

Little Jim's Substitute



It is said that the following incident took place in one of the Southern States. A Christian Schoolteacher gathered her class together on the first day of school and said, "Children, I am going to let you make your own rules and the punishment for disobeying them." So the children began to draw up the rules of their class. They decided that there must be no stealing, fighting, swearing, disobeying the teacher, etc., and that the punishment for doing such things would be ten lashes on the bare back.

All went quite well until one day someone's lunch was stolen. Who was the guilty person? A search was made and each pupil was questioned. At last a boy of poor parents, whose name was Jim, was questioned and found to be the one who had stolen the missing lunch.

"I was so hungry and didn't have anything to eat because my mother had nothing to give me for lunch," he said, "that's why I took the lunch pail." All felt sorry for poor, hungry Jimmy, but he had broken the rules by stealing so he had to take the punishment due him. The law must be carried out. So the teacher commanded little Jim to take off his shirt and come to the front for his punishment. As he was taking off his shirt, the teacher could see what a weak, under-fed boy he was. And then as he walked up to the front, he began to cry out, "I can't bear it! I can't bear it!"

The pitiful cry of little Jim touched many hearts, and just then a boy, big and strong, called Big Tom, stood up and said, "Teacher, I'll take little Jim's place and bear his punishment."

The teacher turned to the other pupils and asked them if this would be all right. Would it be allowable to punish Big Tom instead of little Jim?

Yes, they agreed this would be just and fair, if Big Tom was willing to do so. So Big Tom took off his shirt and received the stripes across his bare back which was little Jim's due for stealing the dinner pail. Then the teacher said, "Little Jim, you come now and take your punishment."

“Oh, no,” shouted the children, “you can’t punish Big Tom and Little Jim, too. Big Tom took little Jim’s place and Jimmy is free.”

The teacher now turned to the children and said, “Yes, you are right. Little Jim is free and this is just what I want to tell you about the Lord Jesus and ourselves. We are all guilty sinners and deserve to be punished forever, but the Lord Jesus went to the Cross and bore our punishment instead. Like Big Tom, He took our place, and if we believe in Him and accept Him as our Substitute, we go free. God who in love gave His Son and punished Him in our stead will not punish us too, if we believe in Him.”

In this incident, dear children, we have God’s wonderful way of salvation beautifully illustrated. We have all sinned in one way or another, and like Little Jim, we must have a substitute, or else we will have to bear our own punishment and be lost forever. The Bible says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” *Ezekiel. 18:4*, and “The wages of sin is death” *Romans. 6:23*. These wages we can never pay, but in the Lord Jesus we have a willing Substitute who has paid those awful wages of sin for all who will believe on Him. He who had never sinned, but was perfect and always obedient, came forth and willingly went to the Cross to suffer, bleed and die for our sins.

This we are told in His Word which tells us in touching language, “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” *Isaiah 53:5*. So also in I Peter 2:24 we read, “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree. . . by Whose stripes we are healed.”

Dear reader, does not this story of the love of the Lord Jesus touch your heart? Think of how much He loved you in going to the Cross and taking your place of guilt and bearing all the punishment you deserved. Surely this is wonderful, unspeakable love, isn’t it? Yes, indeed it is, and so the Apostle John says, “Hereby

perceived we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us”
1 John 3:16 It was only love that could cause Him to come down from Heaven and become the Substitute for unbelievers. He paid all your debt of sin on Calvary’s cruel Cross.

Now won’t you own Him as the Substitute you need and accept Him as your own, loving, Substitute and Saviour? Open your heart to Him and accept what He in love has done for you. Then you will know too that you will never have to be punished for your sins, but go out free, because you have accepted the Lord Jesus as your Substitute who was punished in your place on the Cross of Calvary. “God will not payment twice demand. First from my blessed Saviour’s hands And then again from mine.” “By His stripes we are healed.” “Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”

*“Substitution! God’s own way of saving me,
Substitution! Christ was bound and I set free.
I deserve the penalty,
Jesus died instead of me.
Took my place in wondrous grace,
O what joy His ways to trace.
Substitution! I the sinner. Christ the Lamb.
Substitution! God’s own plan.”*

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