

Loved With Everlasting Love - Part 3

by Paris Reidhead

God's plan of salvation is to bring glory to Himself through the redemption of sinners, and it involves a total transformation of the being, including intellectual, emotional, and volitional aspects.

Duration: 45:11

Scripture: Matthew 4:19, John 3:6, Acts 2:42, 2 Timothy 3:15, James 2:17-26

Topics: "Everlasting Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the process of receiving the word of God. He emphasizes the importance of being awakened to the danger of self-love and selfishness, and being convicted of one's sins. The preacher explains that when the Holy Spirit seals believers, they are able to receive the broadcast from the antenna of Calvary, which leads to repentance and faith. He also highlights the different types of faith, including head faith (intellectual ascent), dead faith (religious rituals), and heart faith (totality of being). The sermon encourages listeners to have a genuine, heartfelt faith in God.

Transcript

God as it set forth, at least for the time, in Ephesians, the first chapter. Let us pray. Our Father, we ask that Thou wilt open the eyes of our understanding, that the eyes of our understanding may be opened, that we may know there's so much that Thou want to have for us.

And Father, we would have a holy greediness, a desire to have and appropriate and use everything that in Thy grace Thou didst see we need to bring glory and honor and praise to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so to that end, we ask now that Thou wilt speak to our hearts. As we think, as we study, as we listen and speak, grant our Father that we'll sense that Thou art here, ministering directly to us.

We ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen. What we have seen so far in Ephesians might be summarized in this fashion.

Before the foundation of the world, God as Father planned and purposed our salvation. In the fullness of time, He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross provided everything that the Father had planned and purposed. Now the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit, is ready and willing and certainly abundantly able to perfect in us everything that the Father planned and purposed and that the Son provided.

Thus it is that the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are all involved in our salvation. But if you'll notice verse 6, having in verse 5, having predestinated us under the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, what was the outcome? To the praise of the glory of His grace. That's what it's all about.

That we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Now that's why the Father planned what He planned. That's why He purposed all that He purposed.

That we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Now He didn't put in anything unnecessary. He didn't leave out anything that was necessary.

Absolutely everything required for us to be to the praise of the glory of His grace is included. To the praise of the glory of His grace. In verse 12, we've got to go back to verse 11, in whom Christ also we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ.

Everything that the Son provided by His death, His life, and His death was again that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. And in verse 14, we're speaking now of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Let me read the 13th verse.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. So what's the ultimate purpose? The glory of God, to the praise of the glory of His grace. Therefore, any thought that salvation is basically you and me centered we're definitely involved.

But the end, the ultimate end of it all, is the glory of God. Therefore, for one to say, well, I am forgiven. I am pardoned.

I know that if I die I'll go to heaven. There are other things in the Scripture. There are other heights for the eager to climb, other plateaus for the zealous to reach.

But as far as I'm concerned, I'm satisfied. I'm forgiven. I'm pardoned.

I know that if I die I'll go to heaven. You know, there's something dreadful about that, isn't it? It's a perversion. It's a perversion.

It's missing the whole point that God was so careful to explain here that everything that as Father He planned and purposed, everything that as Son He provided, and everything now that as Holy Spirit He wants to affect and complete in us, is to the end that it should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Not our comfort. Not our convenience.

Not our pleasure. But to His glory. His praise.

You know, there's a way that you can preach the gospel with about the same moral quality as instructing someone how to hold up a filling station. Why does a person hold up a filling station, if they do? Well, the answer is to get something for nothing. To take the results of someone else's labor.

To steal, if you please. To garner for oneself that which they've not, don't deserve, don't own. There's a way to preach the gospel that has the same moral quality to it as instructions in how to hold up a filling

station or rob a bank.

If we lose sight of the fact that sin is a high, heinous crime against God, and sinners are criminals, we think so much about the fact of the congenital aspects of sin. That we are born of fallen parents, we have fallen natures. You know, a person who has congenital syphilis may feel terribly sorry for themselves, but they can never feel guilty.

The parent who acquired the disease can feel guilty, but the child can only feel self-pity. And if sin is nothing more than a congenital disease inherited from parents, there is never the possibility of one feeling guilty. But sin is not a disease, sin is a crime.

Reaching the age of accountability, the, in the person, chooses, deliberately commits themselves to a course of depriving rightful sovereign of the worship and adoration and obedience that he deserves. And thus everything in the scripture treats sin as a crime and sinners as criminals. Well, look at it for a moment.

What is it? Well, first, sin is treason. It's denial of rightful sovereignty and rightful government. Secondly, it's anarchy.

It's refusal to submit to any government. I'll do what I want to do. The sinner is a traitor.

The sinner is an anarchist. More than that, he's a rebel. He lives in lifelong defiance of right and proper government.

As long as he lives, he lives as a rebel in rebellion. And then it's also transgression. When the fence is there to keep him from someone else's rights and privileges, the sinner, with high disregard of rules and fences, transgresses, cuts a cross.

And it's worse, another element that gives to all of these crimes an insult of the highest order. Sin is enmity toward God. The carnal mind is enmity toward God.

It's not subject to the law of God. It can't be because of what has happened in the very essence of sin, which is a treason and rebellion and anarchy. I'm going to do what I want to do.

Now, when you once see that, then you understand that God's plan and God's purpose has to deal with all of the ramifications of this thing of sin. Has to deal with them. God is the one now who has to deal with the sinner and his crime.

So everything that the father planned and purposed was designed to deal with the sinner as a criminal. In the sense that even his son identifying himself with sinners was treated as a criminal by society, that in which he was born and lived, the Jews, the Romans. He died a criminal's death.

He died on a cross and the cross was reserved for traitors against the government of Rome. Rebels against government. Anarchists.

Was only used for such. And yet, from the Old Testament it had been prophesied that he would die on a cross. In fact, you remember when David brought the ark back after it had left the Midianites and they had set it on a new cart with oxen that had never pulled a yoke? And David thought that was a pretty smart way to go.

So he had a cart made and he put the ark on it. And you remember how it started to tilt and Uzzah put his hand out to touch it and instantly died. Well, why? It says, and David was wroth with God.

Angry with him because he died. David was trying to do a good thing but he didn't understand. And so he left it there and went back to Jerusalem and then he got the scripture.

What did he find out? He found out that with God's people there was the right way to carry the ark. To the praise of the glory of his grace. That was the only way to do it.

How? Well, it had to take young men, 30 and not yet 50, Levites, and it took two staves. One stave through the rings on one side and one stave through the rings on the other side and it was carried on their shoulders. And what are the two staves? Well, if you take those two staves, what do you have? You have a cross.

Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. Now, why? Because the sinner was a traitor. The sinner was a rebel.

The sinner is an anarchist. So everything God planned and purposed was to show the sinner the nature of his crime and to deal with that crime as it is. Now, for one to present the gospel to a person and imply that sin is only a disease and not a crime and to do it in such a way that that sinner is never awakened to his estrangement from God, never convicted of his crime, never changes his mind about who is to be, because if he doesn't know that the crime is defrauding the rightful God of the worship and the honor and the obedience that he deserves, if he doesn't understand that, how can he change his mind about it? How can he change his mind? How can he repent if he doesn't understand what his crime has been? If he thinks it's only a congenital disease, then he's going to simply feel sorry that he had parents such as he had all the way back to Adam and Mother Eve.

But if he realizes that the age of accountability he committed himself to a life of crime, a life of treason and anarchy and rebellion, then awakened by the Spirit of God, convicted through the Word of God by the Holy Spirit, and brought to repentance a change of mind this one now. So there is, I say, a way by which we can preach the gospel that demeans the grace of God and means the response of the person so counseled will be one of simply further selfishness for one to have immunity from justice while continuing in the crime. So everything that God does, he does to the end, what? To the praise of the glory of his grace.

That's what the Father purposed and planned. That's what the Son provided. Now that's what the Holy Spirit is going to perfect.

So what are the ministries of the Holy Spirit? Well, the first we find is the ministry as the spirit of bondage against the fear. Not that he produces bondage or creates fear, but he is the Holy Spirit that reveals to us as sinners that we are in bondage to the God of this world because of our crime of treason and rebellion and anarchy and that there is good grounds for us to fear. And that is the awakening ministry of God the Holy Ghost.

Now God does this, God the Holy Spirit does this without any response on the part of the sinner. The sinner doesn't have to ask God to do it. The sinner doesn't have to know about it.

There are some things that are to be done, however. There are some things that must be done, but not by the sinner. And it's with him we're dealing for the moment.

So the first ministry of God the Holy Spirit is a ministry of awakening in which the Holy Spirit reveals to men their bondage and the grounds of their fear, the reason why they should be afraid of God, because of their crimes. And the second ministry that happens is conviction. When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will convict.

Now the sinner doesn't have to ask the Holy Spirit to convict. He doesn't have to pray for conviction. This is something he will do.

He does it in his sovereignty. There are responsibilities of others. We'll deal with those.

Right now we're talking about the sinner in relation to the Holy Spirit's work prior to the awareness of forgiveness. So the first is awakening. The second is conviction.

And the third is repentance. It's the Spirit of God that reveals that this is a, through conviction, reveals that it is a crime, that at the age of accountability one did choose to rule in his own life and play God in his own life and sit on the throne of his life, a throne that was made for the Son of God himself. And so it is the work of the Spirit of God to incline our hearts to repent and to quicken us.

Now the reason why men don't repent is not because they can't repent, but because they won't repent. They have everything requisite and required to repent. For repentance is a change of mind.

And the only one thing God has given us total control over is our minds. The only thing we can totally control is our thoughts. And the reason why sinners don't repent is not because they can't, but because they won't.

If they would, they could. And it's the work of the Spirit of God. You've sung it for years.

It is incline us to repent and our sins lament. That's the work of the Spirit of God. Awakening, conviction, repentance.

Now faith. Here again. How many different kinds of faith do we find if we search carefully? Well, we find that there are at least four, maybe more.

The first I call a head faith. Namely an intellectual assent to what is written. A function of the intellect.

This is the Bible. This is the Bible. Okay, sure, that's the Bible.

It's an old book, yes. God inspired it, yes. It says, do you believe it? Sure, why don't you? I shouldn't, I believe it.

Why not? A function of the intellect. That's a head faith. And then there's a dead faith.

Which is an appropriation of religious rituals and taboos. My wife and I found that among the Muslims in Africa. They had memorized the Koran, a book as large as the New Testament from Matthew through 1 Peter.

They'd memorized it. And they believed it intellectually. They had no argument with it.

But if you were to ask them, does that make you alive? Does that give you life? What do you mean life? No, of course it doesn't. It gave rules, it gave instructions, it gave obligations, but it didn't give life. Nor did their observance of the rules and the instructions give peace.

Dead faith. Then there's a third kind of faith. I call it the devil's faith.

Namely, an emotional response to what is written. I'm cornered. Sure, I'm a traitor and a rebel.

And yeah, God has said that the soul that sinned in it shall surely die and have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone. Well, that's not a particularly appealing situation. What's the alternative? Well, here's heaven.

Hey, that's a good deal. What's it going to cost me? Well, Jesus paid it off. I like that.

I like the terms. What do I do? Believe. What does believe mean? Well, here it is.

Do you believe? Sure, I believe. What have I got to lose? I've got everything to gain. I'll believe.

Believe. Of course, I'll believe. It says that the devils believe and they tremble, but they remain devils.

Why? Because they have that kind of faith. Then there's a fourth kind of faith. And that is heart faith.

And the Scripture says, with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. And the heart is the totality of the being, the entire being, the mental, the emotional, the volitional aspects, the total, totality experience. And that heart faith, oh, it has elements of intellectual quantity to it, of course.

There are appropriations to be made and there is an emotional concomitant, certainly. But there's an entirely different quality to it. And that's what we find here when it says that, in this 13th, in whom he also trusted.

After that he heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, in whom also after that he believed. That's heart faith. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.

Heart faith. And that's based upon awakening and conviction and repentance. That's why Paul said, he was in Ephesus from house to house, night and day, teaching what? Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

They went that way. They could not be saving faith without real repentance. Repentance and faith.

Now, I grew up with a type of teaching that says repentance was Jewish. It was a work. It has nothing to do with the period of grace.

But Paul was talking to the Gentiles and telling them that he was with them for a period of months, house to house, night and day, teaching repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. They were Gentiles, and so there isn't any question at all, and I don't believe anyone else is arguing to the contrary today, though they did at one time, that there is less than the requirement of repentance as a prerequisite for heart faith. Now, here we have it.

In whom also that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. Now, let's look at that for a moment. Now, you're familiar with the Wesleyan revival in England in the early part of the 18th century.

In a church where his father had been rector for many years. Now, what was his crime? Why would the... And he was an Anglican clergyman, an ordained Episcopal priest. Why was it he couldn't preach in an Episcopal church? They've closed throughout the country to him.

Was it that the Episcopal church at that time was modernist and he would believe the truth? Oh, no. Have you ever read the 39 articles of the Episcopal church? Well, if you haven't, I recommend them. They're very good reading.

Those 39 articles are about as orthodox and as kosher as theologically you'll find anywhere. Wonderful. Indeed.

A marvelous statement of truth. But why was it then that they closed the church? I'll tell you. John Wesley said that it was fine, there was no problem about having children baptized.

See, everybody in England was a member of the church of England. That was excellent. Surely they came under the watch care of the church, certainly.

But no one had the right to claim that they had been forgiven of their sins and were children of God unless they had experienced the witness of the Spirit. That's why they closed the door of the church to John Wesley. Well, that is, see, but they would, they might say that, in the years among them, I would find that they're just as opposed to what I am saying as anyone else was, as the Anglicans were.

Because whether that person makes a verbal statement when they're 12 or 50, or whether they are baptized as infants is not significant in light of what Wesley was teaching. Namely, that no one had the right to think themselves a child of God unless they had the witness of the Spirit. The witness of the Spirit to the new birth.

This was the not without which. And the church of England closed its doors to Wesley and drove into the fields. And so who did he preach to? People that had been baptized as infants in the church of England.

What did he tell them? He told them repent and believe. He preached the law, the holiness of God, the righteousness of God. And what happened? Well, as he preached, people were awakened.

They call that a time of awakening under Wesley's ministry. Awakened. And they were convicted.

Of what? Of their crime against God. And they repented. And they believed.

And what happened? They received the witness of the Spirit that they were born of God. And he took those people that had this thus experience and put them into a little group, a little class meeting he called it, eleven with a leader. And they would meet every morning or once a week or twice, whatever they could, usually at five in the morning.

And by the way, he always gave an invitation when he preached. He always did. He never preached without an invitation.

You know what his invitation was? If the Spirit of God has awakened you, if you are convinced of your crime and you desire to repent and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and your Savior, meet with me tomorrow morning at five o'clock. I'll tell you. Oh, that's going to sift a lot of the chaff out of the wheat, isn't it? Anybody who just got emotionally excited is going to find a reason to pull the covers up and just give me five minutes more.

The only ones that are going to get up at four o'clock and go four or five miles down the road to meet with John Wesley in some cold room in England are the ones that say, I must have peace with God or I die. And these that did come and these that did have the witness of the Spirit, he put in these little class

meetings. But that was why the churches of England closed to him.

I remember a pastor some years ago who had heard that I was proclaiming as I am what I am for forty years, thirty-five at least. It took me five years to find out what to preach and he stood in the pulpit. I was sitting over in the side and he reached over.

There are some people that go around saying that the only way you'll ever know you're saved is that you have a tickling under the fifth rib. An emotional excitement and stimulation. That's heresy.

The only way anyone will ever know that he's saved is because he takes a verse of Scripture and he stands on it. And the people said amen to him. Well, first thing, the witness of the Spirit is not a tickling under the fifth rib.

Not a tickling under the fifth rib. What is the witness of the Spirit? Well, Job gave us the key. The part of a man that knows the things of a man is the spirit of man and it's in him.

All right. I'm not going to embarrass you. I'm going to ask you a series of questions.

Don't respond because you would be embarrassed. But I just want you to get the point. How many of you are here? Raise your hands.

All right. How many of you are married and know it? Raise your hands. What part of the man is it that knows that you're here? Your feet? Your seat? Your back? Your eyes? What part of a man knows you're here? What part of a person knows they're married? Job said it.

The part of a man that knows the things of a man is the spirit of man that is in him. What part of you knows your name? What part of you knows your education? What part of you knows whether you're working or retired? What part of you knows all these things? That's your spirit. The Word of God says it.

Now, when one is dead in their sins, their spirit is estranged from God. And they know it. They know it.

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The wicked are like the troubled sea, cast up by iron dirt. Continuous seething in the spirit of the wicked.

You mean to say that God did not know that there is no peace to the wicked? He said it and it wasn't true? Of course it's true. Of course it's true. What is spiritual death? You go to your television and sit and you turn, put the power on and there's no picture and no sound.

What do you say about it? It's dead! What's that mean? All those workings inside rusted down to powder? Has no form anymore? No shape? It just sort of self-destructed? What does it take to make a television set dead? Just one little transistor out. One little connection broke. It's surrounded by television impulse but it isn't receiving it.

So sinners live in the presence of God but their receiving set is broken and they know it. Or at least they're not getting any broadcast from God. They are dead.

What does that mean? That they cease to have human personality and human capacity? No! It means that there's no communion between God and that heart. They're without communion. Without contact.

Does that mean God isn't there? No! Paul said, in Him we live and move and have our being. He's not far from every one of us. But in the sinner the receiving set's dead.

Why? Because of the crime. Self-love. Selfishness.

I will rule my life. I will be God. No.

Awakened to the danger. Convicted of the crime. Changing one's mind and believing what happens? They are, as we said here, sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

What happens? Well, it's re-soldered. Where that wire was broken the Spirit of God re-solders it. And what happens? They begin to get the broadcast from the antenna of Calvary.

And what does it say? When they hear that broadcast what does it say? It says you can call Almighty God before whom you tremble Abba Father. When you were speaking about working in New Jersey when I was pastor in New York City there was an inter-varsity staff worker by the name of Harriet Marsh. We were talking to this point at an inter-varsity alumni gathering up at Cedar Campus in Michigan.

And when we finished Harriet said I'd like to give a testimony. She said I was a student at Douglas. Then it was Douglas College and Rutgers University.

I came on the campus from an agnostic home. I considered myself an atheist, an intellectual atheist. And I happened to see a young woman who had the most radiant smile and the most shining face of any person I'd ever met.

I knew nothing about her but I said I'm going to find out, I'm going to have her my roommate. I want to find out what it is that makes her translucent, glow. And I got her name, found out who she was, and applied, asked if I could become her roommate.

I had some connections there and so it was arranged. And I found out that she was very active in the Christian group on the campus, that she loved Jesus Christ with all her heart. And just seeing her and being with her and her roommate won me and I professed faith in Christ.

But I had one professor that thought that I as a young intellectual and an atheist was too good to lose and so he kept putting pressure on me for many, many months that I was throwing my life away associating with these freakish evangelicals. And finally he convinced me that this was just an emotional something that had happened to me. So I went one day to the prayer meeting that I usually attended and I told them I wouldn't be praying with them anymore and I wouldn't be attending the Bible studies or the groups anymore.

That I had decided that I had been deceived, self-deceived, not by them, that this whole Christian thing was a myth, had no relevance to an intellectual life and that I was throwing it all over. I would be happy to be with them as friends but I wanted them under no circumstances to talk to me anymore about Christianity. And they with tears in their eyes agreed that they would still be my friends and they wouldn't talk to me about Christianity.

They never told me they wouldn't talk to the Lord about me though. And I knew better than to ask them that. And I didn't think if what I was saying was true that wouldn't make any difference anyway.

Well, I saw them, I continued, they respected what they'd promised and the months went on. Still a roommate, still at the university college but never attending their groups or involved in any way. One day in the library I was reading, I came across the agnostics prayer and it made an impression on me.

You know what it is? Oh God, if there be a God, save my soul if I have a soul. Well, I wrote it down and I was walking home and this was going through my mind and when I got to my room, my roommate who I expected to be there wasn't there and I know she'd be gone through the afternoon and the evening and so I was alone. I locked the door.

I didn't want any of her friends bumping in on me and I decided that I would give this a try. Now this was an agnostics prayer. I coached it, I got it and then I was going to sit there at the desk and pray and I said no, that's not really fair.

We knelt when we prayed so I'll kneel and so she said I knelt and going over this prayer in my mind and then she said well some people fold their hands so the least I can do is fold mine won't hurt anything so she said I knelt and I folded my hands all the while repeating those words and then she said I opened my mind and I said dear father in the fullness of time God sent forth his son made of a woman made under the law to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of son and since we are sons he has sent forth the spirit of his son to our hearts whereby we cry dear father in heaven. Abba father. Sealed with that holy spirit promise whereby we say of almighty God Abba father.

Dear father. The witness of the spirit. What is it? It's the part of a man that knows the things of a man.

The part of a man that knows that almighty God is his father. That's what Wesley told England and it was that message that brought England from the abyss into which France would fall. Pulled it when it was over.

Pulled it back and saved it. Perhaps it's that message that's needed in America today. With 50, 80, 100 million people that claim to be born again and only a handful that can cry Abba father from the heart.

Father in heaven we come to thee in the name of Jesus Christ. Thou sovereign of all grace thou God of all grace. Thou who has ordained that thy holy spirit would be the spirit of adoption that no one in the universe has the right to usurp the sovereign prerogative of the third person of the trinity who alone has the right to tell one who's been the child of the God of this world that he's been taken out of the family of death and put into the family of the father.

Oh what crimes we've committed father in our zeal by telling people before they had an opportunity to hear from thee how many have been stillborn. We ask thee father today that we may recognize the sovereignty of God the holy ghost that he alone has the right to see you and witness and certify that men have passed from death to life. Oh that we might take that time that's required with those father to whom thou hast given us the privilege of ministry.

That they might at the very beginning of their Christian walk learn from thee passed from death to life. We can tell them how bad they are and how gloriously holy thou are. We can tell them what they have done and tell them what thou hast done.

We can tell them what they must do and what thou will do but only thou can tell them when it's done in their hearts. So to that end father we ask again that we'll respect the sovereignty of the holy ghost in those areas that he has reserved to himself. We thank you now for this time together and for this people and ask that something from this hour may redound yet to the glory and honor and praise of Jesus Christ in whose

name we ask him.

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