

Romans (Quality: Good)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 July 1983

Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

[0 : 00] I have an attention this morning to a word found in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, the 8th chapter and verse 32.

8th chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, verse 32. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

This is truly a tremendous truth, declaration of that truth, which undoubtedly we pass by at times without recognising or realising its magnitude.

Those of you who were among the six that attended the prayer meeting last Thursday will remember that I quoted this verse or part of it on that occasion.

And as I did so, the truth seemed to lay hold of my mind and heart, so much so that I felt constrained to take this word as the text today.

[2 : 07] And I hope the Lord our God will open it to our minds and understanding, for the great and glorious works of God are here revealed in this precious portion of his word.

He that spared not his own son. Those words alone in our text are of sufficient gravity and greatness to occupy our thoughts and minds, not only while we are here this morning, but through the whole range of our lifetime.

He that spared not his own son. What we were speaking of on Thursday, those of you who were here will remember, was the wonderful truth, the very opposite truth really, to this truth in our text.

And that is that while God did not spare his own son, he does spare his people.

And he promises so to do as we have it in the 17th verse of the third chapter of Malachi, where God says there, I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

[4 : 09] And as I was meditating upon those two scriptures and the complete oppositeness of them, I thought of this word and the occasions in the scripture where it occurs, this word spare.

And it seemed that my mind, in some rather interesting and precious way, was led to various parts of the scriptures where this word is used by God in his holy inspired word.

and how instructive it was to one's mind. And I pass it on to you this morning in order that we might extract as we come and approach our subject, which is so great and so important, we might extract some help, perhaps some comfort or encouragement from the word of God.

Now, we know the teaching of the Lord here, at least we ought to seek to understand what his teaching is.

And there are really three things that the Lord is teaching us in this word or by this word, he that spared not his own son.

[6 : 06] And the first thing is this, that God seems to lay down very clearly a principle here in which he expects that his people who come to a knowledge of him and come into his ways shall not in any way spare themselves.

That's the teaching of this important word of truth. You see, God sets himself forth here in his word as the supreme, glorious person who in working out the salvation of his people spared not his own son.

therefore he requires from his people, although he will spare them, the awful ravages of opposition that is against them that they have to contend with day by day in their earthly pilgrimage.

He expects them, nevertheless, not to spare themselves. One of the great curses of individual experience as well as the church of God at large is that spirit in which there is an attempt made to spare ourselves.

avoid to spare ourselves. Avoid responsibilities if we can and as much as we can. If there are duties, let somebody else undertake them.

[8 : 07] If there are dangers to enter, let us avoid that course at all costs. you know how the spirit pervades and if you and I, if we are both honest before God we have to acknowledge this, that we are guilty and have been guilty considerably so of this very spirit of sparing ourselves ourselves.

And it is just this very spirit that God enjoins and by example, his own example, clearly expects his people to turn away from and to avoid at all costs.

Now that's the first thing that God would have us learn from this glorious example that he puts forth of his own sparing not of his own dear son.

The second thing is this, God's willingness to spare his people is a mighty help to them in pleading for him for the sake of others.

Now we've had an example of that this morning. As we were reading about Abraham's converse with God, one of the most amazing episodes in the life of man since man was created on the earth.

[10 : 11] A man whose name was Abraham was highly favoured and privileged. He was brought out of a heathen ungodly nation full of idolatry.

He was commanded by God to go forth and the Lord God appeared to him in the course that he took.

And on that particular occasion that we read this morning, he appeared to Abraham as he was about to go toward Sodom and Gomorrah, those wicked cities whose wickedness had cried to very heaven because of its terrible nature and awfulness.

And Abraham, knowing the willingness of God to spare his people, he enters into a whole range of entreaty with the Lord to spare those two cities if God should find righteous souls within their boundaries.

He begins, as you remember, with fifty. Wilt thou destroy the whole place for the sake of fifty? Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked?

[12 : 04] You see, Abraham knew the mind of God. He had no Bible to go on. He was taught directly from God, from the Holy Spirit of God.

And what he knew of himself and what he knew of God was the outcome of that teaching. He knew that he was himself but dust and ashes.

He had no Bible to tell him that truth. He knew it because God had taught him. He knew also that God was almighty. he knew that he was just and he knew that justice demanded a complete requisite in regard to judgment but he also knew that God was merciful and he appeals on that ground of God's mercy glory.

And look at how he comes right down. And all the while you know Abraham no doubt had a respect and his mind was greatly disturbed because in those cities there were his nephew and his nephew's children.

They were inhabitants of these cities and he knew that what God would carry out he would perform and therefore he could see the terrible danger in which his own kith and kin were in at this time.

[13 : 55] And though Abraham never mentioned the name I believe in his heart there was a tremendous burden of anxiety on behalf of those of his own kindred who were in mortal danger of destruction in those cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

And he comes right down. He says let me speak but this once O Lord if there should be ten found in that city wilt thou destroy it for the sake of ten.

And the Lord God said I will not destroy it if ten are found. Now what I want you to extract from this is the wonderful encouragement that God gives to us to plead with him on behalf of kindred perhaps it might be in our own family circle people who have no fear of God in their hearts of the moment who are in awful danger in consequence and who seem almost as if it is impossible for any change to appear in such cases.

Look at Abraham. Let us go on. Let us plead with the Lord. You see the Lord did save in the nick of time by the skin of his teeth we might almost say Lot and his family.

He sent an angel to bring out Lot. His wife was destroyed but Lot and his daughters came out alive safe from the awful deluge that fell upon those cities because of their awful wickedness against God.

[15 : 54] Now I say what I want to emphasize, what I want to point out is this, that while God would spare two wicked cities for the sake of ten righteous souls, if there's a righteous soul in a family who can say that God will not spare, that is to say save with an everlasting salvation, those who seem to be so adamant, so careless, so indifferent, so unconcerned about their own souls and the never dying condition in which their souls are placed.

We ought to go on where it seems impossible. Is there anything impossible with the Lord? Is there anything too hard for the Lord?

He that spared not his own son, but he who is willing to spare the ungodly for the sake of righteous souls that are in their midst.

He is the God to whom we can address with all earnestness our hearts in prayer to him and we ought to do so and continue to do so.

For who can tell whether the Lord may not appear with delivering goodness and mercy in answer to our petitions?

[17 : 34] things. Then, the third thing is this. God takes special pleasure in those of his people who are willing not to spare themselves.

He sees it. No one else may take seemingly any notice of it but God sees it. I go again, I turn again to Abraham.

You know how God did fulfill his promise and in the old age, he was ninety-nine and Sarah was eighty-nine, he got forth in that family a son whose name was Isaac.

and that son grew up. He became the one in whom all the promises of God were centred.

He was heir to the great wealth, not only the natural wealth and possession of Abraham but to Abraham's faith in God his Lord and his maker.

[19 : 00] God said to him, take now thy son, thine only son.

And have you ever noticed how God repeats this? He anticipated, you see, in his speaking to Abraham, he anticipated what he himself would do in regard to his own dear blessed son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who as our text says, he spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

He says to Abraham, take now thy son, thine only son, and offer him up to me for a burnt offering.

And Abraham went. We have no revelation in the scriptures, as to the degree of heaviness that may well have borne down upon that dear man's heart.

But what we have in the scriptures is the great example of Abraham's willingness to give to God all that he commanded.

[20 : 24] and to give it gladly without any reluctance and without a single wave of rebellion.

And he takes him to Mount Moriah, a place that he had never been before. and there he builds an altar and binds Isaac on that altar and raises his hand high to heaven to strike deep into the heart of his own son.

And God calls. And he says, now I know, this is God speaking, now I know that thou fearest the Lord, seeing thou hast not withheld thine only son from thee.

You see, God's pleasure was in the willingness. He did not permit the sacrifice to be made, but God saw the willingness of Abraham and he blessed him in consequence of that willingness.

My dear friends, we may not be always able to carry out what we intend, but if we have a willing heart and mind, God accepts it. He recognizes it.

[22 : 04] It's not our ability that deprives us of any blessing that God may have in store for us, but it's what we so often lack and what we need to cultivate and to pray for most incessantly and earnestly and constantly and that is a willing mind, a willing heart to obey God and to do whatever he commands, even though it may cost us, as Abraham thought it would cost the whole of his life, all that he had, every possession that he possessed, he was willing nevertheless to sacrifice to God and God recognized that.

Now I know that thou fearest the Lord. God. Well then, coming to another part of the scripture, we find in the book of Joel, Joel was a prophet that sort of portrayed a great deal of the present time in which we live, turmoil, strife in the world, God's church being hemmed in on every hand, side, and harassed by all its enemies and foes.

The Lord sends his servant with a great message, and it's the message of hope and of confidence and assurance.

Call an assembly, call a solemn fast, blow the trumpet, lift up thy voice, spare not, says the Lord to his people, spare not.

This is to the church of God, in all her travail, spare not. Oh, one of the sickly things today is the church of God, professing church that is, is out to spare itself.

[24 : 19] They like to confine themselves into a nice little corner, compact, easy going, let the world pass by, take no notice of that which is without.

Let us concentrate on what we are within. Let us be satisfied with the walls around us. You see, in other words, the church's attitude today is, spare thyself.

And God's message to the church is this, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, sound the word of truth to the very ends of the earth, call men to repentance.

Declare the word of God widely and blessedly. And again, Joel says in that wonderful prophecy of his, he says, Lord, spare thy people, give not thine heritage to reproach.

Well, then again, look at the case of Nineveh and Jonah. There was Jonah, rebellious, wonderfully dealt with by the Lord, and taught by him also.

[25 : 57] But when he comes to deliver the Lord's message to that great city of Nineveh, he has in his heart deep down a desire to see the destruction of Nineveh.

He wants to see God carrying out his threats. You know how God had sent him with a message of threatening 40 days, 40 days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed.

And you know, Jonah really wanted to see that destruction. He goes to the outside of the city, to wait for it, expecting it to fall any moment.

Then he would rejoice. He would be able to say, there, I told you so. Oh, that's his terrible spirit, isn't it, that sometimes pervades us when we seem to want to see the disaster fall upon our enemies.

And those that oppose themselves and God and truth, we would love to see them overthrown and destroyed. But how does God deal with his servant Jonah?

[27 : 19] Well, he raises up a little plant, because the sun is beating down. There has Jonah gone out. He won't reside in the city, not among the people of Nineveh.

Oh, no. No, he'll separate himself from them. Sure enough, he goes out in the verges of the city, where he can see the city from a distance, where there's no shelter, and the sun blazes down on him, and he falls sick with the sunstroke.

And God raises up in a very short space of time a plant, sufficient to be a covering, at least, for Jonah's head.

And then God teaches Jonah by taking that plant away, withering it. A worm strikes at the root, and it begins to wither.

And Jonah is cross, and angry about it. And God comes to him and he says, you are angry about this little plant, because it has failed to provide you with a shelter.

[28 : 30] And here's a great city right down here in front of you, within your view, that you are waiting to see the destruction of it. And he says, this is the lesson you've got to learn, Jonah, that I'm willing to spare that city, if there is a repentance among the people of it.

And this is the lesson that you, my servant, must learn, that it's far, far better to spare than to destroy.

Then look at Saul again. God sent Saul, and this was his undoing, really, this was the cause of his downfall, you see how much there can be drawn out of one word in the scriptures, if you like to take the care and time to go through it.

God said to Saul, go and destroy the Amalekites, and Agag, the king of the Amalekites.

And that was God's commission to Saul. and Saul went. God gave him mighty success in his campaign.

[29 : 59] And he chased them and destroyed them. But there was one, the king Agag survived. and Saul reprieved him.

Why he did that, we're not clear in the scriptures, but no doubt there was something in Saul that was in affinity with the ungodliness of Agag.

also, there was much in the possessions of these people. God said, destroy everything, sheep and cattle, everything that they have, let nothing survive.

And here was Saul carrying it out partially. He was sparing Agag and the sheep, the best of the sheep and the cattle that belonged to these people.

He was saving it for himself. He pretended to be doing so for the Lord, to sacrifice a greater sacrifice to the Lord. And the Lord came to him through Samuel the prophet.

[31 : 17] And he says, has the Lord greater pleasure in sacrifice than in obedience? it was the undoing of Saul.

He spared Agag, but he lost his own kingdom and he lost the pleasure of God upon him.

Then we turn to David and oh how David had to suffer because of his folly and his sin.

You remember how Nathan came to him with a parable? And this was the parable. He says, there was a rich man with many flocks in his possession son.

And nearby he had a servant who had one ewe lamb and this ewe lamb was very dear and very precious to this man.

[32 : 36] He brought him up. He bore him along as a daughter in his bosom. there came a day when a rich man came visiting this man who possessed so much and he wanted to entertain his visitor.

So instead of taking one of his own vast flock and killing that and dressing it as Abraham did for those three men, he goes to the poor man and takes his one ewe lamb from him and kills that and dresses that.

And Nathan comes with this parable and he tells it all out to David and David's heart was stirred with anger and he threatens instantly righteous judgment upon this man who did such a deed as that.

So utterly unworthy wicked and Nathan said thou art the man thou art the man and poor David hung his head he recognized that it was the word of God coming straight home to him to bring home his sin in regard to Bathshebawick to hunger and things sung down in real confession and contrition and godly sorrow.

The Lord forgave him. And then he went, and I believe this is one of the reasons that he wrote that beautiful psalm, the 39th psalm.

[34 : 45] And the last word in that psalm is this, O spare me that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more.

Just one more word or two about this, and it is this, to the word to the church of God. We have it in Isaiah, the 52nd chapter of Isaiah.

The Lord says, spare not. This is to his church, his people, the children of Israel, who are representative of the church of God. He says, spare not.

Lengthen thy cords. Strengthen thy stakes. Spare not. That's the first word. I've already indicated how much there is the very opposite spirit today, prevalent among God's people.

Oh, I hope you and I, my friends, will hear and take heed to the words of the Lord. Spare not.

[35 : 58] We ought to be seeking and considering deeply in our hearts what the church is for, what its function is, what its purposes are in the world.

It's not just to have a nice, composed, little community of social interest.

It is here, and the Lord indicates very clearly what it is here for. It's here for this purpose, to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes.

That is to say, to build and to prepare for whatever eventuality may come. And the secret of doing it is to spare not, not to try and harbor and retain and reserve ourselves, but to spare not and to expend and be expended for the sake of God and for Christ.

Paul said, I am willing to be sacrificed on the service of your faith if only I can see poor sinners brought to Christ Jesus the Lord.

[37 : 20] Then, finally this morning, in the 58th of Isaiah, he says, cry out aloud, cry aloud, ye inhabitants of Zion.

Lift up thy voice as a trumpet. Cry out and cry aloud, ye inhabitants of Zion. We keep too much of under reticence.

I feel guilty of this to a large extent. We hide our light under a bushel often, but God commands us and calls us not to spare ourselves, but to seek to honor him and to glorify his name and to proclaim his glory widely as far as he gives us strength so to do.

Now, I haven't come very much to my text, but we shall continue that and I hope you'll all be here this evening because it's a most wonderful text where God tells us that he spared not his own son.

We've come up by various routes to this point. We've seen how wonderful a use there is made of this word spare and how much teaching there is in it.

[38 : 48] Now we come to the very heart of the truth itself where God says he spared not his own son.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.