

Christ died for us

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[0 : 0 0] Now seeking the Lord's help I would like us to turn to the passage that we read in Romans chapter 5. Romans and chapter 5.

Reading from verse 6 again. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die. Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

And especially these words of verse 8. But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

Just by way of introduction I want to take you back to John's gospel for a moment or two.

[1 : 1 0] To one of the great passages of John's gospel that expresses the desire of God and the love of God towards the human race. In those words of John chapter 3 verse 16 we have For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved. And I think that today that there are plenty of people maybe even within our churches maybe even here this morning who are looking upon the concept of the passage of John's gospel God loves the world and they're looking at that passage and they're saying to themselves well God is a God of love to this world and he sent his Son into this world so therefore he sent it into this world his Son into this world because he loved this world and therefore he must love me.

And as a result of that they take comfort and they feel to themselves well I'm alright because after all Jesus was not sent into the world to condemn the world they say Jesus was sent into the world because God loved the world so therefore I can feel comfortable no matter what my sin I can feel comfortable and I can say all is well with me.

God didn't say you say God didn't say that he is condemning you God is saying he loves me he loves the world and he sent his Son into the world not to condemn it.

And maybe you stand on the sideline of the church and maybe even within the church that is the Reformed church and you say to yourself I'm alright I'm not condemned because God loved me he sent his Son into the world because he loved the world.

[3 : 1 5] My friend there is a great delusion in that interpretation and there are many who are deluded by it. They sit comfortably in their situation in life and they say the Bible says God didn't send the Son into the world to condemn the world.

Can I just tell you at an outset and I speak to this to those that are outside of Christ this morning you may say God didn't send Christ into this world to condemn the world.

That's true. Because of one reason because the world was already condemned and every soul that is in this building this morning every soul that is in this community every soul that is in these islands every soul that is in the village of Maryborough every soul that is in this world who does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is already condemned.

And it doesn't matter how much you think I am living close to the word of God because I read it or I am living close to an institution that is representative of the Reformed Church I feel quite comfortable.

It is an institution that preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ I feel comfortable. Well don't feel comfortable you have no right to feel comfortable. You should be feeling great fear and trembling because God at this moment in time is not commending that love to you in the sense that you are feeling comfortable.

[4 : 55] God is telling you through his word that you are already condemned. So don't allow the delusion of your mind and the comfort the false comfort that you may take from scripture and say to yourself God didn't send Jesus into the world to condemn it.

Of course he didn't. He sent Jesus into the world to save it because it was already condemned. It was already under the wrath of God.

And let's face it the wrath of God has never yet been poured out upon any one of us in this building. You maybe who are an unbeliever the wrath of God has not been poured out and maybe you're taking comfort from that as well.

But one day it will. That's my way of introduction so that we don't any of us here in this building especially those who are not professing faith in Christ that you don't take any comfort from some passage of scripture.

Here the apostle Paul is commending something to us and what a commendation to give to people who are only hell deserving every single one of us.

[6 : 18] Here the apostle Paul tells us God commends his love toward us in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

And I want to look at this in a few different ways. First of all I want us to think of who it is that is commending his love.

Who is it that is commending his love in these words? It is not the church. It is not even those who are close to us and who are maybe anxious for our souls.

It is God. It is the great almighty the eternal God who is commending to us his own love. He commends his love.

It is God the one in whom we live and move and have our being. Do you have an appreciation of God this morning that is above anything else in your experience and that you can say there is none likened to God no not one?

[7 : 25] I would hope that those of us who are in a little while going to remember the death of Christ in obedience to the command of Christ that we can all say yes I know this God or you are not saying to yourself I know him absolutely I know him perfectly but I know him I know that he is God the great creator the great sustainer the one through whom the word of eternal life is poured out upon sinful creatures and if there is anything that you are looking for by way of commendation look to the word of God and to the love that he exudes and to all that he expresses in his word concerning himself Paul says but God commends now here is the very nature of God

God certainly would be well within his right to bring before every single one of us every ounce of wrath that could pour on upon sinful creatures remember the situation that existed prior to the flood and how God had said then it repented him that he had even made man that's what God said but here we do not have a God expressing that at this moment as the apostle Paul appreciates it he is saying this is the God who is desiring that all men would come to a saving knowledge of his son that they would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved he is not commending anything else but his love now this love that God is commanding must in no way be compared to the love that we have one with the other even if we make illustration with regard to what we may try to understand as God's love remember what

God is saying here in commending his love what is he saying and what is the apostle Paul knowing in it that there is no love like it and I hope I may touch on this in a moment or two at the table that there is no love like it whatever you understand of God this morning understand this one thing that his love is commendable his love is commendable and why I don't have to tell or suggest to those of you who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ why God's love is commendable but it's good for us to think about it and to ponder over it to look at it once again and not just once again but every day never let a day pass in your life in your Christian life except that you think of the love of God and the love of God as we will see as it is expressed to whom not to righteous people not to good people not to people who by society standards have been as it were elevated to some position of acclamation some because they've done great deeds some because they have great high moral calibre who is God commending his love towards is it not sinners do you remember the man that went into the temple who went in there not conscious maybe of anybody else oh the Pharisee was there and he was conscious of everybody else he was conscious of everybody else because he believed himself to be better than anybody else but there was this poor publican who was there and what could he say

I'm a sinner God be merciful to me a sinner that's all he could see that's all he could say he saw nobody else he saw himself before God nothing more than a sinner and it's to that person that God commends his love to the sinner to the wretch to the poor to the lame to the hot to the blind let me cast your mind back now I don't know many of you but I know some of you but let me cast your mind back to the day when the stirrings of the truth came upon your heart and your conscience and you started to think around those things that concerned God and concerned your soul and what was the thing that as light streamed into your mind and awakened that darkened soul that soul that was in dead and trespasses and sins what was the thing that came to your mind first and foremost surely it was nothing less than what that man felt as he was in the temple

I'm a sinner what God has shown to me is my sin and that was very well and that is true but you know I don't think that you ever knew what your sin was like what it was really like not just the conviction that the law brought upon you that was in itself soul disturbing that was heart disturbing that was bringing to you a great fear and annoying that you were nothing worth of nothing but God's divine wrath and judgment you felt yourself so low that you were worthless you were nothing but you never ever came to know what your sin was like until you first realized what Christ was doing for your sin what Christ did for your sin you didn't begin to know what it was to even understand the fullness of the mercy of God and the grace of God and the love of God until first of all you could stand there and see Christ on the cross

[14:13] Christ's suffering and die for your sin there are many maybe even here who will not be at the table and you have had moments of crisis of conscience with regard to your sin you know the kind of sins you've been involved in you know how they've developed in your life and maybe you feel a certain degree of conviction but that's all maybe unless maybe even this morning the spirit of God may be working in you and the word of God may be penetrating into your soul and telling you you are a sinner lost and undone you are condemned with the rest of the world but to the believer that's a different matter Christ is commending his love to them God is commending his love to them whilst they are in that sinful condition and knowing that speaks volumes doesn't it reforming my life did nothing it never gave me anything as far as God was concerned seeking to turn over a new leaf did nothing for me did it you maybe who one time tried to reform your life maybe if you had a sin a particular sin oh not just one because the whole life is scarred it's depraved but maybe there was a certain sin that you felt made you feel more guilty than any other sin and you thought well I'll reform myself maybe then maybe

God would look upon me if I'm a better person if I'm an improved person not Saul Saul of Tarshish as he was walking to the road to Damascus with all those letters to take into prison those who were the followers of the Lord Jesus he wasn't even beginning to attempt to reform himself he was stopped in his tracks in his life going there to persecute the church of Christ and there he was stopped and Christ called from heaven and said to him Saul Saul why persecutest thou me Saul of Tarshish knew that he was a sinner the conviction came so powerfully upon him that he landed prostrate where he was and that voice spoke so deeply into his soul that he was a sinner oh my friends it's not some kind of a performance of social change in our lives or moral change in our lives some kind of improvement or some kind of upgrading in our lives that in any way brought the commendation of God toward us and his love toward us oh my friends you could be almost in society and please don't take this wrongly but you could almost be in society's eyes as white as the driven snow but before God's eyes you're a sinner because you don't have Christ and if you don't have Christ then you're nothing but you know

I do believe also in what the apostle Paul is saying here it is a tremendous encouragement to Christ people having been brought out of darkness having been liberated and can look back and to know that everything that God was doing for your salvation was going on in the councils of eternity long before you even had a thought or a desire towards Christ long before you had any thought at all of making of seeking to be as it were make a new life for yourself God whilst you were in that state commending his love toward us and telling us that while you were a sinner Christ died for you can I go back and I take your mind back again

I don't know you but I can I take to you your mind back just for a moment or two not to hurt you not as it were to try and bring back to your your memory or bring forward into your mind the things that you wanted to forget but you remember them you know sometimes you can go back and you can remember them you know that you believe that Christ has cast them into the sea of his forgetfulness but you remember them you remember the great offences that you wish that you had

never done the great offences but the one that you look back upon the most it's not even those acts that you might even be ashamed of are there certain acts in your life that you were ashamed of more than others I'm sure that is true but surely the one that was most shameful of all was when you could say I didn't believe I didn't believe and it was even when I was in that unbelieving state God was working out his purpose for me oh what a comfort to God's people he could have and in fact I've thought many the time he could have cut my life off years ago long before I came to faith in Christ but he didn't because he had a purpose and you who will sit at this table this morning will sit there because God had a purpose oh you know you are undeserving of anything but you can look back and you say I can look down my life and I can see that in everything God had a purpose to bring me he had a plan God commending his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us it takes from under the feet of any of those who think that Christ died for them because they were good he died when they were evil and sinful in their condition let me think of these words for a moment or two as well very poignant words and if you take them and I'm not meaning to take them in isolation but if you just listen to them and how they affect us in our hearing [21 : 03] Christ died for us you know the passage we've read it I'm not going to go through the passage we've all read this passage I'm sure time and time again but Christ died for us go back to Isaiah's prophecy go back to the time when you and I could have said we were just like those who looked upon Christ there was no beauty upon him that we should desire in there was nothing in him that was beautiful that we would in any way be attracted towards him nothing there the apostle Paul saying to us that he died for you and he died what kind of death what kind of death did Christ die what kind of agony did Christ suffer let me go to the garden of

Gethsemane just for a moment or two you remember we're told there that Christ was in great heaviness great heaviness he was in agony do you remember he said let this cup pass from me nevertheless not my will but thine be done that's what Jesus says in this great prayer in that garden he was heavy he was burdened he saw within that cup what did he see he knew what was going to happen he knew what was before him he knew the cross was before him he knew the suffering that was before him but here in the garden of Gethsemane there was as it were a prerequisite to that suffering and as he looked into that cup and he saw the horror of everything that was before him he saw the wrath of God in that cup he saw the sin he saw the curse he saw everything that was the cup of trembling for the

Lord Jesus Christ and surely you and I could never enter upon a communion season or come forward to the table of the Lord without thinking even for a moment of the sufferings that Christ suffered even there in the garden of Gethsemane oh yes Christ was humiliated in many ways they spat on him they backbited upon him they said things about him that were totally false they fabricated things against him but these were nothing in comparison to what he saw when he looked into that cup and he said father if thou be willing let this cup pass from me the horror of it and you and I can't even enter into the depth of the horror of it because our finite minds cannot fully understand it but it must have been for Christ the eternal son of God a horrific experience and it is no wonder that he sweated as it were great drops of blood now I don't want in any way to try and demean the sufferings of Christ but we live in a day and age where one of the greatest problems that we have is stress and the effect that it has upon our physical being our mental being and everything but we do not know what stress and toil and pain and suffering where it is not like Christ knew it he was so strained and so stressed in his whole being he knew the power of evil as it was coming upon him you know nothing and you know sometimes I think when I'm if you do feel a bit stressed and you feel this life is burdening upon you look go into the garden again and look at Christ and see what he did for you and what he suffered even there in the garden Christ died Christ suffered and Christ died God commending his love toward us in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died what a paradox what a paradox God's love we sinners Christ dying and the death of Christ on the cross and as you visit it and as you look upon it and as you see what happened there and we don't have time to go into all the detail of the situation of the cross itself but we cannot go finish on this text until we do look at the cross for a moment or two and see what we can see let me look at one or two of the people first of all that were standing there look at the ladies that were standing there how were they feeling what was their heartfelt feeling as they looked up there and they saw Jesus oh I'm sure their feelings were of mixed emotions there were maybe many human emotions coming out of them but they were looking there at Jesus who died who was dying there on the cross for their sin there was others who were just wandering about and others who were

looking up and gazing some were just making mockery of him and all the time what was [27 : 22] Jesus doing he was pouring out his soul what was Jesus doing he was bleeding on the cross every drop of blood for your sin and my sin you know how we read there for scarcely for a righteous man would one die yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die but Paul goes beyond that and he says but he says God commended this love toward us in that whilst we were not good but evil in that while we were deserving of wrath and judgment Christ died and Christ died the cursed death of the cross does it make you weep does it bring a tear to your eye well if it does that what has it done inside you before the tear appeared what does it do what has it done to your soul are you overwhelmed at the love with

God has loved you the love with Christ has loved you that he laid down his life a ransom for his people whatever every one of them that were around the cross could understand of what was going on there was one who did there was one who knew that was going on and it's the one who was commending the love and as we go back to Isaiah again what are we told there he was brosed for our iniquity the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed what a commendation of love that Christ died and that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ had within it here as it is suggested to us in Isaiah's prophecy he was wounded he was brosed he was forsaken that's the

the Jesus that you and I have commended to us by the love of God this morning it is not another Jesus it is this Jesus this Jesus whom God sent into this world that the world through him might believe God commended this love toward us in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us do you know the cross of Christ speaks of many things the cross of Christ speaks of self denial the cross of Christ speaks of peace the cross of Christ does it not speak also of evil but the one great thing that the cross of

Christ does it commends love and how difficult it is for us to understand that fully I know and I appreciate but please please look at the cross every day and see it see it as God's love to poor wretched sinners such as you and I a word in conclusion I said at the very beginning to those that made feel themselves to feel quite comfortable if the cross of Christ displayed the wrath of God for sin what wrath is going to come upon sinners that have no grace no peace and no Christ what like is it going to be in our lost eternity in eternity where all hell is let loose please my unbelieving friends as you witness today and take away don't let anything else distract you from what you see it's a witness to your soul it's another witness to your soul death but unless you believe unless you repent you will perish the people that are gathered at the Lord's table are those who are not righteous those that are not righteous in their own eyes they are not good in their own eyes they come to the table as sinners leaning upon Christ God commended this love toward us in that while we were yet sinners

[33 : 00] Christ died for us shall we pray oh Lord our gracious God who is sufficient for these things thy word oh Lord tells us speaks to us concerning the love for with thou dis love thine old and how thou dis commend that love toward us by the death of thy son and the effect of it is upon sinners out with a sense of the preciousness of Christ and that thou wast given to them to know that he is the one who will never believe nor forsake.

We are the ones that were deserving of forsakenness, not Christ. And yet the whole thing has been turned around for us for our benefit.

God sent his son into this world not to condemn the world. It is already under thy condemnation that he sent his son to seek and to save that which was lost.

We thank thee for those, O Lord, who were one time lost but are now brought nigh by the blood of Christ and who are brought before his own table at his own invitation.

He calls upon them to come and die. Forgive all our sin, we pray thee, and especially our sins and holy things.

[35 : 07] For we ask it in the Redeemer's name. Amen.