

2 Corinthians. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. (Quality:good)

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Date: 01 January 1967

Preacher: Garnham, Sydney (1899-1980)

[0 : 00] We again to Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians in the ninth chapter and at the last verse. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. I sought a little to look at these words in the morning of the day, trusting that we were led of the Spirit of the Lord, that as we contemplated these words a little in the light of the theme of the season, even the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, as we gathered round by that manger scene in faith to see this unspeakable gift of God.

It will ever remain unspeakable. As I reminded you this morning, not that we cannot speak about it, not that we are to remain silent, but simply for that it is inexhaustible.

It's unfathomable. And that constitutes in itself the fact of it being an unspeakable gift for who can define it, who can begin to grasp, who can begin to feel the wonder that is embraced.

There never was an event such as this. I'm trying to contemplate a little with our friends that grove this afternoon.

[2 : 03] This fact. There never was a greater scene than this. You may say, remind you friends then, you may say, but surely, are you putting this above the death of Christ, to the agonies of Christ?

Yes, for the moment. For this simple reason, the death of Christ, the sufferings of Christ, were dependent upon something.

This wasn't. There would have never been the death of Christ, if there had never been the birth of Christ. So the birth, and so the death, and the sufferings of resurrection and ascension, they're all dependent upon this.

But this is dependent upon nothing. Except, of course, the covenant purpose of God. But that again is dependent upon nothing.

God doeth as he will. And he gave. His only begotten Son. And for that reason, I'm not drawing unnecessary distinctions.

[3 : 23] God knows, and I wouldn't for one moment detract from the amazing wonder of his sufferings and all that they meant, both to him and to you and I as poor sinners.

But I repeat, friend, here is the greatest. God had never given his dear Son. There would never have been any salvation, by any means, whatever.

Unspeakable. Angels, why? Oh, how blessedly does the Spirit of the Lord set these things in his holy word.

And I find through the medium of this same apostle the reminder that angels desire to look into these things.

If I interpret that rightly in my poor estimation, if they desire, it's an implication that they didn't grasp. They desire to look into them.

[4 : 27] Our angels are pausing us here below who can begin at a fathom to discern the beauty, the glory, the singularity of this aspect of the gift as it is unspeakable.

I tried to look a little at some aspects of this that I need to go over again. this evening. There are one or two things more. Not that I shall exhaust the aspects of the unspeakable character and nature and fullness of this gift.

For there's an ocean full of them that I would tally just a moment or two long that we've looked at the unspeakable aspect of it in its greatness in its greatness so great greater than all else unspeakable in its preciousness yes in its rarity yes we looked at that a little in its suitability in its suitability in its suitability ah friend whoever you may be wherever you may be this is suited to you be you saint or sinner be you seeking soul or careless and indifferent this is suited God's gift is suited to poor sinners so have you and I been brought to know it in the glory of that unspeakable aspect of it in that respect it's unspeakable in its freeness why did God you shall never know save that it pleased him so to give the necessity of this gift well we can comprehend that a little when taught of the spirit of God and when we look within our own heart and see something of our own depravity and of our need the necessity of it neither is salvation in any other simple words but profound truth there is none other name under heaven spanning the whole universe none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must detain the necessity of it and God saw this necessity and in infinite mercy provided but look again at this foot a moment or two foot

I feel I must dwell here a little longer thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift and here in this gift I know in all the emanations of it that here is the source of it here is the beginning of it the unspeakable aspect of it in the revelation of the love of God now where do we go from here yes here's a fullness without bottom without brim without sure unspeakable who can begin to define the love of God particularly when it is revealed in this way and manner one can almost love and almost understand loving something that is lovable but here there's nothing to love whatever the whole world lay in utter wickedness there was not a vestige of merit anywhere none righteous no not one and yet

God loved I don't know how it is with you my dear friends but when I try to say a few things on these lines I marvel I really marvel that we don't spend all our time every moment in trying to sing praises to God and yet how poor how infrequent how meaningless are our thanksgivings my dear well might the apostle say perhaps saying it because of the absence of it thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift here in the manger here in the form of a little vine is the revelation not only of what God thinks but the measure with which he loves oh I can only repeat again the words of the hymn writer love so amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all unspeakable yes in the love that is revealed oh friends if we only are enabled of the spirit of God

[10 : 10] I was going to say to be brought to seek it but let's get further than that if only the spirit of the Lord leads us into some contemplation of this wonderful love then it can get any further than that that will show to us the necessity that will show us the suitability that will show to us the preciousness of it love I know I've said it we can't get any further can we when our God by his spirit is lost in the human vocabulary to convey it God so loved that he gave you can't get further but on my soul such love on such love my soul still ponders love so full so rich so free say while lost in holy wonder why oh

Lord such love to me thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift love and think too of the mercy that is mingled with it for you cannot sever these two we sever for the purpose of consideration that I cannot see oh God save forgive me if I'm wrong but I cannot see even God loving the unloving unlovely unless there's mercy mingled it must be sure it is of his mercy that he loved he loved because he would be merciful oh yes and here it is unspeakable mercy I can only say my dear friends you'll understand this and I shall understand this only as we're given to see something about heaven then we shall arm then we shall realise what this one word unspeakable means the incomparable it is significant that this is the only place in the whole scripture where you have this word now having said that let me qualify because you'll probably find fault with me there are two other passages in our authorised version where this word is used but it carries not the same significance in the original

Greek word there's no other word like this no and what other word can there be that can be used of anything else save this gift this wondrous gift of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ through the mystery of the medium of a babe as I said this morning no halos round his head nothing to distinguish this babe from any other babe he was made like under his brethren I don't call to mind anything much of when I was a babe but I don't imagine I was born with a halo around the head he was made light under his brethren the only exception was sin is the mystery of it but this is the only thing that can bear and carry the designation of being completely unspeakable mercy it is of the

Lord's mercies that we are not consumed you can put many alternative words with that I know so it's of the Lord's love we are not consumed it's of the Lord's sacrifice we are not consumed it's of the Lord's many many other things we are not consumed but here is the divine word it's of the Lord's mercy and coupled with that are the testimony given also I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy the prerogative is in his hands there is no power there is no principle whatever upon which he can be commanded to show mercy none can stay his hand or say what do is thou but none equally can command him there is no ground upon which authority can be used in any sense to force him he will do as he will not arbitrarily but mercifully condescendingly graciously to poor sinners thanks be to

God for his unspeakable he but let us go on one further consideration of this and let's take the wider view can we not only to tarry at Bethlehem's manger but to look down the vesture of time this scene took place two thousand years ago and for all I know or anyone else knows it may go on for another two thousand years our times are in his hands none knoweth when he the son of man shall come again but it's unspeakable in its results oh I love that closing chapter of Mark's gospel that reveals this so blessed he reveals in his resurrection glory himself to first to

[16 : 45] Mark and the message is go and tell my disciples and a little later they were to go and tell and then those who they went and told were to go and tell and so it has been now for two thousand years nobody I believe under heaven knows up to the present time what have been the fruits of this unspeakable gift that I am assured as I have said already and would repeat it if time goes on for another two thousand years nobody will know I know this as God has declared in his word that the ultimate results will be a number that no man can number all flowing out of the babe of Bethlehem not that he came in the hope that a few sinners might be saved but he came determined to save he came with a set purpose to save and at last though the number be a number that no man can number he will present everyone faultless and say here are my father and those whom thou hast given me not one of them is lost the unspeakable gift

I say radiating from that scene that then 2000 years was confined to a little stable behind the inn in Bethlehem and now today covers the result result to die and let us remember that he is still running what lovely words we read this evening familiar yes well let's go back to familiarity shall we as we gather up the glory of the declaration that God has set in his truth for our edification and for our comfort behold my servant whom

I hold mine elect in whom my soul delighteth I have put my spirit upon him he shall bring forth judgment unto the gentiles he shall not cry nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the street bruised reed shall he not break smoking flat shall he not quench he shall bring forth judgment unto truth so you go on down the chapter glorious divine security nothing can vary nothing can hinder the unspeakable gift and the glory of its results but look at this in the sense of the personal enjoyment of it what results have you derived what benefits have come to your poor soul through this unspeakable gift other than to dwell long upon them for they are so familiar with us let us go back to recall to memory and sit again to muse while we realise that out of this unspeakable gift there came to us sovereignly mercifully graciously loving men that seal of pardon you say that comes through the blood of

Christ I say it comes through him through him for he he grew in stature as a man he came to suffer bleed and die he came to be despised and rejected and rejected of men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief yet he came to save this is the medium my dear friend inseparably connected of course as we must repeat from his sufferings and his death resurrection ascension and glory and through this medium comes to your poor soul pardon pardon pardon oh friend unspeakable blessing can you begin to define what it is can you begin to define what it means to you when wrought upon the soul in the sweet softening influences of the spirit of God and were brought calmly quietly prayerfully and humbly to consider this unspeakable blessing that comes through the unspeakable gift pardon even if

I don't go any further than that for remember at one time you lay in inescapably under the condemnation of a broken law there was no means whatever of escape it had held you in an iron grip and you could never get away from it and this unspeakable gift this glorious person said I've come not only to deal with you I've come to deal with the law I've laid captivity captive I know that includes Satan of course it does it includes the law that held me righteously justly by the pronouncement of its condemnation and it demanded in its payment they couldn't begin to find a way with all to meet that demand he came and said

[23 : 57] I'll deal with it so he came as the representative of his people he came to stand in their room place instead he came to be their substitute was my late pastor once and was rather fond of saying substitution what is it he stood in my place room instead yes he said it means all that but substitution means he became me he became me he stood where I stood he bore the load that I did he endured the shame that I should have endured he endured the eternal judgment that should have been mine he hodged that blessed jewel that you carry in your breast as the unspeakable gift of

God through the medium of the unspeakable gift of his dear son that he all poor soul do you realize what you've got do any of us realize oh that my soul could love and praise him more oh that there might be a little more response my dear friend to the glories of Jesus the wonders I don't know how it is with you my dear friend sometimes I try to consider what he must think as he inclines as he inclines his ear if only to catch a little distant faint word of thanksgiving and its silence everywhere when the whole world should be throbbing with praise and gratitude with solace pardoned pardoned yes reconciliation reconciliation not going to differentiate between these the Jews are as great as one another

I know one is dependent upon the other for you cannot be reconciled until you're pardoned but so surely as you're pardoned you'll be reconciled reconciled God why would I have grace to set these things forth like all writing to the Hebrews sets before us through the medium of the priesthood and there he reminds us that this glorious dear Redeemer this unspeakable here endured so much as to open a way whereby we might come with boldness boldness to the throne of God not that you may rush chastrically and thoughtlessly into his presence but you may come reconciled to God wonderful thing wonderful treasure what a wonderful privilege

I say again in this as I would say in all the avenues of consideration if your poor soul of mine could only really grasp what these things mean what these things are that are our merciful privilege and possession in the wonders of grace reconciliation to God and remember my dear friends these things are permanent not as amongst men and the hymn writer says earthly friends may fail and leave us one day soon the next day grievous and how true it is we're reconciled one moment the next moment we're as far off as ever we were needing reconciliation again not so once reconciled forever reconciled to God because that which constituted the separation that which must need bring separation is completely removed as I hear some of the aspects of the unspeakable aspect of this gift of God which will be dwelling a lot about gifts probably tomorrow hope you haven't had them already friend do you know what this unspeakable gift is will you wait in the morning and with earnestness rush down the stairs to see what is awaiting for you the way of parking friend can I put it this way will you wait in the morning and rush to your knees to bless you for an unspeakable gift that was ever revealed let alone for a salvation that was accomplished for an unspeakable gift that brought such glorious phrases and wonders oh as I've said many times friends

I've got a message but I've got no power to say before who can reconcile to God the infinite the majestic the holy the heart searching we can stand before him reconciled brought into sonship let's get a little near the tender reconciled yes I can be reconciled and stand at a distance but brought into a living relationship sons of God I can only repeat my dear friends my poor lips my poor mind can't grasp can't conceive can't order words if you and I could only realise what we see sons of God through this unspeakable gift that's what he came to procure the spade this one dear spade came to give his life a sacrifice the father says

[31 : 06] I'm going to accomplish it in order to accomplish it I'll give all that I have my own well beloved son made sons of God these are some of the results heirs of God heirs of God heirs you've got an inheritance laid up in store and none can rob you of it my dear friend there are no contingencies attached to this inheritance there are no life interests in between who I've seen so many in business circles in days of old and there's been a life interest and my word they've watched their life too I don't want to be unkind but as they never rested in a human heart before that we should hurry up and die so I can come into it nobody can rock me of this my dear friend there's no contingencies there's no ifs and buts and peradventures you beginning to grasp or see a little if only to see the glory of this word unspeakable don't wonder it's unspeakable to find that so literally unfathomable yet for where's the mind begin to happen incomprehensible sons of

God joined heirs of God joined heirs with Christ can God go no further can God go no further well that is the testimony of his word and were it not so that it is enshrined in the sacred page of holy writ my dear friend you might well question it the possibility of it join the heirs with Christ as I tried I believe previously in former occasions to explain to you just what this means in biblical language in eastern understanding of it but you won't understand it in western spheres or ideas there's no law of primogeniture in the east each son is equal

I'm sure I've reminded you of that before as I've taken your minds to the parable of the prodigal son there you've got a clear revelation of it joined ears a certain man had two sons and they had half of his inheritance half of the each the young one took his and squandered him when the elder son came in and grumbled the father said all that I have is thine you and your brother are joined heirs he's had with he's squandered him joined heirs with Christ I almost tremble friends to use the word believe me I do really some of these things I tremble to give utterance to them but I repeat were it not for the fact that here it is in the divine testimony dare not listen what Christ is entitled to so much join them with

Christ take that home my dear friend and if that doesn't become unspeakable then nothing else will you see how it goes from the depths and skies to the heights we began with pardon great mercy great blessing inexpressible possession when you got to the heights you joined heirs with Christ not only in the equality with Christ you can never be never be what he is but you can be on an equality in the sense of that which is yours through his atoning blood joined heirs with Christ these are some I say of the results at issue from this unspeakable good gift these are some of the causes for giving thanks thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift but there's another consideration here that I must not omit you will remember that I commenced in my opening remarks this morning by asking the question what is it that the apostle really has in mind in the setting of these words

I ask that question purposely because I'm quite sure your own hearts responded as with mine directly I looked at these words which I felt the Lord had given me I turned them up and began to look at them and I could see Christ immediately I could see a dear redeemer I could see all the purposes of God as they gradually unfolded is this what the apostle had in mind and could suggest that it wasn't then is there something else that is unspeakable that is an unspeakable gift look at the previous verse go back to verse 13 whilst by the experiment of this ministration they glorified

[37 : 36] God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ and for your liberal distribution unto them and unto all men and by their prayer for you which longed after you for the exceeding grace of God in you thanks be unto God for the unspeakable gift the grace of God that is the unspeakable gift in this connection I'm not putting it on a level with the other I'm not giving it the original word necessarily but the grace of God that is in you now look at this fullness that is couched in one word I love the words of scripture you've learnt that surely if you haven't well you very soon will grace that is in me the grace of God that is in me and it embraces all that I have said and all that I've said all through my few years of ministry and all that has been said all down the ages you may split it up and break it up into pieces and think of pardoned peace reconciliation sonship heirship joined heirship grace it's all governed by this one word grace the grace that is in you grace of course the grace of

God there can't be grace from any other not true grace here is the jewel friend and it dwells within your breast and mind it is the personal possession our friend here is the mercy of it this isn't a theme to be contemplated only so God grant it may be contemplated but I have to stand like a Moses was brought to stand upon the mountain to view the landscape or I stand and look within see the grace of God to be here is the mystery here is the wonder here is the unspeakable gift I can only bring you back where were you when the

Lord found you and I want you to answer me that and I dare not answer you that in my experience God only knows where I was when he found me so go back to that scene just for a moment and just look at yourself in all the rags and detour where sin has brought you in all the detirement of it and all of the just condemnation of it as you were like the prodigal I just referred to the younger son the fain would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat that nobody gave him there wasn't a hand that could be stretched forth to alleviate him there wasn't a voice that could breathe a word of comfort or consolation and there you were without

God without hope now in the wonder of this great and blessed revelation of the Christ of God the dear redeemer through the babe of Bethlehem the grace of God that is in you think about it think this is God's gift to your poor son there's no need for me to spend time or even to try to remind you that a gift can never be earned please God to grant to you poor son grace the grace of God all that God had all that Christ procured all that pertained to an eternity of bliss all that's saved from the just deserts of heaven and everlasting planet grace of God that is in you and Paul said thanks to God for this unspeakable gift and that's where we need to come it must be a personal matter

I can rejoice with any father and I find trust I would rejoice with any who are brought to possess the wonderful grace of God in salvation never bring any benefit to my soul unless I possess it myself the grace of God that is in you I know he's talking to these Corinthians but I believe he's looking round at each one of them the grace of God that is in you what sin of this evening do you know anything about this saint of God do you realise what is yours do you see this unspeakable aspect you haven't begun to grasp it you long to feel it but you can't it's beyond human conception it's inexhaustible it's unfathomable it's incomprehensible it's everything it's unspeakable but thanks be to God for it just a word in conclusion upon this call to thanksgiving how are we to give thanks well he might so worthy as sing his praises is that all just very briefly there are three aspects of this

[44 : 34] I believe that we should consider thanks be unto God our first description of praise must be a heart of praise God save us from a mere mockery with our lips a mere formality I know I've quoted it many times and I have to come back to it so many times as it searches the heart bend as this all searching eye that needs every heart says this people draw near to me with their lips but their heart is far from me and we think my dear friends sometimes many times the Lord has to say that of me as he looks down upon me thanks from the heart this is a heart matter friend this is not an empty meaningless expression this is unspeakable in the sense of the gift and where can words be found to pass the lips that can adequately express that which can be acceptable to give all the very thanksgivings might arise from our hearts first the heart touched under the sense of his amazing goodness his amazing condescension his amazing love amazing mercy amazing pity and everything else yes from the heart and then as the heart is moved so the lips will move

I want the heart to guard my lips friend so when the heart is moved the lips will move alright you won't be able to keep it back by the friend so I like the figures given of the master in the gospel no man putteth new wine in the old bottles lovely figures oh he says you put new wine in the old bottles it'll burst them oh it will oh and God make it so spiritually to us new wine in these poor hearts these old natural hearts burst them asunder for this new wine can I put it this way don't misunderstand it firm it's living it's pressing forward something's got to go for it something's got to go so when the heart is moved when the heart is stirred your lips will go alright they won't go mechanically friend it won't be vain repetition it won't be any form or custom mingling with it there'll only be one thing that a worry and that is that you can't express what you feel within give thanks thanks be to God with the lip and then there's one other aspect

I believe of it thanks be to God in the life in the life oh yes you can praise God with your life my dear in silence you can tell to sinners round what a dear saviour you have found without coming and preaching friends in such a way that others will be convinced you've been with Jesus others will take knowledge there's something about him there's something about her I can't just understand it but they're different you know they're different why my dear friends in natural ways particularly the speaker if you said something out of place he would float one of my failings in my youth a vile temple now

I know oh I know it tears my heart to sun with the ill and blaspheme but I won't be with them I won't join them and I have to say well I do not like this dear apostle of old they trashed him put him in prison they beat him they did every conceivable thing he never retaliated he gave thanks to God in his life for the grace of God that was in him this has got to be done my dear friends one way you and I we can all do this silent not depending upon ourselves of course ever seeking that he will enable us so to live God make my life a little life within the world to glow how we learned it almost at our mother's need as children yes thanks be unto

God for this unspeakable gift Jesus what does he mean to you and I friend is he the one thing needful is he the preeminently precious the word says unto you therefore which believe he is the preciousness is he that for you friend is he he'll love him you long to get closer to him you long to be able to serve him more faithfully I do think mourns my heart many times I go home many a Sunday evening beloved believe me I'm not making confessions I'm not conveying to you secrets so go home many a Sunday night without to say Lord I only failed but my failings at least can't prevent your mighty power you can use the foolishness of preaching to accomplish thy purpose but all to be enabled serving that thanks thanks be unto the

[51 : 34] Lord but are thanks being rendered unto the Lord these are the questions that throb within the breath and my responding to him in the way to the degree and as often as I for the grace of God that is in you thanks be unto God for this unspeakable gift all that the Lord will bring us there all that there might be a little feeling of heart a tenderness of spirit a little humble as promised to him as I quote as I close the words again trust with grace to enter into them particularly the latter part do not I love thee oh my

Lord behold my heart and see and cast each hated idol down that dares to rival me that's the message of the season forever God's unspeakable gift and now go on be your life as old as Methuselah go on trying to fathom the unfathomable trying to speak the unspeakable trying to comprehend the incomprehensible but still when you finish it will take an eternity which will be all too short to utter heart his pride to pray God may give you and I each of us individually and collectively to know very sweetly the meaning the sacred sublime the precious glorious meaning of the season and then perhaps when we grasp and being given to feel a little of the sweetness of that our eyes will look onward to distant shore and with your sight even so come

Lord Jesus go word through heaven your soul seven