believe this church is to be about is to proclaim BVBBBBB–Bible Verses Bound By Bible Believing Believers. Because when we ban those verses, we change the story. So, at the entrance of The Sanctuary, you’ll see a sign that says,

“The Sanctuary seeks to represent these underrepresented truths:

God is One, and so his judgment is Love.

God is Love, and so desires to save.

God is Almighty, and so can save.

God is Jesus, and so does save.

*“For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And through him to reconcile to himself **all** things whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.” Colossians 2:9*

Whenever I talk like this, and people take a look at the sacrifice that some of us have paid, they ask, “What difference does it make? What difference does this theology make? How does it make a difference in my life?

Paul writes in Romans 12:1-2

*“I appeal to you therefore brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Your logical worship or *latria*, like what the priests would do in the temple.) Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern (or prove) what is the will of God. What is good and acceptable, and perfect.*

*"I appeal to you THEREFORE..."* Ray Steadman, a friend of mine and well known Bible teacher would say, "Whenever you see a therefore, you need to ask, "What is the therefore there for?" That verse in Romans 12 begins with a therefore.

I also remember that Ray used to say, "You know, I believe that the Scriptures are inspired by God, but the chapter divisions are inspired by the devil." There may be something to that. You know, the chapter divisions weren't added to the text until...like a thousand years later, in the middle ages, by monks...just trying to keep their place.

So, the therefore at the beginning of chapter 12 might be a really huge therefore. And it is because it marks the division in Romans between what Bible scholars call the didactic portion (the proclamation or teaching) and the ethical portion. In other words, Paul says a bunch of stuff and then he says, "So therefore, do these things." It's a huge therefore. So, what comes before the therefore is why we present our bodies as a sacrifice.

What comes before the therefore is "why we train ourselves for godliness," and why we "toil and strive" (1 Timothy 4). It's why we "renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives." (Titus 2) It's why we "disciple all nations baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28). It's Why we "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Lord, which is our logical worship." (Romans 12)

So this is the question for the morning. What's the therefore there for? Well, Romans 11 comes right before Romans 12. Romans 11 is the end of what people sometimes call the Romans road. And the Romans road is kind of the story of salvation. So, Romans begins with a story of the fall. How all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

In chapter one it talks about all the controversial things like homosexuality. In the beginning of chapter two Paul says, "You're all guilty, and you all stand condemned." In other words, all of humanity is guilty. Then he goes on to talk about the faith of Abraham, then about Jesus, who is the ultimate Adam, and he writes about what He did on the cross. And he keeps talking about vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy, and all the scary verses about Israel being cut off and Pharaoh being hardened. And the all of that ends in Romans 11. And you know the end of the story is like the revelation of the plot.

So, let's read Romans 11:25-12:2

*Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness (pleroma) of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. (In other words, a person could be an enemy of God and also elect of God.) For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they*

*too have now been disobedient in order (why were they disobedient? In order...) that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.*

That was one of those verses Bible verses banned by Bible believing believers that I quoted in the film.

*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments...*

In other words, you can't figure out all of his judgments. Paul realized he just said something amazing. But you can't figure it all out.

*...and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your (logical) spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may (prove) discern (live out) what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

So why are we to present ourselves as a living sacrifice? Well, the reason we present our bodies as a living sacrifice is that: *"from him and to him and through him are all things."* *"For God consigned **all** to disobedience in order that he might have mercy on **all**."*

In other words, the gospel is the greatest story that you can possibly imagine. *THEREFORE*, a sacrificial life is only logical. It's your logical worship. In other words, If the BVBBBBB is edited out.

- If the story is incomplete, if Jesus "didn't succeed at seeking and saving the lost," if Jesus didn't "take sins of world," if He didn't "destroy work of the devil," if "it is *not* finished," if "God *doesn't* have mercy on all," then God doesn't Love His enemies – but tortures His enemies, which makes it hard for us to love our enemies.
- If we don't ask what is the therefore there for, if the story is not complete, then Jesus is like, still on the cross – He didn't take away sins, He didn't finish His work.
- If the story is incomplete then God is not salvation, "I am salvation" glory goes to me. He's counting on me to finish the story (which is very helpful when you're a pastor trying to get people to do things: "God needs you so you better get your...crap together.").
- If the story is incomplete, everyone becomes my competitor, like the survival of the fittest.
- If the story is incomplete, everything is terrifying and nothing makes sense.

This week at our board meeting, we were praying about this building. We're worried about whether or not we can keep the lease, and all of that sort of stuff. We're asking what exactly God is calling us to do...it makes you panic...sort of like: "How are we going to finish the story?"

I asked everyone to pray, and my wife said, "Hey, I had a vision while we were praying, can I share it?" I said, "Yeah, that would be great. Anything would help!" She said, "I saw myself standing in this room, and I looked over and there was Jesus. I could tell He was writing my story. I knew He was writing the story of Susan, the story of my life." You know Jesus is the Word, and God creates all things through His word, so if you are a thing that means you were created, or are being created (however that works with space and time) by Jesus.

Well, Jesus was writing the story of her life and she said, "Peter, I looked over. I knew it was the story of my life. I walked over and I started thinking: 'That's not right. No Jesus! That's not the story of my life. It's like He knew what I was thinking because He turned around, He handed me the pen. So, I sat down, and I started writing. As I was writing Jesus went over to the wall, leaned against it, and just looked at me. As I tried to write nothing made any sense. I couldn't write it. So finally, Jesus came over, He put out His hand, I handed over the pen, I went and sat down, and He wrote the story. As He wrote my story I thought: 'That's me! That's me!'"

So, if the story is incomplete, if Jesus doesn't write our story, we have to try to write our story and everything is terrifying. But if "it is finished," if the story is complete, then it makes a difference. There is a logical result. If God makes all things new, if He really wins the story, if He's the author of the story...then there's a logical conclusion.

These are my grown logical reasonable children at Comic Con.



These are my grown children at Comic Con, a few month ago. I don't know who the guy on your right is. Then Brandy, she's some kind of Pokemon figure. Then Sukie from *First Blood* – that's Elizabeth. That's Jonathan dressed like Constantine in the movie *Constantine*. That's Becky dressed like Ginny Weasley–*Harry Potter's bride*.

My grown children dress like these people, act like these people. And why? Not because they have to. No one said you have dress like Ginny Weasley and Constantine. I never said to Becky, "You know Ginny Weasley helped Harry Potter save the world, and she gets married to Harry Potter and that's a really good thing...to save the world and be married to the savior of the world, so you better go do that." No. What happened? They watched the full story and then something logically occurred. They began to dress and act like those people. That was their logical worship.

If the Broncos win the Super Bowl this year do you know what will happen the day following? Everyone will go out and buy t-shirts. They'll start dressing in orange and blue. Nobody has to say, "You! Go out and buy a Broncos shirt! Dress in orange and blue and worship the Broncos." Of course not; it just happens. It's the logical conclusion to what just occurred. It's their logical worship.

I think that's called faith, hope, and love. It is logical worship at the revelation of a great story. And what are they doing? Well, they are becoming 'living sacrifices' They're offering their own identity, and they're receiving another identity on themselves. They're losing their lives. They're losing their anxieties, their responsibilities and they're finding their lives in someone else.

You see, I think that's the logical conclusion to our worship... *IF* Jesus wins, *IF* He's finished the story, *IF* He is the Author of all things.

So, what is the therefore, there for? It's there for everything. It's the reason for everything. And if you're thinking: "Well, that's just Romans." I pulled out a few other verses that I thought we kind of amazing too.

I Timothy 4:7-11

*Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things.*

Why do we toil and strive? Because our hope is set on the Savior of *all* people!

Titus 2:11-12

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, (and what does it do?) training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,*

This is Jesus speaking in Mathew 28:16-20

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority (Now, Jesus has all authority, how much authority do we have? None right? Unless He has it in us.) in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go THEREFORE and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

So, in other words, Jesus shows up and says, "Look I did it! It's finished. I'm in charge. Let me tell you the gospel. I accomplished it, finished it. I took away the sins of the world. I destroyed the work of the devil. I conquered death. Do you see it? Do you believe it?

Now...THEREFORE...go! And I am with you always. Live out this story. Live out the story of my success. In fact, that's what Jesus says, we become His body; His Life gets lived out through us, and we prove the will of the Father.

You know,

Fifty days after Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross, on Pentecost, the disciples were presenting themselves, and Fire fell. And they fell into the Fire. They fell in love with God as they fell into the Fire. The Fire was Love. They became a living sacrifice. They worshipped. It wasn't terror, but Ecstasy.

They "lost their lives and found them." So, *"God consigned all to disobedience that He may have mercy on all."* *"For from Him, through Him and to Him are all things. To Him Be the Glory."*

*"Therefore, present yourselves as living sacrifices."* This is your logical worship.

And do you understand, that's why we come to worship here every Sunday? It's not so that I can tell you these are the three or four things you need to do to make your life work. No. We come here to hear the story: Jesus conquered! Jesus won! Our Father is Good. We come here to hear the story...that it might become our logical worship.

We come here, and every week I try to preach or someone preaches a message about who God is, who Jesus is, and what He does, and then we celebrate this.

## **Communion**

On the night He was betrayed by all of us, He took bread and He broke it saying, "This is my body given to you; take and eat, and do this in remembrance of me." And in the same way, after supper, He took the cup saying, "This cup is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sin, drink of it all of you, and do it in remembrance of me."

This is the gospel. This is the story. This is the announcement that God in Christ Jesus has done it. And when we believe it, it changes us. Our entire life becomes a logical worship, a reasonable worship. It's the only thing to do after witnessing such goodness.



So this morning, God calls you to His table to see the story, and not just see the story but to also ingest it. And then the story becomes your story. So, why do we do it? Because God has done it. That's what the therefore is there for. Let's worship.

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you have done it. We thank you that you really are the Savior of the world. I pray that as we come to this table and surrender our fear, our shame, our anxiety and believe in your goodness that we would surrender to you with joy and ecstasy. I pray that our lives would be logical worship—the thing that we would naturally do after seeing your goodness. Thank you for who you are in Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Benediction**

You see? The gospel is good news, and we're called to preach it. The word in Greek means to proclaim. It's a proclamation that He has done it; He has paid; it is finished; God makes all things new, which means you have to make nothing new. God is Salvation, which means you are not salvation. When we hear and believe the proclamation it changes us. We begin to live the proclamation, not because we have to but because we want to. That's called Faith. That's His Life showing up in your life.

May you believe the gospel in Jesus' name, Amen.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*

**See *The Cutting Room Floor* script attached on the next page.**

The Cutting Room Floor (5 - min. version)

By  
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"Bible Verses Banned by Bible-Believing Believers" by Peter  
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EXT. A SLEAZY HOTEL — DAY

A WOMAN approaches a room at a cheap, sleazy hotel. She is dressed somewhat provocatively. As she walks she is applying gaudy red lipstick with a small compact mirror. She puts it away and hunts in her purse for the key to the room. Finding it, she opens the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM — DAY

She sets down her purse on the table and turns on the light. A MAN is sitting on the edge of the bed inside. She gasps when she sees him, turns, and scrambles out the door.

EXT. A SLEAZY HOTEL — DAY

She runs down the stairs and across the parking lot as fast as she can. The man follows.

EXT. STREET — DAY

He chases her. The woman runs up a flight of stairs.

INT. BROADCAST TV CUTTING ROOM — NIGHT

The chase scene continues on a broadcast monitor in a TV control room. A spool of 35mm film turns as the film is fed into some kind of machine on the wall. An EDITOR watches the chase scene on the monitor.

(on the monitor) The woman runs up the stairs and into an apartment, closing and locking the door behind her. She is breathing very heavily and sweating. The man runs up to the door and tries the handle. Locked. He isn't breathing very hard.

MAN

You had to know I'd catch you eventually.

WOMAN

Not like that!

He moves methodically, with purpose, as he retrieves the spare key from under the floor mat and starts to let himself in.  
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2.

The editor watches the monitor as the woman, hearing the key in the lock, leans against the door in a futile attempt to keep him out. As he pushes his way in, she stumbles back. The man approaches the woman slowly. He reaches for her neck.

[CUT] The editor pushes a button, and the reel of film stops. He leans over the film, turning the reel backwards. Satisfied that he's found the right place, he cuts the film with a pair of scissors. He takes the reel to the editing table. He holds the film up to the light as he scrolls through a scene. Using a razor blade, he cuts out a chunk. He lets it fall to the floor. Behind him is a wall of broadcast video equipment (circa 1990's). Buttons are lit and blinking. Monitors display programming of all different kinds, some of them just color bars. LED columns flash from green to yellow and red and then back again, tracking the audio of the programs. He splices the film together and loads it back onto the machine. He starts it again. The scene plays back on the monitor from the point where the man approaches the woman. The editor watches.

INT. LIVING ROOM — NIGHT

The scene continues on a TV screen in a living room. PETER is watching the TV from his couch. A bottle of beer next to him, a bowl of popcorn in his lap. On the screen the man lunges for her neck and then cuts abruptly. The soundtrack is different as the man sits on the floor against the wall, gazing sorrowfully at a broken necklace.

PETER

What the hell!

Peter looks at WESLEY, who is sitting beside him.

Oh, sorry!

Looks at camera.

Sorry! But don't you hate it when they edit these movies at the best part? Then again, maybe it's good that they do, especially when I'm watching with the kids. They don't need to be exposed to all the sex and violence. And maybe I shouldn't be watching those sex scenes either.

In some ways, I guess it's reassuring that people are looking

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3.

PETER (cont'd)

out for me and my family on a Friday night. But it seems that something like that is also happening on Sunday morning... with the Bible... and I'm not too reassured about that. I mean, there are verses that I just don't hear in most sermons and when they're read in Bible Studies the leader feels obligated to explain them away.

I've always suspected there would be embarrassing or shameful sections of Scripture, that the "powers that be" might prefer to edit- but I figured they'd be about stuff like the massacre of folks in Jericho, threats of outer darkness and eternal fire or maybe the erotic portions of the Song of Solomon ("I say, I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of it's fruit!") You know, I figured they'd edit out stuff like they tried to cut out of this movie. But I was wrong.

INT. BROADCAST TV CUTTING ROOM - NIGHT

The editor is cutting the film with the razor blade. The blade cuts, the light flickering off the metal as it turns, turns, and cuts and cuts. It's not film anymore. He is cutting up paper. It's a book, the Bible. He cuts with the razor blade again and again, quickly yet carefully. Chunks of paper are falling from the table, floating down, twisting and turning as they fall to the cutting room floor alongside the chunks of film reel.

PETER

I won't go into the details here, but I've learned - very painfully - that what "the powers that be" seem to consider most dangerous aren't verses about sex and violence, but verses about the glory and power of God's Grace. And not that it's small, but that it's infinite. So I have to say - I've become rather intrigued by those verses that seem to get left on the cutting room floor.

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4.

Peter is in the cutting room now. The editor is gone. Peter surveys the cutting room floor littered with coils of film and fragments of paper. Peter picks up one of the chunks of paper:

PETER

"For God consigned all to  
disobedience, so that He may have  
mercy on all"

He drops that one and picks up another.

PETER

"For as in Adam all die, so also in  
Christ shall all be made alive."

He picks up another.

PETER

"I will restore the fortunes of  
Sodom and her daughters."

And another.

PETER

"To me, every knee will bow and  
every tongue shall swear  
allegiance"

And another.

PETER

"When I am lifted up from the  
earth, I will draw all people to  
myself."

And another.

PETER

"Behold, I make all things new."

Peter stands and again motions to the cutting room floor.

PETER

And of course, these are only some  
of what I call the "Bible Verses  
Banned By Bible-Believing  
Believers".

Now, some Bible-believing believers  
say, "These verses can't be true  
'cause they contradict other  
verses." Well, I think the whole

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5.

PETER (cont'd)

Bible is true. And if something's

not true, it's us.

Some Bible-believing believers will say "Those verses don't mean what they say." But when I ask 'em to translate these verses in such a way that they would "say what they mean," They won't... and that's good. They should be stressed about messin' with God's word.

So I've been wrestling with this question for years: "Why do so many 'Bible believing believers' seem to believe that so much of the bible is like dangerous, or shameful, to believe? Don't know! ...but I can't help but conjecture:

For 1) We're afraid not to be afraid. We think, "If I'm not motivated by fear I won't be motivated at all." "Fear is the beginning of Wisdom" but "Love is the End." See? We can't imagine a life fueled entirely by Love.

And 2) Like the "Principalities" of this world, we control each other with fear--fear of punishment and the promise of reward. We have faith in threats rather than faith in the Gospel, The Romance of God.

And 3) Maybe that's because we lack faith in God's desire or ability to save. We lack faith in Jesus. The name "Jesus" literally means, "God is Salvation." I think we must believe that "we are salvation;" that we're saved by our own will, rather than God's will, which is Jesus.

And last of all, perhaps, scariest of all... we don't want to be like Jesus. We don't want to be made in the "image of God." We don't want to forgive as we've been forgiven. We don't like crosses... and believe me, I get that.

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6.

Now, there may be other reasons.  
But not wanting to forgive, a lack  
of faith in grace, the  
"principalities and powers of this  
world," and fear are NOT good  
reasons to edit Scripture. I'd  
suggest not editing Scripture at  
all.

So "what the Hell?" Sorry to be so  
blunt, but maybe that's the right  
question.

When we find Scripture on the  
cutting room floor, perhaps we  
ought to wonder: Is it heaven  
that's protecting us from hell - or  
hell that's protecting us from  
Heaven? Is it something good  
protecting us from evil - or  
something evil protecting us from  
the Good?

Peter walks over to the bible on the table, now full of  
holes in the pages.

PETER

God is Good and God is Love and His  
Word is the Word of Love... Why  
would we need protection from the  
Word of Love? Why would we need  
protection from the Bible?

The TV in the living room now displays snippets of more  
footage from the earlier cut scene, hinting that there is  
more to the story than what was seen.

PETER

It feels like something or someone  
is trying to turn the greatest Love  
Story into a threat; The Romance of  
God into a tragedy. Who would want  
to protect us from "falling in  
Love" with God?

Well, maybe we ought to take  
another look at the verses we find  
on the cutting room floor. Maybe  
what looks like a threat is really  
the romance of God. Maybe we've got  
this upside-down. And maybe God  
turns every downside up.