

Christian Love

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[0 : 00] Can we turn again to the second epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy chapter 1. And we might read from verse 16.

2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 16. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain.

But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well. We have here Paul the Apostle writing from the prison in Rome to Timothy.

And he begins his letter by using the words, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

[1 : 22] The authority of the apostles was supreme. The Lord Jesus had promised them that he would give them the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who would bring to the remembrance all that they were taught.

And they were able to teach infallibly. And the Apostle Paul, although he was not with the other twelve, was yet made an apostle by the Lord Jesus.

And he was given the gospel, not through any man, but he received it directly from heaven. And here he writes this letter to Timothy, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son.

He wasn't his natural son, but he was his son in the gospel. He was a son given him by the Holy Spirit through his preaching.

And as well as that, Timothy was called by God to preach the gospel. Paul was his mentor, his teacher.

[2 : 57] And Paul exhorted him to preach exactly that very gospel which he had received from himself.

The only gospel which can change men and women, which is of any value. And there is only one gospel.

In verse 5, he speaks of the faith of Timothy and he calls it that unfeigned faith.

And he says that his mother had that faith and his grandmother had that faith. Timothy has it.

And that's a beautiful thing, friends, when you can look at any family and say the grandmother has the faith, the mother has the same faith, and the son or the grandson has the same faith again.

[4 : 10] his father was a Greek, his mother was a Jewess. We don't know anything about his father as far as we know.

He went through this world Christless. And then, Paul is in prison.

And in verse 15, he says that all they which are in Asia be turned against me. Some were turned against him because they were false teachers.

and they persuaded people to turn against Paul. But that was not going to destroy the gospel.

You see, God has an elect people and they will be saved. They will be saved. It doesn't matter how many false teachers Satan sends out.

[5 : 26] Those whom the Father hath given the Son in the eternal covenant will be saved. In some way or other they will meet the gospel and it will be blessed to them and they will come.

There is no doubt about that. But still, many are turned against Paul and many did it because of fear, because of persecution, afraid for their lives and the lives of their families.

But now he comes to speak of one who had not turned away from him. This Onesiphorus.

The Lord gave mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain.

we should like to say a little about Onesiphorus. And then secondly, we should like to say a little about a very special prayer made for Onesiphorus, which was the Lord grant unto him that he may

find mercy of the Lord in that day.

[7 : 02] Now, first of all, who was this man Onesiphorus? He was an elder in the congregation of Ephesus.

When we look up 1 Timothy chapter 3 we read about the qualifications for an elder.

We only have elders and deacons. A minister is a preaching elder or a teaching elder. And it says in 1 Timothy chapter 3 that he must be blameless, the husband of one wife, a vigilant, sober, of good behavior, a given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, nor greedy of filthy looker, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without. Ah, friends, it's not easy for any elder to read these words and then to say that is exactly my picture.

[9 : 15] whatever true elder of the church of Christ desires to conform to that picture and he knows the closer he comes to it the more blessed he will be as an elder in the world.

Well, this man Onesiphorus was an elder and Paul had been his minister for three years in Ephesus, three years of toil and suffering and agony, three years of weeping and praying.

Yes, and then after three years, it was over. Once again, later on, we see Paul on the way to Jerusalem and he reaches a place called Miletus and at Miletus he sends for the elders of Ephesus. He wants to speak to them for the last time and no doubt among them was Onesiphorus. And there he begins to speak to them.

And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews, and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house.

[11 : 38] And now behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me, but none of these things move me.

And now behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God shall see my face no more.

Wherefore I take you to record this day, I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I cease not to warn every one night and day with tears.

others. And now brethren, I commend you to God. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all.

[13 : 05] And they all wept sore and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.

That then was the last time Paul met the session of Ephesus. And we see the relationship that they had, how they wept with him, and how they kissed him before they departed for the last time.

And Paul here says, the Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus. Not just to Onesiphorus the elder, but to his house, his household, his family.

We don't exactly know why he prays for his family. It may be that he was so knit to Onesiphorus in his soul, that he had to pray to the Lord for his family.

And that is scriptural, that is proper, that is how things should be. If we love the Lord's people, we should love their families.

[14 : 47] We should pray for their families. They should be laid upon our souls. But it may be too, that the family of Onesiphorus themselves had been good to this man, had helped Onesiphorus when he sought to minister to Paul and to help him.

I suppose in worldly goods, in food and drink, perhaps in clothing and shelter, and in the many ways he could have been helped. He could have been given fellowship, he could have lived in that home, he could have come to know them all, but in any case he prays for the whole household.

does it mean anything to you to have any man of God pray for your whole household, to pray for your children, and to weep for your children, and to wrestle for your children, and to bear your children before the Lord constantly.

Does that mean anything at all to us? Oh friends, let us come close to the Lord, let us ask for the best things from the Lord for our families.

He being in stocks, his hands and arms being in chains, and Paul being in the prison, a malefactor, a felon, an evil man, a man thrown into jail, a man accused of evil doings, but he said he was not ashamed of my shame.

[16:40] Many would be ashamed of it, many would be ashamed because of fear, many would be ashamed because their minds were poisoned, but Onesiphorus, Onesiphorus, he said, was not ashamed, not ashamed.

of my chain. You see, you see the spiritual tie, you see the love.

Read in the Old Testament of David and Jonathan, and how Jonathan loved David on that day when he slew Goliath.

He was bound to him in his soul and that because he saw the faith of David and Jonathan himself had had quite a similar experience.

he had fought a band of men and had overcome them, himself and his armor bearer together. And that was done by faith.

[17:59] And now he saw David killing the giant by faith, and his soul knit to the soul of David, and the soul of David knit to the soul of Jonathan.

him. And Jonathan took off his princely garment, and he gave it to David, and he gave his arms to David, and he told David one day that he was willing to give his kingdom to David, but that they should be friends, and that they should be close in the Lord.

And 20 years after the death of Jonathan, David asked if there was any left of the house of Saul, anybody left alive of that family, that he might show him kindness for the sake of Jonathan.

And then he says that I might show him the kindness of God for the sake of Jonathan, the greatest kindness that I can show him.

for the sake of Jonathan, who died 20 years ago, whom I loved, and who loved me, and our souls were knit together as one soul.

[19:23] Well, here you have a man like that, on his ephorice. He was not ashamed of my chain. He loved Paul.

He was willing to risk his life. He was willing to come to Rome. He was willing to come to his prison cell in the grim and terrible days of Nero, when many of God's people were put to death.

And see what that love did. did. But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently and found me.

This man came to Rome. The session of Ephesus never saw Paul again. But there was one man among them who was determined that he would see him.

One of those who wept. One of those who kissed him that day. And he came to Rome. We don't know if he had business in Rome or not.

[20:38] Or did he come specifically to try and find Paul. You see, Paul had gone to Ephesus with the gospel.

Paul's gospel had been blessed to the soul of this man. And this man loved the apostle. And he went to Rome.

He had to find him. The metropolis the greatest city in the empire. Perhaps the most numerous in the world.

Over 50% were slaves. A great city full of prisons. Full of barracks. And he went to that city and he sought Paul out very diligently.

he would go from place to place. He sought him out very diligently. It tells us that he went to place, from place to place, that he was searching, that he was seeking, that he was asking, that he would go from prison to prison, that he would ask, is there such a man in your prison who is called Paul?

[22:14] Or perhaps he's called Saul? He came from Tarsus. He was educated in Jerusalem. He was a Jewish Pharisee.

He became a follower of that way. He's a preacher. he writes letters to God's people.

He calls himself Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Did you ever hear of such a man? Is he in the cells in your prison?

Or did you ever hear about him? And he would inquire, and he would go to the jailers, and he would go to the prison keepers, and he would go to the authorities, and he would go to those who were in charge, and he sought diligently.

He couldn't stop. And then Paul says, he found me. He found me. And when he found him, when he was taken to his cell, when he saw the apostle in his chains, when he saw him in that full cell, where he was to be taken out to die, to have his head cut off by a sword, we must believe that he would put his arms around him, that he would weep with him, that he would kiss him, that he would tell him how glad he was that he found him, that they would talk together about the Lord Jesus, they would talk together about the uncertainty of life, and about Paul shortly to die, perhaps on the Zephyrus too, he would be a marked man, they would keep note of him, his name would be laid down somewhere, somebody would remember him, when the next round of persecution would begin, on the Zephyrus, where is he?

[24 : 26] bring him too, but Paul would have gone, and it all reminds us friends, of a soul seeking for Christ, did you ever seek for Christ, did you ever go as on the Zephyrus went to Rome, were you willing to do anything to find Christ, if all the people in this were willing to do anything to find Christ, this church would be packed tonight, but they're not willing, they're not willing, and therefore the church is not packed, one here, one there, may be made willing, the drivers of the buses would not sit in the buses as others came into church tonight, they would come in, and those who are in their homes watching televisions, and those who are beside the church, who never come to church, they would be in the church, but you see they're not really seeking, they can say what they like, but when a man seeks for Christ, he seeks, as on the

Zephyrus came to Rome, a man must be judged by his life, by his deeds, he came to Rome, he would ask, he would name the one he wanted, and if you seek Christ, if you really seek him, you are willing to go to any lengths to find him, you are willing to search the Bible, you are willing to begin at Genesis, you are willing to carry on to Revelation, you are willing to pray, you are willing to inquire, to go to somebody, to ask, how does a man find Christ, how does somebody come to know the Lord, how can sins be taken away, and you will come to church, and you will listen, but there are many who do not come, who have lost all desire, the Holy Spirit is drawing away, they are being given over to their own sin, to their own lust, to their own hardness, others, but

Onesiphorus, he came to the prison, and he found him. Our friends, it must have been for Onesiphorus something like his finding of Christ, as if he was tasting it in a measure all over again, the man who had been blessed to his soul, his pagan soul, his pagan soul, in a godless city, in a Christless city, in a city of idols, and fearful immorality, and degradation, but he found him. in a second place, Paul's prayer for Onesiphorus.

Oh, friends, may we have that prayer, may we have it for precious souls. verse, the Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.

[28 : 10] The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. First of all, we ask, what day?

what day are you talking about, Paul? Well, in verse 12, he says, I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

And again, in chapter 4, verse 8, he says, Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also, that love his appearing.

And there you have the key to the day. He's speaking of the great day, the day of resurrection, the day of judgment, the day which will climax every other day, which was ever in time.

And Paul so often just calls it that day, that day, you would think Paul would be dwelling upon the day of his death, when he was in the prison of Rome.

[30 : 01] Friends, he wasn't dwelling upon the day of his death, but he was dwelling upon one day, and that was the day of resurrection.

No, he wasn't unnatural. no, he wasn't just a hardened criminal. He was a man who loved the Lord Jesus, and who thirsted and hungered for that day, when the glory of the Lord Jesus should be revealed, when all the redeemed of Christ should stand before Christ, and all the crowns should be placed upon the head of Christ, the day of the Lord.

The Sabbath day, as we know it now, is a reflection of that day. The first day of the week is a reflection of it, but this is the day, the day of the Lord, that day, resurrection, judgment day.

And what does he pray for? The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy. What is mercy?

Mercy is a pouring out of the undeserved goodness of God upon poor, wretched, miserable sinners. [31 : 38] The undeserved goodness of God in that he takes away sin, in that he becomes their God, in that he gives them his fellowship, in that he gives them his righteousness, in that he says to them, I will be your God forever.

I will never leave you. I will take you to glory. I will have you with myself, and God will not change. God will not change his mind.

He is a merciful God. He is the God of all mercy. He is the one who can give you all these blessings.

Oh, wretched, oh, miserable man, unworthy of the very least of his mercies. It's not the very least he gives.

he pours mercy out of the fullness of his loving heart upon poor, wretched sinners. That is the whole meaning of the life and death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[32 : 55] It all speaks of mercy. Oh, says David, sings David, God's mercy, I will never sing.

I will ever sing. God's mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure. It will not come down.

Thy mercy is in the heavens high. Ah, yes, David could sing of mercy, Paul could sing of mercy, and here he prays for mercy, for Onesiphorus.

but didn't he have mercy? Yes, Paul knew he had mercy, but he prays for him for the day of judgment, that he may have the blessings of Jesus Christ on that day.

Adonisiphorus will come out of the grave, where he may have been led by the persecutors of Rome, that he will come out of that grave with an immaculate body, and an immaculate soul, filled with the light of heaven, and the glory of Jesus Christ, a body full of glory, heavenly glory, attached and tied to Christ, rising in fellowship, rising to be forever with the Lord, happiness, in great joy, sorrow having gone forever, pain and agony having fled forever, oh may the Lord grant him that day that he may find mercy, that is the love of Paul, flowing out for Amosiphorus, Amosiphorus showed his love for

[34 : 48] Paul, and now Paul shows his own love for Amosiphorus, my prayer as he says, on that day, that he might have the very best, that he might have the very best, the government, mercy of God.

He's not praying for the dead, that's not what he's doing, he's praying for a living man, he's not praying for the dead, he's praying for Amosiphorus, Paul will go, and Amosiphorus will be left alive in the world, for some time, in any case, we don't know how long.

Now that day, friends, will be the day of mercy for Amosiphorus, will it be like that for you and me, the day of judgment, and the day of resurrection, there is no date given, ah, there are some who think they can work out the date, no, no one can work out the date, it will be the most solemn day there ever was, you won't have any drunken jokes on that day, you won't have men and women reading filth, pornography, you won't have people crowding around the television on a Sabbath evening, you won't have people shaking their hands at

God and cursing God to his face at the throne of judgment, you will only have total solemnity, solemnity, you will be solemn, solemn, you will never have been as solemn as you will be on that day, when the great and the small shall be gathered together, all the kings and the emperors and the queens and the princes and also the beggars and the wretched people who died of hunger, who died of thirst, who died because they could not clothe themselves and the children, ah, these children who were torn from the womb by mothers who did not want them, maybe they wanted a higher standard of living, maybe they called it humanism, maybe they said, we can't afford it, but every one of these children will be there, every child conceived is an eternal person, and every child who was conceived in the womb will be there, the fathers and mothers of these children, and the children will meet, we shall all not only stand before the great white throne, but we shall all be witnesses at that time, oh friends, will people witness against me, will people witness against you, the only help is in the

Lord's great name, in the blood of Christ, mercy in that day, the blood of Jesus Christ, cleanses from all sin, and if the blood is not there, sprinkled on you, body and soul, then the witnesses will be there, and you who have been in this church, and you who have lived in this, and you who have gone through this part of the world, will see elders standing up, and ministers standing up, and deacons standing up, and members standing up, yes, and the very ungodly of the area, standing up, your companions in drink, your companions in sin, whoever they were, whatever they were, they will stand up, and they will witness against your soul, they will have to do that, they dare not do

otherwise, they are before the one who reads every heart, who knows every thought, and the books are open, and everything is spread, oh, young children, oh, young men, oh, young women, middle-aged and aging, you and I must be there, what are we going to say, how are we going to witness, how are we going to receive it, what will be the end result, will we have the mercy of Onesiphorus, will we have it, will we be forever with the Lord, you'll have no dancing and concerts on that day, you'll have no run rig on that day, you'll have no people standing up to defend these things on that day, you'll have no people running after drink and drugs, neglecters of children, neglecters of the souls of children, ah friends, that is all over when that day comes, they must just stand there to receive the sentence for the life which has gone, a short life, very short, it came to an end when, we don't know, maybe a thousand years before judgment day, maybe more, maybe less, no soldiers mocking then, no, no one putting a crown of thorns on the head of Christ then, no one making living torches out of the

[42 : 01] Christians then, no one tearing them between horses or throwing them to lions or having them driven out or destroyed, all that will be gone, all over and done with, all the scoffing mouths will be closed, the Christless life will be followed by a Christless eternity, the life which ended in scoffing will go on into eternity in eternal existence, body and soul, a man cursing and hating the Lord Jesus forever and ever and eternally departing from the Lord Jesus, gospel refusers, those who would not believe, it's all over then, nobody will ask us to believe, nobody will shed tears over our souls, nobody will pray for our souls, nobody will care, it will all be over, friends, we need the Holy

Spirit, we need God, the Holy Spirit among us, there is so much hardness among us, so much impenitence, people are wearing a shell, an armor fashioned in hell, and they are indifferent, and they care not, and their homes are full of people who care not for the gospel, and what will be the end result?

Everybody doesn't go to heaven, it's no use you finding a text every time somebody dies, that's not going to put him to heaven, it's no use you searching and scraping for the good things you think were in his life, that will not put him to heaven, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven, in that day, we'll see Paul, we'll see Onesiphorus, yes, will we see mercy, will we see mercy, my dear precious souls, may the mercy of the Lord Jesus reach every one of you, our precious children, may the mercy of Jesus reach them, our precious friends and neighbours, may the mercy of

Jesus reach them, if the mercy of Jesus will not reach you, better had you never existed, let us pray, O Lord, we pray thee to bless thy word to us tonight, thy salvation, thy salvation, thy covenant God, who has all power, who is able to make the word efficacious, we pray thee to remember us, as thou didst remember the thief on the cross, remember us with that love which thou to thine dost bear, with thy salvation, O my God, to visit me, draw near, bless us each one, take away our sins of worship, for Christ's sake,
Amen.