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# **GOD GLORIFIED**

**Will McKillop**

**John 13: 31, 32; 15: 7, 8; 2 Corinthians 1: 8-22; 1 Peter 4: 7-11**

It is on my heart, beloved brethren, to say a word with the Lord's help about God being glorified. It would be clear to us as instructed believers that ultimately God will be glorified eternally in His universe. The great final thought will be glory to God in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages (see Eph 3: 21). This wondrous passage in John 13 should touch our hearts. The Lord is speaking about Himself. Here we have the moral foundation of the universe of God in eternity. Indeed it is the moral foundation of the operations of God in the present universe. It touches the heart to think of the Lord referring to Himself as the Son of man. He came, a blessed Man, into a sinless condition of flesh and blood, out of heaven into a scene where the first man had dishonoured God in the presence of the universe. He came to glorify God through suffering in the presence of the universe. When Judas goes out, the Lord is free to speak of Himself as the Son of man.

That title brings out, in a way, the reality of the Lord's humanity as perhaps no other title does. He came into the same condition of flesh and blood as we are in, sin apart, and He came to deal with the whole matter of the dishonouring of God by the first man. It might seem strange to say that the first man dishonoured God in the presence of the universe, but the fact is that the whole angelic family was looking on. It was an angel, a fallen angel, who seduced the first man from obedience and led him into disobedience. By this act, God was dishonoured by His creature in the presence of the universe. The Son of man came to deal with that matter, to glorify God through love and obedience, and to glorify Him in respect of His majesty, His holy nature and His moral attributes. So He says, "Now is the Son of man glorified". The Lord is really speaking anticipatively because He had yet to take up the wondrous work of redemption, He had yet to deal with the matter of sin in the universe of God, but the Lord is looking on to the fact that He would be

glorified and that God would be glorified. So He says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him". God was dishonoured in Adam; that was been the history of the first man; God has been dishonoured. But this blessed Man came into this scene to glorify God and to deal with the whole serious matter of what had come in to affront the majesty of God. So He says, "God is glorified in him"; that would allude especially to the cross; God was glorified by a Man in love and obedience even unto death. We can, in a little, understand how the Lord's feelings would be so deep and intense as He spoke about this, being free to do so as Judas had gone out. He says, "If God be glorified in him, God also shall glorify him in himself". God was glorified in the Son of man: His majesty, His nature, His moral attributes were all glorified in Christ as He suffered on the cross and as He went into the grave. He says, "God also shall glorify him in himself". There is hardly anything that so touches the heart as the fact that God came down in love and grace in a Man into the scene where He had been dishonoured, and this blessed Person, the Son of man, so glorified God that He glorified the Son of man in Himself. We might say God came down in grace and now man has gone up in righteousness and is in the glory of God. A wonderful matter for our contemplation, wonderful food for our souls, that God came down in love and grace; the Son of man in love and obedience glorified God in respect of all that had taken place, and now God has glorified Him in Himself. The Son of man is at the right hand of God in the glory of God. Stephen saw Him there; "he saw the glory of God, and Jesus", Acts 7: 55. Then the Lord adds "and shall glorify him immediately". The Lord has not had to wait for His public vindication (that time is coming when He shall be revealed in His glory and we shall be with Him, blessed be His Name!) but in the meantime He is glorified immediately for He is crowned with glory and honour. What should be so appealing to us is that the immediate sphere down here of His glorification is the assembly. It is not only that He is in the glory of God, and crowned with glory and honour in heaven, but He is being glorified here by the Holy Spirit in persons, the kind of persons we have been speaking about – washed, sanctified, justified and available to God.

Having said that, I would like to refer to what I read in John 15 because I believe in that passage we have the Lord's own feelings, intense feelings, that He might draw us into this current of glory to God. So He says, "In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and ye shall become disciples of mine". Surely it touches our affections that the Lord would say to us, "In this is my Father glorified". John 13 is really a question of God and man but John 15 is the Son speaking about His Father whom He loved and in whose affections He lived. So He says, "In this is my Father glorified". Think of the Lord speaking to us currently about "my Father", that is, His Father, and saying, "in this is my Father glorified". The "in this" refers to what follows, "that ye bear much fruit, and ye shall become disciples of mine". So the Lord would draw us into the holy current of His own affections for His Father. Surely that would appeal to us, beloved, that He is thinking about the glory of His Father, "In this is my Father glorified". So He says, "That ye bear much fruit"; fruit is, as we know, an extensive matter in Scripture. There is the fruit of righteousness which is by Jesus Christ, there is the fruit of the Spirit and as we have in Romans there is fruit unto holiness; it is an extensive matter and the Lord would say to us as the evidence of life manifests itself in fruit, "My Father is glorified". This is a matter of deepest import to the Lord Himself. His love for the Father is such that He would not be content to have us other than bearing much fruit. He also says, "and ye shall become disciples of mine". I suppose this would be a full and mature thought of discipleship. It is not just the initial thought, but it is persons who are wholly attached to Christ. Not only subject to Him and taught by Him, but keeping near to Him because they enjoy His love. John sets it out in the earlier chapter, the disciple whom Jesus loved, (see John 13: 23). And where was he? Leaning on the breast of Jesus and in the bosom of Jesus. The Lord would say that becoming disciples of Mine you will prove My priestly support, you can lean on My breast and you can enjoy the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge, you can be in My bosom, and this leads to Christ's Father being glorified. That is not a question of what we may say, it is what we are as formed by the love of Christ.

I referred to the passage in 2 Corinthians because the apostle has in view that we should be in this together. He says, “for glory to God by us”; that would be a collective thought and it is the result of the knowledge of the Son of God. It is one of the things that is spoken of in Ephesians 4, “until we all arrive at ... the knowledge of the Son of God” (v 13). So the preaching in Corinth by the three, Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus, had in mind that the saints should be established unshakeably on this foundation, that they should be immovable as having the knowledge of the Son of God. So he says, “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, he who has been preached by us among you ... did not become yea and nay, but yea is in him”. The footnote is helpful, it says, ‘the verification of all divine truth is in the Person of Christ’. I would encourage us to go in for this kind of knowledge, to reach this blessed Person and to reach Him in stability and immovability. As we are more on those lines, it is for glory to God by us. Paul says, “whatever promises of God there are”. If we had time, we might refer to the many promises that there are in Scripture. Peter alludes to them, speaking about “the greatest and precious promises”, 2 Peter 1: 4. I would encourage the beloved younger brethren to search them out tonight for themselves because it will fill your hand and your heart with substance for tomorrow. That was the point in one of the earlier readings today, that our hands should be filled. Indeed if we understand the way in which Moses speaks in Deuteronomy, he says, none shall appear before Jehovah empty (see Deut. 16: 6). No one who has come under the influence of the love of Christ would be other than exercised to have something to bring in the way of spiritual substance. Deuteronomy 26 shows that. The man brings the firstfruits of the land in his basket; the basket really refers to himself viewed abstractly as the work of God. We spoke about that in the last reading. It is wonderful to learn to think of yourself apart from your history and your natural connections, to view yourself from the standpoint of the purpose of God. It says in Corinthians, “of him are ye in Christ Jesus”, 1 Cor 1: 30. It is wonderful to regard ourselves, beloved brethren, in that light, that we are of God and in Christ Jesus. So he says, “for glory to God by us”. This great matter is proceeding in the

assembly (I suppose if we think of it abstractly) all the time, glory to God in the assembly in Christ Jesus (see Eph 3: 21). The apostle in speaking of that does not confine it to particular times or places; he is speaking abstractly about what the assembly is from that point of view and what proceeds in it. Then we have this wonderful matter of what God has done, "Now he that establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God". This matter is so vital that God Himself has taken in hand to establish us together in Christ; "he that establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God".

Think of how God has dignified us. Indeed Romans says, "whom he has justified, these also he has glorified", Rom. 8: 30. I am speaking about how we are brought into the current of glorifying God, but God would say to us, "I have glorified you". You might say, how has He done that? It is in the gift of the Spirit, He has anointed us with the holy anointing oil. It touches the heart that the same Spirit with which Jesus was anointed is the Spirit with which we are anointed, it is the same holy anointing oil. God could not dignify us more than by anointing us with what He anointed Christ with. So you see how this liberates us from needing any distinction in the world or on the earth; we do not need it at all because we have heavenly distinction and God Himself has done it. He has sealed us; we referred to that in the reading, that is divine ownership, God never regards us as other than His property. He has given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Think of God giving us this blessed Person in our heart; that the Spirit who is the earnest might bring the light and joy and power of what is eternal into our hearts. It is not here the earnest of our inheritance, that is another thought, it is the earnest of the Spirit. And where is He? He is in our hearts. God says, "Not only have I dignified you so that you appear in My presence as suited to it in all its glory and majesty, but I have given you the earnest of the Spirit which enables you to enjoy all that has shone out in Christ". It really means what there is in Christ as Man (in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily) is available to us at the present time.

I touched on the passage in Peter because Peter is practical. As we know he is a kingdom man and he takes account, as divinely fitted for it, of divine operations and of how they apply to the saints at the present time. So he says, "But the end of all things is drawn nigh". We had a touch of that earlier; "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed", Rom 13: 11. "But the end of all things is drawn nigh: be sober therefore". You take a look at things from this point of view and you see that they are not going to continue forever. Noah would illustrate this; God said to him, of man in the flesh, his days shall be one hundred and twenty years, which was evidently the length of time it took Noah to build the ark. Noah would have a very sober view as day after day went on. So the apostle is saying to us, have a sober view; be sober and be watchful unto prayers.

That is greatly needed because if we are not watchful unto prayers, Satan will soon find a way to insinuate himself into our lives or our households or our localities. "Be watchful unto prayers; but before all things having fervent love among yourselves". That is a great matter, fervent love. We spoke about the new man in the previous reading and he is a creation; he does not set out love exactly, he sets out the moral attributes of God because he is created after God in righteousness and holiness of the truth. But chapter 5 of Ephesians, which we also referred to, brings us to the nature of God and that involves generation. We are born of God and therefore we have His nature, which is love. That does not come about by creation but by generation. So the apostle really is alluding here to the fact that we are born of God. He does not say it, but were we not born of God we could not have fervent love among ourselves.

Because we are born of God, love can be extant among us. Fervent love among ourselves can be dominant in our localities. Peter refers to other things which I will not go into, but then he says, "each according as he has received a gift". Every one of us has received something from God; in Ephesians 4 it refers to the measure of the gift of the Christ and the gift there is grace, every one of us has received that gift. Here there is another thought that is allied to that, "each according as he has received a gift, ministering it to one another, as good stewards of the various grace of God". We

not only have fervent love among ourselves but we have the means of enriching one another because grace carries with it that thought, that it enriches as it flows among us. "As good stewards" he says, that is, we are careful to add to the supply of what will enrich the saints. Good stewards, not holding back, not finding we have no means, but we are good stewards of the various grace of God. It is all with a view to God in all things being glorified through Jesus Christ. I think that is a wonderfully touching matter, that the normal operation of life in the assembly is God glorified. His nature is active among us, fervent love among ourselves, we are working in the enriching distribution of His grace and it leads to God being glorified, "that God in all things may be glorified", but "through Jesus Christ".

That is really how God will become glorified in the universe; the foundation is in John 13 where I read, but the Lord will operate until the whole universe becomes active in glorifying God. How great He is that He can do that, and He will do it. He is showing us that already in what He is doing in our localities. No wonder the apostle breaks out into this doxology, "to whom is the glory and the might for the ages of ages. Amen". How these wonderful matters would fill our minds and hearts, beloved brethren, as we think now about what is before us, the Lord's Supper, the holy and precious matter we spoke of earlier today, "This is my body, which is for you". In that body down here He was the blessed vessel in its infinite fulness of divine grace and the infinite fulness of God's love came out in the shedding of His blood. That is the blessed Person that we are going to call to mind if He has not come for us in the meantime. But how our hearts flow together in admiration of Christ in His glorious greatness that ultimately He will bring the universe into such a condition that it will be glorifying God. But He is able to do that already with us and He is doing it; our hearts would delight in saying to Him "to whom is the glory and the might for the ages of ages.

Amen". It is wonderful to finish these two days with our souls just entranced with the glorious greatness of Christ, to find that He is becoming increasingly precious to us, and we are becoming increasingly worshipful as we think of His wondrous ability to bring

everything into a condition for the glory of God. May the Lord bless the word.

**NEW YORK**

**October 2000**

## **PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD**

**Robert Gardiner**

**Luke 15: 11-24; Isaiah 61: 1-3; John 21: 1-12 (to “Come and dine”)**

The railway systems in various cities have what the local people call an up line and a down line. This morning some of us in various rooms in this city enjoyed the experience of being on the “spiritual” up line. We moved from our households from one level of glory to meet with the saints from other households and as we gathered together we reached another level of glory. As we looked upon one another and saw the work of God in one another and the features of Christ in one another we reached another level of glory. We then remembered the Lord in the wilderness, but as we remembered Him, He came in amongst us and we went with Him from glory to glory.

We were on the up line, my dear friends. Were you there? I am not simply referring to people who may not have been physically there; I am asking, were *you* there? You may have been there in person.

You have even have partaken of the Supper, as we speak, but were you there? Were you in the presence of the Lord, and, under the leadership of the Lord, transformed from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit (see 2 Cor. 3: 18)? Did you enjoy something, however small and momentary it may have been, of the place that the Lord has prepared? And in that place did you understand something of the greatness of the riches of the glory of the Father, as with Christ and empowered by the Spirit, we could praise and worship as we will eternally? That is what the gospel is all about. It is about bringing vessels of mercy and fitting them for glory. There is only one way and the gospel comes to tell you of the way. Because, if there is an up line and if the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s well-beloved Son is the Leader of the praise on the up line, the Lord Jesus Christ, the same One, is the One who came down to meet poor sinners who are on the down line.

So I want to speak to you of what I have read. Because there were persons in this world, and I and others in this room have been

among them, who were on the down line of degradation, of shame, of sin. We knew what it was to have been brought up in a Christian household, a household where our parents brought us to the meetings, as we say, but it may be that we did not realise, but perhaps realise now, that we were on the down line of degradation.

If you are still in your sins, that is the line you are on. And that is why I read about this younger son in Luke 15. How like all of us he is! I want to remind you as we speak of this younger son of the man on the Jericho road. The two coalesce in many ways. The man that was going from Jerusalem to Jericho is a similar young man; I suggest, to you that he was going from his father's house to the far country. "Give to me the share of the property that falls to me", and he went out and dissipated his living. The other man, in Luke chapter 10, went from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves and they stripped him and wounded him and left him in a half-dead state. That is the enemy, the work of the devil, the one that would usurp the place of God in your heart and he is taking you and stripping you and wounding you and leaving you in a half-dead state.

So this other man in Luke 15 goes into a far country and he lives in debauchery. The power of the enemy over the man that is away from God! – he stripped him, inflicted wounds and left him a half-dead state. So this poor man in Luke 15 is living in debauchery, living in a half-dead state, "fain would he have filled his belly with the husks that the swine were eating and no man gave unto him". Oh my friend, there are few friends in the world when you are down and out, but the man on the Jericho road *was* found by a true friend who had compassion and who came up to him. I think that point, and the point when the man in Luke 15 came to himself, coalesce. The man in Luke 15 came to himself and said, "How many hired servants of my Father's have abundance of bread", and the man on the Jericho road found the "certain Samaritan" coming out in glorious compassion to meet his need as a poor, wounded, half-dead man, he bound up his wounds pouring in oil and wine. Are you in that state tonight? You know, there was a cry once, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?", Jer. 8: 22. Tonight I can tell

you there is an abundance of balm in Gilead, there is a beloved physician. His name is Jesus! He shall save His people from their sins. This is the one who came up to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine. The balm of Gilead in profusion poured in by the good Physician. And then he took him to the inn and said, "take care of him, and when I return ...". The Lord is about to return, glorious day for the saved person, for the believer in Jesus. The man in the inn would be waiting with bated breath for the return of that Samaritan who had met him when he was in a half-dead state and brought him to the inn. What kind of an inn was it? Was it an inn like the inn that Jesus could not find any place as a babe? No, it was not. It was an inn that was populated, if I could use that word, with persons like the man that had been found in the half-dead state all awaiting the return of the Man that had in compassion saved them from their sins.

Well, I said the Lord came down to meet us in our need. He came into this world, He who thought it not an object of rapine to be on an equality with God, emptied Himself, took upon Him the form of a bondman and in that form humbled Himself and became obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross, (see Phil. 2: 6-8).

It says of the man on the Jericho road that the Samaritan came up to him. Oh, the death of the cross; the Lord went down, down, down into the earth. He suffered for our sins in His own body on the tree, was buried, was raised again according to the Scriptures; a glorious Man this afternoon in heaven, a Prince and a Saviour. "Wherefore God has highly exalted Him, giving Him a name that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow".

What about the name, Jesus? Does it mean anything to you? "Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins". This is the Man we present to you. This is my Saviour, this is the One that God desires should be your Saviour. God has found His infinite delight in that Man and will do so eternally and His desire is tonight that you might find Him as your Saviour.

So I read in Isaiah because I believe the feelings that are exemplified in these verses are portrayed in Luke 15 when the man

found that there was an answer to his debauchery, and to his need, in his father's house. It says there, "he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted"; that man was broken-hearted. Have you ever been broken-hearted my friend? Have you ever been before God broken-hearted knowing that "in me, that is in my flesh, good does not dwell"? Have you been before God in the recognition that you are a deep-dyed sinner and there is no way out?

You, go along the motorway and sometimes find that you are on the wrong road. Oh, how many people are on the wrong road? The man from Jerusalem to Jericho was on the wrong road, the man from his father's house to the far country was on the wrong road. There is an exit on that wrong road; you can take a way out. If you do not take the way out tonight you may find yourself in a place where there is a sign that says, 'No way out'. Oh, how solemn! But now there is a sign that says "exit", there is a way out, there is a way out for the broken-hearted, there is a way out for the captive, there is a way out for those that are bound. The way out is by way of Jesus. He not only *is* the way out, He *made* the way out. He was the sacrifice and the One who sacrificed, He is the blessed One who was made sin. He was never tainted by sin when He was here, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, made higher than the heavens", Heb 7: 26. What a glorious Man is Jesus, the One that God could look down upon and say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt 17: 5. But He went down to make a way for us to be relieved as captives, bound as those that mourn, as broken-hearted, that we might come out in liberty and joy in the presence of God. The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin. This glorious Man went by way of the cross; they took Him to Calvary, they took Him to the place of a skull called Golgotha and there they crucified Him. Do you ever think of the place Golgotha? Have you ever looked at a human skull? A human skull is full of nothing. All the intelligence of man took Him to the place of a skull, the emptiness of man's mind; if they had known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But Isaiah goes on, and the point I want to come to is, "Beauty should be given unto

them instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness". The best robe in Luke 15 is the garment of praise, my friend. Eternally there will be those who have put their trust in Jesus, clothed with the garment of praise, and in that situation they will be set up, as "terebinth of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified".

Secure and stable and in that stable position glorifying God. This is the gospel. This is the emancipation that God would offer to you tonight through His well beloved Son. He is asking you to accept Him, to put your trust in Him, to put your faith in Him, to believe in Him – "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house", Acts 16: 31. You remember that jailor in Philippi, you remember how he cried to Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" There he was, he was bound by his sins and at that point he cried, "What must I do to be saved?". 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house'.

Now I have read about these seven disciples at the end of John's gospel because, some of us have known this experience practically. It may be there is some person in this room tonight who knows something of this. These disciples knew the Lord, they had travelled with the Lord, they knew Him as the One who had gone into death to secure the basis for their salvation. They probably heard that same gospel preaching in Isaiah 61 preached by the Lord in Luke 4, when he said "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears" (v 21). They heard it, they had enjoyed His company. What blessings they had known as they companied with Him for those three and a half years. But now there was a point when Peter says, "I go to fish", and they said we will come with you. They went out and they toiled the whole night and they took nothing. Peter was a successful fisherman earlier on and here he is toiling the whole night and he takes nothing. He is away from the Lord. The seven of them were away from the Lord on a fishing expedition. It must have been doubly sad for Peter to toil all night and take nothing. Peter appears to have been fond of sleep. He slept on the mount of transfiguration, he slept in Gethsemane, he liked to sleep and here he was toiling all

night and taking nothing. You can almost hear him saying, 'I could have had a good sleep'. Oh, the Lord was watching over Peter and the others. He knew where they were. Thank God the Lord has watched over us and He knew where we were. We knew what it was to know our sins forgiven, to have been granted the gift of the Holy Spirit, to know the blessedness of relationship with Christ in the presence of the Father, and yet a time came in some of our lives when we decided to go on a fishing expedition. We left the Lord.

Why am I constrained to speak about this? I do not know. But there may be some person in this room who was brought up in a Christian household, knew what it was to enjoy the blessedness of the Lord's presence and His company, but is now away from the Lord. Is there one soul in this room that has gone on a fishing expedition and taken nothing? I ask you, be honest with yourself, have you taken anything? But the Lord is so gracious. 'Have you anything to eat?' 'No nothing'. Put the net down at the right side of the boat and up comes a net full of fish. The Lord in His grace, abundant grace, has a fire of coals and He has bread and fish laid on the fire. He says, 'Bring of the fishes which you have taken'.

Then He says, "Come and dine". What a Saviour, what a Lord! Toiled all night and took nothing, back into the presence of the Lord Jesus, my Saviour, to find that there is a fire, there is bread and there is fish laid on it, and He says, "Come and dine". There is no word of retribution, just "Come and dine". If this afternoon you have gone away from the Lord, have toiled and taken nothing, He is waiting for you, He is beckoning you. He is prepared now to give you the wherewithal to take you through into all eternity for your blessing and His praise and God's glory.

My friend, there is one more opportunity, one more exit from the downward path that you might come with the rest of us on the up line, led by Christ, the Man who died for us and lives for us and is waiting to take us into the presence of God Himself when we shall have bodies of glory like unto His own body of glory. In the meantime while we wait for Him to come for us, we can enjoy these same blessed relationships as we are with Him in the power of the

Spirit in the glorious greatness of what is for the pleasure of God.  
May you accept Him this afternoon for your blessing for His Name's sake.

**NEW YORK**  
**October 2000**

# THE LOVE OF GOD

**J.A.Gardiner**

**Romans 5: 7-10; Mark 15: 33-39; Exodus 30: 11-16**

I would like to say something about the love of God. It is very gracious of God to commend it to us. Paul speaking here says, "Hardly for the just man will anybody die, but for the good man someone may also dare to die", and then he says in comparison to that, "God commends his love to us in that we being still sinners Christ has died for us". God's love has been greatly questioned, indeed God himself has been greatly questioned in these days. Men trying to work out, to reason out the whys and the wherefores of this terrible disaster in the East, the tsunami, when about one hundred and fifty thousand persons perished. They are anxious to know why God did not intervene. He has power creatorially to do it. Why did he not do something about it? The top men and the ecclesiastical hierarchy have spoken about it, written papers about it, trying to reason out the whys and the wherefores of this awful tragedy. But I have not heard anyone write, or say, that God commends his love to us in that we being still sinners Christ has died for us. To question God's love, in the face of what He has given, in giving up his beloved Son, is surely the evidence of darkness, because, if we look at the cross of Christ, God not sparing his own Son, we can see the manifestation of a heart of love in fulness, in order that righteousness might be accomplished and that love might have full play in blessing, and that blessing for us. How wonderful that is! He commends His love to us, Paul says here, not in the hope that we might do something to merit it, or that we might be more accommodating to Him, but He did it when we were still sinners. It goes on further. It says, not only were you sinners, but if being enemies we have been reconciled to God through the death of his Son. Think of the natural man, God's creature, an enemy of his Creator. Do you believe that? The enmity in the heart of man is such that, he has become an enemy of God. You read what all those learned men say, and it is very sad to see the depths, the

intensity of the darkness, whereas the scripture is very plain. It says that, "God commends his love to us in that we being still sinners Christ died for us". Beloved, if you feel that you are unconverted, that you are not saved, that you have not been reconciled to God by Him, and saved from the coming wrath, it speaks of that here in this verse. That is the second time that wrath has been mentioned in this epistle. The wrath of God from heaven is revealed in the glad tidings, Paul notes earlier, in chapter 1. Now he is speaking of being saved by Him from wrath, that is by Christ. If you belong to the Lord Jesus, if you are saved, if you are under the shelter of his blood, as it says here, justified in the power of His blood, saved by Him from wrath, what a happy person you must be, what a thankful person you must be to be conscious of your being saved from wrath. Christ is your Saviour, the burden of your guilt that lay upon you is gone. He has borne it in his own body on the tree. He has set you free and set you at liberty with God. Is that you? Is that me?

Am I happy with God? The glad tidings of glory of the blessed God. (I understand that could be interpreted as happy).

God is delighting in Christ sitting on His throne. He has sat down with His Father on His throne. This is all very wonderful and very blessed. And how has this been wrought out? It has been wrought out through the depths of unmitigated sufferings. How soberly, therefore, we should consider how God has wrought in order that we might be saved, that we might not only have the guilt of our sins removed from us, a clear conscience with God and have the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Think of what I have read in Mark's gospel, the holy intimacy between Christ and his Father. That is why I read it. The Lord Jesus did not go into death, and such a death, without knowing where He was going or what was coming upon Him. Think of this situation in Gethsemane when He goes through the whole matter in His spirit, 'He began to be amazed and oppressed in spirit'. The devil would be there bringing before Him the awfulness of what crucifixion was. That is terrible in itself to be crucified, put on a cross, nailed on a cross. He did not have to go that way. He had

power to walk away and leave them, those evil, wicked men who sought to take Him captive and deliver Him up to the Romans. He manifested that in the garden. But then He says, "If ye seek me, let these go their way". Think of Jesus alone there delivering Himself into the hands of the wicked people. The Psalmist says, "he gave his strength into captivity, and his glory into the hand of the oppressor", Ps 78: 61. Why? In order that the gospel might be preached here in Peterhead, in order that you might hear it, and that I might hear it and that I might hear about Him and what He has done in the manifestation of God's love in its fulness, prepared to undergo the awfulness of the trial and all that was before Him, not only the cross, but the awful judgment of God, that wrath that we read of in Romans, poured upon His head.

I read this scripture in Mark because it brings out the holy intimacy that was between Jesus and the Father. He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee: take away this cup from me", Mark 14: 36. "Abba, Father" – I suppose it is probably impossible for creature understanding to appreciate the intensity of that relationship, and the fulness of the love that existed between Christ and the Father. And He is facing this cup. He is going to drink the cup of wrath, in order that the glad tidings may be available to you and me. And this is testimony to God's love. Why should persons question God's love if they read the scripture? Satan, the devil, the great source of darkness would seek to darken your heart. The Spirit of God would enlighten us and let us see the greatness of the love that is manifest here. He says, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee: take away this cup from me; but not what *I* will, but what *thou* wilt". He is subject to the will of God – pure, holy, perfect Man. So He had no reason whatsoever to die except that He loved the will of God and He thought about you and me. That is what is called "acting vicariously". How wonderful that is. He is submitting to this. The power of the devil is there bringing it all before Him, on His spirit. And He bears it all and goes through with it. Further on it says, "And when the sixth hour was come, there came darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour". He had been on that cross

for three hours, suffering the awfulness of that physical suffering, feeling the awfulness of the reproach that was being poured out upon Him. He despised the shame. It was below his dignity. I love to think of that.

All the awful things, the taunts and the jeers that were being poured out upon Him, He despised. He endured the cross, despising the shame. There was joy set before Him and He is going into that joy. But I am not thinking of that at this moment. I am thinking of depths of sorrow and suffering that He endured, that He bore. At the sixth hour there came darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. That is three hours. And during that time, during those three hours He was bearing the wrath of God for my sins, and I thank God, and will do so eternally that that is the case. And during those three hours – and you think of the compression that must have gone into those three hours because during that three hours, He exhausted the judgment of God against sin, the wrath of God completely exhausted, so that God has nothing more to say to sin – but during those three hours He was bearing the judgment of God that you rightly deserve. He was bearing it vicariously. He was bearing it for you, to be your substitute; to take your place. He took my place and He never wilted. He never faded. He went through these three hours in the strength of a sinless, holy humanity. Think of the terribleness of what that was. Never forget that during those three hours, He bore your sins and He bore mine. He bore the wrath of God against them. You say, ‘But I was not born; how could that be?’ Peter tells us that He bore our sins in His body on the tree (see 1 Peter 2: 24). He is thinking of a whole race. Jesus was making propitiation for God, clearing the way for God. And as soon as the three hours are over, and He goes into death in power, He cries with a loud voice – “Jesus having uttered a loud cry expired”. There has never been a death like the death of Christ. You may have seen persons die. Some people die suddenly, others have a prolonged time of weakness and they die. But the whole thing is weakness. The sentence upon fallen man is death, and nobody dies in power, physical power. You may think of Moses of whom it says his eye

was not dim nor his natural force abated but that may be an exception. They died in weakness. But not Jesus. He retained His strength through these three hours when God was pouring out His wrath upon Him. He was maintaining and sustaining that in the strength of a holy, incorruptible humanity. There is the true sin offering, exhausting the judgment of God in order that you might be saved. God commends His love. God is saying 'this is My love'.

Here in this chapter, 'this is my love'. I was prepared not to spare mine own Son, but to freely deliver Him up for you all. So the great matter of atonement has been made during those three hours of darkness. A soldier pierces His side with a spear and the blood comes out. The blood is carried right into the very presence of God and God is glorified immediately. What happens next? The veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom. God does not delay. Jesus bore the judgment. As soon as that judgment is exhausted, God is free. He is free in love and He is free in grace and free in blessing to men. His grace, His love, His concern was as much for that soldier whose spear pierced the side of Christ. It was available to him as to you and me tonight. That is the God of the Gospel.

That is the God that men have queried, Does God love? Why should this be? Why should that be? Man has cast out God's Son.

They do not want him. They say, "We will not have this man to reign over us. Away with him". You say, But that was the Jew. That is your heart, the same as mine, unless God does something, unless there is a change and a new beginning. He has the wherewithal to give you a new beginning. He said to Nicodemus, you must – it is essential – you have to be born anew. Unless you are born anew you will never see the kingdom, you will never see this rule of blessing and wonderment that is going to be brought in. You will never see persons wholly in subjection to God, delighting in God.

Nicodemus could not follow it. Maybe I cannot. But the facts remain. God has prepared by His Spirit, and the Spirit acts sovereignly in the new birth. How blessed that is. All of God. The gospel asks nothing of man at all. Not one thing. God has provided everything. If you need faith, ask God. It is the gift of God. If you feel you need the Spirit to change your attitude, your outlook, He is

available. Think of the riches of God's love poured into the glad tidings, so much so, that it comes right down to where you are. It speaks to your heart. It speaks to your intelligence but He wants your heart. He wants your heart to be like His heart, a heart of love. How blessed. Oh let His good news lead you to repentance.

I read in Exodus, because that is your answer to it. The ransom money is very precious. The rich shall not give more, the poor shall not give less. How beautifully it has been said that you sitting there, and me standing here, cost the Lord Jesus the same as it cost Him to secure the apostle Paul, the same as it cost to secure the apostle Peter, and John and James, all the worthies of the testimony. You were the same cost. They did not cost more than you cost. So you have a half shekel. What does this mean? It is to be contributed for the service of the sanctuary. Oh, you say, all these persons you speak of are great persons and very able and so forth. What am I to do? You are to be moved in your heart by the compassions of God, you are to take your body and present it as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your intelligent service (see Rom. 12: 1). You do not have to be clever to understand that. It is your intelligent service to present your body.

Do not let the plague come upon you. The plague abounds, and the plague at the moment, I feel, is a materialistic plague. You go back sixty or seventy years and it was a different plague. It was not a materialistic plague. You never thought in your life that you would be so well off as you are now. All you need to do is look at the cars outside the meeting rooms. It was not always like that. Do not let that overcome you. Piety overcomes the plague, "it is profitable for every thing". Jesus went about here in poverty. I am not saying that there is virtue in poverty, but I am saying, do not let the materialistic plague affect you and your links with the sanctuary. That is important. You are to contribute your body a living sacrifice, your intelligent service. Start with the Lord's Supper and proceed with the meetings that follow it and there you are with your body. You are available. This is the working out of Christianity. This is the answer to the manifestation of God's love in Christ. 'You belong to God, you

are not your own', Paul says. You do not do what you like. You are not your own. You have been bought with a price, and we have seen something of the cost. Then he says, "Glorify now then God in your body", 1 Cor 6: 19. Let us be in the testimony.

I hope I have been able, in some measure, to show the wonder of God's love. Its holy constancy never changes, God has never changed. God has never altered His outlook, He has never needed any adjustment. He remains what He always has been.

God is light and that is relative because there must be darkness if there is light. But then He is also love, and that is what I have tried to speak to you about: the love of God is manifest in Christ and available to you and me; to be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Is that not something great? You do not have to try to arrive at this. Christianity involves responsibility. The Spirit of God is here so that responsibility might be fulfilled. But it is not a burdensome thing like the law. You have to do this and you have got to do that and you have to do the next thing and you have to come to the meetings and you have to come to every meeting during the week, every one. That is not in itself Christianity. Christianity is that the love of God is shed abroad in your heart, while you should be there and you delight to find your life amongst God's people, find your life in relation to the sanctuary. You are delighting in it. The extension of that, according to John's epistle, is the extension of what came out here in Christ. They saw that life, they handled, they touched, they saw how the Lord lived, what He did, what He did not do. How He enjoyed life. Not one enjoyed life as Jesus did. That is why he said, "Cut me not off in the midst of my days". God wants you, not only saved and clear of the world, but He wants you to enjoy Himself in His home.

May it be so for His Name's sake. Amen.

**Peterhead**

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2005**