

Romans

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[0 : 00] The Word of God The Word of God The Word of God

The Word of God Verses 22 to 24 What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had aforeprepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

I wonder under what influence we're living.

Are we living solely under the longsuffering of God? God, is it a mercy of God that you're still alive?

Is it a mercy of God that He sustains you and blesses you by His bountiful providence that you continue in this world with a goodly measure of the supply of the things which associate with not only the necessities of life, but to a degree with the pleasures of life?

[2 : 51] You have, as it were, a cup that flows over in the good providence of God, as it enables you to live in a reasonable position and condition, a position and condition which is in many ways suitable to your present life.

You may have the benefit of home and a wife or husband, you may have children, you may be able, as it were, to find comfortable accommodation, run your car and those various modern amenities which add to the ease and pleasure of this life in a natural sense.

But is there another dimension to your life? Are you a natural man, purely a natural man, without any other consideration, ever breaking in, either with a measure of terror upon your spirit, or are you so intoxicated by the things that God gives to you in His providence that you will never have a thought or desire to be different and to realize the solemnity of your birth in common with all the human race, that we're born in sin and shapen in iniquity and in sin did our mothers conceive us.

My friends, yes, God is good to all. God is good to all. His tender mercies are over all His works.

But having said that, the text this evening is not a foreign consideration as we look into the ways of God with the children of men.

[5 : 15] What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?

Now there are some people in the earth, and one would judge by the subsequent teaching of the Word that it is a remnant that shall be saved, that the majority, the majority are children of wrath, and God has no purpose to their salvation.

He has indeed provided everything necessary to the salvation of His people. But their hearts are hardened.

Their spirits are so encompassed with the world and the things of it that the thought of any change of outlook, any change of spirit within them is obnoxious in the consideration of it.

Well now, I don't want to dwell too long upon this, but certainly I would speak it in the spirit of affectionate warning.

[6 : 42] How solemn to live through this life, receiving the benefits of God's good providence, and yet a heart so hard as to not think of God, never offer thanksgiving to God, never, as it were, to see the hand of God in the supply of our temporal needs, and the excesses of benefit to which He turns His hand from time to time that give us rest and pleasure.

Well now, what if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?

Now don't you know, if your consideration can spread just for a few moments, to think upon the attitude of man left entirely of God to his own ways, fitted to destruction.

There's nothing in Him, so to speak, nothing about Him that could possibly give delight to the Lord, His Maker.

He's abandoned, as it were, to the iniquity and total gender of His fallen nature, that self and self-interest, self-indulgence, is the hallmark of His approach.

[8 : 33] Well now, my friends, it's a solemn thing. But all of us, by nature, are in that condition. If God did not intervene, we all would fall into that category and prove to be vessels fitted to destruction.

One of the great mercies, and I'll go on to this now, and that He might make known the riches of His glory upon the vessels of mercy.

Now, the people of God are vessels of mercy, and in the fullness of God's mercy, according to His purposes of love and grace toward them, He brings them to an understanding of their condition and position relative to their existence and the eternal nature of their inevitable future.

And what a wonderful thing it is when the Lord, in the fullness of His mercy, awakens us to the reality of our position and our condition, that we're not just here to live a certain number of years in time.

Whether short or long, our life may be, my friends, the longest really is but a short existence, for we appear but for a little time and then pass away.

[10 : 22] And some of us have been speaking today of the brevity of life, how quickly our lives have gone. I can speak from the, not the time I entered into the forces in my youthful years, but the time I was discharged from army life.

And it just seems such a short while ago. And yet, between then and now, more than 50 years has passed away.

And the question arose today, where have those years gone? What, whatever has happened to me during that period, that short period of time?

Well, the Lord has determined the length of the days of His people and He is the potter who prepares prepares vessels unto honor, vessels unto glory, as well as those that are left and are fitted for destruction.

When we come to a consideration of the two bodies of people that constitute society generally, we realize this.

[11 : 51] Am I saved or am I not? Am I a vessel of mercy to whom God is showing mercy or am I one that God has left to the ruin of my nature to add up, as it were, the measure of iniquity to my destruction and then will send me justly to perdition forever and forever.

For now, a concern relative to these things is a very good evidence of an interest in the riches of God's glory because he doesn't leave his people in ignorance to perish.

He awakens them by the power of his spirit. They're born again of the Holy Ghost. They're made wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.

They come in the leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit to a position and place where they are made manifest as Christians, the followers of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And my friends, this question so often recurs, am I his or am I not? Well, I want to pursue the subject briefly and quickly and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he hath afore prepared unto glory.

[13 : 44] The apostle comes to this, even us, even us. And that is not an expression that is destitute of grace.

It is an expression that's pregnant with grace because the apostle can't see any reason at all why God in his rich mercy should have chosen him and those to whom he was addressing this remark.

Even us. Why was I made to hear his voice and enter while this room when thousands make a rigid choice and rather starve than come?

The distinction between those that are saved and those that are left is according to the sovereign electing purposes of God and is consistent with the sole work of God working to salvation in the hearts and lives of those he has ordained to everlasting life.

Well, the potter and the clay. You know, in the potter's house this last week, my son-in-law was concerned that his daughters might witness the potter making a vessel.

[15 : 19] And I was as interested as anybody in the fact that he agreed to demonstrate his skills and we watched him closely and initially he motivated his wheel and it started spinning around, motivated by electricity obviously in these days and in the center he put a lump of clay that was like about the size of a cricket ball just put that in the center of this revolving wheel.

and yes, he gradually sorted from a great number of different tools, tools that obviously he intended to engage in making the vessel that was in his mind to bring to us.

And it was very, very instructive because first of all, this lump of clay began to rise and he was working on it to bring it up into a vertical position and it was like a little vertical tower, if you like, of clay when he finished his first purpose and then with it still rotating at quite a fast rate, he took one or two sharp tools and began to work those into this clay so that gradually we began to see the intention that was in his mind brought to pass in the nature or in the type of vessel that he intended to bring forth.

And all the skill that one imagined was in exercise as he used his skills to bring to the vessel to bring to pass the vessel of his intention.

And one saw the vessel come up and it was a beautiful vase in the finality of it.

[18 : 10] And two things impressed me considerably was the sharpness that they were like pieces of metal that had a very sharp edge and he worked those round this clay in such a way that well the shape of it was quite impressive to witness as he formed it.

And then obviously the inside of the vessel needed some attention and I was very impressed by the fact that he put his hand to the top of the clay and gradually as it were his hand worked down into the vessel so that it was all right for sale in the internal nature of it as well as the external appearance of it.

and we saw the whole procedure brought to pass and I could not possibly describe it in its detail any further but to use it as an illustration of how the Lord the heavenly potter works upon the clay of those that he ordains to save with his everlasting salvation.

And my friends it was indeed a very useful ministry to witness the workings of this skilled potter and to relate it to the experiences that the Lord uses in the case of his children individually making them what he would have them to be to the glory and honor of his own great name.

Vessels of mercy. Vessels of mercy. And all the Lord's dealings are especially merciful in the sense that that the people that are taught of God these vessels of mercy chosen of God have nothing in them to commend themselves to God but God makes them fashions them in such a way that they are qualified to acknowledge and appreciate the sovereignty of his dealings with them the peculiar distinction of their way of life to the way of life of those that are left those that are forsaken of God and that ultimately perish in their sins.

[21 : 16] God is a sovereign with respect to the length of time he adopts in the fashioning of these vessels of mercy he is able very quickly to perfect a vessel to his everlasting glory we have that in the case of the dying thief do we not who upon the cross with the Lord Jesus Christ was brought to a saving knowledge of the Son of God and he was as prepared for glory as those that for many years were under the instruction of this heavenly potter using many circumstances sanctified in their lives to bring forth praise and honour and glory to the Lord with respect to their souls preparation for glory hereafter now that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy what a wonderful thing it is for the

Lord so to use a conviction as a tool what I might term to use his holy law to bring us to an acknowledgement of our exposure to the just judgment of God the Lord doesn't make Pharisees by his teaching he makes humble thankful sinners to realise that it is of his sovereign goodness that they are made what they are for his honour and for his glory not unto us oh Lord not unto us but unto thy name be the glory you know surely it's a most humbling consideration why was

I made to hear thy voice why was I made to hear thy voice why has not the Lord chosen others before me and my friends there's a ready response to this that if the Lord calculated in the degree of unworthiness surely the people of God consider themselves to be the most unworthy among men and there would be ample reason for God to leave them to harden in iniquity and to perish in just judgment to their destruction I believe this point of experience relates to the children of

God they justify God in their condemnation they justify God in their condemnation if my poor soul perished it would be consistent with the exercise and administration of heavenly justice but my friends what a wonderful thing it is that God in the abundance of his mercy takes of the worst of sinners to sanctify and bring as vessels of mercy to glorify his name in time and to eternity now and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy the sharp tools used by the potter seem to have a great influence on the shape and nature of the vessel that he was making and as we look into scripture and I believe there is a corresponding appreciation in the life of the people of

God that the tools that seem to be most effective to bring them to a position and place where they are vessels of mercy are experimentally considered the sharp tools you know I was thinking relative to this of the life of Joseph you know Joseph when he was at home with Jacob the beloved son of his father one that if Jacob heard in showing favoritism it was in the spirit that he manifested toward Joseph but then there came some sharp tools didn't there into Joseph's life he was sent out with those provisions that his father decreed should be conveyed to his brethren and what about the reception that he received when eventually he contacted his brothers my friends it was a sharp tool wasn't it it was a sharp tool but

[27 : 36] Joseph would not have been as it were the instrument that God ordained if he had carried on comfortably in the home of Jacob and developed as it were a life around the home and the appreciated environment in which he initially appears to live God led him about God brought him into contact with a spirit that was very very hard for Joseph to experience there instead of being appreciated by his brethren we find him to be rejected by his brethren sold into the hands of the

Ishmaelites and then to as it were disappear from the family context altogether as he is taken down into Egypt but oh the wonder of God in that wherever Joseph went Joseph seemed to prosper the providential dealings of God with Joseph were such a nature that when he came into the home of the Egyptian there he found favor and soon was prosperous but another tool is brought to bear false accusation false accusation something that he was pure and clear absolutely in the sight of

God and man the very suggestion of his spirit being alien to immorality brought him to be falsely judged and condemned and his life was very very trying as he was found in the prison and my friends the very nature of his false accusation his rejection so to speak and the fact that his lot was cast into the Egyptian prison there to languish and in his heart all through this period of time was the fact that initially he had a dream and he had a dream that was so powerful and gracious and its influence upon his spirit that he was as it were waiting for the interpretation but everything circumstantially seemed to develop in opposition to the fulfillment of the dream that God had given to him in the beginning and instead of as it were rising to a position of exaltation to be respected and regarded by his loved ones the whole tenor of his life seems to work in exactly the opposite direction let me ask you this question do you think

Joseph would be such a clear character in the image of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ if in his father's house he'd remained and if everything had gone his way the tools that God used sharp sharp bitter difficult to understand difficult to interpret remember in the prison for two full years the word of the Lord tried him he was there a man as it were under terrible stress physically and spiritually but nevertheless God was working on Joseph in such a way that Joseph eventually realises the fulfilment of the promise that God had given to him through that initial dream and he is brought as it were to the right hand of

Pharaoh and in that exalted position he is the instrument of God to the salvation of his family the family of Jacob but the way God worked the tools that God employed Potiphar's wife what an awful responsibility she had in the condemnation of that innocent person what difficulty was that her husband obviously believed her false report and committed Joseph to the prison and there how he languished and waited amidst the blessing of God in being able to interpret the dreams of the butler and the baker nevertheless he waited and he waited until the appointed time of the Lord came when

[33 : 48] Pharaoh should have a dream and out of that dungeon estate he was brought straight through to the right hand of the king of Egypt my friends God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform and the various tools the various the employ of even the wicked to as it were further the understanding of Joseph relative to the deliverance that God affected in the experience of that particular scriptural character and we can go on in scripture can't we you think of David David what a tool was Saul in the experience of David so much so that David appears almost a despair relative to his continuance in the fulfilment of God's promise to him that he should be ultimately the king of Israel and he says I shall one day die by the hand of

Saul I can't see I can't see any way by which this thing will come to pass the whole effect of my circumstance is contrary here's a man in power here's a man with many forces to employ joy and his bitterness is such that he reject his own son and he hates me with a real hatred but with it all with it all God taught him how he could take care of him how he could preserve him how the king was insufficient to express his venom against David and David escaped out of his hand again and again and again why the Lord was teaching

David a sovereign protector I have unseen yet forever at hand and my friends the wonder of David's life is very marked in this that Saul's son was his best friend the one that seems to have lost a very promising future was Saul's son Jonathan because of his friendship with David and God turns the hearts of men whithersoever he will God's on the throne and rules and over rules and uses these various characters to make us realise our dependence upon God and make us realise how God knows our frame and remembers that we are just and in the fulfilment of his gracious purposes brings us through the fiery experiences and trials of this present life well now and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy you think of the apostle Paul the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy there's a hardened

Pharisee there's a man as it were that gives evidence of being an enemy to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ and everything that savours of Christianity and my friends God appointed him in his wisdom to be the apostle of the Gentiles you'll know without me going through the whole record this evening how the Lord sanctified that man used tools as it were to fashion him and prepare him in all humility to serve beyond the limits beyond the limits of the children of Israel that he should go forth as the apostle of the Gentiles and made him willing to serve the Lord and to establish churches in foreign places vessels of mercy how God is working to the accomplishment of his purposes of love and grace through instruments that he chooses to sanctify and use and instruct and guide to his own honor and to his own glory now when I come to this point even us even us whom he hath called whom he hath called who

God has separated who God has worked within to the separating and sanctifying of them as a distinct body of people a people among the people the people of the living God even us even us whom he hath called God calls with a holy calling or a calling to holiness those whom he has purpose to save they're not suffered to go on in the world seeking the things of the world and attempting to satisfy their whole desire in temporal things that they are a people who learn that the wilderness is a wilderness that there's nothing satisfying to the spirit made alive in the world and the things of it they're citizens of a better country they're people separated by God for God and under the leadings and teachings of his holy spirit they're weaned as it were to set their affections on things above not on things on the earth whom he hath called now my friends has

[41 : 16] God effectually called can you as it were if you cannot look particularly back to a time can you appreciate that through a season so to speak of experience you've been brought to a consciousness of your condition and your need your condition relative to things eternal your your need and none less and none else but the Son of God to save you they all declare I nothing am my all is bound up in the land my friends

Jesus says I am the way and there's none other there's none other there's no possibility of coming into the acceptance of God and the possession of the promised glory of God but by the Lord Jesus Christ his blood cleanses from sin his righteousness is a spotless robe which effectively presents the before the holiness of God a people a people who shall be for his eternal praise a vessel of mercy yes a vessel of mercy even us whom he hath called called out of the world called out of the general attitude and the general approach of the world not to see our future in material things not to see our future in the things of this world but to see a future which is to be sought after and earnestly coveted and prayed for through the

Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of God and his people forever and forever those whom God effectually calls do not continue as they once were the calling of God the effectual calling makes a change can you see in your life a change can you say tonight well yes I once was indifferent to these things I went to chapel I listened to what the preachers had to say and in that measure I conformed to the influence of my background family home and the family worship yes I never rebelled against it but I wasn't a lot interested in it and you were really different from what you now are because

God has effectually called you and the things of God mean much to you much to you in fact it's a great mercy if you can say that the things which transcend all other things in the experience of your heart is to know where you stand and how you stand and how you will be in the presence of God to a never ending eternity bettals of mercy bettals of mercy even us whom he hath called not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles the Lord is an absolute sovereign it seems does it not in the old dispensation that such characters as man we considered this morning was an unusual evidence of the

Lord's sovereign choice the dispensation of the law was largely centred in Abraham and his offspring according to the flesh they were the Israelites but now since the Lord Jesus Christ came and fulfilled his work and brought together the Jew and Gentile under the sovereign dispensation of God's eternal purposes of love and grace it's not to the Jews only but also to the Gentiles and how favoured we are as Gentiles in this dispensation to have the work of the Spirit bringing us to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus with hearts made willing in the day of his power to follow him and affections that are fixed to a great degree upon him and those things that concern the Lord

[47 : 16] Jesus Christ anticipating anticipating a place peace in heaven for Abraham looked for a city which had foundations whose builder and maker is God and my friends really the work of the Spirit in preparation for that holy and that happy place that want to go to God know what are one and but and see how he is that have the theih Thank you.