

The Kindness and Love of God

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- [0 : 0 0] Now before we turn to the Word of God, let us just say a few words. Lord, enable us to see what it is we are about, and to apply to our hearts where we need it that balm that we so much need, Lord, in our present day.
- And let thy light forth on your truth, may they shine forth, and take of the things of God, and reveal them unto us.
- For Jesus' sake. Amen. Now the reading was from the epistle of Paul to Titus, and chapter 3.
- And that is what we're going to look at for a few moments together on this evening. Because of our situation together here, and how greatly privileged we are that we can gather together and worship the Lord of glory, the Lord that so many do not know this evening.
- And it pains us that there are so many who do not know. And our heart's desire and prayer for God is that they might be saved.
- [1 : 3 9] And we all have them, dear friend, in our families, and beyond that. You can always think of someone tonight, that you may be praying for for a long time.
- And you've probably, on the point of giving up, what I would say to you tonight is, do not give up. Do not give up.
- Because that is giving in to Satan's strategy, my friend. Because he is the great enemy. And Paul here, we're going to look at verse 3 following.
- For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, and serving diverse lusts, and so on. And in verse 4 he says, But after that, the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.
- Not by works of righteousness, which we have done. But according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and so on.
- [2 : 5 7] Paul here was the Crete as we know it today, more so than they would have known it then, is known for as a holiday resort more than anything else.
- But it wasn't a holiday resort at that time. And I don't know what it's like even today. But this is where Paul had left. He had had a mission there.
- And he had established a little church, a gathering of believers. Believers. But Paul's strategy was always to move on to another place.
- Because there was such a great need. And isn't there a great need? In our own day and generation. That we cannot stand still and do nothing in a sense.
- But what he had done was, he had this young man, Titus, who had been helping him in various missions along the coast there.
- [4 : 0 1] And once he established the church, he then left it in this man's, which he knew himself. Paul was the type of mentor you would always want to have.
- Because he knew exactly how to teach people. He knew exactly what to say. He knew exactly how to give them good advice, in the things of the Lord.

And he wasn't talking secondhand. It wasn't about something he had learned in a book himself. But he had first knowledge of it himself. And he left this Titus for a while in Crete, while he moved on.

And he speaks of, he imparts to him the importance of the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Nothing else is as important as the fundamentals of our faith. Because these are the very foundations of our faith.

[5 : 08] And once the foundation goes, the Lord goes. And we see that today throughout our land.

Where the Bible has been challenged. Where anybody who stands up to say anything about Jesus Christ is jailed. A case is made against him.

Because of the enmity that is in the human heart. The human heart is not at peace with God. Far from it.

Far from it. And the more scope it has now, the more we see of that. And that is why he's telling it before, remember the things that I said to you.

Remember the things that I taught you. Remember, it doesn't matter whether you totally understood them or not, he said. But remember how important they are to the Christian faith.

[6 : 13] Like the death and resurrection, like the virgin birth, of all these things, my friend, are totally important. Whether people sweep them aside or not, there is no salvation without that, my friend.

And this is what he comes to, to them with that. He stresses the Christian life, my friend, in a day where many would profess to be Christian.

Because he says that himself, in chapter one, at the end of the chapter, they profess that they know God. But, in word works, they deny him.

What's the logic there, my friend? Because one thing is going against the other. What they're saying, and what they're doing. And this is what he's, he's, he's warning a tightest here, to speak to them about these things.

These are things that are really important to you and to me. Because, remember, he is not talking to a group of Christians like we have here.

[7 : 21] We're not, they weren't familiar, they were familiar to it, to a certain extent. Including a lot of their own input into it. But Paul is trying to get them, to get the input of their own out of it.

And allow Christ to fill their hearts. And this, because it was a pagan society that they had here. A pagan society.

And we see ourselves, that we are honest. We see threats of that making their way into our own lands today. Paganism, materialism, anyism, my friend, except the gospel.

Anything is tolerated, except the gospel. And if the gospel is not preached, you see, if they can get rid of the churches, if they can get rid of the ministers, and get rid of the elders, and get rid of the members, and all that, the Bible, then they've made it.

But, you see, we have, we have, a word that is, truer than that. He said, that the gates of hell, shall not prevail, against it.

[8 : 37] It'll shake it, it'll knock it, but it will not prevail, against it. And that is why Paul here, places, like a sort of a reality check.

And we can all do with that, from time to time, a reality check, just to see exactly, where we're at. What we believe, really. What is the, the, the good, that we have.

Instead of all that, centered on Christ Jesus. and he says, well, they are words of, of encouragement, my friend.

This is not a word, a sermon on discouragement. All our, our Christians, tonight, need, encouragement, more than anything else, that they need. In, after all, they have been through.

I know, that they are being, a subject to, through, from papers, from all angles, from the television, everything, is pointed, towards, the dismantling, of the kingdom, of God.

[9 : 43] But they're so foolish, that they cannot see that. But that doesn't stop, them doing it. So we're, touching on here, just now, three little things. In verse three here, where he said, for we ourselves, were sometimes foolish.

Paul doesn't exempt himself, from the situation here. He doesn't come in, and say, well, I'm above, everything, all the situations, that you have here. I, it doesn't, it's not relevant to me.

He, he goes right, straight into it, and he says, there is here, first of all, the ruination, by sin. Ruination, my friend, by sin.

We, ourselves, were also, foolish, disobedient, deceived, diverse, lusts, and pleasures, and hating, one another. That's what he starts with, my friend.

And that is where, he, whatever they say, this is what is right. Paul said, to the Romans, none righteous, he said, no, not even one, he said.

[10 : 51] None righteous, my friend, none good enough, my friend. Why is that? Well, because, the fall of man, brought mankind, into, an estate, of sin, and misery.

And sin, and misery, are always joined together, my friend. Wherever you see it working, it heads for misery. Sin, is heading for misery, because, the strong man, within us, has been conquered, was conquered then, the fall of man.

We have lost communion, with God, my friend. And we are under his wrath, and his curse, because of that. And that is why, we should not be content, in our former state.

He says, in another place, they were without God, and without hope, in this world. My friend. Now that's a, a pretty, dismal picture, isn't it?

Everybody has some hope, or another. Hope in something. But when it comes to the, the things here, we didn't have. And I include myself, in all this, the same as Paul was.

[12 : 10] And I include you, because, this was our picture. This is how God saw us, not as how we saw ourselves. We might have seen ourselves, good enough, because there were certain things, that weren't, in our lives.

But because of this, he says, this is what happened. We didn't. They didn't, like the Romans, they didn't, retain, the message, of God, in their knowledge.

There are people, you speak to, they don't want to hear, about God. They don't want to retain it, they don't want, anything to do with it. And they are the most, miserable people, surrounded, with so many problems, but nothing, nothing they can do, but they don't want, to hear the gospel, as Jesus said, but you will not, come to me, he said, but you might, find rest.

Do you know, that's where, you rest, as tonight. However, disturbed, your mind might be, or whatever, conflicting thoughts, are around you, this is where, it comes.

You've got to come, to the cross, my friend. Come to the cross, because none of us, came down from heaven, my friend. We were here, in this world, as sinners, my friend.

[13 : 39] And we are all sinners, still, but sinners, saved, by the grace, of God, my friend. And in the light of that, we and they, Paul says there, we ourselves, he said, we ourselves, we're trying to establish, our own righteousness.

Is that not what happens? Because, we've brushed aside, God's righteousness, we want to establish, our own, and just like the Tower of Babel, it only goes so far, and it falls over, after a while.

Where did this, lead people, where did it lead Paul? One of the extreme cases, of this, well, he was foolish, regarding the things, of God.

He hadn't, a clue, and he was, he had first class, honors, my friend, from Gamaliel's, lecture room.

First class. There was nothing, he couldn't answer. He knew all about that. But see, when, when, this moment came, things, had to change.

[15 : 03] Had to change. Paul wasn't, any longer, the big man, or the strong man, that he thought, that he was. He fell, to the ground, my friend, fell to the ground.

And there's a sense, in which we all, have to fall, to the ground. We have to, pray for grace, to enable us, to bend the knee, to God.

Because, we are such, proud, individuals. We don't like, bending the knee. But God wants us, to do that. Because, he is there, although he has created, all things.

Yet, he wants to be, with those, who are, poor, and broken, in spirit. And, who tremble, at his word.

Tremble, at his word. Martin Lloyd, John, Dr. Martin Lloyd, John, used to say, that, if we have never, trembled, before the word of God, that is in our home, that we haven't, technically, heard the gospel.

[16 : 14] It's quite a statement, but, the more you think about it, you see where it's coming from, and how real, it was, for him, and for all, round about.

freedom. Because, that, that's fallen creatures, we were prone, to wander, and we were prone, to leave, all these things, and establish, our own way of life.

And we called it, freedom. Didn't we? Freedom. See, that's what people, who are on drugs, are yearning for. Freedom. They want to rise, above the reality, of common life, it's here.

And, they only get so far, my friend. And there, there are devastating figures, today, out, regarding, the problems, that that has caused, my friend, in this world.

And how rich, that has made, other people, my friend, who are selling, these things to them. No, the classic, and all that, was the prodigal, who left, his father's house, and went away.

[17 : 32] And he wasn't, the first one, and he wasn't, the last one either, who did that. Until, he came, to himself, Lord, that's what he said, and realized, how well off, he had been.

And how sin, had devastated him, and brought him, down into the gutters, of this life, to feed swine, my friend. What, what could you do, without you, than do that, my friend.

An offense, by all means. But it's called, freedom. But the truth is, that there is no freedom.

The false prophets, called in the Old Testament, peace, peace. And they hurt, they healed the hurt, of their people, slightly, he says.

Slightly. But, at the end of the day, there was no peace, my friend. No peace. Because, this isn't the peace, that Jesus gives you.

[18 : 44] This isn't, the peace, that you're longing for, tonight here. Because, this one, no one, can take it from you, my friend.

This is the gift, of God, to you, my friend. And these people, had to realize that, he had to push forward, these words to them.

Difficult, as that was, and that was a difficult, ministry, in the midst of pagans, and all sorts of people. You know yourself, if you go into a, a gathering, and there's, a lot of unbelievers there, and they find strength, in, in, in, suing up against you, in cringing up against you, because of that.

But you know, that whatever, you, they have, they haven't, what God, what you have. And that's how precious, Jesus Christ is.

Precious, Jesus Christ is. Our people, who were out of favor, with God, are brought, into favor, with God.

[19 : 56] and they have peace, with God, through the Lord, Jesus Christ. Of course, they still reign, in their bodies.

We still have to fight, with sin, every day of life. We have to, because, we are still, on mercy's ground, and we are still, in this world, Lord, we haven't, been transferred, although we have, been transferred, from the kingdom, of darkness, into the kingdom, of light, we are still here, in this process, that goes on, on earth here, before, we are transformed, posed, other ways.

These are things, that belong, to your past nature, my friend, your past nature. Oh yes, you wrestle with them, oh yes, you have, but it's an indication, that there is something, good in you, my friend.

The old folk, used to say, that where there was, a real change, a real, change, in a person's life, my friend, that the doubts, would be right, behind them.

And that is true, they are there, right behind, at the door, of the heart, waiting, for an opportunity, to enter in. And Paul, is saying to them, well, you have to set this, before them, because, it is a wonderful thing, he said, according to the faith, of God's elect, and the acknowledging, of the truth, which is, after godliness, in hope, of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised, before the world, began.

[21 : 44] Before there were, eons of time, my friend. This was all done. That your name, was there, and for years, and thousands, of years, as it might be, that's how it was, until that day, when he knocked, at the door, of your heart.

We're not going to stay, on the ruination, of this thing, but it's a real, it is real, my friend. This is what is, causing all the problems, out there, sin, my friend. Because it breeds, sin, as James tells us, and then it breeds, death.

Eventually, it breeds death. That's what it's out for, that's what it wants, to do. But we want to move on, from that, to the redemption, by Christ.

Ruination by sin, redemption, by Christ, he said. But, there's another, very important word, there in verse 4, but, after, that.

But, after, that, he says. That is the moment, that changed everything, in Paul's life, and it is, what, encourages Titus, to press on, with the mission, that he has, until such time, as he sends others there, to relieve him, and, and, to move on, to something else.

[23 : 10] The redemption, that Christ, has brought us. By his mercies, he said, he saved the kindness, and love, of God. The kindness, and love of God.

This is, I think, contrasted against, the love, the love of God, our Saviour, over against, man's inhumanity, my friend, he sets this up.

The love, of God. Do you know, what this love, is tonight, my friend, in your heart? Do you think, that's a pertinent question, not an impertinent question, to ask?

Do you know it, what that love is, my friend? Peace, he said, like a river, floodeth my soul, he said.

That's what it's like, my friend, if it is describable, my friend. It is beyond that. He is on about people, who have been brought, into, a state, of grace, my friend.

[24 : 28] Grace. That's a wonderful, word, and a wonderful, work, in anyone's life. The grace, of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

My friend. And Paul here, only knows, only too well, what being brought, back was, what redemption meant, my friend. He knew it from, the Old Testament, my friend.

He knew it, how they sold the people, and sold slaves, some things like that, and brought them back, again, my friend, at a price. But this one, is the freedom, that comes, through Jesus Christ.

Freedom, for your soul, my friend. nothing to do, with your body, in a sense. It is your soul, my friend. You don't have anything, more precious here, tonight, or anywhere else here, than your soul, my friend.

And that is, what concerns me, more than anything else, my friend. Whether you have riches, or whether, you are poor, or whatever it is, my friend, it's this, and the riches, of Jesus Christ.

[25 : 41] Do you have that? Do you wonder about it, when you go to bed? Do you ask yourself, questions about it? Such and such, down the road, such and such, a person, or such and such, a lady, that you work, that she's not, where you were, before.

That is the problem, isn't it? And then, you see, the mind works it out, and finds some formula, and says, that's the reason for it. Oh, it's not, my dear friend.

It is because of God, the Father, who motivates them. God motivates your soul. Bringing them back, from the brink of lostness, my friend.

Lostness. That's what the gospel, is all about. That is what is preached, my friend. Because that we are lost, without Christ, we are lost. And we cannot save ourselves, my friend.

We can't go, along there, and offer them money, or something like that. You can't do that, because, it doesn't work. We're talking about, two kingdoms, my friend.

[26 : 50] We're talking about, the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom, of this world, here. And here, my friend, redemption, redemption, brought us back.

Brought us back, my friend. See, when God begins, to convict, convict us, of sin. The spirit, enters in, to convict us, of sin.

You see, there's no hiding place. You can't go, say, well, some people try, drink, and drugs, and the whole, machinery, works against them.

Because, it can't be done. They're working, with, with, worldly things, on, supernatural, things. And this is, the supernatural, that is touching, your life here.

if he speaks to you, tonight. Don't, my friend, if he speaks to you, from heaven, tonight, do you, give him, my friend, a listening ear.

[27 : 59] A listening ear. Because, he demands that. The son of God, he said, who loved me, he said, and gave himself, for me, he said.

When that wonder, strikes home, in your life, and you realize, why did Christ die? Why did Christ, leave the realms of glory?

Why did he die? Why was he, subjected to all that, cruelty? And go to the cross, of Calvary, for your sin, and for my sin.

There's no cheap ticket. No cheap ticket, here at all. Because, his love, then covers, a multitude of sins.

It washes, away, my friend, your sins, whatever it was, as if it had never been. Because, if a man, or woman, or child, be in Christ, he is a new, creation, my friend.

[29 : 06] The new creation. He's amazed at himself, or you were amazed at yourself, when free grace awoke you, from the light from on high, and the evil, shoot you, you tremble to die.

But once, you see, you realized what it was. That's the conviction, I think, prior, to the conversion. And Paul, here, uses the word, sound, here, very, very often.

The sound is not knowing, my friend, the right doctrines. A devil can know the right doctrines, my friend. But it's about, my friend, practicing the great doctrines of truth.

Putting them into practice, my friend. Putting our Christian life into practice, so that others cannot but see, that there is a change in my life.

He, before I, when I was converted, a person came to me, up to me on, on Cromwell Street, and asked me, if I would go in with him, for a drink, to drink.

[30 : 20] He had never asked me, before, in all my life. He was the stingiest person, you ever met. But see how Satan, manipulates, and works in, and gets him to say that, just to test, my friend, to test.

He's never short, of a book of rules, for that, my friend. And that's why, we have to be on our guard, my friend. Paul, wants him, to be strong, in the Lord, and the power, of his might, and have the right message, when he goes out, to preach to them there, and to give them, leeway in certain things, but not in other things, to do as it please.

A Christianity, that allows you, to do anything you want, is not a Christianity. It's not worth the paper. It's written on. And I'm afraid, there's a lot of that, around in our present day.

He says, rebuke them, sharply, when you see them. Because, once, you are, you are, redeemed here, you are redeemed, to love one another.

Out of your heart, flows rivers of water, my friend. rivers of water. But then, there is, the regeneration, by the Holy Spirit, he says, as well as part of it.

[31 : 56] By the washing, of regeneration. There's a lot of emphasis, put upon washing, and rituals, in the Bible, isn't there?

Because, he says, it's not of righteousness, he says, it's not of works, he says, but after that, the kindness of God, and our Saviour, towards man, appeared.

That's the mystery, that was hit, before the ages, was appeared. There was an epiphany, of it coming, forth, my friend. It stuns you, doesn't it?

when it hits you, when it hits you, not by works of righteousness. He was soon to discover that, my friend. There are churches who work on that, that is works righteousness, and whatever they do, they're guaranteed a place then.

I'm afraid, my friend, that's way off the beam, in this situation. It's nothing that we have done, my friend. That's the strange thing about it. It's nothing that you have done, or I have done, that deserves this.

[33 : 00] This is in God's elect purpose, that he knew, and he set in process, before the world began. That's what you find yourself, wrestling with, when you wrestle with things like this, my friend.

Certainly not works righteousness, not at all. It's not the mode of baptism, whether it's infant baptism, or whether it's adult baptism, or anything, a labour baptism, or whatever it is, my friend.

It is not. It is the washing of regeneration, my friend, through the Spirit of God, through the blood of Christ. That is what washes us clean, my friend.

That is what satisfies God, my friend. Satisfies God. And that is what saves you, and saved me, my friend.

That washing. It wasn't of our own, if we couldn't do it. It was the new birth, my friend. The new birth. Paul said, Jesus said to Nicodemus, realise this, he says, you've got to be born again, he said.

[34 : 17] And that is something that's outmoded today. It's not a common, it's not good to hear that, because that tramples on many, many toes, but it's the truth.

That's the only way you can be a Christian, is through the rebirth, being born again. And a highly intelligent person, like Nicodemus, couldn't fathom that out, because the heavens are higher, than the earth.

God is higher, than the earth. And he said, he started trying to explain, how that would happen, and he came up with a pathetic formula. You must, one lady once, spoke to Dr. Martin, Lloyd-Jones, after a sermon, when he had said to them, well, you have to be born again, you see.

And this, a prim and proper lady, thought she had no need of that, you see, she was above that. She had no need of that, so she confronted him at the door, and she said to him, why are you always on about this, born again?

Why do you have to be born again? Because, Mrs. he said, you must. That's all he said. You must, he said. You must.

[35 : 37] And there's nothing as wonderful that brings joy into the courts of heaven, my friend, when one sinner repenteth. One sinner. It brings joy into the sinner's life as well, because it brings new hope into your life.

A whole new world opens before you that you never knew anything about. You never knew you were as blind as that. I didn't know I was as blind as that. But as the home writer puts it, he says, I was blind, he said, but now I see.

Now I see. what you're on about here, he said. Not at all. New company. You were afraid, maybe, that you would lose your company, your friends, and things like that.

Well, don't be afraid of that, my friend. You won't. You'll have more friends than you ever had when you're in the family of God, my friend. More friends than you ever had.

And the new song that he put into your mouth, my friend. What was it? Some old lullaby? One old ballad?

[36 : 49] No. Our God to magnify. To magnify him. So the sinner who was loaded down with the seven vices that we have in verse 1 there, in verse 3, I should say, are now filled with the virtues that we have following on after that.

One and two. They obey the Master, my friend. And how do we obey the Master?

Well, by following the Master's instructions, my friend. Like anything you get, you get a manual with it, maybe with 20 languages or whatever, but back in the days it wasn't quite as complicated as that.

But it always said to read the instructions. and that is why we need to read the Bible more than we've ever done before. We need to find ourselves in the Bible, find what condition we are in, what our greatest need is, how it can be sorted out.

Because it is what you would not dare to die without, my friend. That's what I would say with you. You don't dare to die without it.

[38 : 23] Because Jesus died. Jesus went to the cross. Jesus had bought this, and Jesus said, it is finished, he said. It is finished. And how can we add something on to that?

Well, by believing him, my friend. By believing Jesus. He shed this abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, my friend, abundantly.

It didn't leave any of us, shortchange any of us along the way. And renewal like that requires us to continually surrender in the process of sanctification that the Spirit works in our lives, changed from glory unto glory, from vessel unto vessel, my friend, to remove the alloy and the dregs within us and make more room for Jesus in our lives.

Ah, but we are free. No, we are not, my friend, unless we have Jesus. If you have Jesus tonight, God bless you, you are free, my friend.

You are free. If you haven't, well, seek him where he is to be found, my friend. Seek him in this dangerous age, my friend, that we are brought into his will.

[39 : 58] That is the problem. With our sins, we are grinding against this, it's not synchronising at all. When you change your car there without using your clutch, you'll hear a noise, it doesn't want to enter, but once you get the two right, they slip into each other.

No problem. No problem. And that is how it is with God's will, you see, we can't be grinding against it. We have to submit to him and enter into that.

With a word, my friend, from St. Augustine, he said, that we are free, he said, when we delight to do God's will.

that's a challenge, when we delight to do, not grudgingly, but when he gives us grace to delight to do God's will.

It's a delight for me tonight to be here with you. It is. I've never been here before, I didn't even know where the church was.

[41 : 14] But that doesn't make any difference. When we come into God's house and God's place together, we find the common denominator that binds us all together.

So that he is to stand there, he is to profess this with them, that they are not to deny the Lord, he said, he has to correct them when they do the wrong thing, and so on, because he was such a good teacher himself, and a good mentor that you couldn't wish to have a better one than Paul.

I know, he says, in whom I have believed. I don't doubt in whom I have believed. He said, oh, he had his moments as well. Yes, but that's human nature with us.

But deep down, it said that, I know, in whom I have believed. Because this is not our home, my friend.

We are strangers and pilgrims, ushered on by the tides of time and providence to the eternity, my friend.

[42 : 32] And where then, what happens then, if we don't have a pilot to enter into the haven, my friend? What happens? Well, disaster, wouldn't it?

He said, I never knew you, he said. I never knew you. That's why it's important to know Christ. That is important to have this Christ on board.

Whatever other things you suffer in this life, and mark my words, you will. You hardly go through this life without having the difficulties that are common to mankind, my friend.

You are not on your own in that, and if Christ is with you, greater than man is present, my friend. Greater than man. sinfulness, and with that in mind, that sinfulness that has destroyed us and has separated us from our God, my friend, and all that that entails, are we heading for the harbour, my friend, for the haven, for the haven, are we?

Are we on course for it? Well, the mariner has to be on course for it, my friend, and those who are going to sail into that haven of peace, where Jesus Christ is himself.

[44 : 01] F.B. Mayer once said that he was a great evangelist, he was back and forth from Ireland a lot, on the ferries back and forth then, and he was very friendly with the captain who was on board the ferry, and he was up with them on one of the course nights they were coming across there, and he was bewildered, seeing, well, with the little amount of good stuff that they had then, there was no GPS's then, or radars, or anything like that, but they had their own way of doing it, and he said to him, how on earth do you know when you are right on course for the harbour, he said, and he said to him, well, he said, see these three lights that you see there, they're not together just now, he said, but by and by, he says, we'll get them to be together, we'll get the sailor, change course in such a way that we have the three as one, my friend, then I know, he said,

I'm bang on, right on, the middle of the entrance into the harbour, simple, but without the knowledge of it, it wasn't, and with Christ on board, my friend, will your anchor hold, will mine hold, in all the storms of life, my friend, or may God bless you, and bless the young people here, the youngish people here tonight, especially as well, it is wonderful to see young people in the church of Jesus Christ.

He will never leave himself without witnesses, my friend. Let us pray.