

Always delivered unto death

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[0 : 00] Will you turn again with me to our reading in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, and particularly to verse 11.

For we which live are already delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

When the Apostle Peter writes of his brother Apostle Paul, that he writes many hard things, difficult to understand.

There is no doubt whatsoever that down the centuries there are many who would fully agree with him. I dare say we would ourselves, but Paul has often puzzled us.

And by the very profundity of his thought, made it hard for us to follow him. Paul was a notable scholar.

[1 : 07] A past-class metaphysician and philosopher. The theologian of the New Testament. A man who thought profoundly.

But who sometimes used metaphors that are a bit difficult to understand. He had sat at the feet of Gamaliel.

A noted leader. And teacher. And he had passed on to others. What he had learned from Gamaliel.

But particularly what he had learned from Jesus Christ. And was continually learning. As Christ, by the Spirit, inspired his thought. For this very work of providing the Church.

With an inspired theology. And so tonight we have one of these passages before us. Let us look at it again. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.

[2 : 22] That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest. In our mortal flesh. Now let's think first of all of the claim made.

We live. We live. Talking about believers of course. And then secondly. Of the commitment indicated.

We are delivered. Unto death. And then lastly. The purpose.

Declared. That the life also of Jesus. Might be made manifest. In our mortal flesh.

Three quite. Difficult. Correlated. Things. First of all. Then let's think of the claim made. We.

[3 : 28] For we which live. Are always delivered unto death. We. Which live. We. Live. It's a claim that he's making for all believers.

Now when Paul. Speaks. Of death and life. He very often uses. These terms. In a connotation. That is not.

Always familiar. For example where he says. I'm crucified. With Christ. Nevertheless I live.

Yet not I but Christ. Live within me. And the life that I now live. In the flesh. I live by the faith of the Son of God. Who loved me. And gave himself for me.

Work that out. Work that out for you. If you can. It's worthwhile. Spending time over. And it's worthwhile. Praying. March over.

[4 : 24] It's full of gospel. And of spiritual teaching. Crucified with Christ. Yet alive.

Similarly. What he writes. To the Ephesians. Reminded them that they were dead. In trespasses and in sins.

And yet alive. Dead. Yet alive. You. How he quickened. Which were dead in trespasses and in sins.

But you find the same. Usage. In the teaching of Christ himself. To take no doubt the most familiar one. In the parable of the.

Prodigal son. Where he represents the father in the parable. As saying with regard to the. Penitent and returned. Prodigal. This.

[5 : 25] My son. Was dead. And is alive again. He was lost. And is found. And again when he himself went into the house of Jairus.

Having been summoned there by Jairus. Because his daughter had died. Jesus said.

As he. Dismissed the mourners who were gathered together. Over the event. The damsel is not dead.

But sleepeth. Not dead. But sleepeth. And he laughed at him to scorn. As if they hadn't seen dead people before.

And didn't know the difference. Between natural sleep and the sleep of death. And when he spoke of the death of Lazarus.

[6 : 32] He did it in metaphor also. And even his own disciples didn't understand. Until he explained to them what he meant. He told them he was going again into Judea. Why should he go to Judea.

A place so dangerous for him. Where they had recently sought to. Kill him. And he said Lazarus. Is dead.

And I must go and awaken him out of that. Out of that. Sleep. Lazarus. Needs to be awakened. He was as they would say dead.

Jesus called it sleep. And not until Jesus. Changed to their way of. Thinking and speaking. To be in the sand. They said.

If he sleep he should do well. No need to go. And then Jesus said. Lazarus. Is dead. And so you find it right through.

[7 : 34] The New Testament in particular. This. Unusual. Connotation. Into these words.

Death and life so often come. Dead. And. Yet alive. Now when we say that a man is dead.

We are talking in the physical sense. When God in Holy Scripture. Uses that term.

He's using it in the spiritual sense. You remember the warning that he gave to our first parents. When he caused them not to eat.

The fruit of the. Tree of life. In the midst of the garden. The fruit of the. Fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Father.

[8 : 41] He said. In the day that thou eatest thereof. Thou shalt surely. Die. Die. But they were still alive at the end of that day.

And for a long time thereafter. Father. And yet my dear friends. They certainly died that day. That very day. In the very act of sin.

For the effect of sin is. As Isaiah puts it. To separate us from God. Your sins have separated between you and your God.

And when the. Sinner. Is separated from God. He's in a condition of death. Spiritual death. That's the effect of sin. To separate. Men from God. And when they're in that condition of separation. They are spiritually dead.

[9 : 48] And that's the way in which Paul is using the. Word here. And when he speaks of life. He speaks of it too. In the.

Spiritual. Sense. They live. And their life is.

Head. With God. In Christ. Rather difficult to follow. Isn't it? And yet if you keep these distinctions in view.

And the. Connections into which God. In his word. Uses. These terms. His meaning becomes.

Gloriously. Clear. And highly instructive. He that believeth on the son.

[10 : 45] Hath life. Life comes to the soul through faith. The believer.

Was once dead. But. He was given new life. By the Holy Spirit. And the life that he now lives in the flesh.

He lives by the faith of the son of God. Who loved him. And gave himself for him. Now Paul.

Classes himself. And the believers. To whom. To whom he is writing. As among the living. That's the claim he makes. We. Live. We too were once dead.

All of us. We too. To have experienced the. Enlivening work of the Holy Spirit. In our own souls. With the result that we now. Live.

[11 : 43] Live by the faith of the son of God. Who loved us. And. Gave himself. For us. And when does that life come to us?

Well. When did it come. To the. Prodigal son. It came to him. When he repented.

When in his misery. He arose and said. How many hired servants of my father's. Have bread enough and to spare. And to spare. And I perish with hunger. I will arise and will go to my father.

I will say to him. Father I have sinned. And that is the beginning of it all with us. It's not just the turning over a new.

Of a new page. It's not just. A resolution to. Change to a new mode of life. That's implied of course. But it begins with this direct act.

[12 : 46] This enlivening act of God. Through the Holy Spirit. In the soul of man. You have a quickened. Brought alive. Who were dead. In trespasses and in sins.

We are alive. And Paul. Acquired.

A fullness of life. That he had never had before. He came to understand.

What life really meant. In God's use of the term. When he made his surrender. To Jesus Christ. And said. Lord what will thou have me to do.

This was the man who afterwards wrote. For me to live. Is Christ. And then he changes to the.

[13 : 50] Physical level. And says. And to die. In your sense of the word. You who live after the flesh. To die. Is gain. Nothing is the claim.

That is made. Now let's look at the. Next thing that is mentioned in our text.

The commitment. Indicated. For we who live. Are always delivered unto death. For Jesus sake. These terms coming in again.

Death and life. That's the. Theme of the whole verse. Now very naturally the question arises there. What does it mean?

By being delivered unto death. Who delivered him to death? And the strange thing is this. That. The one who delivered him. Unto death. Is the very one.

[14 : 59] From whom he derived life. Now.

Again. There's some confusion. As to what is meant here. By being delivered unto death. Some writers would limit.

The meaning of these words. To. The. Martyrdoms. In the early church. And that Paul here. Was writing in anticipation.

Of his own martyrdom. He was a man delivered unto death. Now it's quite true that Paul. Had. A premonition. Of death by martyrdom. Quite clear.

From his own words to Timothy. For I am ready to be offered. That's what his death was going to be. I am ready to be offered.

[16 : 01] And the time of my departure. Is at hand. Yet that apprehension of. An imminent. Martyrdom.

Yet that's not what he's referring to here. And again. It is quite evident. That we do not come at the deepest meaning of this word.

By saying that it applies to all men. This. Thing that Paul is saying applies. Only to believers.

Not only to martyrs. Men who give their lives for the gospel. Although it applies. Perhaps in a very. Special sense to them. But to all believers.

Others. You see. Physical death. Is a thing that comes to. All men. It is appointed unto all men. Once to die. And after that. A judgment. But this.

[17 : 07] Death. That Paul is writing about. Is I repeat. Peculiar. To the believer. It's something that is experienced. By every believer.

Not every believer. Is put to death. By martyrdom. But every believer. Is delivered unto death. As Paul puts it here. And this is.

Something. That is done. To them. They are actually. Delivered. Unto death. In a way. It suggests. The law courts. Man.

Has to do this trial. He's on a capital charge. He's found guilty. He was.

Delivered. Delivered. Unto death. Handed over to the authorities. To be kept in custody. Until the time for the. Execution.

[18 : 22] Came wrong. That's rather grim doctrine. And surely is applied to the believer. thing whoever. God. conoc into the universe.

Let's see how we have to understand it. There is a struggle. Between life and death. Going on. On every believer. It began when he was converted And it will go on to the end of his life And the victory Will be gained by life Paul tells the Philippians he was convinced that The God who began the good work in them Who quickened them and limed them Would carry it on no matter the opposition No matter the severity of the warfare Carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ The day of his glorious appearing The day when the believer sees him As he is So instead of being a morbid subject It's really a glorious one for the believer to follow up

Could he use the figure of Agriculture Or if you want it on a smaller scale Horticulture You lay out a piece of ground You have purpose in so doing It's going to come alive With fruits and flowers and useful and beautiful things But you must first of all Deliver that piece of ground Deliver it so to speak over to death You can't go and Plant And sow that garden Until it has been prepared for the event And even after it has been prepared for the event The one One

Weeding of the garden The one Laying out of the soil For the reception of the Chosen seed And for the growth of what is to Arise From it It has got to be tended carefully Right through the season Weeds grow And weeds have got to be Kept down Many things inimical to the growth Of the seed that you put into that Ground Or the things that you planted there Many things inimical to their growth Continue to understand Appears And as often as they make an appearance They've got To be opposed And to be eradicated So that's what Paul means by this passage We are delivered unto death God has a purpose for us He cleared our souls

Of what was growing there before The harmful The hateful things That we didn't know in the true characters in the past But that we know now It's clear them of these things These noxious Roots That spring up And imperil The fruits and the flowers that we desire There's got to be a constant attention to these things Now quite simply We call that sanctification That's what it is in the Christian life Sanctification That's Paul's figure for sanctification A process by which As the Westerners of the Divine put it We are enabled To die unto sin And live unto righteousness So that's the struggle that's going on In the soul There's the sentence of death Upon everything that is opposed to the Gospel

[22 : 38] Everything that is unseemly in Christian behaviour All these things must go And we must be in the struggle God is not going to do it without us We must be workers together with God Work out your own salvation With fear and trembling But God we cannot It's too much for us But listen It is God that worketh in you Both to will and to do of his good pleasure And in that partnership There can be no failure We are delivered unto death For his sake That the life of Jesus Might be manifested In our mortal flesh Now what is all this leading to?

And that brings me to the third point that I made And that is The purpose declared God has got something in view For the man who can give a testimony like this And the purpose is this We which live are always delivered unto death For Jesus' sake That the life also of Jesus Might be made manifest In our mortal flesh That's what God has in view To bring his people into conformity With the likeness of Jesus Christ And that was the Apostle John's hope And certainty It does not yet appear what we shall be But we know that when he does appear We shall be like him For we shall see him as he is We shall be like him He is able to keep us from falling Says Jude And to present us faultless

Before the presence of his glory With exceeding joy That was happening The delivering unto death Was motivated by this great purpose That the life of Christ Might be manifested in our mortal flesh And you gather from this too That We don't have to wait until we are in heaven Before the life of Jesus As manifested in us It's manifested at the very time Of a man's conversion The life of Jesus appears where?

In our mortal flesh It will be in the body of the resurrection Undoubtedly But it's going to begin even here In this life All things become new The likeness of Jesus Is being reproduced In the life of the believer He's being made The backdrop of this Marvelous change That is wrought By Jesus Christ The backdrop of the glory Of Christ himself For God he says Who commanded the light to shine Out of darkness Has shined in our hearts To give the light of the knowledge Of the glory of God In the face Of Jesus Christ Now how does this take place?

It happens In the Christian life It happens In the day by day life Of the Christian Who has dedicated himself To Christ And is resolved To be for him And not for another So that this mortal flesh Of ours This Poor body Which Must endure so much And in the end Go down to the grave To moulder a high layer Until the power of God Resurrected This mortal body That we're in Just now Even that body Can Show forth The glory of Christ And that's the purpose That God Had in view In this commitment

[27 : 09] Which we are considering The believer Is intended And it's his supreme Purpose in life To show forth The glory Of him who Called him out of darkness Into his Marvellous light Now when you Bear that in mind That God By the Spirit Is working in the life Of every believer Gradually effecting This change in him By this process Of sanctification He will come nearer To understanding What Paul means When he says For me to live Is Christ That's my great aim In life That's why

I've dedicated myself To be for him And not for another That's why I consecrate myself Daily To be in his service That is a great thing That Frances Ridley Havagall wanted For herself But she has spoken There for all True believers All for Jesus All for Jesus All my beings Ransomed powers All my thoughts And all my doings All my days And all my hours She wanted even now The life of Jesus To be manifested In her mortal body And Christ's likeness Thank God Is not as rare As some folks would think John G. Payton

In his autobiography Tells of his Early home In which piety Flourished So conspicuously And he tells us When he was Still a youngster He and the younger Members of the family Became familiar With the father's Practice After lunch Every day To retire To a small room Close the door Behind him And remain there For a time And he said We came to know To The significance Of that radiance That was on his face When that door Opened again And he came forth The life of Jesus Was being manifested In his mortal flesh Even to his own family And it's difficult To be a saint At home And recognised as one For that home

In Dempreshire Was one of that nature The life of Christ Was being manifested And it's happening In neither of the children Who can say that About their father As John G. Payton Said it in effect About his father The life of Jesus Is being manifested In His mortal flesh Now that surely Is something Worth Striving for Not only for what We are to gain ourselves From the Christian life And the practice of piety Is always gainful But also From the blessing That it may bring to others Let me close With this Reminiscence In my Greenock ministry We had a lady

In the congregation Whom everybody knew As a true Christian And yet She was not a lady Of many words And she didn't find it Easy To As we put it Talk religion There were things So deep So precious That she couldn't Easily Discourse about them But the life of Jesus Was being manifested By her Because Sometime After she joined Our congregation A woman Who had joined Much more recently Than herself Came along To the Kirk Session

[32 : 18] Just before A communion To be admitted Into the fellowship Of the Lord's people In the congregation Some conversation With her I asked her About her Spiritual experience How it had begun So far as she could discern And she told me this It didn't begin In any sermon That I ever heard It didn't begin In any book That I ever read Although sermons And books Were useful to me Afterwards She said It began With something That I discerned In a Christian lady And the Christian lady As it turned out Was the one Whom I had been Whom I described A moment ago She said That we used to meet She said On our shopping expeditions

She was a woman Of few words But she said I came to understand That she had Something that I lacked And the more I got to know her The more I felt That I needed That something That she had And that I hadn't So she said Without asking her What church she went to One evening I followed her And that was How I came to This church To begin with And that she said I regard as The beginning Of my Christian life That was a testimony That I never forgot A woman Who found it Difficult to speak Of spiritual things The deep things Of the soul Yet Living a Christian Life of such Quality That this Hitherto Quite Careless

And worldless Woman Desired to know Her secret Believing that She had something That she lacked So you see It doesn't take A special Training in evangelism Although I'm not Decrying that Far otherwise But it doesn't Take that To a Country To a Purpose That Paul Is dealing With in this Verse The Manifestation Of the Glory of Jesus In our Mortal Lives Was it not Robert Murray McChain Who said It is not After all Great learning That Jesus Blesses And that Appeals To men

But great Likeness To Jesus Well my friends Let that be our aim Can we claim Tonight With Paul We Live Then let the Fight go on We're delivered Unto death For Jesus Sake Delivered To the Task of By his Spirit Exterminating From our Lives All those Things that Would hinder The growth Of the Fruits of The spirit In our Lives It must Go on And sometimes It's very Frustrating Isn't it Let's listen Again to what Paul says To these Same people Be ye Therefore Steadfast Unmovable Always Abounding In the work

Of the Lord For as Much as You know That your Labour Is not In vain In the Lord The full Manifestation Of the Glory of Christ In the Believer Of course Will not Come while He is In this Sinful Unsinning World But the Very fact That the Fight is Going on Now Is the Guarantee That will Be crowned For victory Crowned With victory Complete And everlasting Victory Then It's an end Worth striving For Let's pray God to help Us in it