

The Stream of God's Love

by Ray Greenly

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and laying down self-importance in order to receive God's love and mercy, and warns of the consequences of resisting God's love.

Duration: 43:57

Scripture: Matthew 3:7, Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:17, Romans 2:2-6

Topics: "Love Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of taking responsibility for our actions before God's judgment. He warns that excuses and justifications will not hold up in the face of God's truth. The preacher highlights a tragic case of a man who accepted money to deliver drugs and emphasizes that God cannot allow such individuals into heaven. He urges listeners to receive God's love and mercy and live a life that reflects repentance and holiness. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the significance of communion as a commitment to trust and obey Jesus.

Transcript

Let's pray. Such love you have poured out for us, Jesus. I pray today that the block for that love could be removed from our hearts.

That that love could flow freely into us, transforming, changing, healing, restoring. I pray in your name, Jesus. Amen.

In the book of Romans, the first chapter, there is a statement of introduction. In that statement of introduction, in verse 17, it says, for in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last. Just as it is written, the righteous will live by faith.

That word righteous, dikisoune in the Greek, literally means purity, innocence, kindness. It is God's love that's been poured out. It's interesting, the construction in the Greek does not use the sense of from God, but rather out of God.

So something supernatural is flowing out of God and it's there for us. If we don't receive it, we cannot possess it. Everything in our culture is dancing up and down in front of our eyes, our cell phones, the internet, movies.

I hear Christians commonly say to me, and I have to bite my tongue, oh I'm going to a movie this evening. What? A movie that wicked men and women have produced to build your mind toward the one world government, to set your mind in place for the Antichrist to come. You're going to go and sit and drink that filth? There's a problem, a lack of recognition about what's going on in the world.

Drugs, cocaine is so commonly used in our culture today. Alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, you name it. Drugs, pharmaceuticals, it's all flowing in our culture.

It's all mind altering drugs because we can't handle the reality of our life. And God is saying, look I'm in the spirit realm and I'm willing to flow to you a supernatural presence that will change your whole life, that will clear your mind, that will set you free, that will release you. So what is the block to receiving this supernatural gift of God that's flowing? Why can't we receive it? I want you to turn with me to the second chapter.

I'll begin reading with verse two. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you a mere man pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you'll escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

God will give to each person according to what he has done. So very simply let's face reality. The supernatural presence of God is now pouring into this culture.

And if we resist that supernatural gift of love, of kindness, of mercy, if we resist that and instead go into darkness, a day is soon coming when we will face the reality that God is no longer pouring out his love. He has turned and is now pouring out wrath and judgment and retribution. There is a judge.

And when you face the judge, it's amazing. I've been to court with so many young men and women. Pastor, will you go to court with me? And I say to them, why do you want me to go to court? Because if a pastor's there, it'll say that there's something about me that the judge should be lenient with me.

And I say, well, how are you going to dress when you go sit in front of the judge? Oh, I'm going to have a tie on. I'm going to have a good shirt and clean. I'm going to look good, pastor.

Well, why didn't you look good when you were down on the corner? Why didn't you look good when you were involved in that robbery? All right, I'll go with you. But I can't promise you anything. The judge is not going to look at who's sitting beside you.

He's going to say, what did you do? And why did you do it? But not much on why. He's just going to want to know what did you do? Did you do this? This is what you're charged with. Yes or no? Yes, I did it.

But I did it because my mama didn't treat me kindly. I did it because my dad didn't love me. I did it because I didn't have any money.

I did it because everybody else was doing it. And on and on with the excuses. Until finally, there's only one question that remains.

Did you do this? All the evidence says, yes. Here's your sentence. I just read about a tragic case, a man 58 years old.

15 years ago, he accepted money from an undercover agent to deliver a box of drugs. And because he was fearful for his life going into that part of where he had to go, he hid a firearm. He was sentenced basically to life in prison.

He's sitting in prison today. He's sick. He's dying.

His grandkids are saying, where's grandpa? He got paid \$1,000 by the police to do the job. And he's serving life. 25 years for the firearm.

I think it was 20 years for his distribution of cocaine. Did he do it? He did. He went to court.

They sentenced him. It was an unjust sentence. But it was the sentence.

He can't do anything about it. He's done. His life is basically over.

He knows he will die in prison, and he will never have that time with his grandkids. He forfeited his life. We have to face the reality.

Right now, God is pouring out love. He's saying, look, you don't have to go this way. You don't have to fill your heart with bitterness and anger and revenge.

You don't have to fill your heart with fornication and with every other wicked thing. You don't have to fill your heart with all of this. You can.

You get to choose to do that. But the day is coming when the judge is coming. And the judge is going to ask you, is this what you did? And if you say, I don't remember, he'll probably have a full high definition video to show you.

And you watch you on the screen as you lie and cheat and steal and do whatever you want to do. And then he's going to say, was that you? Yes. And the judgment is death.

God can't afford to bring that kind of person into the heavenly realm. He doesn't want hell all over again on earth. He wants a clean earth.

He wants a pure earth. He wants people who will receive the gift of his love and mercy. So every day, everything you do counts.

It matters. It makes a difference for your eternity. It makes a difference.

So what is it that blocks this flowing love of God, this supernatural gift that he's trying to extend to you? Yes, it's what we do. But let me read verses seven on to those who, by persistence in doing good, seek glory and honor and immortality. He will give eternal life.

But for those who are self-seeking, can I put it another way? For those who are full of themselves, being full of ourselves is the primary block for the love of God to flow into us and to change us. And I have to confess, this has been the greatest block to my Christian walk with Jesus. Self-centeredness, self-interest, self-absorption.

If you were to ask me, what's the major battle of your life, Pastor? I would tell you to every day cast off all concern for me, that I could have in my heart the concerns that Jesus has. Self-pity, self-glory. I mean, look at a man who goes into the boxing ring and makes \$157 million in 36 minutes.

Is that about what it was last night? Astonishing. And every evidence of his life, even though he calls himself a Christian, is of total self-absorption, total concern. \$150 million is not enough for him.

He wants more. Is it enough for you to walk around with \$50 in your pocket or \$100 in your pocket? He carries a bag around with him with \$250,000 and he thinks he's poor. Much of the time he carries around a million dollars at a time.

How much money does a person need before they're willing to no longer be absorbed with themselves? How much money do you need? How much recognition do you need? I got a call yesterday from a listener. He said to me, Pastor, on my job, I've gotten really angry because I'm an electrician and I'm on the night shift. And I come in on the night shift and I see all of these orders that were supposed to be filled during the work shift and they're not done.

And they expect me to work like a dog all night to do the work the guys didn't do during the daytime. He said, I'm sick of it. So he said, I finally gathered up a bunch of these work slips and I went to my boss's boss and I laid out what's happening.

And I said, this is wrong. And I've been every night working like a dog so that these guys could drink coffee and sit around and laugh and talk. And I'm picking up the slack for them.

And I don't want to do that anymore. And the boss quieted them down, said, I'll look into this. I'll take care of it.

Thank you. Just go do a good job. And then he said he immediately was invited to an award ceremony where his boss's boss gave him a wonderful recognition award in the government.

He said he went to that recognition ceremony. He said, Pastor, I want to tell you, I could not even look up. I was so ashamed.

I was so embarrassed because I knew they gave it to me because of my complaining and not because of the quality of my work. He said, Pastor, how do I forget about myself and walk like a Christian? This is really the issue. Are you willing to forget about yourself, your self-interest, and allow the love of God to flow into your heart so that you're given totally over to Jesus? Or do you want to complain about everybody else, how easy they have it and how hard you have it, how you're not treated with sufficient respect, how nobody recognizes what a great person you are? Do you need to go to one of those award ceremonies and have everybody clap for you and go up and get your little award? Because you're a super complainer and they want to shut you up and get you off their backs.

He said that award should have said super complainer award. He was so ashamed. He could barely talk to me about it.

Being self-absorbed blocks the presence of Jesus from it being able to enter our hearts or our lives. I'm reminded of a story. It's found in Matthew, Matthew the 15th chapter.

There's a Canaanite woman. Jesus has taken his disciples over to the coast. He's trying to get them away from people where they can just talk to each other, where they can rest.

They're exhausted. He goes, takes them over on the coast where they can just enjoy some time on the ocean. And this Canaanite woman sees them.

And it says in verse 22, this is Genesis 15, 22, a Canaanite woman from the vicinity came to him crying out. Now that word crying out in English is not an adequate translation. It's literally this woman came violently and threw herself down in front of Jesus, screeching.

She said, Lord, son of David, have mercy on me. My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession. I was interested in that word demon possession in the Hebrew or the Greek rather to see what it was really saying.

What it was really saying was, my daughter is suffering. She is being terribly exercised. Now demon possession literally is saying to distribute fortunes, to distribute fortunes.

In other words, this woman has become demon-possessed because she opened the door to wanting financial resources. She was never satisfied with what she had. She always was greedy for more.

And she finally made a deal with the devil that he would give her what she most wanted. And in turn, he would own her. Now you think this doesn't happen today? Robin Williams confessed openly before he committed suicide that he gave his soul to the devil and that's how he could do his act, his shtick.

Other Hollywood people have openly said, we have a deal with the devil. Cher was one of those. She was so famous in music because she made a deal with the devil.

I could name many others. Milly Cyrus has by her own confession made a deal with the devil and he is rewarding them with financial resources. He is giving them the treasures of this world.

They sold their soul. Jesus, when he was confronted by the devil, was offered all of the kingdoms of the world if he would bow down and worship. And Jesus said, the word says, worship the God of heaven only.

Get thee behind me, Satan. But they wanted fame and fortune and they sold their souls. This girl sold her soul to the devil for money, made a deal with him.

And now she is suffering. Can I say this, please? The devil is not a good deal keeper. Once he gets ownership, he may or may not fulfill his promise.

He will fulfill his promise only if by fulfilling it, he can capture the heart of another person. So this mother has come crying out. Jesus didn't answer her.

You know what? She was not on Jesus' agenda for that day. Jesus had his to-do list. He knew what he was responsible for.

And he was going about accomplishing what he had been told by the father to accomplish for that day. And here comes this Canaanite woman screaming and yelling. And Jesus doesn't answer.

Did not answer a word. So his disciples come to him and they say, send her away, for she keeps crying out after us. Literally, she keeps croaking like a raven, screaming and shrieking after us.

It seems like mama is demon possessed. She is that concerned about her daughter. All self-interest has been removed from this mother's heart.

All she cares about is saving her precious daughter. And she knows that she has absolutely no ability to turn her daughter's heart. She has been captured by demonic forces and they hold that daughter in their fist.

She knows that. And so totally embarrassing herself, totally making herself a public spectacle, she comes after Jesus. Do you have any concern so great in your heart today that if Jesus walked into this room, you would jam past everybody else and you would shout and you would shriek, you would cry because you are so concerned that this person be saved or you calm, cool-handed Luke? You know, hey, I've got to think about me, my reputation.

I don't want people to look at me and think I'm strange. I don't want people to think I'm not cool. What is it that controls your life? Is it passionate need for Jesus? Or is it your own self-respect, your own reputation? You know what? We've got to forget about our reputations.

We've got to lay our reputations aside and begin to cry out to God. This woman, she will not back off. So finally Jesus answers her and says, I have a divine appointment and it's only to the lost sheep of Israel.

Look, woman, you were not assigned to me. I'm not supposed to deal with you. Do you ever feel like you go to prayer and you begin to ask Jesus for something and it's like you're not on the list that day and you feel like you're not even getting through the roof? Your prayer is dropping on your head as fast as you say it.

Your prayer comes crashing to the ground. You say, what's the use of praying? Jesus isn't even listening. You can take that attitude or you can pray louder.

Jesus is now positioning this woman in a place where her true heart is going to be revealed. The disciples are saying, send her away. And they're saying it loudly because she's shrieking.

And Jesus is saying, I was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel. And the woman comes and gets on her face, lays down on the ground right in front of him. Lord, help me.

Lord, help me. And he replies, it's not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs. And literally the word dog there is for a puppy dog.

It's not right for the puppies to get the food of the children. I can't think of anything more insulting. Because of course we think we're so important.

You better talk to me right, pastor. I'm not going to like this church. You know, don't call us snakes.

Whoa, would that be insulting? If John the Baptist were preaching here today, would he say, you brood of vipers. That's what he said to the people. Do you understand the self-esteem that we have in our culture is all false.

It's make believe. It doesn't reflect the reality of our position before God. We are lost sinners.

It is only by grace. It is only by the love of God. It is only the love being poured down out of heaven for us that even gives us the privilege of coming and listening to the word of God being taught.

We don't have a right to hear the word of God. If it offends your heart, know that you're full of yourself. And God is saying, look, will you forget about you? Will you let the acid wash of my love come into your heart and totally cleanse you? A friend came over to help me.

I have a whole group of young people who come into my house every Friday night, and they do a great job of picking up and cleaning up. But you know, after a few weeks, the house begins to go downhill. And of course, they're the ones who are getting it dirty.

I'm not. So a friend came over and said, look, I'll clean the house for you. So a few minutes later, I walk into my bedroom and my bathroom, and all I can smell is Clorox.

And they say, Pastor, the house isn't really dirty. Your bathroom just needed taking care of. I'm saying, what? I'm clean.

No, it's your bathroom that needed taking care of. Well, they were right. In reality, we all need to be taken care of.

And we all need the Clorox and the disinfectant to clean out our pride and our self-esteem and our concern for ourselves. That's what's blocking the cleansing love of Jesus that wants to come and flow into us. But we maintain, hey, I'm doing great.

I'm okay. It's them. It's not me.

It's them. No, it's me. It's me.

I'm the one that needs cleaned up. Until we can begin to take that position, we will block the love of God from flowing into our hearts. It doesn't matter what any of you think of me.

It doesn't matter really what you think of each other. But it matters a great deal what Jesus thinks about you, because he's the judge. This woman, yes, Lord, she said, but even the puppies eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table.

She's saying, look, I don't care what you call me. I don't care what you say to me. I care about only one thing.

I care that my daughter who made a deal with the devil is released from this captivity. That's all I care about. I care about the salvation of my daughter.

She is dying. The devil is killing her. And she will not let Jesus go.

Now, I want to tell you, it doesn't matter whether you're on God's agenda for the day or not. You can put yourself on his agenda. But it means you have to lay down all of your self-importance and your pride.

You have to lay that down. And you have to go to the Lord God of heaven and lay out an honest case for why he should answer you. And the best case in the world is your need and your willingness to admit your need.

And you're saying, look at the mess. I can't clean it up. I can't change it unless I'm released from this bondage of darkness.

Lord, she said, even the puppies eat the crumbs fall from the master's table. And Jesus answered, woman, you have great faith. Your request is granted.

And in the book of Mark, it says the woman went home and found her daughter sitting on the couch, healed of her demon, restored. I've been praying, Lord, give me eyes to see my self-absorption. Give me eyes to see my pride.

Give me eyes to see where I still am defensive for myself. Cause my heart to be totally given in concern for other people. It doesn't matter.

Essentially, it doesn't matter what you think about me. It only matters what you're going to think about Jesus when you face him and he is your judge. That's what matters.

And when you face him as your judge, will you be clean? Will you be whole? Will you be restored? Or will you still be controlled by a demon spirit as you go before the judge and are then cast into the lake of fire with the devil and his angels? It's a decision that we have to make. It's a cold-blooded decision. Will I or will I not forget about myself and follow Jesus? Or do I want my little deal here and my little deal there? And I want this and I want that and I'm collecting all of that.

Oh, I don't mind. I'll collect Jesus with all my other stuff. No, he's not something to collect.

He's the king of kings and he's the Lord of lords. He's the master. He's the ruler of the universe.

And we will go before his judgment bar. All roads lead to the same place. I don't care if you're a Mohammedan, a follower of Mohammed, a Muslim.

I don't care if you are a Hindu, a Shintoist. I don't care what your faith is or if you're a Baptist or a Presbyterian or a Catholic or just a plain vanilla Christian. All roads will lead to the same place.

They lead to the judgment bar of God. And there, every person is going to be sorted out for who they are and what they did. And we will be responsible before the God of heaven.

And either at that point, we are washed and clean and walking holy before him or we will be lost. Today, we're celebrating the communion. This communion cup that we take is literally an offer from Jesus of marriage.

It is the cup to the bride perspective saying, will you marry me? And if you take this cup today, you are saying, I will forget about myself and I will only look to Jesus and I will trust and obey him. I will walk with him. And then the reality is you have to do what you said you do.

You walk it out. A woman from Florida called me. She said, pastor, I had this dream.

I don't understand it. She said, I was in a military induction center and they were handing out our uniforms and they were giving us shoes. And the man placed these great big shoes in front of me.

She said, they had to be an 18. They were huge shoes. And I said to him, those shoes are too big for me.

He said, I'm sorry. The only shoes I have for you. She said, pastor, I don't have a clue.

What did that dream mean? I said, my late wife used to say, we have to have big feet and little heads. I said, my sister, if you're going to do what God has called you to do in the army of the Lord, your feet are

going to have to grow big enough. You can wear those shoes.

And what that means is you're going to have to walk in holiness. You're going to have to grow up in Jesus or you're never going to serve him the way you've been called. And she said, you must mean I don't get a pair of shoes my size.

I said, no, because right now you have little feet and a big head because you've been ordained as a minister of the gospel by a very famous bishop. And you think that that makes you somebody that didn't make you anybody. These shoes are what will make you somebody.

You grow up into these shoes, these 18 size shoes. You can tromp through the devil's territory and break down his strongholds. So don't play games with God.

She may never call me again and share a dream. But I think the dream was for all of us. It means growing up into Jesus.

And to do that, we're going to have to forget about ourselves. And our little petty concerns with you said that to me. You did that.

I'm mad at you. Come on. We're going to have to lay that all aside.

We're going to follow Jesus. It's for real. And we're going to have big shoes to wear.

I remember when I was a little boy, my dad wore size 10. He wore shoes that looked very much like the ones I have on today. They were cap toes.

And I would get in my dad's shoes and I would clomp around the house with the shoes falling off. When I was just a little boy, my daddy asked me if I wanted to preach one weekend. He put a box.

I stood up on the box so I could look over the pulpit, just barely look over the pulpit. I preached that weekend. My dad preached every weekend.

And I'll never forget. He said, Raymond, when you can wear my shoes, you can be a pastor. Today, I wear shoes.

We've got to grow up into the shoes of Jesus. Big feet, little heads. You have to decide.

So as we take the communion today, take it consciously, not unconsciously. Don't come and take the communion because everybody else is coming. Because everybody else won't come.

Take the communion recognizing that you are saying, I will forget about myself and I will receive the love and the righteousness of Jesus in my life. And I will walk like Jesus walked. The bread, it's the broken body of Jesus.

It's to give us strength to walk this walk. The Christian walk is not for weak people. It's for people who walk in the strength of Jesus.

So I invite you today to come and take from the table of the Lord. Now, as you take the cup and you take the bread, would you take it back to your seat and then we'll all eat together. Sam, would you come help me?

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