

# Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment

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[ 0 : 00 ] Father, we know that it's far easier to see specks in other people's eyes than it is to see logs in our own eyes.

And we know in your word it says that we flatter ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin. And so, Father, we have sort of a knowledge that those are your words, but, Father, we confess that we don't really live that.

It's hard for us to live that and experience it. And we ask, Father, that you would be very kind to us this morning and pour the Holy Spirit upon us, not only us who are here, but those who are joining us via the online medium, that the Holy Spirit would fall with fresh power upon us and make who Jesus is and what he accomplished for us on the cross ever more real to our hearts so that, Father, we might grow into that new life, that new life of self-knowledge and repentance, and pursuit of justice and of mercy and of compassion that you intend for your people.

And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, imagine that, I mean, depending on your age, for me it would be maybe one of my kids brings home a boyfriend or a girlfriend.

For you, you have young kids or no kids, that wouldn't be the thing. But maybe it's your sister, your brother, your nephew or your niece. Somebody very close to you brings home somebody or brings to you to meet somebody that they've started to date.

[ 1 : 38 ] And you're having a nice meal, enjoying your time together. And all of a sudden, in the midst of that conversation, the person, you know, so in my case might be the boyfriend or the girlfriend that one of my kids has brought home, or your brother or your sister, all of a sudden in the conversation, they say a racial slur.

Now, for some of you, you probably are familiar with hearing racial slurs. And because I know that happens, obviously, in Canada, and some of you might have friends who make racial slurs. But for me, if it was like, I don't know, somebody who's come and wants to date my daughter or, you know, date my son, and if they said a racial slur while we're having a conversation, like, first of all, I confess for me because I'm not used to things like that happening, I would be gobsmacked.

Like, I'd go, did I just hear that right? Like, I'd probably in first, in fact, at first sort of doubt that I actually heard it. Like, I know that I heard it, but I'd sort of doubt, like, I can't have heard that.

Like, that's sort of amazing. And then you're talking for 10 or 15 minutes more, and then they say it a second time. Now you know they've said it. Now, I'd like you to hold on.

[ 2 : 54 ] Remember, and this is the person who wants to date your precious daughter or who's going to date your sister or your brother or your, you know, somebody like that, your dad, you know, your dad or your mom are single, and they want to date them, and you just heard them say these racial slurs twice.

Now hold that image or that example in your head as you start to read the text, because it's going to help us to understand something that the Bible says, which is very powerful, but not only about the issues of racism and prejudice, of favoritism and discrimination, but also in terms of how on earth you have justice and how on earth you show mercy in a world where things like that happen.

So if you would take your Bibles and turn in them to James chapter 2, verse 8, we'll look at the text and see the wisdom, the practical wisdom, the very, very incisive wisdom that the Bible gives into this particular topic and issue.

And it goes like this. And those of you who were here last week and remember, because I didn't put you to sleep, or were watching it online, one of the things that we talked, the main thing we talked about last week was the problem of prejudice, discrimination, favoritism, and how the Bible says that in fact it does not at all fit with your walk with Christ, that in fact prejudice erodes faith, and faith

erodes prejudice.

And if prejudice, favoritism, discrimination isn't being eroded in your life, it could be a sign that you actually don't have a faith and trust in Jesus, because it's of the nature of the gospel to erode prejudice, favoritism, and discrimination.

[ 4 : 34 ] And of course racism is a very violent and hateful form of prejudice and discrimination. And so the text continues. That's what just went on just immediately before that, and it's going to help us to understand the first little bit that's said, because that's the context.

The Bible very firmly says, in fact, if you remember correctly, in verse 1 it uses a plural word to really bring home, to emphasize it, that every type and form of prejudice, every type and form of discrimination, every type and form of favoritism is not at all compatible with your walk with Jesus. And here's how it continues in verse 8. If you really fulfill, so if, it's following sort of up on, in fact you could also even translate it as a bit of a however if, if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, what is the royal law?

Well, it tells you, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. You are doing well. But if you show partiality, and that word partiality is the word that can also be translated as prejudice, favoritism, or discrimination.

That's what the word is. If you show partiality, prejudice, favoritism, or discrimination, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors, which is a very strong word, violator, transgressor.

[ 5 : 55 ] It's a very firm claim that you are doing something that's completely and utterly abhorrent to the royal law. And the royal law, for those of you who don't know, it's actually one of the interesting things about this text.

It shows that Matthew, I mean, James is aware of the fact that Jesus is the one who said that this is the way to summarize all of what our Jewish friends call the Tanakh or the Torah, when we call the Old Testament, that all of the laws that you find in the Bible, that are horizontal, can be summarized with this one statement, that you are to love your neighbor as yourself.

And it's also very interesting, if you note in verse 8, it says that we are to fulfill this law. It doesn't say we are to keep it, but to fulfill it. There's a very, very important difference between these two words, keep and fulfill.

And to keep it, well, you keep the speed limit, but you don't fulfill the speed limit. To make it sort of a very obvious one, you keep the speed limit, but you don't fulfill it. Fulfill it, when it says fulfill, it means that this law is propulsive.

It gives you a quest for life. It describes where true north is, so that you can orient what's going on in the world. If you're in a workplace situation, a family situation, if you're trying to figure out how to apply the Bible, and what texts are going on, and what you should do, that what Jesus is saying, that's why it's royal, because it comes from the King of kings and Lord of lords, is that you are to fulfill loving your neighbor as yourself.

[ 7 : 27 ] You're now, when you become a Christian, when you give your life to Jesus, he in a sense gives you a boot, a loving boot, and says, this is your quest. This is where you're to be headed in your life.

It's not just a matter of keeping it, it's a matter of fulfilling it, entering into it, and as we all know, that if we were to try to do this in our workplace, in politics, in business, in art, in family, and in neighborhood, it's not just something you tick off, it propels you into a whole way of living, and it's fulfilled with this word love, and which is also going to be important, we'll look at again in a moment, by saying law, it's not just saying something like a principle, it's not like just saying like a type of logic, it's also including words, that to understand the words of the scripture, you are to understand that they come from the heart of the triune God who loves you, and that because from all eternity, the Father has loved the Son, and the Son has loved the Father, and the Holy Spirit is on one level, both a loving person, but also the very love that flows between the Father and the Son, and so every word that comes from the triune God is motivated, comes from love, to teach you to love, to propel you into love, and he does this by telling you things, he writes,

God causes words to be written, in a sense rules, commands, that in fact, the mantra which is so popular today, love is love, is in fact empty and vacuous, you need words to describe it, to ground it, to propel it, to help put guardrails up, to give you what that end result is, and that's what James is saying is all about it, and so what he's saying is to show any prejudice, any favoritism, any discrimination, violates this law, and all of the laws that which it summarizes, you can't say that

you're keeping God's word, if prejudice, discrimination, favoritism, partiality, and racism, is it all a feature of your life, that's what the text is saying, but then, the text moves, in a very, very, challenging direction, and you have to remember, that when God causes his word to be written, he's writing it, not just for people, in post-modern, post-capitalist, Ottawa, in 2021, he's writing it for, people in Singapore, people in Iran, he's writing it for Korea, he's writing it for Christians, who lived 100 years ago, 500 years ago, 1,000 years ago, that his word is, trans-cultural, trans-temporal, trans-linguistic, trans-ethnic, trans-racial, it's speaking into every culture, and as we all know, in many cultures, it's very easy to say, well, look at that, who would have thought, that God was woke, and we can give ourselves, all a good pat on the back, and walk out the door, but no, no, no, no, no, no, the Bible never allows us, love never allows us, to flatter ourselves, and pat ourselves on the back, let us go off, thinking, well, you know, I did that, good guy, good on me, it takes a bit of a turn, look at what it does in verse 10, and by the way, if you go back and look at it later, you'll notice, this is one of the strengths, of the English Standard Version, I don't, in my private devotions, I read the NIV, true confession, my ESV, groupie friends, will all now not like me, I'll probably get hate mail, but the NIV is just very easy, to read in my normal devotions, and preaching, I always use the ESV, one of the things the ESV does, it's very good at getting, connector words, which the NIV, to make it easier to read, will smooth over often, or the New Living Translation, another fine translation, you go back, and you'll notice the for, the for, the if, the if, but that go through, it's like there's a connection, that goes through these verses, so note, in verse 10, it goes like this, sorry, that was the grammar geek moment, I just lost some of you, and some of you are going, whoa, look at that grammar geek stuff, yeah, anyway, so, for, whoever keeps the whole law, but fails in one point, has become accountable for all of it, for he who said, do not commit adultery, also said, do not murder, if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor, of the law, now this is a bit confusing, when we read it, in fact, some people, will say, okay,

[ 11 : 59 ] George, is that saying that, I don't know, like me showing a little bit of, like, you know, is George, is that saying that, when it comes time for my taxes, if I, sort of, try to get away, with a couple of income tax returns, that I did in 2021, but it's going to really help me in 2020, and I try to slip them in, and hope they don't notice, so I get a better tax, like, are you saying, that's the same as rape?

That's the same as murder? Like, George, how does that make, any type of sense? And, and if that's the case, then, isn't the Bible, just completely, and utterly undercutting, any attempt, to live a moral life?

Like, I thought that was, sort of important to Christians. So, like, that doesn't make, any, any type of, any type of sense, at all. And, and as well as that, don't you think, George, that's a bit harsh on people?

Like, a bit judgmental? Like, how is that a loving thing, to sort of make such a blanket statement, about people? So, you sort of go from thinking, okay, this is pretty powerful stuff, good stuff, you know, love, a quest, like, that's stuff that we can understand, can get behind, we might not be able to live it, but we can get behind it, and it now goes and says something, which, for many of us, we think is maybe a bit extreme, and not loving.

So, what's, what's going on here in the text? Let's think back to the story, if you remember, if I haven't put you to sleep, with this story, the illustration that I gave at the beginning of the service. What happens if, your sister, your brother, your kid, your dad, your mom, brings home their new boyfriend, or girlfriend, and in the course of the conversation, they, they give you two racial slurs.

[ 13 : 45 ] Now, true confession, in, in our house, I mean, I would probably, I would probably just be sitting there thinking, I don't know what to say, my wife would go after the person. Like, this is a good thing, by the way, this isn't a put down for my wife, this is a good thing about my wife, she, she would say something about it, she'd step right up to it, I, I, maybe not quite know what to say.

I'd probably rather say, I'd like to think about it for a week, and then do a sermon, and talk about it, rather than knowing what I'd say, right in the moment. But, what would you say, how many of you would believe the person, if they said, oh, listen, you know, just, I had a glass of wine, you know, it doesn't mean anything, it's just a bit of a joke, you know, I'm under a lot of stress, and they come up with a few excuses.

How many of you would buy it? Zero of you would buy it. How many of you would be desperately concerned, that your daughter, your son, your sister, your brother, your mother, your father, is going

to actually date this person, and maybe marry them.

How many of you would be deeply concerned? Why? Because you don't believe for a moment, that it's just a slip of the tongue. What do every one of us believe?

That it reveals something dark, and twisted, and wrong, in that person. That's what all of us would believe. It reveals something dark, and twisted, and wrong, in that person.

[15:11] What the Bible is doing here, is it's actually saying, first of all, the text is not saying, that there's no difference, between small sins, and big sins. It's not saying, that some tiny little lie, that you've just said, is the exact same thing, as raping somebody.

It's not saying, there's no difference, between small and big sins. It is saying, that even the smallest sin, is revelatory.

That even the smallest sin, reveals something, about who you are. That there is in fact, something within you, that is dark, and twisted, and not right.

Now it's really funny, in our culture, our culture, doesn't know, how to deal with this.

On one hand, if I was to say that, I mean, once you actually, can sit in coffee shops, and all again, or more coffee shops, and just a couple of them, if I was to say that, to some people, they'd probably say, George, that's a terrible view, of human nature, it's just wrong.

[16:21] At the same time, I would say to them, but if somebody told you, that their 10 year old, was perfect, and never done anything wrong, in their entire life, would you believe them?

In fact, if they said it, with a very satisfied, self-confident smile, wouldn't it make you, want to gag? Wouldn't you say, that it only shows, that they're not very smart, or very wise, or very attentive?

In fact, isn't it the case, that in every movie, you watch, or every story, you read, that if you see something, where it looks, as if everybody is perfect, it means there is, a great evil behind it.

So why is it, on one hand, that our culture, on one hand, is addicted, to the idea, that fundamentally, within us, there is fundamentally, that we're fundamentally good, yet at the same time, in our culture, we have a disbelief, that anybody can actually, act out of that, fundamental goodness, and only be good.

Why is it, that we have those two things, in our head, and it's the reason, is, and we don't know, how to put them together, only the biblical gospel, helps us to wisely, put them together, without despair.

[17:42] Because you see, that's what often happens, in our culture, we either despair, of human beings, or we end up, trying to ignore, the reality of human beings, and have an overly exalted, view, of their goodness, their niceness, and if not of, them in general, of myself, in particular.

And the Bible here, is actually pointing, at something, which is profoundly wise, profoundly wise, wise, that every thing, every time we do something, which is wrong, it reveals, something about our state, and it also reveals, that we can't fix it, because we know, we can't fix it.

So, some of us might say, well that's a bit of a bleak view, of what it means, to be a human being, and some might actually say, well that's sort of, what I thought about, about Christians, that Christians just have, this view that, everything is bad, everybody's wicked, everybody's a sinner, like on Saturday Night Live, if they had somebody, begin the skit by saying, I am a sinner, everybody would laugh, because they know, that there's a joke coming up, that they'll make fun, of it.

And so, some might say, well okay George, you don't realize it, but you're in a Saturday Night Live, skit, and one of the weird things, about Christians, is they don't laugh, they all listen, but all of us watching, we're laughing, because we know it's, so, well let's see, the Bible moves, both deepens the issue, and also gives resolution, and hope, in the next two words.

And it goes like this, in verses 12 and 13, so, that's a follow word, right, if look at, actually we'll read verse 11 again, for he who said, do not commit adultery, also said, do not murder, if you do not commit adultery, but do murder, you have become a transgressor, of the law, so, in other words, how shall we then live, speak, and so act, as those who are to be judged, under the law, of liberty, for judgment, is without mercy, to one who has shown, no mercy, mercy, triumphs, over, judgment, judgment, that's the title of the sermon, mercy, triumphs, over, judgment, I don't have a tattoo, but if I was to have a tattoo, that would be a good line, to tattoo somewhere in my body, mercy, triumphs, over, judgment, it has legs, it won't look ridiculous, when I'm 90, I mean it would look ridiculous, when I'm 90, but, at least I'd still be able, to agree with it, but listen to what this, and it's a bit confusing, law of liberty, and now it sounds, as if you are being judged, but not being judged, and mercy, but listen to it again, we'll read again, those two verses, so, remember now, given that you have this, any wrongdoing, that you do, reveals something, just as a racial slur, reveals a darkness,

of racism, a twistedness, of racism, a perplexing thing, because once again, if this person at the table, they might be very witty, very smart, very, very well educated, love animals, love children, obviously love your, you know, your sister, your kid, your child, or whatever it is, and yet, despite the fact, that they can be all these, excellent things, there's in fact, something twisted about them, in fact, it would be so twisted, that you wouldn't want, your loved one, to marry that person, like you wouldn't, and in fact, if he said, you got to show me mercy, you'd say,

[ 21 : 18 ] I'm not showing you mercy, do you think I'm an idiot, think I'm a fool, I'm not going to show you mercy, listen again, so speak and so act, as those who are to be judged, under the law of liberty, for judgment is without mercy, the one who has shown no mercy, mercy triumphs, over judgment, that's what's going on in the text, I'm going to give you, another thought experiment, just to take a couple of seconds, and I want you to think, of one or two instances, where if, and this is just in your own life, not in somebody else's life, but just in your own life, one or two instances, in your own life, where if mercy had been shown, life would have gone far better, one or two things, where if mercy had been shown, life would have gone far better, now I'm willing to bet, that for most of us, we thought of times, when mercy should have been shown to us, that you thought of times, when mercy should have been shown to you, that you didn't think of a time, when you should show mercy, to somebody else, you see, if you just think about that, that that's the sort of the right, for those of us who are right-handed, it's the right-handed way, of responding to it, it's the natural inclination, it shows, a type of self-centeredness, and self-exaltation, about each one of us, that we would first think, of ourselves, as being victims, and not as ones, who are, needing to show mercy, needing to swallow, the cost of showing mercy, in fact, if you think about it for a second, if it ends up being the case, that we always want to receive mercy, but virtually never show mercy, how can you ever actually, wisely show mercy to that person, you see, if a person only wants to receive mercy, but never actually give mercy, it shows that what they really want to do, is manipulate you in the situation, for their own good, and exaltation, think of it in a movie situation, those of you probably, most of you probably have very, far better tastes in movies, and shows, than I do, but I like ones with guns, and good, you know, there's some type of a conflict, you know, getting the bank robbers, or stopping the spies, or the terrorists, or catching the murderer, or something like that, and you come to a situation, where the person, the terrorist, or whatever, who's, or the evil murderer, the serial rapist, the serial murderer, the good person, the cop, is there, and they have them, they have them dead to the rights, they have the gun drawn, the person can't get away, and maybe, you know, they've been a victim, by the serial killer, you know, maybe one of their loved ones, and they're not sure what to do, and all of a sudden, the person who's the rapist, or the murderer, or whatever, says, listen, you've got to show me mercy, show me some mercy, you know, don't do it, don't do something you regret, show me some mercy, and you're the viewer, you know, there's another person beside, says, no, no, no, take the shot, take the shot, don't show them mercy, they're not, don't show them mercy, they're just going to abuse the mercy, they're just going to use the mercy, it's just going to be weakness, take the shot, take the shot, and then of course, you know, depending on the movie, the person does put, you know, they decide they are going to show mercy,

they step forward to not, you know, kill them, or do whatever, and once they let their guard down, in fact, the bad person uses it against them, beats them up, or kills them, and gets away, and we all see that in different situations, in movies, and so if you go back to this puzzling phrase, it sounds as if God's only going to show mercy, if you've shown mercy first, but what the text is trying to get at, once again, is a bit of an attempt for us to reflect upon the real situation, see, when we show mercy to somebody, we show mercy in the hope, that there's a restoration of order, that there's a walking towards justice, that there's a walking towards goodness, that there's some sense in the other person of gratitude, there's some sense, that with this act of mercy, that there will be a walking in the way, that is right, and good, and true, but if in fact, you just show mercy to a person, who never has no intention of doing that, no intention at all of doing that, most of us would say, that's not really as much a case that mercy should be shown, because the person is just wanting to use your mercy, mercy to continually further their own ends, and maybe you show them mercy once, maybe you show them mercy twice, but if you continue to show them mercy, and it's always just transgressed, then really all they're concerned about is exalting themselves, and triumphing, and continuing to walk in a way which is not just and good, and merciful, and so the Bible here isn't saying, that God waits for you to start being merciful, before he shows mercy, that's made clear by the very powerful

statement, that mercy triumphs over judgment, because you see, it's only in the biblical gospel, that you start to have a sense, of how mercy could triumph over judgment, that what we understand as Christians, that God never ceases being just, he's only just, his mercy isn't just sort of saying, I think I like these cronies of mine, it's not like, and we can pick on Trump right now, but the fact of the matter is, is that every president, every president when they leave office, every president when they leave office, regardless of political affiliation, pardons their cronies, that's what they do, those of you who are Republican types, looking down your nose at Democrats, Republicans do it, Democrats do it, it's human, it's not showing mercy, what is it?

It's ignoring the demands of justice, it's exercising privilege, and prejudice, and favoritism, and the Bible condemns it, the Bible condemns it, the Bible condemns it, and no transgression is permitted and allowed, because the person who does it is your hero, that is the path towards deeper evil, but what the Bible says, James would be thinking very, very powerfully of the fact, that he is the younger brother of Jesus, that Mary and Joseph had children, after the virgin birth, and James is one of those children, that was born as a result of Mary and Joseph's marriage, and that James insulted Jesus, he thought Jesus was insane, he didn't believe anything that Jesus was saying is true, he did things to mock him, to undermine him, and when Jesus was in his darkest moment of problems, when he's condemned by the authorities, the religious, the secular, the political, the cultural, the intellectual, the world powers, and Jesus is condemned, and when he dies upon the cross,

James is not there. What does James know in his own life?

[ 29 : 28 ] Mercy triumphed over judgment. Jesus appears to James, it's one of the things which is told, after Jesus has died and risen from the dead, James knows the tomb is empty, James knows that the body wasn't found, and James knows that they would never find the body, because Jesus, risen and alive, appears to James and speaks to him, with words of love and forgiveness, that James comes to understand, that Jesus, when he died on the cross, that what James was to understand, that in James' place, condemned, Jesus stood, that the full demands of righteousness, and justice, were being upheld by God, but God does something, at great cost to himself, that James could not do for himself, and Jesus dies on the cross, condemned, in the place, of James' mockery, breaking of filial bonds, and all of the other things, that James had done to Jesus,

Jesus dies, in James' place, you see all forgiveness, and mercy is a key part of forgiveness, all forgiveness is only forgiveness, if justice is maintained, and the one who is wronged, bears the cost of the wrong, in their own person, for the sake of this profound mystery, that only makes sense, if it is the triune God, that has in fact created the entire world, that sometimes for the good of your own soul, and for the good of others, and for the good of the city, and the good of the nation, to swallow the desire for revenge, to die to reparation, in an act of forgiveness, is the act of wisdom and love, South Africa is a country, that has many problems still, but they have far fewer problems, because Nelson Mandela, understood the importance, of mercy and forgiveness, that he would swallow his desire, for revenge and vindication, and pay the price of that, to set both him, and his persecutors, towards the path of freedom, mercy triumphs, mercy triumphs, over judgment, so what do those other two phrases mean, just in sort of closing, what does it mean to say, that we're judged by the law of liberty, what does it mean to say, that if you don't show mercy, that God won't give you mercy, it's an indicator language, we'll use the mercy one first,

Tim Keller has a very wonderful, illustration, about what it is that happens, when you receive the gospel, and he says, what happens when you receive the gospel, it's as if God gives you new clothes, and the new clothes, are way too big for you, like way too big, but what happens is, that as the gospel, becomes more and more real, to your heart, as the reality, of God's forgiveness, to you, who have something dark, and twisted within, that in your place condemned, he stood, that there is this fundamental, God never surrenders justice, he never gives up on it, he never plays favorites, he doesn't show partiality, he doesn't show prejudice, he's not racist, not at all, and maintaining all of the demands, of justice and truth, and goodness, yet still there is this, mercy that comes from love, that is what, can make you right with him, and it's all done by God, for you, that as this grips you, and as you start to hear, the words of Jesus, that are spoken, that are words, that are all words of love, that come from the love, of the Father, for the Son, and the Son of the Father, and the Holy Spirit, loving the Father, and the Son, and that every word of Jesus, in terms of how you shall live, comes out of love, and as you're gripped, by the gospel, you start to grow up, to fit the clothes, and showing mercy, isn't a requirement, to receive mercy, but a sign, that you've started, to receive the

mercy, just as the smallest sin, is an indicator, of a blackness, and a darkness, and an evil within, the showing of mercy, is the sign, that you're starting, to grow into the clothes, because you see, God's intention, for human beings, and his intention, for his children, is that they never surrender, the demands of justice, they never show favorites, in terms of how justice is applied, I've been in lots of organizations, where the CEO, is given a pass, because he's a CEO, but the Bible says, the higher the authority, the more they shouldn't, have a pass, because the damage, they can do, is vastly greater, and what it's talking about, in the terms of the law, of liberty, is if you understand, that mercy triumphs, over judgment, it's one of the several places, in the Bible, where there's this profound, explanation, of what the gospel is, that mercy, triumphs, over judgment, judgment, well then what we understand, is that, the way, every one of us, lives our lives, and we've become Christians, is that the law of liberty, nestles, between your justification, and your glorification, and God wants both, to be very real, to our hearts, because it's only, as both are real, to our hearts, that we begin to learn, how to live, that we begin, to have the confidence, to look, at the flaws, and the issues, and the sin, of our own lives, and both to see, their horror, but to understand, that to a perfect God, that horror, was even greater, and yet in love, in your place, in my place, condemned, he stood, and so, if you understand, that the words of Jesus, in terms of how we should live, that you are to love your neighbors, yourself, and all of the other commands, but not committing adultery, and not taking innocent life, that all of these, are to be understood, and lived, nestled between the reality, of your justification, in Christ, and your glorification, in Christ, that is liberty, it begins to free you, free to be more honest, about yourself, free to be more honest, and clear-eyed, about the world, and maybe even freed up, to start to show mercy, to not just, to see past vengeance, and to be willing, to pay that price yourself, that is needed, for there to be mercy, and forgiveness, and so, it's a very, very wonderful thing, if you understand, as the gospel grips you, as you understand, that in my place, condemned, he stood, and what that says, about justice, and mercy, then you understand, that all of the words, of scripture, emerge, from one heart, and one mind, and one desire, and the words, of scripture, are that as you are gripped, by the gospel, and Jesus saves you, that what you are launched on, is a quest, for love, a quest, to be more loving, it is a quest, to be more merciful, it is a quest, to be free, that's why, it's both the law of love, the royal love, and it is the law, of liberty, because that is the quest, that is the journey, that the Lord, has put you on, that will culminate, in your glorification, not God weighing your merits, but having had him, pardon your offenses, on Friday,

I was, I wanted to, have a chat, with somebody, from our congregation, we met in the Sun Life building, and, when we came in, I said I had to, to get a coffee, and I joked, that because, you know, we both know, that if we sit at a table, and talk, and take our masks off, without coffee, we might get COVID, but if we sit at a table, without masks, and have a cup of coffee, the coffee somehow, destroys the transmission, of COVID, now, you know, we all know, that they're, they're trying to balance, opening the economy, with the, the, you know, demands of trying, to protect the, the, the vulnerable, but every single one of us, knows that the problem, with laws, and regulations, around COVID, is that some of them, reflect science, it might have been true, in February of 2020, but we now know, they're not even true, yet the laws continue on, they come from different reasons, from different people, and different sources, and, and the idea, that you keep all of them, when we all know, I mean everybody,

[ 38 : 50 ] I mean I don't, I don't know people, who are highly hysteric, about it, but everybody knows, that there's contradictions, within what's been said, but the thing about this, and this is so important, in closing, is to understand, that you can't end up, looking at the Bible, and saying, well that's outmoded, that's outdated, or that's because, they didn't have enough knowledge, because given that you, to understand, that the same one, who in your place, condemned he stood, so that mercy triumphs, over justice, that he is the same, one who speaks, these words to you, and his words, he is the uncreated creator, he is the eternal, one who creates you, to exist in time, he is the infinite one, who creates you finite, he is the one, who has no environment, who creates you, to live in an environment, and he is the one, who is true, knows the heart, of every human being, and it's not as if, there's new knowledge, about human nature, that the creator, of human nature, will have to come, to understand, and so every word, he says, is a word, that we can trust, and a word, that we can understand, is true, and that will lead us, towards love, will lead us, towards freedom, will lead us, towards liberty, will lead us, towards mercy, and will help us, to walk in justice, and will do so, in a way, that is good for our soul, and good for our city, and good for the country, and good for creation, and so heed his words, and this is especially important, because in our day and age, if

you're here, you're watching this,

I know, it is so unbelievably, crazily, counter-cultural, to give your life to Christ, but only the biblical gospel, unlocks, the mystery, of who you are, in a way, that redeems you, and will speak words, of truth, and love, to you, and mercy, to you, that will give you, a new purpose, start to begin, to free you, from anxiety, it is so worth it, to take that, counter-cultural, step, and give your life, to Jesus, and it might be hard, to explain to the world, but every word of his, is a word of liberty, of love, of justice, of mercy, freedom, of goodness, please stand, stand, let's pray,

Father, we give you, thanks and praise, that you don't require, some magical words, for a person, to become a Christian, Father, if there are any here, who feel, a type of pressure, a compulsion, to surrender, and to call out, to Jesus, that he would be, their Savior, and Lord, Father, I ask that the Holy Spirit, would move mightily, in their lives, that they would not resist, and they don't need, special words, other than say, Jesus be my Savior, Jesus be mine, Jesus I need mercy, Jesus show me mercy, come Lord Jesus, the heart moves, and whatever words you are, whatever stumbling words, you have, are fine with God, because he sees, the desire for your heart, and we give you, thanks and praise, Father, that Jesus, will cross that, what was before, an infinite distance, from him to that person, and Father, in that moment, of us surrendering, our lives to Jesus, we are adopted, as your child, you Father,

Son and Holy Spirit, come and live within, our sins are forgiven, mercy is shown, condemnation, has been dealt with, justice has been followed, but mercy has been given, and that now, Father, is the final word, about us, that in a sense, every single one of us, who are in Jesus, that whether it is, a literal tattoo, or a spiritual tattoo, that every single one of us, the word over us, is that mercy, has triumphed, over judgment, that that is the truth, about who we are, and we ask, Father, that the Holy Spirit, would bring this truth, deep to our hearts, and bring your word, deep to us, that we might grow, into those big clothes, you have for us, and so be free, and live for your glory, and all God's people said, Amen.