

Encouraging the Church

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[0 : 00] Now as the Lord enables us, let us turn again to consider words we have in this chapter we've read. The book of Revelation and chapter 1 and reading from verse 4.

John to the seven churches that are in Asia, grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come.

And from the seven spirits who are before us thrown. And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. And made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father.

To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. I'd like to highlight one or two thoughts from this wonderful section of scripture.

[1 : 05] The book of Revelation believed to have been written around 95 or 96 AD.

And it was during the reign of Domitian, the Roman emperor. And of course the cult of emperor was a reality then, still flourishing.

And the emperor himself demanded worship of his people. Of course the Christian communities did not conform to that requirement.

With the result that they were persecuted very much. And we see that in chapter 1 verse 9, John who is the apostle John, who is the author under the spirit's direction of this book.

He is saying that he is the brother and the kingdom and the patient endurance that earned Jesus Christ.

[2 : 18] He was on the island of Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He was banished to the island of Patmos.

Because Christians were given a very hard time. And those in authority felt that John may have had a good influence upon the church.

Encouraging the church and so on. And they wanted him off the scene. And they banished him to the island of Patmos. Nevertheless, the Lord appeared to him there and gave him this marvelous revelation.

And in our day we don't read many Christian newsletters without mention being made in them of the persecuted church somewhere throughout the world.

There is so much enmity and animosity and hatred of the church of Christ and of Christ himself.

[3 : 28] And we must pray that the church of Christ be sustained during these persecutions and trials in our day. But we see that here we have a wonderful message of encouragement given to the persecuted church in that time.

The end of the first century AD. I'd like to say a few words first of all on the word of encouragement. From verse 4 onwards.

A marvelous word of encouragement to the downtrodden and persecuted people of God in John's day.

And in our own day. Because I believe the seven churches in Asia represent the church of Christ down through the years. With its problems.

With its inconsistencies. And everything concerning it. I believe that these seven churches in Asia are representative of the church of Christ. And we see here that there is a word of encouragement sent to them.

[4 : 55] That's the first thing. The second thing that is before us here is in the middle of verse 5. A song of love. To him who loves us.

And has freed us from our sins by his blood. And made us a kingdom priest to his God and Father. That's a song of love.

God's love for his people. What he has done for them. In love to them. What he has made them. In love to them. He has made them a kingdom.

And priests to God and his Father. And thirdly and finally. And thirdly and finally. The song of praise. Into which we are encouraged.

To participate. It says here. To him be glory. And dominion. Forever and ever.

[5 : 55] Amen. From the God who sends encouragement. Be glory and dominion. From the God who has loved. Be glory and dominion.

From the Christ who has died. Be glory and dominion. And from him. For him. Who has done all things well. For his people. May we all sing a song of praise.

Not just with our lips. But with our life. May our life be a song of praise. May our walk. Be a song of praise. To his great name.

Firstly then. The words of encouragement. To the persecuted church. In John's day. And in our day. And in your own particular circumstance.

If you are a child of God. Persecuted and tried. Listen to what it says. Grace to you. And peace. From him who is.

[6 : 58] And who was. And who is to come. Who is this? Surely this is none other. Than the unchanging God of the covenant.

The God of God's people. The God who is. Who was. And who is to come. He is the unchanging one.

Unchanging in his commitment to his people. Unchanging in his power. Regarding their keeping. Unchanging in every aspect of his dealing with them.

He is the same. He is the same yesterday. And today. And forever. And this God who is. Who was. And who is to come. Sends this encouraging word.

Grace to you. And peace to you. Who are tried and afflicted. His all-seeing eye. Seize. Your tribulation.

[8 : 01] Seize your questions. Seize the difficulties in your life. Because you are a believer. And he is intent upon sending peace to you. In the middle of your trial.

Sending a word in season. To pacify your soul. Sending grace to give you strength. Grace to believe. In the face of opposition.

Grace to continue. To serve. Grace to give you strength. Because. Because. He is the supplier of all. The grace that we need. When the apostle Paul found himself.

Bothered with a thorn in the flesh. He besieged the Lord three times. I wonder if it was. Something. To do with.

The fact that Jesus. Prayed three times in Gethsemane. That Paul prayed three times. For the. Thorn to be removed. But the Lord said.

[9 : 00] I'll not remove it. My grace is sufficient for you. And my strength is made perfect. In weakness. You have to bear with the thorn.

Maybe you have to bear with the opposition. And the trial. And the affliction. Through which you are passing. But the Lord promises grace. And strength. For every day.

And every moment. Of every day. What a word of encouragement that is. From the covenant God. And then he says.

He's sending. Grace and peace. From the seven spirits. Who are before his throne. I don't think this. Speaks of.

Angelic spirits. I believe it's. A statement. Regarding the. All. Encompassing.

[9 : 57] Activity. Of the Holy Spirit. Of God. In all his works. In relation to God's people. He's the spirit. That enlightens. He's the spirit.

That leads. That draws. That brings. Every aspect. Of blessing. That the Lord. God sees fit. To bestow upon us. It is through the Holy Spirit.

That that is administered. To us. And we are thankful. To God. That he knows. Every aspect. Of our lives. And that his Holy Spirit. Is sent. To the situations.

That defy. Resolution. On our part. God. And he will give us. Grace and peace. To bear. And to continue. And you're thankful.

For the Holy Spirit. Of God. Mentioned here. As the seven spirits. The perfect number. All encompassing. All embracing. In his activities.

[10 : 55] In his activities. But then also. Beginning of verse five. Grace and peace. From Jesus Christ. First of all.

He's mentioned. As the faithful witness. Some expositors. Believe that this is an illustration. Or a pointer.

To Christ's. Mediatorial work. As. Our prophet. You know that as our mediator. He is exercising. The offices of prophet. And priest. And king. And here. He is the faithful witness. He is telling us. What God is saying.

He is bringing before us. By his word and spirit. God's will for our salvation. And it's through the work of the mediator. That that witness is born in our mind.

[11 : 51] And hearts. And lives. He is the faithful witness. He'll not mislead. In any way at all. He tells it the way it is.

He tells the truth. He is the truth. The faithful witness. And then also it says. That he's the first born. Of the dead. Maybe a pointer to his.

Work as. Great high priest. Of the church. He lived. And he died. And he rose again. And he exercised.

The offices. That I mentioned already. Prophet. Priest. And king. In that. Whole life. That he lived. And in the death. That he died.

I know that he is risen. He continues. To exercise. That office. As priest. Even in heaven. When he continues. To make intercession. For his people.

[12 : 54] The first born. Of the dead. He has ascended. Up on high. Brought captivity. Captive. And received gifts. For men. For those that did rebel.

And then also. That he is the ruler. Of kings on earth. Christ. Our mediatorial king.

When you think of. The dictators. Over various countries. In the world. When you think of those. Who are cruel. To their people. Many of them. Do any of them. Realize. That they are in the hands. Of this.

Almighty king. Christ is the king of kings. And lord of lords. Domitian. The emperor. The emperor. Was in the hand. Of this king. All other emperors.

[13 : 50] Since then. All kings. And queens. And rulers. And men of high estate. Are in the hands. Of this king. And the little church. Suffering there.

Oppressed. And afflicted. John. On the isle of Patmos. There. Stranded. As it were. Cut off. From society. What a blessing. This world.

Would have been. To him. That the ruler. Of the kings. On earth. Is sending him. Grace. And peace. That the faithful witness. Is sending him.

A word. In season. That the seven spirits. Of God. That is. The holy spirit. In his. Complete works. Is present.

With him. To do for him. According to his need. And the God. Of the covenant. Who is. And who was. And who is to come. Is his constant.

[14 : 44] Companion. What an amazing. Word of comfort. That is. To the people. Of God. And you. Yourself.

Here today. I don't know. What your trials. And afflictions. Might be. But if you are. A believer. In Christ. You have nothing.

To worry about. Ultimately. Because the almighty. God. Is your refuge. And underneath. Are the everlasting. Arms. Praise him.

For this. Secondly. We see here. A song. Of love. He's talking.

From the end of. The beginning of verse five. From Jesus Christ. And then. In the middle of that verse. To him who loves us. He's still talking about.

[15 : 40] Jesus Christ. Our mediator. Our Lord and Savior. And it says now. To him who loves us. And has freed us. From our sins. By his blood.

He loves his people. I wonder why. He loves. His people. I wonder why. He loved Israel.

More than. The Moabites. Or the Philistines. Or the Egyptians. Why did he love them?

Well if you look. In Deuteronomy chapter seven. And verse seven. You'll find something. Like this written. That he didn't love them. Because. They were more numerous. Than others.

He didn't love them. Because they were. Mightier than others. Or better than others. You'll find the answer. He loved them. Because. He loved them.

[16:43] The reason for God's love. For his people. Is in himself. Not in them. When we love somebody. We see something. In them.

That draws our love. Maybe it's a trait. Maybe it's a way of speaking. Maybe it's a smile. A personality. Peculiarity. Peculiarity.

Whatever it is. It draws your heart. And you cannot but love that person. But there was nothing like that. Seen in Israel.

For which God loved them. There's nothing in. Any of. God's elect people. That drew God's heart. In order to love them.

Nevertheless. He did. If you look in the book of Proverbs. Chapter 8. At verse 31. He says something like this. That his delights.

[17:40] Were with the sons of men. That is from all eternity. His delight. His love. Was focused on the sons of men. Particularly on his own people.

And when you look in. Jeremiah chapter 31. At verse 3. The Lord speaks through Jeremiah there. And he says. I have loved you. With an everlasting love.

And with loving kindness. Have I drawn you. What were they like. The Israelites. What were these people. In these seven churches. In Asia.

Like. When God first loved them. Where there was nothing attractive. About them at all. What was true of you. When God first.

Made his love known to you. Was there something. That earned that love of God. To come. Not at all. What does Paul say.

[18:39] As he writes to the Romans. In chapter 3. He says. There is none righteous. No not one. No one understands.

No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. No one does good. Not even one. And he loved them.

He goes on to say. In Romans 3.13. Their throat is an open grave. They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips.

Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift. To shed blood. In their paths are ruin and misery. And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

What an amazing. And discouraging picture that is. Of us all as we are by nature.

[19:40] We are sinners. And sin attaches to us. At the very point of our conception. At the very moment.

We are conceived. The guilt of Adam's first sin. The guilt of Adam's first sin. Attaches to us. And that means that we have original sin. When we are born into the world.

And when you live a life in the world. Sins of thought. Word. And action. Add to the number of your sins.

And all sin contaminates. And all sins makes us. More and more impure. In the sight of God.

But you see the way it is here. To him who loves us. Where did this love begin? I'm not sure if I can answer that question.

[20:41] But by saying this. It is an eternal love. In the heart of the eternal God. From all eternity. There was a love. For his people.

They were elect in Christ. Christ. And theologians talk about. The covenant of redemption. Meaning.

That the persons of the Trinity. In eternity. Before the world was created. The persons of the Trinity. Met. And God the Father.

Asked God the Son. Will you go into the world. As mediator for these. Elect. Whom I have loved from all eternity.

In order to save them. And the Son readily said yes. I love them. As you love them.

[21:41] There is no difference. In the love of God the Father. To his people. From the love of the Son. To his people. The persons are united.

In love of each other. And love. For the elect. And Jesus Christ. Agreed to come. And what was the first thing he.

Must do. Practically. Well. The angel said to Mary. The mother of Jesus. The Spirit of God.

Will come upon you. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Shall overshadow you. And that Holy thing. To be born of you. Would be none other. Than the Son of God.

At the point of his conception. The eternal Son of God. Took human nature. And joined it to his. Holy.

[22 : 42] Divine nature. Uniting. Uniting. Humanity. Humanity. With divinity. In his person. And when he came into the world.

As a babe. He was bearing the sin. Of these people. Whom he loved. Every step of his life. He was their sin bearer. Every word he uttered. Every place he went. He was bearing. The sins of those.

Whom he loved. From all eternity. And whom he received. In order to set them free. From the power. And the curse of sin.

And the curse of the law. And the song here. Says to him. Who loves us. And has freed us.

[23 : 39] From our sins. By his blood. I believe this is particularly talking.

Of the work. Of atonement. The work that Christ finished. Upon the cross. You know.

The Lord Jesus. As our savior. As our mediator. He must satisfy. He must satisfy. Every detail. Of God's law.

On our behalf. And the Bible reminds us. That he magnified the law. And made it honorable. In our room. And in our state. And then that he.

Paid the ultimate price. To God's justice. For our sin. In order that our sins. Be taken away.

[24 : 35] And what was the price. That justice required. In order that our sins. Might be taken away. Well God's wrath.

And curse. Be poured upon him. To the satisfaction. Of the justice of God. That justice. Be fully satisfied.

In the outpouring. Of this punishment. Upon sin. In the person of Christ Jesus. For his people. And it says here.

That he has freed us. From our sins. By his blood. If you read in the Old Testament. Prophecy of Zechariah. You'll find there.

A reference to. This very thing. And he says there. That. A fountain. Has been opened. To the house of David.

[25 : 35] And the inhabitants. Of Jerusalem. For sin. And uncleanness. What fountain is this? Who opened it? Well obviously.

It's a term used. To illustrate. The work of Christ. As our saviour. As he opened. The fountain. Of life. By his own death. He opened it. And life everlasting now. Comes to those.

Who believe in Jesus. And you know. In the words. Of the verses here. He has freed us. From our sins. By his blood. He has freed us.

From our sins. Because. He has paid the price. There is a fountain. Filled with blood. Thrown from Emmanuel's veins.

[26 : 36] And sinners. Plunged beneath that flood. Lose all. Their guilty stains. When are we plunged.

Beneath that flood. When do we actually lose. Our guilty stains. Well it's not by works of law.

The apostle. Paul to Titus. Writes these words. Not by works of righteousness. Which we have done. But according to his mercy. He saved us.

By the washing. Of regeneration. And renewing of the Holy Spirit. Which he shed on us abundantly. Through Jesus Christ.

Our Savior. The Holy Spirit. Takes of the things of Christ. And reveals them to us. He is shed upon us.

[27 : 33] Abundantly. In the day of regeneration. We are enabled to. Repent of our sins. And trust in Jesus. The sinner's Savior.

To come to him. Like Banyan's pilgrim. Came to the cross. On his way to the celestial city. And he said. Blessed cross. Blessed sepulchre.

Blessed rather be the man. That there was put to shame. For me. And his burden fell off. And rolled over and over.

Into this open sepulchre. And he saw it no more. He saved us. By the washing. Of regeneration. Washed us.

In that act of regeneration. In the Old Testament. The blood of bulls and of goats. And the ashes of a heifer.

[28 : 29] Sprinkled upon the unclean person. Were sufficient to sanctify. To the purifying of the flesh. Ceremonially.

They were cleansed. Or washed. From their sins. And impurities. Using these means. That God had appointed. But now. It says in Hebrews 9.

How much more. Shall the blood of Jesus Christ. Who through the eternal spirit. Offered himself. Without spot to God. Purge.

Your conscience. From dead works. To serve the living God. Not only is our outer life. Cleansed. But our inner life.

Is cleansed. We are given a new heart. We are. Our conscience. Is washed. As it were. Purged. From evil works.

[29 : 24] Our focus. Is no longer. On serving sin. Our focus. Is on serving him. What a message. To the seven churches. That were going through. Such a bad time. To him who loves us. And he loves you today.

If you are one of his elect people. With an everlasting love. A love that will ensure. That at last. All your sins.

Will be taken away. The catechism. Sums it up marvelously. Doesn't it? When it talks about. The souls of believers.

At their death. Are made perfect in holiness. And to immediately pass into glory. And their bodies. Being still united to Christ. Rest in their graves.

[30 : 22] Until the resurrection. And then the next one goes on. At the resurrection. Believers shall be raised in glory. Soul and body.

No more sin. They shall be openly acknowledged. And acquitted at the day of judgment. Shall be made perfectly blessed. In the full enjoying of God. Through all of eternity.

Why? Because he loved you. With an everlasting love. He has stuck with you. Through all the difficulties and trials of life. And he'll at last present you faultless.

In the presence of his glory. With exceeding joy. Exceeding joy. Next. In a word. Finally. In a word. In a word.

This is a song of praise. It says. To him be glory and dominion. Forever and ever. Amen. who is he encouraging to sing the song for those who have been loved yes washed from their sins loosed from their sins yes but those who are a kingdom and priests to his God those who belong to the kingdom of God who have Christ as king who are happy to submit to his kingly rule happy to do what pleases him and also their priests their lives their bodies are living sacrifices dedicated to him day by day is that true of you?

[32 : 10] is it true of me? am I living my life as a living sacrifice to the Lord Jesus Christ who loved me and gave himself for me?

may God bless these thoughts to us let us pray may God bless those who have done but most loving would have been can I see?

sir it's not it's time but it's time why would have been to the Lord Jesus Christ