

To perform the promised mercy

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Roddy Macleod

[0 : 00] Godly amongst the ancient Jews were closely attached to the covenant and they fiercely claimed to be descendants of the faithful Abraham. And evermore they sought to establish their covenantal relationship to God. And the godly amongst them, and this man Zacharias was one of them, he always bore in mind the covenant promises of Jehovah his God. And when the fullness of time had come for the appearance of John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ, then he was he was laid hold of by the Holy Spirit and he spoke these words of prophecy concerning both

John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ. And in these words they refer to the Lord Jesus' birth and they refer to his ministry and to his sacrificial death upon the cross of Calvary.

After being stricken down and after being given a table he wrote that his name shall be called John and thou child shall be called the prophet of the highest for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.

And the godly amongst the Jews were looking to God's promises with regard to the birth of the Messiah, to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was to sit upon the throne of David in a spiritual sense, but in no less a real sense for that. And Zacharias realizes the connection between covenant and mercy. And he says to perform the mercy promise to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

Now then when Zacharias is referring to the mercy, we must understand that this expression, the mercy, refers to the greatest mercy of all, to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The mercy of God, personalized in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3 : 35] And the mercy of God in the Bible is the free and undeserved favor of God to men. It regards men as undeserving of the Lord's mercy and blessing and favor. And the Bible in its use of mercy regards the mercy of the Lord's mercy and blessing and favor.

And the mercy of the Lord's mercy and blessing and blessing and blessing and blessing and blessing. And the mercy of God is something that is promised.

And here Zacharias is saying that God is presently performing the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

There are three things we want to consider tonight and the first is why Christ has styled the mercy. And secondly, what kind of mercy Christ is to his people.

And thirdly, how this mercy is performed. But firstly, notice why Christ is styled the mercy.

[4 : 59] Well, Christ is styled the mercy. Because God could never show mercy to the world but only in and through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we can say that Christ is the very first fruit of the mercy of God to sinners. But the world enjoys a great many privileges and a great many blessings on account of Jesus Christ's coming into the world.

Jesus Christ is the very first mercy. And he is the first mercy.

Because there are many other mercies that we enjoy in this world and that the ungodly world enjoy. That is not directly associated with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[6 : 33] It is only therefore in and through Jesus Christ that God can and does bless the world of men.

And particularly the church of Christ. He is the first, the chief, and the greatest and the best mercy. He is the chief mercy.

He is the chief mercy. Because all the mercy of God to sinners comes to us. Through him and through him alone. God doesn't deal with sinners in any other way or by any other person.

But through him who is the mercy. God is the chief mercy. For there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

He is the one mediator between God and men. The man Christ Jesus. He is the medium. He is the channel through which God gives us the benefits and the blessings of his mercy.

[7 : 51] Not a drop of saving mercy can come to the children of men but through the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the mercy because all inferior mercies derive their value and their sweetness from Jesus Christ.

Christ is the chief, who is the chief, the principal and the primary source of the mercy of God. He is the fountainhead of all mercy. Christ is the chief mercy.

And our Lord says that if we give even a cup of cold water in the name of Christ. Then that cup of cold water is something that is very precious.

And something that takes on a new sweetness and a new preciousness because it is only given in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And because his blessing rests upon it in the giving of it in his name. You know how in the Acts of the Apostles, the Apostles always denied that there was any power or any authority in their own name.

[9 : 09] When they were challenged about doing miraculous things. What an opportunity this was and would have been for them were they so inclined to attribute themselves this authority and this power to work miracles.

But they always denied that they had any authority or any power in healing themselves to work miracles. They said, as for example, Peter and James on the steps of the beautiful gate of the temple when they said in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk.

So that anybody giving a cup of cold water, the least perhaps of all gifts to anybody in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall not and shall never lose his reward.

And a natural gift, water, a gift of nature is doubly blessed and takes on a fresh sweetness when it is given in the name of Christ.

And when it is received and used in the name of Christ. So you see how Christian people have a double blessing, they have a double portion.

[10 : 35] They have the gifts of nature which are in themselves precious and sweet. But more than that, they have the blessing of Christ along with them which lends them a sweetness and a freshness that they otherwise do not.

And the people who do not have. And the people who do not have. An unbelieving person can sit at the Lord's table and can drink the wine and eat the bread that is consecrated for the Lord's Supper. And this will neither strengthen his body nor strengthen his faith. But the believer on the other hand, coming to the Lord's table in the exercise of a living faith, that believer is not only strengthened in his faith, he is also strengthened in his very body.

For these things are the life of the body. The bread and the wine. And not only the life of the body, these things are the life of the soul.

Ah yes, the new person, the new nature, the new life, under the new name, enables that person who has them to have a new experience of the gifts of nature.

[12 : 07] Natural men and godly men and Christian men make a natural use of natural things. But the godly man, the spiritually minded man, he makes a spiritual use of natural things as well as our spiritual things.

All the things of this world, all the gifts of nature and all the blessings of this life, divide their value and their worth from the Lord Jesus Christ.

How useless are riches and honors and the praise of men, if all of these things must be left behind and must. Of what use are riches and honors and places and praises of men, when all these things must be left behind and must perish forever.

Whereas riches and success and position are valuable assets to the believer in this present world. And they are stepping stones for him to reach forth to higher and greater things.

They are lodestones that weigh downly and godly. And that their riches and honors and preferments and places and positions weigh downly and godly.

[13 : 42] And hinders them making a right use of Christ and the gospel. Well, these things, these things are used by the Christian as stepping stones upon which he stands and reaches forth to greater and higher things.

You see therefore the difference between a rich person who doesn't have the blessing of Christ. And a rich person who has the blessing of Christ. And you see the consequences in both cases. On the one hand, the way down, as a millstone. The ungodly. And they live there. It is very opposite to the godly. The godly stand upon these things. And they keep the world in its proper place. Under our feet. So that there are superior and subordinate mercies and blessings coming to the world through Christ. And the believer enters into an enjoyment of the supreme and superior blessings. The primary blessings. The blessings that come directly from the person and the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. [15:16] For those the world may indeed receive blessings from Christ. But only through secondary and subordinate causes and means. Such as social status, wealth, and these types of things. And what a sweetness there is therefore in all temporal blessings to the Christians. Temporal blessings are doubly blessed to the Christian. Because he has the blessing of Christ with them. Or as the Catechism teaches us about these things. Having a competent portion of the good things of his life. And the blessings of Christ with them. The mercies. Natural blessings and spiritual blessings. Natural people and godly people. Have some enjoyment of natural blessings. [16:21] Because food and drink. Have some appreciation and some degree of satisfaction. In the use of their daily bread. And the people. In the use of their daily bread. To the poor believer. The believer whose faith is strongly in exercise. Even a cup of cold water. Is exceedingly precious and sweet. And a meal. An ordinary meal. Can be as very sweet as a sacrament. Without. It's some. The believer can taste the spiritual sweetness. Even in natural things. And others can't taste. Even in spiritual things. [17:20] Such as the Lord's Supper. And the mercy. The same mercy. Becomes by this means. A feast. To both soul and body. Well Christ. Is the mercy. The mercy. Supremely. To the world. And to the church. All Christless people. Indeed. Hold their mercies. With great and much uncertainty. But the believer. The believer. Possessing the Lord Jesus Christ. His mercy. Is a durable. Lasting. Everlasting. Mercy. He is. The mercy. The supreme. And the primary mercy. And there is none. Like unto him. The end of the mercies in this world. Is but the beginning. Of endless mercies. Of endless mercies. In the world to come. Being found in him. [18:17] Not having our own righteousness. Which is of the law. Not having the righteousness. Which is by the faith. Of the Son of God. Who loved us. And who gave himself for us. Now secondly. What kind of mercy. Is Christ. And we should say. At the very outset. Shouldn't we. That this mercy. Is a free. Is a free. Of endless mercies. Of endless mercies. In the world to come. Being found in him. Not having our own righteousness. Not having our own righteousness. Which is of the law. Not having the righteousness. Which is by the faith. Of the Son of God. Who loved us. And who gave himself for us. Now secondly. What kind of mercy. Is Christ. And we should say. At the very outset. Shouldn't we. That this mercy. Is a free. Mercy. An undeserved. Mercy. He is the gift. Of God. To us. The gift of God. Is eternal life. And he says himself. This. Is eternal life. To know thee. The only true God. And Jesus Christ. [19:12] Whom thou hast sent. He is a free. Mercy. And more than that. The Lord Jesus Christ. Is a full. Mercy. Mercy. There is a fullness. Of mercy. In him. In him. The justice of God. Is satisfied. And the real needs of souls. Is supplied. It pleased the Father. Says the apostle. It pleased the Father. That in him. Should all. Wholeness. Dwell. Wholeness. Dwell. And out of his. Wholeness. Have all. We received. And grace. Grace. So that Jesus Christ. Is the mercy. As to. Freeness. And as to. Fullness. And he is an absolutely. Necessary. Mercy. And I think the very word itself.

Implies. That mercy. Is something that is absolutely. Necessary for us. As sinners. He says himself. I am the.

[20 : 08] The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The.

The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The.

Ransom. Of. Our. Souls. An. Absolutely. Necessary. Mercy. For. Us.

He. That. Believers. Not. Not. Ready. He is an absolutely necessary mercy for sinners.

He is the fountain of mercy. The psalmist said, all my wellsprings are thee. From his person and out of his merits, there flows our redemption and justification and adoption and sanctification and glorification, our peace and joy and our spiritual life here and our life of glory hereafter.

[21 : 25] And he is a satisfying mercy. He that is full of Christ can't feel the lack of anything. And the apostles knew this, didn't they?

They said, unto whom can we go? For thou alone hast the words of eternal life. Whom have I in the heavens high but thee, O Lord, alone?

And in the earth whom I desire besides thee there is none. He is a satisfying mercy. Those who have embraced him and those who trust him have found that they have found satisfaction for body and mind and spirit, for time and eternity in him who is thee mercy, promised to Israel and performed in the days of Zacharias.

And oh, what a suitable mercy Jesus Christ is. He is a suitable mercy.

Doesn't the apostle tell us, you are, he says, complete in him. You are complete in him.

[22 : 51] We lack nothing. He is the fullness of God to meet our emptiness, our nothingness, to meet the vanity of our earthly existence.

Here is the very fullness of God himself. For God that dwelt in him bodily, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the second person in the days of his flesh amongst us.

All the fullness of divine mercy and love and pardon and peace are in Jesus Christ. And we, by nature, are enemies.

Enemies by wicked works. Alienated from the life of God by wicked works. Dead in trespasses and sins. And we stand in the relationship of enemies.

To him. Ah, well, if you are still an enemy to him, know this. That this mercy that Zacharias has prophesied about.

[24 : 02] Ah, this mercy. This Lord Jesus Christ. He is our reconciliation. He is our reconciliation. Are you sold under sin?

Then he is our redeemer. Are you condemned? He is our justification before God. Are you a sinner?

And polluted? Well, here, in this person, is a fountain. Open for the sin of Israel.

And for your sin. Are you lost? And you can't find your way. Here is one who says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Here is the one who says, Come unto me, all ye who are lost. And I will show you the way to the Father. The rest is no more suitable to the weary.

[25 : 02] Nor bread for the hungry. As Christ is for the sinful. For bread is to the starving. And for water is to the thirsting.

And dying of thirst. Christ is to the sinner. Christ is a wonderful mercy.

His name is wonderful. Counsel, almighty God, everlasting Father. His person is a wonder. Great wonder. You know this, the holy angels of God who excel in wisdom and in intellectual powers.

It is said of them with regard to the sufferings of Christ that they desire, they quote, they desire to look into these things. What things? Into the sufferings of Christ.

They can't get over it. That their God, the second person in the Godhead should be found in the likeness of human form.

[26 : 06] And that he should so humble himself. and that he should be made to be sin for us. And that he should undergo such sorrows and such sufferings on behalf of the children of men.

The angels cannot get over it. They wonder at it. And his name is wonderful. Great is the mystery of godliness.

For God was manifest in the flesh. What a mystery, miss this. What a wonder it is. What kind of mercy is Christ?

Well, is a free mercy, a full mercy, a necessary mercy, a fountain of mercy, a satisfying mercy, a suitable mercy, a wonderful mercy, a unique, a much less incomparable mercy.

And the most wonderful thing of all is this, that you are here tonight. And this blessing you is a mercy that is offered to you.

[27 : 12] It is a present offering mercy. There's no promise of tomorrow for you of this mercy. God may harden your heart as he hardened fatal heart.

He may harden your heart or he may allow yourself to harden your heart. But this mercy is a mercy that is offered and offered now.

And the third thing I said we would reflect upon is the mandate of God performing this mercy. how did God perform this mercy?

Oh well it's not a mistake. It's not this a mistake. How it is that in the council of peace ere the universe had any existence this mercy was considered by the triune God.

and in the council of peace there was a way devised whereby mercy could be shown to you tonight this night now sitting where you are God devised a way wherein he could be merciful wherein he could be the just God unjustifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus.

[28 : 48] God devised a way wherein his character is in no way malign and wherein his integrity is in no way compromised.

But he is the just God in justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus. God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

He is faithful to himself in his covenant promise and in the performing of that promise he is faithful to himself and he is just and equitable in forgiving you your sins on the basis of the incarnation of the Son of God and on the basis of the death of the Son upon the cross of Calvary.

He is faithful to himself and just in his dealings with you in pronouncing you forgiven and pardoned. His character and his righteousness holiness his God likeness is in no way impugned by his freely offering you this mercy that is spoken of in this verse of Lord Jesus Christ.

God has made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ.

[30 : 43] God performed his mercy according to all the covenantal promises according to all the Old Testament predictions according to all the Old Testament rituals and shadows in that old system of the old covenant God has performed this mercy he has been true to his work he has been faithful to himself and true to his promise and he has performed in the miraculous conception and in the immaculate birth in the holy life and in the vicarious death of Jesus Christ God has been true to his word of promise and to the word of prediction and prophecy and to the word that is inherent in all the shadows and all the types of the old testament sacrificial system whereby the old testament saints were saved looking into them and saying through them the one who is the substance of things to come the good one who is the substance of the good things that was to come

I have performed all his promises all his predictions all his prophecies and all the things that were spoken of beginning with Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them the things relating to himself if Christ is the mercy of mercies of God to men in vain do men seek and hope for mercy out of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and many have said to me I know I know they would say that God is merciful but I have to tell them that God in no way would be merciful to them except in through and by the person and merits of the

Lord Jesus Christ and him alone people may resolve to live better lives to pray more earnestly and to weep more sincerely but all of this will not procure for them mercy mercy is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and can be communicated to us only in from and through Jesus Christ and people look to themselves and they promise reformation of their outward lives and they promise with some degree of sincerity repentance and reformation but all of this is useless apart from the Lord Jesus Christ to perform a mercy promise to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant if any man thirst Jesus says let him come unto me and drink a person is willing to believe and willing to repent and willing to restore and willing to reform when that person is already saved because he has been made willing in a day of God's power to believe reform restore and repent and there is given to such a one new life new desires new objectives and best of all a new destiny destiny nobody will go to a new destiny to heaven itself unless first of all they have a new heart and a new nature a new life new objectives new goals new achievements and we cannot get these things apart from the mercy these are great mercies but they come to us from the fountain of all mercy from the Lord

Jesus Christ who is the mercy of all mercy do you know him do you trust him do you pray to him do you love him do you serve him do you worship him is he to you the greatest of all is he your all and

in all we pray that we may have the ministry of the Holy Spirit to convince us of our sin and of our misery and to convince us of the righteousness of Christ and to show us our consequent need of a savior that we may fly to him to lay hold of him and to believe in him and to love him that we may serve him in newness of life to thou bless us and to thou grant unto us thy strength and thy power to enable us to live unto holiness and have the everlasting life graciously forgive all sins for Jesus sake

[37 : 24] Amen pass from Godarp from continue it to learn living and okay st inspiring to live■■
andlak