

David Mathis, in giving the devotional two weeks ago, mentioned something that reminded me of what I would like to talk about to you tonight. He said something about crying in a sad movie. I just wonder, how many of us here (you don't have to raise your hand) have ever cried during a movie when someone in a part that you liked died, or something else really sad happened? I think that just about all of us have, including yours truly. But let me ask another question: How many of you have ever cried when you read the story of how Christ died? I don't think I ever have. I was really brought to think about this when I read Charles Dickens' book, *A Tale of Two Cities*. In this book, a man who has done nothing worthy in his life trades his life for a friend. His friend has been condemned to die during the French Revolution, and he puts him to sleep in his jail cell and pays a jailer to drag him out of prison while he himself remains. The two men resemble each other enough to be able to do this. And as I read this part of the book, I was really moved. I got choked up and began to get chill bumps; and then I realized that this was the very thing that Christ did for every man who ever lived, in the sense that he died in the place of all those who would accept him. And I wondered, Why do I not feel this way when I read the story of Christ? Of course, one answer is that the novel is written in a style that effectively gets the reader involved in the plot. The Bible is written in a matter of fact historical way. God wants you to come to him not because of the way the words are arranged, but because of what the words are saying. Another answer is that we're used to hearing the story. But the third answer, the most meaningful answer, is that my heart isn't just quite right.

Who is your greatest hero? Webster's Dictionary says that a hero is someone who is admired for his achievements and qualities. I read stories of people saving other people's lives at the risk of their own, and I think, "I sure would like to be like that!" Probably every one here at sometime or another, in their own mind, has countless times saved some highly favorite person from grave danger. Everybody likes a hero, and wants in some way to be like them. But have you ever thought of Christ as a great hero? I don't think it is wrong at all to think of Christ in this way. He did something great for us, something which really moves us if we think about it. I guess I am just a born hero-worshipper. My problem is that I worship people in the place of the greatest hero of all.

Let me read to you now from Ps 106:21-23. "They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea. Therefore he said he would destroy them - had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them." What is a breach, anyway? A breach is a gap, a break, a tear; in this case between the relationship between God and his people. Moses stepped into that gap to pull it back together again. Stepping into the breach is like what soldiers used to do, when the whole army would march forth in a huge square, and when a man on the front line would get hit and fall, the soldier in the column behind him would move up and take his place to make a solid wall again. [I don't know which took more courage, to start out in the front line or to step up into it after you had seen the man previously occupying it fall.]

One Sunday afternoon I went to the singing at the Nursing Home, and sat down at a table with a few men. Brother H.D. Marcrom came over, placed a Bible on the table and said, "Somebody read." One of the other men took it, and as he thumbed through it, I thought of how I had sat there wondering who would take it, who would take the challenge that had been given. And I thought of how this occurs each day in some way in every Christian's life. There is a breach that exists for ever work that needs to be done in the kingdom of God. As these jobs come up, we must step into the breach for God ourselves, as his son did for us. We must be as Isaiah in Is ch 8, when the Lord says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then Isaiah says, "Here am I, send me!" How many of us would say this? Some day someone will place the Bible on your table. What will you do? Will you sit and say, "O God, I hope someone else takes it," or will you say, "Here I am, Lord! Please use me!" If we want to be heroic, we must follow the greatest of all heroes: Jesus Christ!