

2 Corinthians 4:15-5:10

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Preacher: Mr Donald John Morrison

[0 : 00] the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit will just turn again to that portion of scripture which we read together. And especially the last verse in chapter 5.

For he hath made him to be sent for us. For you know sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in heaven.

There's a lot of big words in the Bible. And some of them are difficult to understand.

And some of them they need somebody with a lot more knowledge and education than I have to explain. But there are little words in the Bible which are just as important as the big ones.

And in this section of scripture that we read together you find a word of three letters occurring twelve times. And I'm sure you've noticed it as we read together.

[1 : 12] And the word is for. For. Now the word at the beginning of every verse that contains it means that something important has gone on before it.

It's reading into another verse because of what has gone on before it. for all things we read in chapter 4 verse 15 for all things are for your sakes.

Why? Knowing the previous verse knowing that he which raised the Lord Jesus shall raise you also by Jesus and shall present this with you.

And you go on from the 12th of the 12 instances where the word for appears between verse 15 and the end of chapter 5.

Well what does it all lead up to then? This little word God as it is in God just as it is the word as well. And the little words are so important in the word of God if you look at the word but and as and you find really how they connect what has gone on before and explains what's going to be afterwards.

[2 : 46] And that is really what is happening in this portion of Scripture. We're leading on to something we're advancing we're moving to a sort of destination with the word of God and he's the apostle is building up onto something and he's just throwing your attention to it and he's trying to focus your mind on what he's going to come up with and he's going to come up with a great truth.

All truths are great but there are truths which are so important to us that the apostle seems to just to hold your mind and just focus him on what he's going to present to you at the end of his reasoning.

And it's good for us then to look at what he says to us at the end of chapter 5 and he says to us that God is in Christ.

See we we look at what we read and what we sang together and we see the loneliness of Christ and Christ on his own and Christ on the cross and Christ being abandoned but we know that from the word of God that God was in Christ reconciling the world into himself.

And isn't it amazing that the God of heaven and the Son and the Spirit which has written it down for us not the Apostle but the Apostle was led by the Spirit to write.

[4 : 40] It's the Spirit that gives the word and the Spirit tells us that God was in Christ reconciling the world into himself. Why was God in Christ reconciling the world?

What happened? Why did God need to reconcile the world? Well we need it and we know that when Adam lost his favour with God through his sinful mess but the way to paradise was closed the gate was closed not only was the gate closed the gate was protected and there was a sword pushed in the way and not only a sword but a flaming sword and not a static sword but a sword which turned to the right and to the left to ensure that nobody passed it by.

God has to see we think that all the modern things that we have today are just things that were invented by man and his own intelligence but God has security long before we invented it and God secured the garden and all that was in it and the tree that was forbidden he secured it so that nobody and nobody could ever get through that gate again the way was barred and God had the power to stop anybody yet again and there was man man was on the outside an alien an enemy because of what he had done and everybody who came after him had the same condemnation and the same penalty imposed upon him everyone was guilty by the fall of one the greatest on the least they all had the same sentence hanging over and the day thou eatest of it thou shalt surely die what a depressing thought really isn't it if that's all we had if that's all the bible contained that God had imposed a death sentence on all who were to be born of the race of

Adam Adam who was formed out of the red clay the red earth that's really what his name means he was formed out of the earth and he was given that place of honour and plenty and he had no problems should have had no problems all he ever needed was before him everything he needed to sustain him to make his life good he had before him he even had a companion for him from his side to help him so that he wouldn't be on his own all that was good was given to Adam to enjoy but one item was forbidden and like a little child the more you tell him to leave things alone the more you can be sure that he will touch it and approach it and try and use it or try and abuse it and the same is true of mankind what is bad for you is what you go for for struggle and what is good for you have you felt that in your own soul

I'm sure you have I'm sure you have the things that you should avoid and the things that attract you so here you are then mine on the way upside an alien under a death sentence no way back the flaming sword in his way so what's going to happen well we know that the Old Testament scripture tells us that sacrifices were offered and blood was spilled and all that was just symbolic of what was going to happen there was no substitute for the substitute there was nothing capable of taking the place of Christ they were all symbolic of what was going to happen in Christ and by

[10 : 21] Christ but what does the apostle tell us then well that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself God was in Christ well Christ and God were in the Old Testament readings we have and the Old Testament instructions we have they were equal equal in power and glory God and Christ and the Holy Spirit they were equal in power and glory and Christ became flesh and Christ worked among men and he was given bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh flesh and he was the same as you he carried blood within him he had all the feelings that human beings have he worked with his hands he worked laboured for his food but he was different he had no sin he was sinless pure and we can't understand what purity is because no matter how good we see ourselves we are not pure because sin has marred us with your vessels which are cracked and pitted and mailed and spoiled that's really what what the prophet of old saw when he went into the potter's house and he saw the potter had tried to fashion a vessel on the wheel and he was sticking on fine but all of a sudden it collapsed and the vessel was marred and spoiled but thank

God he didn't throw the clay away he put it back on the wheel and he fashioned it again into a thing of beauty and a thing of use and that's what God has done to you and to me in Christ he hasn't thrown the clay away because we were marred and spoiled he is fashioning you and fashioning me again so that we might be vessels for his own glory and we look at ourselves and we say to ourselves oh well I don't see myself as anything that is acceptable to God that is able to glorify God because I'm still like the clay and the water when it was crumbling at all the part but God in these own capable hands there was so much pressure to apply not only from the inside of the vessel to shape it and to bring it up but from the outside too and he's fashioning with his careful hands what he's going to make of you and what he's going to present to us see the apostle Paul was described as a vessel a chosen vessel he wasn't described as a perfect vessel at all just a chosen vessel and so it is with you and with me before in Christ we are chosen but not perfect the perfection is in him and the potter and the hands that are fashioning us and then he goes on to say that we are ambassadors for Christ well what does an ambassador do well he represents the kingdom in which he is sent or represents the king or the government of that kingdom though it's quite difficult to be an ambassador if you were an ambassador of the United

States today in certain countries he wouldn't be that popular because of the decisions of the president he would certainly find it difficult to be an ambassador in a Muslim country representing the United States whether right or wrong it would be difficult to be an ambassador in such a case but being an ambassador for Christ is also difficult because not because there is anything wrong with the judgment of Christ or with the kingdom Christ represents the difficulty is with the ambassadors that we present or don't present the kingdom of God in an attractive and honest way so that other people would want to join with us that's our problem that's our problem with ambassadors that they look at us and read us and say

I don't want anything to do if that's the kind of people you are I don't want anything to do with them what is our problem I hope it's not really a problem that puts people off when they see the likes of me standing here I honestly despair for myself when I stand here and think that I might be doing more harm than I'm doing good it's frightening for me today to think that somebody somebody who is the least of the least is allowed to stand here and those who am I admired and glad are not able because of death to stand here

I feel he is mind blowing for me by my spirit I just can't explain God only knows God only knows God only knows if you're an ambassador for Christ you want to make the best of your situation you want to tell people about the country and its beauty and its security and its love and its joy we're here and we're so gloomy and everything is a burden to us but there's a land far away where there is joy that we can't even begin to threaten the beginning of chapter 5 tells us that this tabernacle this portion of clay that our spirit dwells in it's crumbling it's falling to pieces it's falling to pieces what hope have we got what chance have we got of joy how can we lift ourselves from this depressing state well by saying to our souls that God has prepared a place of habitation for us which shall never crumble an eternal house in the heavens we can't understand it we can't even begin to imagine it we some places when you when you see them you get a map of what it is you can google in us they say nowadays in modern terminology and you can't see what the place looks like but you can't do that to heaven it's a mystery you take it by faith you take it by faith and you say to yourself

[19 : 08] Christ has promised it Christ will deliver it Christ has my name written on that room which is part of the many mansions my name and address are there because Christ has promised it and I believe Christ above all things that the earth is believable now except what the word of God says and though we go on we know that the time has come and the time is fast approaching where we'll just leave this earthly house and go on to a better place place how is it possible well we'll go back to the last verse in chapter five for he hath made him to be sent for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him don't just try and get your mind around some of this and you can't get your mind around all of it a sinless spotless land without blemish or spot that's what we have in the old dispensation that's what we have the lamb of the passover he was set aside he was to be selected he was to be chosen it wasn't just any lamb it was the best lamb in the flock and he was inspected and provided that he was the best and the most pure of the flock he was sacrificed but

God only had one son and he was a perfect son and what does it say for he hath made him for he hath made him God made him be reconciled to God for he hath made him to be sin for us just think what is happening God making his son sin for you and for me God making his son whom you know sin to be sin now with all with all respect with all respect with all respect what I shall good have been to a pure and sin to be made sin see we who were sinners were sinners by nature and sinners by practice taming all sin to be made what you were not it's difficult to explain to be made a member of the church to be made a believing man to be made something like that which the spirit has done to a lot of people in here and to most people in here

I would imagine so I don't have to confess what God has done to them in the spirit but it's mind blowing that God has visited us and touched our souls and made us what we were but to make a sin a sin is a sacrifice that we can't do again to understand why did he do it why because there was no one else good enough there was no other lamb Abraham found a ram in a thicket to substitute for Isaac on the mountain there was no substitute for Christ because the substitute could not be perfect or better than Christ Christ the perfect lamb the son of

God was made the perfect sacrifice the last sacrifice the only sacrifice the sacrifice that all other sacrifices led out to why well it tells us the word of God tells us that we made the What's happening? What's the victim? We're putting off our cloak of sinfulness and putting it on the curse.

Putting it on your jacket of sinfulness and putting it on the shoulders of Christ. And he's putting off his cloak of righteousness and putting it on your jacket and the covering of sin.

[26 : 13] He's swapping garments with you, swapping the colour because of his love for you.

God in Christ reconciling the world into himself. God in Christ giving you what you didn't deserve.

This is grace. This is mercy. See the law demands of you. Do and you shall live. The law demands do and you shall live.

But when the law says do and you shall live, the law demands that every point of the law is observed by you. And every little detail in the law must be observed by you so that you can live.

And nobody was able to do it except the Lord Jesus Christ. But what does grace say? Grace says live. For all is done. All is done. Christ has done it. Christ has observed the law. Christ has kept the law. Christ has enlightened his people.

[27 : 31] Under the shadow of his blood and under the shelter and the cleansing of his sacrifice on Calvary's cross. And we are offered that power of righteousness. And I go back to the old parable of the son.

And he came back from the far country. And all his growth and all his stench. The stench of sin. He took back from the far country. And his father was watching for him and waiting for him.

And I can't get the picture out of my mind. Because the prodigal is me. Prodigal is me. And the father is looking for him. And the father sees him. And the father runs.

And the father embraces him. And the father kisses him. And the father loves him. And the father takes him home. And the father dresses him. In the perfect form. The best form. The best form. The best form that was waiting for him. For his return.

And the father made him through the ■. And the father made him through the And the father made him through the And the father made him through the just with the colour of love over him.

[29 : 26] And he was covered. Covered! Shoes on his feet and a ring on his hand.

He had all that the family would expect of the son of the father. He had everything that the father wished to give him. Who has told us of this and who has written as well the Apostle Paul?

What a transformation in his life. And it's not any greater than the transformation in your life. And hopefully in mine. Because the Apostle Paul was an enemy of God.

And an enemy of Christ and an enemy of Christ's people. But no, he's a changed man. And he wants to tell the world about Christ. And he wants to tell people how great Christ is.

And he talks about the suffering of Christ. And he tells us that he became sin so that he could become righteous.

[30 : 53] And that's what happened. And that's what happened. Well, it happened on Calvary's cross. We know that Christ was hung on the cross.

And he had two companions, one on each side of him. And somebody on that side saying that there were three crosses and three types of death.

But one died in sin and one died to sin and one died as sin. The difference between one died in sin and one died to sin was the one in the mirror.

The cross of Christ, the Christ of the cross. The one died to know Christ. The other didn't want to know Christ. And the cross is the thing that separates mankind through every age and in every area.

To this very day. The sufferings of Christ. I was reading last night something that really spoke to me.

[32 : 16] I don't know how many of you know anything about the Duke of the Camer. He was a minister and a great scholar and he wrote a lot of Gallic hymns.

hems and there. He talks about the day of judgment in one of his hems. It's a frightening and awful piece of theology really. There are some encouraging things in a tomb. And there's a translation of it which goes something like this. The gate against your rock before, my life and death have burst it wide. The spear has paid for you a door, a new wide opening in my side. The flaming sword that waved beneath when Eve and Adam sinned has held deep in my heart, a lemon sheath, and in my blood its flames are drowned.

So if you might know, I drink a little bit. I have a little bit of a rush, and I will say, I will say, I will say, I will say, I will say, I will say, I will say.

The sword is taking out of the way, and the sword has been used, and the sword has been cut, and the way is open, and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to you. How has Christ achieved all this? When he suffered and died. And the same barred in the letter, in the letter, in which he has written, the sufferings of Christ, in which he sees the miracle of what has happened. The God of all eternity, a suffering child of the killing.

Marvellous, these people. Marvellous how they delved out of what God was achieving in Christ. And he says in this verse of the suffering of Christ, the Lord, if all the fiery vengeance that the Saviour suffered then were laid upon the angel hosts, and all the sons of men, they all would perish at the reap to swift destruction heart. One drop of his tear shattering would burn up all the world.

[35 : 09] And the■ would burn up all the world.

For he made him to be sent for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

What a glorious exchange! What an amazing thing that you are part of today, in Christ.

You were slim, held bold, you were a slither, lost. But though you have practiced this imputed to you, not because you earned it, but because it was God's good pleasure to give it to you.

But he didn't give it to you as a free offering. It didn't cost you anything except obedience. But it cost him what he had.

[36 : 37] It cost him his son. It cost him the agony of watching his son. God was in Christ. It cost him the blood of his son to be spilled, to be spilled, and to be trampled in the fruit, by those who are unwilling to believe, to see their need.

And you and I are supposed to proclaim it, because we are ambassadors for Christ.

Let us try our best to tell others. There is still hope.

There is still salvation. And salvation in no one else. Our works, good though they might be, our secondary to what Christ has done for us.

His works are the important of us. Let us pray. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.