

Mercy, truth, righteousness and peace

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[0 : 00] Seeking the Lord's blessing and his leading and guidance, let us look again at the psalm we read together, Psalm 85, at verse 10.

Psalm 85, at verse 10. Psalm 86, at verse 10.

So, two points from these two verses. First of all, the meeting described here, the coming together and the parties involved.

And secondly, the birth which pertains to this meeting and the death and the effects of that birth and that death.

This psalm alludes in the first place to the return of the people of God from the captivity of Babylon.

[1 : 58] Lord, thou hast been favorable unto thy land. Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

But, great and glorious as that return from captivity was.

The prophet, the psalmist, knew well that that was not the best deliverance of the children of God.

Just as the captivity was not their worst captivity. There was a better deliverance.

There was a worse captivity than even this one, great as it was. The church of God. The church of God down the ages looked for the deliverance of all deliverances.

[3 : 17] To be wrought by the Talmud. To be wrought by the Almighty Deliverer himself.

This was what set them aside as a people. That they looked to God in this way. they looked for the almighty deliverer himself God who was to come in our nature and of course the reason for that these souls of men had been led away captive under sin and Satan and only messiahs could set them free and this coming of his is certainly set before us here in prophetic wise for glorious properties in God mercy and truth righteousness and peace are here brought in by the psalmist and represented as persons who meet and whose meeting is obviously in terms of the utmost agreement and love so let us seek to meditate on these two verses first of all then the meeting and the parties involved this meeting infers that there had been a parting of these a parting of mercy and truth a parting of righteousness and peace how could that be we must hasten to assert that there is never any disharmony or semblance of variance in the all glorious God there cannot be with him there is no variableness in fact his glory his very glory consists in the perfect harmony of all his attributes in himself he is gloriously mercy he is gloriously truth he is gloriously righteousness and he is gloriously peace without any any variableness no this does not allude to God as he is in himself it alludes to us fallen sinners and we should

we should we should always be keeping in mind that we are fallen sinners one of the greatest of the Puritan preachers it was said of him that before he mounted his pulpit steps each sabbath morning he walked to and fro among his own sins what calamity and catastrophe our fall and our sin has affected in God's wondrous universe we find mercy and truth estranged we find righteousness and peace as it were at variance we hear mercies please we were singing them in the first psalm we sang here this morning we hear mercies please we hear mercies frustrations as far as we are concerned and this must be emphasized that it is as far as we sinners are concerned wherefore hast thou made all men in vain what profit is there in the blood of any sinner will the

Lord cast off forever and will he be favorable no more is his mercy clean gone forever doth his promise fail forevermore hath God forgotten to be gracious hath in his anger shut up his tender mercies these were the holy whisperings of mercy but to no avail for truth must be heard too and let God be true and every man a liar and what says truth the soul that sinneth it shall die and righteousness is of the same accord the God who is truth is also the God who is righteousness the God who is righteous in all his works and these are the words of righteousness what is the use of justice if God will not execute justice that is if he spares sinners righteousness is the cases like this these are the words of righteousness

I shall die if man does not die I shall die if man does not die and peace could affect no reconciliation which did not involve the satisfaction of righteousness and the honoring of truth righteousness refused to look down from heaven these four which were in the bosom of God from all eternity were not divided in themselves but parted company with regard to us sinners because of our restringement from God and this is a remarkable sight the properties of God divided because of us mercy going one way and truth going another way righteousness refusing to look at peace that's the estrangement and our word upon the meeting life is full of meetings how many people we meet each day there are casual meetings and there are arranged meetings there are meetings which matter very little and meetings which matter very much usually casual meetings matter little usually arranged meetings matter much but the reverse can be true casual meetings can be of the very greatest importance and set meetings arranged meetings can prove to have been of very little importance and we know this ourselves when we often when we seek to set things in order things go awry things go all wrong meetings are usually reckoned great by the greatness of the personages they involve and by the occasion of this meeting that is the time of the meeting and the reason for the meeting that's what usually makes meetings great and important the greatness of the personages involved involved the time of the meeting and the reason for it surely then there could never have been a greater than this meeting with such as the mercy of

[14 : 12] God the truth of God the righteousness of God and the peace of God and how could their meeting be effective speaking with reverence not in God as he is of himself and certainly not in man as he is of himself this meeting could only be effected in the man who is God in God made flesh that is on the occasion of the fullness of times has come friends the fullness of time was the manifestation of

God in our nature time who time had to come to our fullness before such a meeting as this could be and the purpose of the meeting was the glory of God and the salvation of men and we notice that this is a double meeting mercy meets truth and righteousness embraces peace that's the way to set before us God instructed his church down through the old testament ages that this was going to happen he gave them symbols of the reality he gave them sacrifices and various other types

Jehovah the eternal I am revealed himself as the God of truth the God of the promises the God of mercy the God who would multiply pardons the God of peace and we see truth meeting mercy in wondrous sacrifices and symbols mercy and truth met in the holy of holies be often thinking of that the meeting of mercy and truth symbolically in symbol in type in the holy of holies in the old testament church the mercy seat never without blood was over those embodiments of truth

God's commandments that's what the ark of the covenant signified no wonder the waters of Jordan split when what symbolized the mercy and truth of God came to the edge of these waters again marvelously the meeting of righteousness and peace was prefigured in the first priest mentioned in the bible the very first priest mentioned in the bible prefigured righteousness and truth you remember who the first priest mentioned in the bible is abraham abraham was tired after his warfare and he was met by a certain personage and the amazingness of the whole affair is that there was no doubt in abraham's mind or in the mind of this personage whom he met that this personage was greater than abraham in things spiritual you remember who he was melchisedek met the father of the faithful melchisedek met the friend of god and he met abraham in order to bless abraham and you remember how he blessed abraham he put the name of god on abraham that's how you bless anyone you cannot bless anyone in terms of yourself you can only bless anyone by putting the name of god upon him or her and this very blessing made abundantly clear that melchisedek was the greater but who was eh the first priest mentioned in the bible he was the priest of the most high god he was the king of righteousness that's the meaning of the name melchisedek but he was something else as well he was also king of salem that is the king of peace righteousness and peace kissed each other in this very person in this very priest he being made like to the son of god abideth a priest continually without father without mother without beginning of days without end of life but made like to the son of god he abideth a priest continually secondly then the birth and the death

with their effects we are told that the day of meeting and the day of embracing is the day of truth birth that is how it is set before us here truth shall spring out of the earth and righteousness shall look down from heaven there is only one way he who is the way the truth and the life we hear him speaking to god and to the justice of god sacrifices we sang these words sacrifices and offerings thou wouldst not but a body hast thou prepared me in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure then said

[23 : 00] I lo I come in the volume of the book it is written of me to do thy will oh god and this birth involves his death his blood the blood of god we are allowed to say that because the bible says the blood of god god made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of god in him oh friends this is what the good news voices abroad this is what salvation implies he who knew no sin was made sin this is the mystery of god salvation we amass of sin knowing no righteousness estranged from righteousness righteousness refusing to have anything to do with us made the righteousness of god in him who was made sin we have these words out of the great book of job that book which tells us of cleansing through suffering that book which sets plainly before us the cleansing of the eyes the cleansing of the hearing the cleansing of the heart through god's dealings with that great sin then he is gracious unto him and saith deliver him from going down to the pit

I have found a ransom he could only find it in himself he could not find it anywhere else the son of god took on him our nature that in our nature for our nature he might make to god standing standing in terms of god's most exact and strict justice a complete and full and in every way sufficient satisfaction in our nature for our nature suffering to the full paid most farthing this and this alone could effect such a meeting as we have here and confronted by the mere awesomeness of this transaction what madness do such hearts entertain as dare to assert that god can forgive offenses of his own free goodness and mere mercy without putting his son to such suffering if he could leave off being just if he could set aside his truth he could do this but he cannot leave off being just and he cannot set aside his truth just as untruth are as essential properties in him as mercy and peace be but the sheer wonder of this that the only begotten of the father the eternal son should be begotten in our nature two begettings in his experience our redeemer was and is and ever shall be a woman's son drop down ye heavens from above and let the skies pour down righteousness let the earth open and let them bring forth salvation and let righteousness spring up together are

I the Lord have created it the fathers of the church applied that great verse out of Isaiah to the virgin birth may I read it again drop down ye heavens from above and let the skies pour down righteousness let the earth open and let them bring forth salvation and let righteousness spring up together I the Lord have created it we know that births have very often brought an end to dissension in families many and many an estrangement in a family has been cured by a birth but never in this wise never more so than with this what a reconciliation was effected by the death towards which his birth intended and what was the effect of this bringing up of truth from earth what was its effect there was certainly joy in heaven every birth occasions joy for the mother or should occasion joy for the mother according to the

Lord himself he sets this before us for joy that a man child is born unto the world the travel is forgotten but in on this occasion there was joy for God himself and there was wondrous joy among the legions of unfallen angels as they came down to express this joy they came down to express it they had to good tidings of great joy it was joy and honor for them to lower themselves in worship to the babe who was

God the babe who is God but the psalm confines itself to make mention of only one in heaven the psalm here confines itself to make mention of only one righteousness look down righteousness which had refused to look down before righteousness look down and no wonder are because among men righteousness or truth righteousness saw not only the truth of God but

[33 : 13] God the truth the word made flesh what a sight this was truth so long a stranger so long an alien from earth was now really there among men the whole of heaven was engrossed at this sight the angels of God had come down to look at him righteousness looked and looked again at this marvelous sight the word which is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament the word that is used is a kindred word a cousin to a great word that we have sought to bring before you already the stooping in order to look this is a cousin word a kindred word it means not merely to look but to look through and through righteousness looked through the mystery of godliness

God manifest in the flesh the Hebrew word used reads as if righteousness beat out a window in its desire to see the sight that's the implication of the Hebrew word righteousness beating out a window in its desire to see this sight before this righteousness had turned from earth averted her gaze from earth would have nothing to do with lost sinners but now when she beholds truth springing out of the earth she is not content merely to look she breaks a window through to look upon the earth with a good aspect and not only down she looks but down she comes she not merely looks down but she comes down she cannot do otherwise such is the magnet of attraction and what do you think the first thing these four wonderful properties in

God did what would you say speaking reverently all four of them ran first and they kissed thee son they kissed thee son and on doing that or in doing that truth ran to mercy and embraced her and righteousness ran to peace and kissed her and no wonder for he is the truth through the tender mercies of our

God God the power of adjectives the tender mercies of our God oh friend have you experienced the tender mercies of our God God and he is made to us righteousness and he is our peace and the God of peace is proclaimed as the God of peace is set before us as the God of peace as he brings back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant death could not hold him and let us remember that as we seek to prepare ourselves to partake of the holy supper that we are partaking of the only sustenance for our immortal souls and that we are remembering the death of one who is eternally alive they all meet in him and we have the glorious sight of righteousness leading this wonderful band righteousness shall go before him and what else and shall set us in the way of his steps this is where you can meet him this is where you can meet him no matter how defiled you may be and how defiled you may feel he is the savior of sinners to the uttermost and wherever you are you are not beyond the uttermost you cannot be he's an all sufficient savior if you could really say the gospel cannot reach me the gospel would not be the gospel oh come to him as you are this is an eternal meeting there some in their foolishness would like to have mercy without truth that is quite impossible

God has united them in Jesus Christ for his glory and for the salvation of poor sinners you have to embrace them both because you cannot have one without the other God again if you would love peace without loving the friend of peace the embracer of peace peace will never never love you separated if you try if you seek to separate it from its friend and companion righteousness oh kiss thee son and you will embrace all these may the

[42 : 36] Lord bless us all amen let us pray oh Lord we thank thee that there was effected and accomplished in thine own greatest accomplishment the death of thy son that there was effected and accomplished the reparation of all that we had done amiss that there was effected and accomplished the glory of

God and the salvation of men who save us from refusing the Christ of God and bless us for his sake amen amen