

Deliverance Shall Come

by Chuck Smith

God wants a full-hearted commitment from us, not just a half-hearted or lukewarm relationship.

Duration: 35:52

Scripture: Psalm 51:17

Topics: "Repentance", "Sanctification"

Description

This sermon focuses on the importance of turning to the Lord with all our hearts, emphasizing the need for genuine repentance, fasting, weeping, and mourning over our sins and failures. It highlights God's graciousness, mercy, kindness, and His desire to forgive rather than punish. The message underscores the significance of having a deep, fervent love for God, surrendering fully to Him, and maintaining a genuine, wholehearted relationship with the Lord.

Transcript

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Romans chapter 10. Our scripture reading will begin with verse 11 to the end of the chapter. I'll read the 11th and the odd-numbered verses, and we ask you to join together as you read the even-numbered verses through the end of chapter 10.

Shall we stand as we read the Word of God? For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by the foolish nation I will anger you. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsame people.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the great salvation that you have provided for us this day through your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. We pray, Lord, that as we study today, and as we look at this great salvation and its effects within our life, that we'll be drawn to receive and to enjoy, Lord, all that you have given, all that you've provided for those who will just open their hearts and just receiving today, your love, your forgiveness, your grace, your mercy, all of the benefits, Lord, that are ours through him.

Bless, we pray, the study of your word today. In Jesus' name we ask, amen. You may be seated.

Well, the little book of Joel, just three chapters long, and so tonight, if you haven't read it over, you can read it a couple of times this afternoon and be prepared for the study this evening of the book of Joel. But this morning, we'd like to draw your attention to the second chapter of Joel, and there beginning with verse 12. Therefore, also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting and weeping and mourning, and rend your heart and not your garments.

Turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and it repenteth him of the evil. The Bible speaks much about the heart of man, but as a general rule, it isn't referring to the physical organ in our bodies, but it is referring actually in a way to just the courage that a person might have, or the love that a person might have. We say, well, she's my sweetheart, or we draw a note and we put on a little heart and it's just a symbol of, you know, love you and so forth.

And we talk about a person who really puts his heart into his job, and we're talking about a diligence that they might have. On the other hand, we speak of the heart as a place of intensity. You know, someone said, well, he did it with all of his heart.

And it means that he really was intense in what he was doing. It can refer to interest. A person really didn't have a heart for it.

And it means that he was sort of disinterested in it. It can also refer to completeness and, you know, do it with all your heart and that is put everything into it. As it appears into the text today, God appeals to his people and he says, turn to me with all your heart.

It was interesting when Jesus was with his disciples up at the Sea of Galilee and he was talking to Peter, he said, Peter, do you love me more than these? Just what Jesus was referring to, we're not certain. What were the these? Jesus, before he was crucified, had his last supper with his disciples and he said, all of you are going to be offended tonight because of me. Peter said, Lord, though they may all be offended, I will never be offended.

Jesus said, Peter, before the rooster crows, you will have denied me three times. Peter said, they could kill me, but I would never deny you. Now, Jesus is saying, Peter, do you love me more than these? Was he referring and looking around at the other disciples because Peter had more or less declared, they might all fail you, I won't fail you.

Peter, the rock, you know, depend on me. And yet we do know then the story that when the little maiden said, aren't you one of his disciples? Peter said, no, I don't know what you're talking about. And as she sort of insisted, yes, you are.

I have seen you with him. Peter began to curse and he said, I told you, I don't know the man and denied his Lord as Jesus had prophesied that he would. Now, Peter is being asked, Peter, do you love me more than these? The word translated love in the Greek is agapas.

It is a intense love. It is a divine love. It is a all consuming love.

It is a fervent love. And that's the kind of love Jesus is asking about. Peter, do you really love me more than these? Peter responded and said, Lord, you know that I love you.

But Peter used a different Greek word for love. He is the word phileo, which is could be translated, you know, I am fond of you. Jesus doesn't want just fondness.

He is wanting a stronger love. He is wanting that agapas, the divine fervent love. So he asked the second time, Peter, do you love me? Again, using the agapas, maybe, Peter, you didn't understand.

But evidently, Peter did understand because the second time he said, Lord, you know that I am fond of you. That's not the kind of a relation God wants with you. He wants a loving relationship with you.

His love for you is complete. He wants your love for him to be complete. Now, quite often, I think that we answer rather ghibli, Lord, you know that I love you more than anything in all the world, you know, but if you were offered tickets to the Super Bowl next January or February.

And it was on a Sunday evening. Where would you find yourself that Sunday evening in church, worshipping the Lord or on the 50 yard line watching the Super Bowl? So it's easy, isn't it, to just sort of declare something. Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

But give Peter the credit for being honest. I'm fond of you. He couldn't say, I love you, the Agapost, but Lord, you know, I am fond of you.

Jesus is here saying, or through Joel, actually, the Lord is saying, turn to me with all your heart. God doesn't want a half-hearted relationship with you. In fact, in the church of Ephesus in Revelation chapter two, Jesus said concerning this church of Ephesus, though you have a lot of things going for you, I have this against you.

You've left your first love. That is the intensity of love that they once had, that fervency that they once had in their love for him. He said, you have left your first love.

And so he said, remember what it used to be like when you first came to know Jesus Christ, when you first began to follow him, the excitement, the thrill, the joy. Remember from whence thou has fallen. He said, then repent.

And then he said, do your first works over. Come back to that first love that you once had. You should never have a take it or leave it relationship with Jesus.

Your right relationship with him should be the chief concern of your life. For we are talking about your eternal destiny, which depends on your relationship with him. It is interesting to this church of Ephesus, which have become lukewarm as far as the love, no longer fervent, intense love for Jesus, but just sort of, well, they still believed in him and all, but they were lukewarm.

And Jesus said, unless you repent, I will spew you out of my mouth. He said, I'm not interested in a lukewarm kind of a love. I'm interested only in a fervent, intense love from you.

So note, it says that, therefore, turn even to me with all your heart, not a half-hearted commitment to him, but with your full heart. And so he's talking about this becoming the top priority in your life. Note, he said, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

That should be the first pursuit of your life. And then all of these other things will fall into line and the rest will just naturally take place if you have your priorities right. Jesus said some very heavy things.

And in Matthew 10, 37, one of those places, he said, he that loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Or he that loves his children more than me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take up his cross to follow me is not worthy of me.

He is worthy of our full love. He is worthy of our fervent love. He is worthy of that kind of love that has held nothing back.

I think of the chorus we used to sing years ago. In fact, so many years ago, I'm sure that it's very few of you, if you were ever in church, you know, 50, 60 years ago, maybe you remember it. But otherwise, don't expect you to know it.

But it was a chorus that went, after all he's done for me, after all he's done for me, how can I do less than give him my best after all he's done for me? How can I do less than give him my best and live for him completely? I forgot that one little phrase, after all he's done for me. It's one thing to say it. It's another thing to sing it.

Oh, I love the Lord with all my heart. Oh, I love the Lord fully or completely. And people sing of that kind of love.

And they may avow that kind of love, but that's words. The Bible said, let's not love in words, but in deed and in truth. In other words, don't just have a verbal love that you're declaring concerning Jesus.

But let it be a true love that is manifested in every area of our life. If you remember the story in the book of Acts concerning this couple, their names were Ananias and Sapphira. Now, the people were very excited in that early church.

Many people were selling their possessions, bringing the money in and laying it at the apostle's feet. And receiving the plaudits, I'm sure, and applause of the people. And they decided to sell their house and bring the money in.

But they thought, you know, let's not give everything. Let's just, you know, we'll give a generous portion to the church, you know, and let's not give everything. Hold some back for a rainy day that might come.

And so they brought the money partially, but acting as though they were bringing the whole amount. But it was a lie. They weren't giving the whole amount.

They were holding back for themselves. And the Lord gave Peter discernment in it. And he said, is this how much you paid or you were paid for your house? They said, yes, that's it.

Peter said, why have you decided in your heart you were going to try to deceive the Lord? You haven't lied unto man. You've lied unto God. And they both fell over dead.

And they were carried out and buried. They had made a false statement before the Lord concerning the amount of their commitment. Living in that environment would be very difficult.

I was wondering if we were living in that kind of a spiritual environment today. When we finished with the song, I surrender all, I surrender all, all to thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all, I wonder how many would still be standing. There goes the congregation, you know.

Because we can sing it, but it's another thing to actually do it, to truly surrender our lives. It's easy to say, oh, I love the Lord more than anything else in all the world. But yet, that isn't always so.

Oftentimes, there are things, there are interests and all that we have that supersede our love and our interests for him. So, Joel deals with this. He said, therefore, saith the Lord, turn even to me with all your heart.

And then he said, with fastings and weeping and mourning. The Lord wants us to show contriteness, which is manifested in fasting and weeping and mourning. Fasting is a thing of self-denial.

It is denying my flesh and feeding my spirit. And then the weeping is weeping over our failures and our shortcomings. I've come short of what God wants me to be.

I fall short of what God wants me to do. But to realize my failures would cause me to begin to weep over the fact that I haven't been able to live up to even the standards that I've set in my own mind, weeping over my failure. Have you ever found yourself weeping over your sin? Do you realize that you have disappointed God and now you're disappointed also in yourself and you weep over that? David said in Psalm 66, I am weary with my groaning.

All the night I make my bed to swim. I water my couch with tears. Speaking of the grief that he had over his own weaknesses and failures, not living up to what God would have him to be.

And then he says about the mourning, mourning over my sins. In the Beatitudes, Jesus said, blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. In Isaiah 61, Isaiah wrote, the spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted and to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who were bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of the vengeance of our God. To comfort all that mourn and to appoint for them that mourn in Zion to give them beauty for their ashes, the oil of joy for their mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

In Revelation 21, 4, the Bible tells us that God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, and neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away. So the mourning over again, my sin, my weaknesses, my failures.

Then the prophet writes, so rend your heart and not your garments. In those days when a person would have great disappointment and would maybe, you know, be in that place of weeping and mourning over their failures or weaknesses, they would often just show their total just dismay. They would rip their robes and people say, whoa, you know, he's going through a deep grief or sorrow or whatever.

Say your wife would die and so forth. So you want everybody to know just how much you are grieving over her. You would go ahead and rip your robe and, you know, robes were expensive in those days.

And people think, whoa, he really had a great love for his wife. Look how he's ripped up his robe, you know. And it was just a way of showing a deep emotional experience.

Here the Lord is saying, look, I don't want you to tear your robes. I'd rather see a broken heart than a torn robe. So rend your heart.

Tear your heart, not your garments. And so as we are told in Psalm 51, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a contrite heart, O Lord, you will not despise. The torn garment was intended to show your pain and your grief, but also intended to draw people's compassion toward you and for you.

But God is not interested in us tearing our robes to show our repentance, but he is interested in our having a broken heart over our issues of failure. The question is, is your heart broken today over the way you have been living your Christian life, over your personal failures, or over someone else's personal failures? Maybe they have failed you and you feel let down today and you have sort of a broken heart over a broken relationship that was very meaningful to you. Someone maybe has broken your trust.

And so you feel I'll never trust them again. You know, here I have placed my confidence and trust in them. And when it really came right down to it, they failed me.

They turned away and they were not there to help me. And the Bible tells us that a true friend was closer than a brother, but they bailed out when I was really in need. And so my attitude is usually that's the last time I'll put my confidence or trust in them.

And so we are told that turn unto the Lord. At a time where we are discouraged and feel we have been deserted by friends and so forth, turning to the Lord to find the consolation that he gives. But why should I turn to the Lord? Well, first of all, we are told here that he is gracious.

Perhaps the breakup in the relationship was your fault. Maybe you failed to come through for them when they were in a pinch and they've turned upon you because of that. They said that because you failed at the critical moment in their lives, they will never trust you again.

And they've broken off their relationship with you. They may even be angry and vindictive toward you. But how many times have you let the Lord down? Still, he is faithful, isn't he? He is so gracious and he does not break off his relationship with you.

He doesn't cast you off. But also, he is merciful. Now, there's a difference between being gracious and being merciful.

Being gracious is that I do for you what I don't owe. Grace is getting what I don't deserve. I deserve, really, the punishment.

I deserve being chastised by God. But he blesses me. Those blessings are the blessings of God's grace upon my life.

And I found one of the most difficult things in the Christian experience is to accept God's grace gracefully. You know, when God has done some wonderful thing for us, maybe I've really failed totally, completely. I think, oh my Lord, I can understand if you're not going to be interested at all in me.

And then I know how unworthy I am. And God just pours out some tremendous blessing on me. I say, oh Lord, you're just too much.

Can't handle this. I mean, I don't deserve this, Lord. And he says, I know you don't, but you know, I'm gracious.

And that is getting something I don't deserve. Mercy is not getting what I do deserve. Now, because of what I've done, I deserve to be punished.

But God doesn't punish me. He shows his grace instead. So that's basically the difference between grace and mercy.

Grace is getting what you don't deserve. Mercy is not getting what you do deserve as far as the blessings of God are concerned. It's interesting, the word mercy appears 276 times in the Bible.

Merciful, that is appearing 40 times in the Bible, and then mercies is another 40 times. So surely the Bible does teach us concerning God that he is a merciful God. I didn't bother to count the number of times the word grace is used, but I'm sure that we would be overwhelmed with that too.

In Micah 7, 18, he asked, who is a God like unto thee that pardons iniquity, that passes by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, who retains not his anger forever, but who delights in mercy. I love that God delights in mercy. Now here also, it says that God is slow to anger.

Have you ever known people who seem to have a chip on their shoulder? Any little annoyance can just send them on a tirade. Uh, this person is opposite to them. They are long-suffering, and that is a good definition of slow to anger.

It means that you just are slow to get angry. You are long-suffering. God is long-suffering to us, slow to anger.

And then it says of great kindness. God's not just kind, but there is a great kindness of God toward us. As Christians, we are exhorted to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us.

And so kindness, one of the characteristics of God toward us. He looks upon us and his actions towards us are actions of kindness and of love. And it says it repents him of the evil.

That is, and let me give you a different translation of that. It's sort of my own, but it's true to the Hebrew. He desires to forgive rather than to punish us for our evil.

God doesn't want to punish us. God wants to forgive us. He's looking for an excuse to forgive us.

And that excuse can only be given by you just by asking for his forgiveness. Trusting that he will forgive you, knowing that you don't deserve it, but knowing that he is loving and he desires to do it. He loves to do it.

And just giving God that opportunity by saying, Lord, I'm sorry for my sin. I'm sorry for my failures. I'm sorry for my weakness.

Forgive me. And he is so ready to forgive and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and to just place us as his sons and give us that standing of a son of God, a daughter of God, loved by him and received by him, forgiven by him, and just enjoying the relationship and the fellowship that he's made available by providing for the removal of our sin and by just doing so much for us. So what a wonderful God.

What a wonderful Savior is Jesus, my Jesus. What a wonderful Savior is Jesus, my Lord. Father, we are so grateful and so thankful for what you have done and what you are doing.

And Lord, what you are desiring and longing to do in our lives. We pray, Father, that we might be open and that we might give you every opportunity to do those things for us that you long to do, to demonstrate

how much you do love us and of your deep concern for us. Help us, Lord, that we might become everything you want us to be.

Fill us with your spirit. Fill us with your love. And Lord, may we be able to honestly say we love you, Lord, more than anything in this world.

Our love for you, Lord, is paramount. The most important thing is our relationship with you. Lord, may it not just be a thing like Ananias and Sapphira, but Lord, with us, may it be a true expression of our hearts.

May we indeed love you with all of our hearts, minds, soul, and strength. May we love our neighbor as ourselves. In Jesus' name we ask.

Amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front. And it could be that this day, the Lord has spoken to your heart.

There are issues that he brought to mind. And you're recognizing that you're not all that he should have and would have you to be. But you'd like to have more of his love and more of his spirit controlling your life.

They're here to pray for you. And so we would encourage you to just come on forward. As soon as we're dismissed, they'll be standing here at the front.

And they'll be more than happy to just pray for you. If you have questions, to answer your questions. And just to spend some time with you in prayer for that work of God's spirit to be strong and powerful in your life.

Giving you the ability to become everything God wants you to be. So may the Lord bless you. May his hand be upon you.

May he fill you with his spirit. May you have a wonderful week walking in fellowship with our Lord in Jesus name. Amen.

God bless you.

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