

# Man's Heart and Christ's Heart

by John Nelson Darby

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing Christ's love and forgiveness, and how it brings confidence and trust in Him.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:5, John 3:16, John 14:6, Romans 3:10, Romans 4:25, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 9:28, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Forgiveness", "Grace"

---

## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the contrast between man's heart and Christ's heart, illustrating how humanity's enmity against God is revealed through the crucifixion of Jesus. He explains that while the law condemns, Christ's grace offers forgiveness and reconciliation, allowing believers to approach God without fear of judgment. Darby highlights the importance of recognizing our sins and trusting in Christ's sacrifice, which was made out of love for humanity. He encourages believers to understand that Christ, who bore our sins, is also our Judge, and thus we can have confidence in Him. The sermon ultimately calls for a heartfelt response to God's love and grace, urging individuals to trust in Christ for their salvation.

---

## Transcript

God has not left us in darkness as to our state, nor as to His ways in grace towards us as in that state. The blessed truth of His coming in love to this world before He comes in judgment, is a testimony to our state, but also to the love of God towards us in that state, and if we neglect this testimony, we have to come before Him in judgment. "Every knee shall bow;" but there is all the difference between bowing to Him as a Saviour and as a Judge. If we come to Him in grace as a Saviour, we find our sins dealt with in another way than judgment. If my creditor comes to claim a debt, and I have nothing to pay, it is all over with me, but if he comes to pay it, I am clear. And we must have to do with God in one way or the other. If, as having our sins dealt with on the cross, that is putting them away: if in judgment, that is imputing them to us.

The gospel is the testimony of what God has done before the day of judgment, that man might not have to answer for his sins.

God cannot approve of iniquity - that is impossible; but it is very different to insist upon the payment of a debt, and to come and pay it. The gospel is the testimony of what Christ did as Saviour before He comes as Judge, and this testimony is for us to believe.

We get the work of the Spirit of God, which gives us a sense of our sins; the work done outside us, by which they are put away; and the testimony of the Holy Ghost to give us the knowledge of that work; for if unknown, I should be as uncomfortable as I was before.

We see in this scene what the human heart is when fully brought out (for it does not always shew itself). We see, too, a work in a man, and a work for a man; and then the consciousness of it wrought in his soul. God makes us know forgiveness; He has not given His Son that we should be ignorant of it. I cannot talk of walking with God, if I do not know whether He is going to condemn me, or not: you never heard of a criminal walking with his judge!

In looking at this scene, you will see how all were against the Lord Jesus? And why? He had healed their sick, cast out devils, raised the dead, so that Pilate could say, "Why; what evil hath he done?" I cannot call myself a Christian without saying that the world has crucified the Son of God. And the terrible thing is, all His works shewed who was there. God had said, "I have yet one Son, may be they will reverence him when they see him." But this revelation of what God was only brought out the enmity, and now God has to say to the world, What have you done with my Son? What has He done to you? Nothing but good. Then why spit in His face, and crucify Him? If any one had done so yesterday to my mother, could I go and be "hail fellow, well met," with him to-day? Man has done this, and when the light comes in, he confesses he has done it, and that he cannot answer one charge in a thousand.

The world is under judgment; we all know the world will come to an end; we all know it, and yet we go on with it!

The law comes to tell man what he ought to be: "Thou shalt love the Lord God with all thine heart;" "Thou shalt not covet." But I know I have not loved God, and I have lusted. I have broken the law in every particular. If I offend in one point, I am guilty of all. It is very simple: if I tell my child not to do three things, he does not care one bit to do two of them, but he does the third, which he does care about. A man must be a monster of iniquity to have committed all the sins in the world!

If you apply the law, "there is none righteous, no, not one." God does not say this in the day of judgment, but in the day of grace He warns us. He tells us beforehand, in mercy, what His judgment as to us is; if He were sitting on the great white throne, could it be any plainer than we get it in Romans 3? Can a man stand up after that, and say, I am righteous? Is that the way to meet God? Is He a liar?

People talk about mercy, which means they hope God will think as little about their sins as they do. A man has committed, say, ten sins - he hopes to go to heaven; if he has committed eleven, he thinks that is not too much; if a hundred, he hopes still - he has no thought of holiness. One sin shuts out from God, but the door is not shut to any, if they own their sins. If I am set to wash this table, it is not a question whether there are five spots or fifty, but can I wash it well?

Man only mocks the blessed Son of God; every detail of this scene gives us a picture of what man's heart is. Man is never ashamed of a false religion. A Mahometan will say his prayers in the market, and if you are making a bargain with him, you may wait till he has done. A Hindoo is not ashamed of the worship of his gods, but a Christian is ashamed of Christ: and so the Lord says, "Whosoever will confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father and the holy angels."

The chief priests, who were set to intercede for weakness, cry out for His blood. Pilate, who was to judge the guilty and protect the innocent, washes his hands of the innocent. His own disciples flee from Him.

If two men are hung together, when did you ever hear of one insulting the other, unless he had brought him into the trouble? But when it comes to Christ you get it. The human heart is enmity against God. The moment they get the opportunity, they all trample upon Him. Thank God, He was there in grace, but it shews what our hearts are. We all know some are criminal and vicious, and some are not. But the prodigal son was as much a sinner when he crossed his father's threshold, as when he was eating the husks; and that is where we all are.

Do not you like doing your own will? Do not you see it in your children? You find it out in them. And this is what sin is. The law condemns it, but it condemns me too. Do not fancy that it only condemns the sins; it says, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them."

The law only shews what we ought to be, but does not tell us what we are. If I apply a right rule to a person who has cheated me, what does it do? Condemn him. The law does not give life, gives no help, but only a measure of what a child of Adam ought to be. God tells us what we are, and He tells us before the day of judgment comes, that we may lay it to heart, and find the remedy. When Christ came, He put His sanction upon all that, for it was His own law, but He came in quite the opposite way. The law claimed the debt, Christ paid it, and that is grace! "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." God came into the world because we were sinners; He did not stay in heaven, and say, You behave well, and it will be well, but He came down because we were all wrong.

Who put it into God's heart to give His Son? Did you? Did the world? Why, it was in God's own heart to do it! He so loved the world, that He gave His Son. I can trust God's heart more than I can trust my own: there is no inconsistency in His heart, He is not double-minded, and I know His thoughts concerning me.

But more than that - Christ died for us. Why should I go to pull a person out of a ditch, if he is not in it? Why did He taste death? Because we were under death. Why take the cup of wrath? Because we were under judgment. What was all that sorrow about? My sin. Oh! I say, what unutterable love I and what a sinner I must be! It gives honesty of heart, not excusing ourselves, like Adam; hiding our sins if we can, and if not, excusing them.

If a man comes to pay my debts, I take care to bring up every farthing I owe. The effect of God's love is to give honesty of heart. I believe His love; I am glad to tell Him everything, or rather to know that He knows, and that I need not tell Him. He has come to clear us completely, and this produces honesty, instead of concealment.

God is light and love, and He must be both wherever He comes. He comes in light, and shews me where I am, and He comes in love to forgive.

Look at that poor woman who was a sinner. There was one heart in the world she could trust, and that was God's heart. Did she hide her sins? No; she came weeping and confounded about them, but she trusted Him - she trusted the love that brought the light to her. Take Peter in the ship. He goes up to Christ, and says, Depart from me! What did he go to Him for, then? He was drawn to Him by the sense of what He was, and when there, felt he was not fit to be there. The great man said, This Man is not a prophet. He was so dark, he had got God in his house, and could not find it out; the poor woman did.

Let us look at this poor thief. There was the work in him, and the work for him. What does he say? The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, it is the sense of what God is. He says, "Dost thou not fear God."

Then he confesses his sins, he owns he is suffering justly. The light had got into his soul.

We have been saying the world is wicked; so it is; but when the light comes, I say, I am wicked. An honest conscience owns its sins: "we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our sins." Then, "This man hath done nothing amiss." How did he know that? He had never been with Christ. He was taught of God; he could guarantee that Christ never did a wrong thing. Do your hearts pass their word for it that He never could? Has He been sufficiently revealed to your hearts for this?

Then he says, "Lord!" Here is a strange thing. The chief priests and heads of the people were all mocking Him - His disciples had run away. What sign of Lordship was there? To a malefactor, apparently like himself, he says, "Lord." The only comforter the Lord had upon the cross was this poor thief!

"Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." He was dying the death of the gibbet. The sign that God had come into the world was a babe lying in a manger, and He ended on a cross, and all the way through had not where to lay His head. What faith in this poor thief! No matter, if all the world was against him, He was a King all the same, and he says, You will come in your kingdom.

What was he thinking of? He was in an agony of pain on the cross, but he does not say, "Save thyself and us." He owned He was the Lord, but does not ask Him to spare him one bit of pain - only, "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

How could he have such confidence in Him? Why, he was a thief! But what the light always does is to give confidence. What! remember a thief, who had just owned he was suffering justly? Can you trust Him like that, honestly confessing your sins, but trusting in God's heart when you own them? Do you trust Christ's heart? If you do not, you do not know Him, for He is trustworthy.

God gives us striking examples that they may strike us. All are not thieves, but it is really the same thing for us all. Have your hearts had Christ so revealed to them, that, honest in your conscience before God, you trust God, when you know what you are? See that poor woman trusting Christ with all her sins before her: that is not so easy always, for if our sins are before us, we reason, and wonder how God will receive us. Are you wondering how God will receive you? Then you have not met Him yet, or you would know how. When the prodigal came to his father, he said nothing about, Make me as one of thy hired servants. And why not? Because his father was on his neck, kissing him, treating him as a son.

The thief owns his sins, but trusts Him. And then I get the Lord's answer: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Now is the Son of man glorified, for to-day shalt thou be with me.

The poor thief was bearing the punishment of his sins from man, but who was bearing it from God? The One who hung beside Him. "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." When I have confidence in Christ, I say, I must go to God, and I find Christ on the way; and what is He doing there? Judging me? No; bearing all my sins. There is that blessed One, whom I have been despising all my days, and I see He has taken my sins, and borne my burden - He has taken them all, and I shall not bear them. Trust Him, no matter how bad you are. If you cannot trust any man, trust Him.

If He has won my heart to this confidence, I find that He who is going to be Judge has been dying for my sins, and how can He impute them to me? Supposing, of course, that I have owned and confessed my sins, and am coming to Him about them, I find the wonderful truth that Christ has been bearing them, that God has dealt with them, and laid them upon Christ. I come beforehand to the day of judgment, and I see

in the Judge the Man who bore all my sins. How, then, can I fear Him? I find that God, because of my sins, has given His Son to bear them all into a waste land, not inhabited.

The work for me is totally finished, but it is not finished in me. I ought to grow more like Him every day, but the work for me, as regards my guilt, is finished, and if it is not perfectly finished, when is it to be? He cannot die again, cannot suffer again, cannot drink that dreadful cup again. That cup made Him sweat great drops of blood in only thinking about what it was to be made a curse for us, and He cannot be made that over again. He is set down because the work is done. How little they thought they were sending the poor thief straight to paradise, when they sent to break his legs!

And now about knowing it, for that is the important point: the Lord told him he was to be with Him that day. And was he to believe it?

It happened to him, but it was written for us. If I come to Him, I know He has finished the work, and has put my sins away. The work was done once for all, and, through the grace of God, brought to me. Knowing no other name under heaven whereby I can be saved, I find He has put my sins away, and I know it! He has gone back into the glory, because He has finished the work. The Holy Ghost brings it home to our hearts, and I say He has finished the work. As in Romans 4, "He died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification." His resurrection is the proof that God has accepted the work. If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins; but if raised, He has borne them, and I am not in them.

What part had we in the cross - I mean in bringing it about? Nothing but our sins, and the hatred that killed Christ - that is all! And that is what humbles us, and brings us, dependent on the grace of God, to say, My sins brought Him there; but God, instead of putting me away, put them away.

Why is this gospel preached? Is it that we should know it, or that we should not? He has made peace; and how careful God is to shew us this, that we may be happy! Defiled, I am cleansed; guilty, I am justified. You say: But I have offended God dreadfully. So you have, but there is forgiveness. God has not a thing against you, Christ has borne it all. He has got the fruit of my sins, and I have got the fruit of His work. If we come thus to God, the very Christ who put our sins away is the very Judge before whom we shall appear. How do believers come before the judgment-seat? "Sown in dishonour, raised in glory." He comes, and receives me to Himself, and that is the way I get to the judgment-seat. How can the believer fear, if, when he sees his Judge, he is like Him?

What opened the poor woman's heart in John 4? Not speaking about the living water, but, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." Her heart was opened by her conscience being reached; "If thou knewest the grace of God." Giving, not imputing - If you knew who it was who had come so low as to be dependent on a woman like you for a drink of water, you would have confidence in Him. And so would you, if you knew the Son of God, come down to a manger and a cross, you would have confidence in Him.

And that is what He is doing in Christ - winning back the confidence of man's heart, when he cannot trust Him because of his sins. The love of God came into the world when men were in their sins; there was love enough in Him to give Himself.

Do you believe that love? If so, there is the plain statement, "By him all that believe are justified from all things." He did not bear half, and leave me to perish by the other half.

When I come to Him, I find that, instead of meeting me in the day of judgment, He has met me in the day of grace.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/mans-heart-and-christs-heart/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**