

Lecture - May 1872

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the profound nature of God's love and grace towards sinners, emphasizing faith over works and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Romans 5:1

Topics: "God's Love", "Grace and Redemption"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the profound nature of God's love and grace towards humanity, illustrating that true freedom comes from understanding what God has done for us rather than relying on our own experiences or works. He contrasts the struggle of living under the law with the joy of knowing God as a loving and gracious figure who redeems us despite our weaknesses. Darby highlights that our justification and peace with God are rooted in Christ's sacrifice, and that true joy comes from recognizing our status as sinners saved by grace. He encourages believers to focus on God's character and love, which is demonstrated through the Holy Spirit, rather than their own merits. Ultimately, Darby calls for a deep understanding of divine favor and the joy that comes from being reconciled to God.

Transcript

Here you get, not experience, but God dealing with a man - what God is for me from beginning to end. Am I so free that I can delight in what God is? We have to learn ourselves - under law - and then the place we have been brought into - but it is more to know God. Suppose I were free in heaven, it is more to know the God who made me free.

The notion of love in God is what has met the poor sinner. There is joyful reasoning in the eighth chapter and bitter in the seventh, the dreadful nature going through the process, then finds he has no strength and is delivered. You distinguish between the liberty in the eighth and what you get there [?here?] - here (Rom. 5) it is what God has done for a man. It is this point that makes the difference. When conscience is at work were reason from what we do to what God will be - all right - only I ought to conclude I am condemned because it depends on what we have done. Drawing conclusions from what we are is experience, and out of that there is no issue except a false profession of perfection. People find some good work (and that is pleasing to what they are) but there is no conscience of what they are really - they are standing upon God's judgment of what they ought to be and then there is, and can be, no peace, and if judgment comes they are certainly condemned. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." When I take up my state, mingling judgment with works, all that is confusion of

mind, and a thorough mistake as to the whole ground man I upon.

"Hoping" to be saved is not being on the ground of redemption - when a man speaks of hoping, what is he hoping? Is he hoping, Christ's blood cleanses from sin? Is he hoping Christ has died? In that kind of hope there is not an atom of faith. We ought to find it written, "being justified by experience" instead of "justified by faith". . . We go on with this till we find we can't get out of the position we are in. You can't get out, but there is one who can take you out. So the moment he says "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me," it is all right then, and at once it is "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is what we have to learn. The moment He has made me learn myself, it is all settled. "Hath made me free" - is that nothing? The moment I learn God is for me, I reckon on Him for the future - He was for me when I was utterly ungodly and without strength.

A soul looking at God sees itself entirely guilty, not knows it - that's experience. It is one thing to know I am in debt - another thing to know that I am a bad man of business. Here it is the fact that we have sinned and God has come out I grace when all the world was guilty before Him. I learn what God is for man when guilty - I get all that God is in grace. There is nothing to do with experience when I get this peace. There is no thought of forgiving and evil nature. When sin was condemned Christ died - I do not want Him to intercede for that - I want Him to hatchet it down, so to speak - I do not want to spare the flesh but to get rid of it - so you find "the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." - that's not intercession.

On the other hand you have "seeing that we have a great high priest . . . let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." That you do want if flesh is working. But I do not want my flesh to be spared. . . I may want to try and spare it in my folly, but what is wanted is the hatchet of God.

This has nothing to do with peace. That would be confounding the nature with what grace has done. The remedy for sin is "His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." "He was delivered for our offences." The whole question of our sins was before God on the cross and settled for ever - conflict is not settled, that goes on - but this does not go on - the question of Christ's work must be raised - my experience neither adds nor takes away from the efficacy of Christ's work on the cross. This has nothing to do with being victorious. Here I get a person who has borne all my sins. If a question of guilt is raised in the mind then I see you have not laid hold of the work - the grace wherein we stand is the perfect divine favour - just as Christ is [?] there is not a question between us and God or else there is not peace - having peace as to the whole question of sin, I find nothing but divine favour shining upon me and I am looking for the glory of God.

"Being justified" for the past - "by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand" for the present - and "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God" for the future, so that past, present and future are all perfectly settled - peace settled, standing settled and glory settled. I've got the key of it all, "God's love" v. 3, 4, 5. "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations." I glory in what God does - His dealings - it is God that is doing it all the way - glorying in all God sends that will work patience. That detaches from the world - the roots running in the world get loosened - "and patience experience," experience is not glory, the heart is corrected - "experience hope," and hope does not make ashamed - God's love is shed abroad in the heart. I get what God is, His character - It is His love I have understood - It is the dealing of God in His

grace with us.

The God will be with me all the way. There is a great deal to learn but "God withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous;" God must work in them to bring them practically righteous in the end, because the love was shed abroad in their hearts.

Remark, this blessed truth, the proof of His love was in the gift of His Son (v. 8) - the consciousness of it is through the gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 5) - the way it is shed abroad is that God is there: "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" "God dwelleth in him and He in God." Where do I get the proof and testimony? Is it in the experience of myself? In truth it is not! How can I tell this love? In that "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." If I know it, it is by the Holy Ghost.

When I was ungodly, God gave the best thing He had in heaven for me. When I had no way of getting better, when I was without strength. Was it because of any good in me? No! I was ungodly. Was there some way for me to come? No! I was without strength and there was not a single right thought in me for me to shew. It was God's love, pure and alone.

The weakest saint knows it and the highest saint cannot fathom the love of God. If I want proof of it I must go back to the time when there was not a single good thought in my heart. That's God's pure love!

We can all love, even an animal can: "peradventure for a good man some would dare to die" but God loves from the motive of His own heart. "God commendeth His love to us" (v.8), the His is emphatic. When I come to the proof I turn wholly away from myself to God, that was the "own . ." [?] the doctrine of God's love, when it was all on God's side - the consequence is, I reckon upon the fruits of it.

The Spirit of God always draws conclusions from what God is and has done to what He will be for you, not from what I am (v. 10). "Much more" if God has done that, He will do the other.

There is the road to travel and you glory in tribulation. He may chasten, but the power of Christ's life is there as accepted for you. I have got God Himself, not merely in His acts, but in Himself, and more, "not only so," but I joy in God.

I am assured to be kept because I cast the eye entirely on what God is. What God is everlastingly in Himself He has demonstrated in what He is to me as a sinner. It is what the angels desire to look into and in it I learn what He is. An angel can only see it in us, he does not know it for himself.

We must learn it as guilty sinners if we are to learn what God is - to learn it we must learn it as mere sinners, and having learnt what He is, then I delight in Himself - so you get to "joy in God," not a question of sin, but of perfection of favour.

We must learn that we are guilty, but we must learn it as mere sinners. If I introduce the smallest atom of goodness I reduce it in God - then it is not all good in Him.

If I could go to the door of heaven and say "I have done well, let me in" I should never know God at all. If I earn my wages there is no grace - but if I am a mere sinner and God has come and saved me and put me into glory I can say I know God. I can joy in God, and because I am only that, the angels can learn in me what God is.

Now, beloved friends, how far can you say you joy in God? How far have we learned that we are sinners? and that's all about it - and that it is all love in God and from God and not in us at all? How far, that "when we were yet without strength," and "ungodly" it was simply there and then was the "due time" and that there and then we learnt God?

Is the love shed abroad in you hearts? is divine favour a word which sounds as a known thing in your souls? If you think of God is what comes into your mind the perfect sense of divine favour? the secret even if God disciplines you. You have got the secret of it all, for "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

The proof of it was "for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly," thus I've got in what God did, the proof of what God is and the way that I learn it! for what had I? Just my sin, and not able to get out of it.

Do your souls really know what it is to joy in God having received the atonement [sic, reconciliation]? Divine favour the dwelling place of your souls and consequently jealous of everything that would hinder the enjoyment of it - we have to watch ourselves and judge ourselves.

May you be able to joy in God for having received the reconciliation. We shall soon leave our weakness, but it is that perfect divine love that met us when we were away from God in our sins that will be our everlasting joy when in His presence for ever.

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