

# God's Commitment to Us

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I want us to focus our thoughts and our minds and our souls this evening on verse 32 of a reading there from Romans chapter 8.

He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

And then verse 38. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The gospel as we hear it, the gospel as it comes down to you and me together, comes with a very simple challenge and message.

It challenges us in our commitment, first, foremost, and always, to the Lord. He must have the priority over all else.

[ 1 : 2 4 ] We have it so often set out in simple words in scripture. We are to cleave to the Lord. The Lord spoke to the young ruler and he says, one thing you lack, sell what you've got and follow me.

David in Psalm 27 says, one thing I of the Lord desired and will seek to obtain. The Lord spoke to Mary after the dispute between herself and Martha and says, she's chosen one thing.

And then the words of the Lord himself, seek ye first the kingdom of heaven. All of these texts bring before us vividly the priority which the Lord sets before us and requires from us from this gospel.

We can see that priority translated into flesh and blood because we always like flesh and blood we can identify with. Think of the way in which Abraham behaved with the sacrifice of his son.

Think of Job. Think of Job where so much piled into his life. Where he lost so much in a day.

[ 2 : 4 0 ] Where he suffered and endured so much. That continued day after day after day. And even with the possibility of death coming to him.

That commitment was still ringing from the lips of Job. Even though he say me. Yet will I trust him. That's the kind of commitment.

And let's not try to flannel it or to hide it right now. That's the commitment the Lord is looking for from you and from me. And that's the way the Lord speaks to us right now here and now in our service.

We have asked for his presence and we look for his company. Very well. Let's face up to the consequences of his coming amongst us tonight. That he speaks directly, powerfully and personally.

To you and to me alone. As to where we stand with him. That's what he's looking for. That commitment. From you, me.

- [ 3 : 55 ] To him. Yes, but. If that's the kind of commitment the Lord is looking for from us.
- What is the measure of the Lord's commitment to us? What is the measure of the Lord's commitment to the believer?
- Is there a line drawn somewhere? That limits? That defines the commitment the Lord is going to make and give to his people?
- Just how far will the Lord go? In the life and dealing with the experiences and things that we've gathered in our life as we journeyed along the path of life.
- Just how far is that commitment to be measured? How far astray can we go? Do we go? Is there anything?
- [ 5 : 02 ] Any problem? Any situation that we're in? Is there anything that we've got to drag up from our life or set before us in our life? Is there anything that will exhaust the commitment of the Lord to his own?
- Think of examples. Think of Job. Think of Jacob. a man who lived by his wits. A schema. Supplanter. A man who obtained the birthright from Esau. Then beguiled Isaac. And the blessing that was due to the firstborn. A man that lived by plans.
- Think of the disciples and the way in which they were slow to learn. Time after time. Three times were given in scripture at least. Where the Lord repeated the essence of the gospel destination to which he was going.
- And every time the Lord told them they were slow to pick it up. Did the Lord's patience run out with such? Then you've got the appalling.
- [ 6 : 15 ] The appalling behaviour of David with Bathsheba. Maybe we could say, well, David, you've crossed the line now.
- God has gone no more to deal with you. Or again, we can think of Peter. He denied his Lord.
- And he did it three times. And he did it with curses. You have really done it this time, Peter. You have really crossed the line this time.
- Is there a situation like that? What's the measure of God's commitment to his people? We might go looking, yes.
- We might go looking in other people's lives, just as we've looked at and spoken of here tonight. But turn the mirror inward on ourselves.
- [ 7 : 19 ] There are so many provocations that come from you and me, from the diary of life that we've been composing. Just think back yourself.
- How you've provoked and how I've provoked the Lord. Just look back and think of the ways in which have we taken things to the line?
- Have we crossed the line? What's the measure of God's commitment to us? And when we engage in that exercise of looking at ourselves, when we realize the big things that we've got that provoke the Lord, we just begin to realize with the faintest of glimmers the enormity of the love of God and the enormity of the commitment of God to people not like Peter or David, but just like you and me.
- He knows his people. He knows all there is to know about you and me together. There are no surprises. Yes, there might be shames and blushes upon each one of our faces when we look back over our life, but there are no surprises to the Lord.
- There are no factors in our life that is the life of a Christian. There are no factors that even come close to threatening the commitment the Lord has made to his people.

[ 9 : 02 ] And it's good for us just to take that simple truth to ourselves. It's good for us to linger around the cross and to consider what we're told and shown there, to carry it away with us into daily life as we go out tomorrow to work or whatever our lot is placed by the Lord.

We're alone and we're struggling. And it's a source of strength to us all to think he that is for us is greater than anyone or anything that is against us.

To think as we are going to do in a moment of the scale of God's commitment to the believer so that whenever we come across an area in our life, an experience we've got to go through, an enemy we've got to fight, whatever the commitment is given of the Lord on the side of his people, whatever there's a commitment given to defend his own, let there be no question.

Let there be no doubt whatsoever that the Lord indeed is there, come what may, for every one of his own.

We all like to listen to the old men speak. We all like to listen to them the way in which they share with us their own experiences.

[ 10 : 34 ] So often they are so appealing because they come with flesh and blood attached to them. Let me read to you one simple testimony just appropriate to what we're saying tonight.

Joshua, an old man, been through the war, leading God's people, about to go.

They're all going back to the land appointed to them. And then he says this, Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth.

And you know, in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning us.

All are come to pass unto you and not one thing has failed thereof. And the image that is given to us there, you've all had a meal today and there's always, every one of us, there's been crumbs on the table.

[ 11 : 41 ] That's the image that is given to us here. Not one thing has failed. The Lord has said, not even a crumb of what God has promised to his people has fallen and failed.

God's track record in dealing with his own is 100%. So next time you dust the table with some crumbs, just think of what Joshua was saying.

That's the commitment of God to his people. Not one thing has failed. So let's come back to what we're speaking about here then.

The commitment of the Lord to his own. What's the problem that God has to face?

What's the problem that we carry in our hearts? Right at the beginning, or at least earlier on in this book, in Romans chapter 3 and at verse 26, it's set out for us like this.

[ 12 : 53 ] At this time, God has this problem. What is it? That he might be just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus.

That God is just, that there's no compromise to his character and at the same time he forgives and takes in every believer to himself. That's the problem that God has faced.

It's a problem that has arisen because we're all sinners. Broken God's law, offended God's righteousness, disregarded God's requirements.

And no matter how people in this world today dress it up, sin is an awful thing. Sin is an awful thing. It's not easily and it's not quickly dealt with or removed because we're told without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

That tells us the enormity of what is required to remove sin from you or my life. We don't just simply lift the carpet and sweep it underneath. We don't just simply patch it up with a little piece of sellotape over it or a piece of plaster above it.

[ 14 : 08 ] No, they don't work. Without the shedding of blood there's no forgiveness of sin. So what does that mean? It means that somebody's life has got to be given.

But it's not just any old life that's given. There's got to be some special quality about that life because it's got to be a perfect sacrifice. And that perfect sacrifice is going to carry this fearful demand of death and blood and agony.

That's the sacrifice that the Lord requires for sin to be forgiven. So whoever whoever is going to offer a sacrifice for sin must have that quality of life.

But also goes through the consequences of being the substitute going to suffer fearfully for it. What a prospect that is. Search as you will through mankind and human history.

There's only one that you'll find that measures up. There's only one that you will find that will do what is required. And that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 15 : 25 ] The Lord Jesus Christ. There on the cross there's the closest identifying of Christ with his people.

He is their substitute savior. He is there carrying their sins the closest possible identifying with his people. But at the very same time there is the greatest gulf between them and him as their savior because he is the perfect sacrifice which they are not.

And we know what happened. He suffered physically but especially spiritually. This Jesus Christ.

But the question comes to us who is this Jesus Christ? Who is he? And so we come to the answer given to us in this passage and in this verse.

God spared not his own son. At the very prospect at the very prospect knowing what was involved in paying the penalty for sin the agony involved at that very prospect God did not hold back his own beloved son.

[ 16 : 54 ] The son shared that divine eternal nature loved within the trinity by God the father God the son and God the Lord Jesus Christ.

An infinite love but there was going to be no slackening. There was going to be no reduction there was no what do we say today pulling of punches because of the relationship between God the father and God the son.

That's the measure of commitment that God is laying down for us here to ensure the sacrifice and the saving of his people.

Look at the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ lived. His meat and his drink was to do the will of his father. The totality of his life was one of obedience to the father.

The testimony of heaven was this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. And yet what happened? He was not spared.

[ 18 : 07 ] There was no reduction there was no pulling of punches just because of who he was. He was not spared so that his people might be spared.

It was deliberations from the counsels of eternity. He set out on a journey. He came into this world at the incarnation.

He walked that path that led and took him eventually to the cross. And all the while he was carrying a gift. It's a beautiful text.

We can linger on and get so much sweetness and strength from it. John 17 twice in that prayer of the Lord. he speaks about those whom the Father has given to me.

Those which the Father has given to me. And it's as if the Father in heaven is saying and I realize the limitations of an illustration but nevertheless it's as if the Father in heaven is saying to the Son look after them well.

[ 19 : 30 ] Look after them well. Everything that was against the name of every one of his children everything that was written in the book with your name or my name on it he took it.

That cup with your name or mine on it he drank every single drop that it contained so that we might never ever ever have to taste the fearful experience of God's wrath.

Commitment how can you measure it when you've got things like that about the Lord Jesus Christ how can you say God's commitment what can you say about God's commitment when you see him giving and sparing not his son from all that has entailed and all that it meant to be the savior of his people the suffering the one whom he loved from all eternity the one who was obedient the one in whom he delighted yet there was the deliberation of eternity within the trinity that he was going to go and die and suffer according to the demands of justice the penalty he took and there was no restraint placed there we spoke about Job at the very beginning remember what happened in the councils of heaven go back and read the first few chapters of

Job and the devil was there and he was going to go and plague Job but God the father set limits you can't go beyond that you can't go beyond that and there were limits set upon how far the devil could go into the life of Job but there was no limits set round about the Lord Jesus Christ there is never ever ever a shadow or a doubt in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and its application to his believing people sometimes you know we say have I gone too far have

I gone too far and we can be afraid and we can be cast down here we have a measure of God's commitment to the good of his people it's going to cost you the Lord will take you back with a broken heart and with bruised knees oh yes to be sure but he will bring you back that's the scale of his commitment he gave his son that's the intention he has no one else could meet it no one else could meet the demands of God's law the only one who did was Jesus Christ but he wasn't held back because he was the son of God he came and he paid the penalty that sin you and mine could be forgiven simple gospel truths set out before us sometimes when the table is spread like it is just now sometimes we are hesitant to take these truths to ourselves the sheer enormity of what we're handling in the gospel sometimes there's a restraint and we hold back and we say well for someone else but not for me

[ 23 : 48 ] God in his dealing with you and me alone and apart speaks in the simplest of terms and he gives these truths to you and to me to take to our soul that we can live comfortably in the light of them tomorrow and days to come no reason why any one of us should live in the shadow no reason why any one of us should live in a corner walk in the light enjoy the blessings know the privileges from the Lord the problem the way in which that commitment of the Lord is demonstrated in solving the problem he spared not his own son nothing was held back simply because he was the son of his love so if that's the commitment

I want to go on very briefly to look at the conclusion which Paul gives us here he says what does he say in verse 38 I am persuaded there's a certain logic to our faith that we've got to work through there's a certain logical consequence there's steps and stages that we're entitled to take and he says there's this and there's this and it leads to that and that's exactly what's happened to Paul he has been persuaded it's a passive verb something has come upon him something has happened to him as he's handled these truths as he shared them with the Christians in Rome as he brings them to us the same happens to us we have been persuaded about certain things there's a logical consequence that nothing nothing can separate us from the love of

God and Jesus Christ his son there has been a vital relationship established there has been a complete and perfect work done there are blessings and abundance made available don't let anyone don't let anyone rob you of these simple truths there's a conclusion that Paul is sharing with us here it's not just simply that you hold on it's not just simply that you're there squeaking through it's not just simply by the skin of your teeth all these are the cliches that we use today no what does Paul say we are more than conquerors the Christian demolishes these things are set out here by Paul against us it might look from our side as if it's a close call it might look from our side it might feel like our side that it's oh so close to the line but from

God's side the scale of the deliverance is enormous nothing and nobody will part us from the love of God in Christ Jesus his son that commitment that conclusion and how does he illustrate it for us the last thought I want to bring with you look at the contenders it's as if Paul is I said this morning I was on Fort William go to the top of Ben Nevis and there you can survey most not all but good bit of Scotland all the islands all the water all the hills all the rivers and it's as if Paul is there standing on some kind of pinnacle and he's surveying human experiences and he's looking at anything that comes into your life and mine and he says well what about death it brings a change the bonds are broken the family circle has an empty place in it does it not happen to every one of us suddenly we're told death is no respecter of persons families can be broken and parted but what about

God's family what about God's family does death come in to break the family circle of God's people no death will not does not cannot part us from Jesus Christ yes we might even lose touch with reality our mind might begin to wobble and our mind might begin to fail we might lose touch with reality before we pass from the scene of time that will not part us from the love of God in Jesus Christ death might come suddenly with little warning if any warning at all sometimes that won't part us from the love of God in Jesus Christ death no but what about the other thing what about life life today is full of so many distractions so many things we can have to fill our life we can see the way in which people's lives are packed with things just to keep them going a buzz through life what about life then and all that it offers and all it holds out will that distract us and draws away from

[ 30 : 08 ] Jesus Christ no as the Christian goes on and as we taste more and more of Jesus Christ to our soul the more we want him and the more we can let go by us we can just let these things sweep past us because they don't have the appeal that they once had we're not interested in them as much as we're interested in the Lord that's what happens when we come to discover more and more and taste more and more of what he's got for us life that will not intervene death no contention what about spiritual forces he says what about angels principalities or powers all he's saying is that should any or all of the spiritual forces that can be ranged against us if they were all to bear down upon one of us if we were left to stand on our own we would certainly fall but no we never stand on our own because we are safe in the arms of things present or things to come what about the past we've all got a past we've all got things we've done that would bring shame to our face if we were shared with the people beside us what about things to come in the future we don't know what the future holds but for some perhaps it might be awful it might be frightening we don't know and the unknown brings uncertainty and can scare us the

Lord says no the past the future nothing can break in to part us from the Lord height nor depth nothing we we we are never ever ever in a place in an experience where we are separated from or beyond the reach of the love of God in Christ Jesus lonely yes isolated yes out of the way corner certainly yet the eye of God is always upon us and follows us with his special love I've only once been in London where the Queen was moving around just where we were and there's a fascinating process takes place because the Queen drives in that car and there are about six or seven motorbike police people going up and down buzzing past it all the time whenever they come to a junction they'll put the bike across that junction to stop the traffic until the cars go past and then they go buzzing ahead to do it to the next junction so the

Queen has a sedate but unbroken journey from where she's come from to where she wants to go safe and certain because of these motorbike outriders that's not for everybody of course only for those and such as those but in the kingdom of God the Lord ensures that level of protection to every one of his people every one of his own are kept sure and safe not one of them will be lost that's the prayer that Lord gives and makes in John 17 not one remember we spoke about that journey he was on and the gift in his hand and the Lord Father saying look after them well and the Lord turns around and says everyone that you've given me I have indeed looked after well the commitment the Lord God gives and makes to the good the survival and the blessing of his own people we struggle at times to find words to put down markers for the commitment the Lord has and makes and gives to his own we find it difficult to give human illustration and example sometimes we're just simply reduced to saying that we know him and every day there's something new and fresh from him to my soul the way in which he's committed to his people and we discover that commitment in the little things known only to yourself just a little thing but it shows and brings home to you the commitment the Lord has to your ultimate good and well being the salvation which the

Lord has obtained through Jesus Christ come back to that problem we outlined at the beginning that problem has been dealt with in Jesus Christ and so the argument of this text is from the greater to the lesser if God has dealt with that the biggest problem that we ever could face if God has dealt with the problem of sin in your life and mine if that's the level of commitment that he has shown the argument is simply this God will deal with all other lesser problems he will solve all these other difficulties that you and I will ever have to face that's the comfort and the ease that's the commitment the Lord has made and the Lord has given but it's a commitment and an ease that is only available to those who trust in him let us pray