

Commanded to Love - Part 2

by Derek Prince

The sermon emphasizes the importance of love and compassion, and how it is the perfect law of liberty that includes all other laws.

Duration: 28:28

Scripture: Philippians 2:3, James 1:25, James 2:8

Topics: "Agape Love", "Christian Compassion"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of love as described in the Epistle of James, emphasizing the importance of loving one's neighbor as oneself, which is referred to as the perfect law and the royal law. It explores the profound nature of love, highlighting that true freedom comes from loving others unconditionally, just as Jesus exemplified. The speaker shares personal experiences and reflections on compassion, suffering, and the deep bond that comes from sharing in Christ's sufferings, urging listeners to seek a deeper connection with God through sacrificial love and compassion for others.

Transcript

In I want to tell you two things about love. From the epistle of James. It's rather interesting, I'm reading from James, Peter and John, which I don't very often do.

James chapter 1 verse 25. And then 2, chapter 2 verse 8. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. And then chapter 2 verse 8. If you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well.

So that law, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, it's called two things. It's called the perfect law and the royal law. It's the perfect law because it includes all other law.

When you do that, you are obeying all law. It's the perfect law, it's the royal law. It's the kingly law.

And it's the perfect law of freedom. This is very simple but very profound. Nobody can stop you loving.

If you've made your mind up to love, nobody can stop you. They can say all sorts of hard things about you. They can treat you in a very mean and miserable way.

But they cannot stop you loving. Is that right? So it's the perfect law of liberty. Furthermore, it's the perfect law because it contains all other laws.

When you really love your neighbor fervently with a pure heart, you'll keep all the other commandments. You see, and it's the perfect law of liberty. In other words, who is totally free? The person who loves.

Nobody can stop you. The perfect example of that is Jesus. They did everything to him.

They beat him. They pierced his hands and his feet. They put a crown of thorns on his head.

They gave him vinegar to drink. They abused him. They reviled him.

But one thing they could not do was what? They could not stop him loving. He loved them to the end. You see, if you love with that kind of love, nobody can stop you.

It's the perfect law of liberty. You are the only really free person on earth because nobody can stop you doing what you want to do. Now I want to make this personal.

Don't cringe. It will work out all right. I make it personal to myself first.

I just want to read an incident from the end of Mark's first chapter. Mark chapter 1 verse 40 and 41 and 42. Then a leper came to him, that's Jesus, imploring him, kneeling down to him and saying to him, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

And Jesus moved with compassion, put out his hand and touched him and said to him, I am willing, be cleansed. As soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. It says there Jesus was moved with compassion.

It's very interesting because it's exactly corresponds to the word that David used in Psalm 18. How shall I express this? It's a gut feeling. It refers to the bowels.

I think the old King James used to speak about the bowels of compassion. And that's where our deepest feelings are. They're not in the heart, this physical heart, they're here.

This is where it all begins. This is the source of everything. And the word that's used is, it says Jesus, his bowels were moved.

I remember when my first wife was writing her book. She was talking to the sheriffs who were auditing it, editing it, and she said something about my bowels were moved, and they had to explain to her that wasn't the right way to say it in English. But it's exactly right.

That's what it's talking about. You know in every language that I know, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, the real deep innermost part of you is not this physical heart, it's this. And I think all of us will know that's where it really begins.

Whether it's love, whether it's fear, whether it's hate, that's the place it starts. And so it says Jesus' bowels, if I may say that reverently, were moved for this man. The word compassion actually isn't there in the Greek.

And when I read that, I asked myself a personal question, by what am I moved? What moves me? What prompts my actions? Am I really moved with compassion, or am I moved with personal ambition,

self-seeking, a desire to get my own way? Let me just read something from Philippians chapter 2. I may seem to be overemphasizing this, but I have really come to the conclusion that the greatest single problem in the church today is personal ambition on the part of ministers. And I'm not saying I'm exempt. In Philippians chapter 2, beginning at verse 1, Paul says therefore, if there's any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, those are all very powerful words.

They're not superficial feelings, they go right deep down. Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in loneliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

I don't know whether you could confuse me of being overemphasizing this, but I see so much personal ambition in the church, to be honest. And I meet a lot of wonderful ministers, but most of the driving force in the church today that I see is ambition. It's to get a bigger church, to hold a larger meeting, to get more names on my mailing list.

It's to make myself known. It's to get people interested in me. Maybe I'm cynical, but that's what I see as one of the main driving forces in Christianity today.

And Paul says, cut it out. It's got no place. Let nothing be done through personal ambition.

What are we to be moved by? What's the answer? That's right, love or compassion. So I'm going to ask you, many of you are in the Lord's service, in fact you all should be in one way or another, by what are you moved? What motivates you? What prompts you to do the things you do? To speak the words you speak? To relate to people the way you do? Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Is that really what is motivating us? Is it the love of God? Is it compassion? I'll share something which God sometimes impels me to share.

It's very difficult to share. It's very painful. But after God called my wife Ruth home to himself, I went through a time of deep grief.

But I learned how much people loved me. It was a revelation. I got letters from many different parts of the world, people from different races, different denominational backgrounds, comforting me, assuring me of their love and their prayers.

I never knew there was so much love in the world, until that happened. I didn't know that so many people loved me, and I'm sure I'm not an easy person to love. But after all, persevere and you can achieve it.

But I got one letter from a lady, I don't even remember her name, and she directed me to Psalm 84, verse 6, and says in verse 5, blessed is the man whose strength is in you, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. In other words, he has no permanent residence in this world. He's on a pilgrimage from one world to another.

And then it says about these people, and this is the verse the lady quoted to me, as they pass through the valley of Baca, they make it a spring. The rain also covers it with pools. Now you need to know that Baca is the Hebrew word for weeping.

You can't understand that Psalm unless you know that. So as they pass through the valley of Baca, they make it a spring. What this lady said to me was this, you may have to pass through the valley of weeping, but you don't have to stay there.

That impacted me so deeply that I couldn't read any further. For one hour I just sat and gazed at that verse. And God did something.

It says, as they pass through the valley of Baca, they make it a spring or a fountain. And at that moment, God opened a fountain inside me. Something I, I mean I've been a Christian nearly 60 years, speaking in tongues and doing all those things, but there's something completely new happened in me.

A spring, a fountain, was opened inside me. And it was a fountain of compassion. And it was unlike anything I've ever experienced before.

I've known the love of God, I've loved many people, I've certainly loved each of my wives and my family. But this was something not from Derrick Prince, who has another source. It was a spring, it was a fountain, and it was compassion.

And I had never experienced anything exactly like it before. And I began, just began to understand what it means when it says Jesus was moved with compassion. And I realized God was sharing his compassion with me.

And I, at that time I prayed two prayers. I prayed, Lord, let this fountain never become defiled, let it never become contaminated, and let it never become stopped. Now it's not under my control, I don't decide when it will spring up, God does.

But I've learned something very interesting. When that fountain of compassion is flowing in me, it attracts people to me. They don't know why they're coming, but they're feeling something that they've been longing for.

And it really gives me also a kind of power over people. I have to be very careful that I don't exploit it. Because when people feel real divine compassion, you can get them to do almost anything.

But that's what I believe God is waiting for. It's that we love one another with his divine love. That we love something else God has done for me.

And if you come Sunday night, you'll hear it all. I'll give you everything, both barrels. But God has given me a supernatural concern for orphans, widows, the poor, and the oppressed.

I mean I, by the grace and mercy of God, I'm the head of a family of 12 adopted children. So it's not that I've never done anything for them. But I have seen with a new intensity, I don't want to preach Sunday night's message tonight, this morning, but I've seen that's what God is looking for.

We can talk as much as we like about faith and righteousness, but we do nothing for the people who really need us, we're just using empty words. And there's no shortage of people who need us. That's one thing we cannot complain about.

They're not far from any of you. They're the people who desperately need to be loved. They're lonely, they're not cared for, they have no answers, they're desperate.

And you don't have to walk far from where you live to find people like that. I'll talk to you, if God wills and we live, I'll talk to you on Sunday night about that. But I've come to see that this is the, what would I say, it's the purpose of God.

It's what God is waiting for. I was preaching, even before I had this experience, I was preaching in the state of Virginia to a group of black brothers. And at the end of the message, a young black man came up to me and he said, Brother Prince, would you pray for me? I said, what do you want? He said, that I may speak to people with the same compassion that you have.

I looked at him for a moment. I said, there's a price to pay. Because I knew I was paying the price.

He was silent for a few minutes. Then he said, I want it anyhow. And I prayed to him.

I don't doubt that God's hand is on that young man's life. I want it anyhow, no matter what it costs. Do you feel that way this morning? There's this fountain that God sovereignly will open up in you.

It's not under your control. You don't decide when it will happen. You see, there are some things that don't come without suffering.

I've always been amazed at Paul's prayer in Philippians chapter 3, that I may know him, Jesus. That's wonderful. We all say they are wonderful.

And the power of his resurrection. Well, we all say that. But the next verse, and the fellowship of his sufferings.

And many, many times I said to the Lord, as I read that verse, Lord, I don't know that I can really say that. Do I really want to know the fellowship of your sufferings? I'm an honest person. I think that's perhaps one of the basic benefits of God's dealing with me.

I am honest to myself. I'm honest to others. I said, Lord, many times, I'm really not sure I can say that I want to know the fellowship of your sufferings.

And the Lord is very patient with me. He didn't pressure me. But you see, I've come to see that some things only come by suffering.

Suffering does something that nothing else will do. It prepares the soil for that fountain. And then I remember when I was in the military, in the army.

I was what they called in the British Army a medical orderly. I was supposed to be looking after wounded and sick people, but in actual fact I was too useful in other capacities. They never gave me that job.

But anyhow, I learned by my association with my British soldiers that people who've passed through a real hard, dangerous time together, they've been under fire, they've been in the trenches, they've been wherever, they are bonded together in a way that other people are not bonded. They may be very different in their personality, their social level, many other things, but having been through it together bonds people. And I think Jesus wants to be bonded with us.

And when we go through it together with him, we have a bond with him that cannot be broken. So I'm not welcoming suffering, but I am prepared for it. I don't seek it, I don't run after it, but I realize there are some things God cannot do in me without suffering.

So I've passed through the valley of Baca. God has opened the fountain. I'm not there in the valley.

If I weep today, it's not for sorrow, it's for compassion with people. How about you? Would you like to make a commitment? It's a scriptural commitment. You don't have to do it.

You can still get to heaven if you don't do it. But you'll have missed something on earth. Will you say, in the words of Paul, that I may know him, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering? Then you see, I realize that things come that way that cannot come any other way.

I've said for many years, God is a self-revealing God. He loves to reveal himself. He loves to share himself.

But I've realized lately through what I've been through that God has a deeper desire than that. He wants us to share what he goes through, to share his experiences with him. And when you go through the valley, you're sharing something very precious, very wonderful.

You'll come closer to the Lord than you've ever been. And that's what God wants. He's not interested in our suffering, but he's interested in sharing his sufferings with us.

I'm not talking about the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. Those were unique. Only he could do that.

But I'm talking about the sufferings of Jesus for the church. Don't you think that Jesus is grieved sometimes by the way the church acts and behaves? We can be critical. We can accuse.

We can point. And believe me, nobody can do that more effectively than I can. But that's not what God is waiting for.

He's waiting, will you share my deep concern for my bride, for the one I love so much? Can I share some of my sufferings with you? That's really when you're getting into deep water, at that point. I've never been a superficial person. I'm tired of superficiality.

I'm tired of empty religion. I'm tired of empty confessions, which I made to get something out of God, but were never expected to fulfill them. I really believe God has sent me here at this time to confront you people with a decision.

How shall I express the decision? Lord, no matter what it takes, open that fountain in me. I don't want to be superficial. I don't want to be just a churchgoer.

Lord, I want to bring joy to your heart. I want you to be satisfied with me. Not with what I do, but with me.

I want to share fellowship with you in the deep places. There's another interesting thing in that verse from Psalm 84. It says, As they pass through the valley of weeping, they make it to spring.

The rain also covers it with pools. The word for rain there is the word that's used for the latter rain of the Holy Spirit. And I believe that's where the latter rain falls.

And it's interesting to me, it covers the pools. It doesn't cover every place. It covers the lonely places.

And I have observed that too. When the Spirit of God moves, it's the humble that get blessed. It's the people that have no claims, no pride, no self-righteousness.

Lord, here I am. I'm just a pool. Fill me.

Well, how are we to end? Brother John, would you come up and stand beside me? These are your sheep. I think I'm going to invite you, if you wish. And I'm not going to check on you whether you do it or not.

But I want to suggest that you say to the Lord, Lord, I want to know you. I want to know the power of your resurrection. And I want to know the fellowship of your sufferings.

If you're suffering, Jesus, I don't want you to suffer alone. I'll suffer with you. Would you be prepared? Well, you don't have to tell me.

I'm going to say it, and you can say it after me or not. Whichever you want. All right? It's your decision.

I'm not supervising you. I'm just putting something before you. But consider carefully what you say.

Because you'll be held accountable by the Lord. You know, it says in Ecclesiastes, Don't tell the angel it was a mistake. What you say.

There is an angel recording everything we say. It's a privilege and an honor that God is so interested in us. But it's also a responsibility.

So, I don't know quite how to do this. I want to offer you the privilege of saying quietly, not out loud, the following words. Lord Jesus, I thank you that you died for me on the cross.

That you've loved me with an everlasting love. That you've drawn me to yourself with loving kindness. And now, Lord, I have a request.

That I may know you and the power of your resurrection and the fellowship of your suffering. That I may be drawn to you in a closer union than I have ever yet known in my life. Lord, I give myself to you without reservation.

Take me as I am and make me what you want me to be. For your glory, Lord. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.

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